

EXPLORING THE SECURITY CHALLENGES IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Tourism is said to be a business of providing travel, accommodation, food, entertainment for the people who are on travel (Mohamed 2007). Among the consumer variables that affect one's buying behaviour are his mental constructs like: attitude perception, motives and learning.(Kolawole 2011). However, once a consumer is not motivated to buy a product because of some factors that are related to insecurity, much will not be expected in the industry. More so, on the international scene, Nigeria is viewed as a country that is richly blessed culturally. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, international tourists arrivals slumped by 1.3 percent in 2001. The changing attitudes of travelers in the wake of various attacks were reflected in the manner in which a number of independent travelers dealt with the fear of insecurity. Likewise in Nigeria, the aspirations and hopes towards a greater Nigeria in tourism receipts has been an illusion. Disunity festers among different ethnic groups and incessant bombing has enveloped the country. As it is now, human lives as well as properties are not properly protected: tourists and foreign investors would consider it a very huge risk coming into the country to invest. Nigeria is continuously losing millions of Naira from these developments and the gains can only be possible when peace and security is restored to the land.

Keywords: *Tourism, Insecurity, Hospitality and Challenges*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is said to be a business of providing travel, accommodation, food, entertainment for the people who are on travel (Mohamed 2007). Nigeria, as an African emerging market economy has correctly identified the fact that tourism has the potential to catapult it to the first rank of emerging market economies and is making giant strides towards the achievement of its goals and objectives. One of the Nigeria Mission Statement is that Tourism is one of the priority sectors of Nigeria's economy. However, since the Nigeria Government has boldly stated an irrevocable commitment to tourism, one must expect several challenges at this crucial stage of development of the sector. Not only does the consumer have to spend relatively large amount of his/ her disposal income to buy any tourism product, he must also perceives it in a subjective and experiential manner. As buying of tourism products in any destination is highly sensitive and needs perceptions involving danger, lack of safety and insecurity, it is in this context that lack of safety

and security and incidence of crime represent a more serious threat to travel and tourism than any other negative factor. This is because, safety and security are vital to providing quality in tourism services in any destination. More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of tourism destination depends on being able to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF BUYING TOURISM PRODUCTS

Among the consumer variables that affect one's buying behaviour are his mental constructs like: attitude perception, motives and learning.(Kolawole 2011). However, this must have started by the concept of need. When a need causes one to act in a particular way at a time, it then becomes a motive or drive. A motive or drive is therefore a stimulated need which is sufficiently pressing the need. It is an internal energizing love that directs a person's behaviour

towards his/ her goals while motivation itself is a state of the individual in which energy is mobilized and directed towards the attainment of specific goals (Busch and Houston 1985). However, once a consumer is not motivated to buy a product because of some factors that are related to insecurity, much will not be expected in the industry. That a product is exposed to a consumer does not guarantee that the consumer will automatically buy and consume the product. The tendency of his buying no matter how attractive the product, is determined by among other factors, how he perceives the environment being secured, whether the destination is devoid of war, crime, embarrassment and plague. The perception consumers have on any destination will either make tourism thrive there or not. It is therefore necessary that the product should be presented to the market with the good information that the consumers will associate it as conforming to their beliefs and attitudes as it is very difficult to change people's perception on a subject matter when already formed (Kotler 1980).

III. NIGERIA AND TOURISM POTENTIALS

Prior to the emergence of tourism as a key sector in Nigeria, crude oil, including its derivatives had been and has remained a prominent feature of Nigeria's external sector: and by implication, the main stay of the country's economy. Being regarded as West Africa economic giant, Nigeria contributes over 40 percent of West Africa's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and presents investment opportunities in different sectors of the economy. Nigeria has been in the forefront of cultural renaissance and social regenerations which gained momentum several decades ago when the country hosted the second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture known as FESTAC in Lagos in 1977. No matter the drawbacks that festival produces nostalgic feelings and fond memories for all Africans and remains one of the proud moments of this great nation. More so, on the international scene, Nigeria is viewed as a country that is richly blessed culturally. It would be recalled that some years back, Nigeria celebrated her fiftieth year of independence and contemporary art works from the milieu of talented indigenous artistes were shown at a special independence exhibition in commemoration of the occasion. The art works pointed to the multi-faceted tapestry of the nation's diversity in ethno-religious racial, language and distinct identities knit together in a destiny beyond comprehension showing our riches in tourism potentials..

IV. TOURISM AND SECURITY CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA

Safety and security are vital to providing quality in tourism. More than any other economic activity, the success or failure of a tourism destination depends on

being able to provide a safe and secure environment for visitors. This was highly evident in the aftermath of the tragic event of 11th September 2001. In the weeks following the September 11th attacks in New York and Washington, passengers abandoned airports in their numbers as the effects of these attacks extended beyond U.S. borders with grave ramifications for many activities.

The inclination of tourists from various parts of the world to travel abroad also fell sharply in the post 9/11 period as example. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, international tourists arrivals slumped by 1.3 percent in 2001. The changing attitudes of travelers in the wake of these attacks were reflected in the manner in which a number of independence travelers dealt with the fear of insecurity. Some of them even got involved in "home swapping", using home exchange programme which allowed them to "stay at home"

Likewise in Nigeria, the aspirations and hopes towards a greater Nigeria in tourism receipts has been an illusion. Disunity festers among different ethnic groups and incessant bombing has enveloped the country. As it is now, human lives as well as properties are not properly protected: tourists and foreign investors would consider it a very huge risk coming into the country to invest. Tourism, as one of the avenues by which government gets foreign revenue through tourists who visit the country, as it is now, Nigeria is continuously losing millions of Naira from these developments and the gains can only be possible when peace and security is restored to the land. In the same sphere, the popular Abuja National Carnival, an annual rallying event which should symbolize the unifying celebratory spirit of Nigeria at home or abroad is dwindling year after year. The carnival, which was instituted among other considerations, to bring into focus the role of culture in the nation's search for economic prosperity, peaceful coexistence and national intention, has lost its quality.

Sequel to the persistent insurgence of Boko Haram and kidnapping in the country, the nation's hospitality and tourism sector has indeed suffered great losses from negative agents plaguing the industry. However, in recent times, incessant bombing attacks on the innocent souls in the country is one of the ways in which hundreds of innocents have been killed, investments worth billions of Naira destroyed placed the country at an all time high terror alert which edging the economy edging towards a collapse. And the culture and tourism sector is not left out in all these pandemonium. It would not be exaggerated to say the tourism sector is in jeopardy as a result of nefarious activities of the sect.

V. CONCLUSION

Apart from the effort of the government to combat the various crimes and the bombing activities, it is undeniable that the tourism industry has a right to defend itself as well as to have a legitimate expectation that the state will do all it can, to ensure safety and security. It is, therefore, in the industry 'own interest to

co-ordinate its efforts and co-operation fully with the other main partners i.e. the government law enforcement agencies and the wider community to defend this menace. It must be recognized that when visitors are safe that is why much is expected and that if the travel and tourism industry emphasizes security it will have a good chance of surviving social economic success.

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