

ROLE OF ARTS AND CRAFTS IN PROMOTING CULTURAL TOURISM FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Art and craft production can boost cultural tourism in the pursuit of economic development. Naraguta Leatherworks in Plateau State is one of the companies in the creative industries in Nigeria that have great potentials but which is not receiving adequate attention to compete for international best practices.. This study explores the contribution of art and craft works as an attraction and promotional tool for cultural tourism development. It also attempts to bring together factors which impede or assist the development of the local craft sector within the local tourism industry. The sixty-member staff of the Naraguta Leatherworks formed the population of study. A structured closed ended questionnaire supported with interview and documentary records provided the primary sources of data. Mean distribution and standard deviation of responses were calculated to provide basis for discussion and deductions. It was found out that arts and crafts are desired by travelers and tourists and so could contribute reasonably to tourism and economic growth. Public-Private Partnership is recommended for addressing the challenges faced by the art and craft industry with a view to reaping the benefits thereof. .

KEYWORDS: *Arts and crafts, Cultural tourism, Tourism promotion, Development*

INTRODUCTION

Art and craft works have always existed in Nigeria. Apart from the primary role of providing employment and generating revenue for the survival of communities, arts and crafts can play a vital role in promoting cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is the means by which people's culture – their artifacts, sociofacts and mentifacts are communicated and admired by others who are the class of tourists travelling purposely to avail themselves of these services. Tourists often seek new and unique experiences in their travels. Smith and Smith (2001) emphasizes the impact of tourism not only economically, but also socially, culturally and environmentally In Nigeria, places like Naraguta Leatherworks in Plateau State, Ladi Kwali Pottery in Niger state and the Kofar Mata Dye pit in Kano, Kano State are good examples of art and craft organisations that produce imaginable products that can boost tourism Tourist demand can provide the basis for the growth and diversification of artisanal production and the creation of markets in major tourist areas

Naraguta Leatherwork is located in Plateau State being one of the most preferred states in Nigeria because of its serene weather and opportunity for recreational tourism. This leatherwork produces artworks that are very marvelous such as shoes, wallet, caps, mats, pillows which are good for household decorations and use in public places like hotels, halls, airports, seaports and offices. Despite its potential to boot tourism, the Naraguta Leatherwork is not receiving adequate attention it deserves to compete for

international best practices. The importance of arts and crafts as souvenirs to tourists and its relevance in developing and promoting cultural tourism cannot be overemphasized. Therefore, this study is geared towards observing and finding out the contribution of art and craft works as an attraction and promotional tool for cultural tourism development. It also attempts to bring together factors which impede or assist the development of the local craft sector within the local tourism industry

Conceptual Framework

Nigerian arts and crafts are generally notable and widely admired worldwide (Lawal 2008) and they represent the rich cultural multiplicity of the country. Eco (1909) identified the major crafts in various communities in Nigeria to include *Leather and calabash making* found in Kano, Oyo, Plateau and Soot, *Woodcarving* flourishing all over southern Nigeria since time immemorial, *Ivory carving* in Benin used as paper knives, women earrings, necklaces, bangles and small piece of décor. Other forms of artwork include *grass weaving available in abundance in Kano, Katsina and Plateau* as grass baskets, fans, tables, chairs and floor mat, and artistic expression in *painting* which can be found in most parts of the country. Tourism has developed into a new market for the handicrafts industry, and the articulation of the tourism handicrafts mechanism is seen through the creation of new products directed towards the domestic and foreign tourist demands (Toops, 1993)

Jemkur, (1991) said that the role of arts and crafts in promoting cultural tourism includes the provision of such goods as handbags, belts, shoes, wallets, leather jackets and so on from which tourists usually buy as souvenirs and for personal uses. Infact, arts and crafts are undoubtedly one of the most beautiful products that attract cultural tourists at destinations Naraguta leatherwork produces varieties of arts and crafts that are admired by tourists. Additionally, the artisans in Gindiri make mats with different designs, colors, sizes and shapes which serve as souvenirs and attract tourists and people from different places. Moreso, the blacksmith men produce a wide range of high quality products and objects like farming and war tools, ornaments, and utensils for domestic and commercial purposes

Contributing, Uzomor (2007) emphasizes the use of arts and crafts for interior and exterior decoration in guest rooms, lobbies and offices where travellers and tourists spend most of their leisure time during their visits. Okunlola (2006) adds that arts are used in traditional medicine and for utilitarian and storage purposes. Women dresses, beads, ancestral figures, musical instruments and designs and embroidery used in social functions are made from traditional arts. The link between the artisanal sector and tourism is important. The objective should be to cater not only to travelers buying crafts as souvenirs but also to more sophisticated customers who demand products requiring extra skills and high quality

Art and craft work in Nigeria has suffered some setbacks, especially the Naraguta Leatherwork. These shortcomings are in the area of funding, support from stakeholders, raw materials supply, modern equipment, and skilled manpower. If these aspects are not properly addressed, there is the tendency that the benefits accruing to the tourism industry from the sector will be lost (Okunlola 2006)

Methodology

An exploratory research approach was adopted to find out the role of arts and crafts in cultural tourism development and promotion in Nigeria, with Naraguta Leatherwork, Jos in focus. A survey design was employed to obtain the opinion of individuals involved in handling and producing arts and crafts material for tourists' purchases. This approach follows the opinion of Kumar (2005) who suggested that survey is an adequate instrument for exploratory study.

Structured, close-ended questionnaire was used for obtaining the primary data. The issues raised in the questionnaire pertained to how often people visit the leather work, how much the patrons like the art works, suggestions often made by patrons and likely support or improvement required to boost the services of the company. Each question was to be answered on 5-point Likert scale indicating the level of frequency of visit, degree of likeness and level of agreement with points raised. The choice of questionnaire allows the respondents to respond at their convenient time. Visitors' book, suggestion box, sales invoices and interview at the company also provided additional information which was used in this work. The population of study comprised the 60 members of staff of Naraguta leatherwork, students on excursions and visitors found at the time of visits to the company. Prior to distribution of the

questionnaire, an enlightenment session was held with respondents to shed light on the relevance of the study. In addition to primary data, news items, newspaper reports, contributions from history and culture conferences and publications by other researchers provided dependable secondary sources.

A combination of inductive and deductive qualitative analysis using basic statistics was performed to determine the relationship between outcome and observation. Mean distribution and standard deviation of responses were calculated to provide basis for discussion and deductions.

Findings and Discussion

A total of 60 copies of questionnaire properly completed were returned and analysed. . Nearly all the respondents have been working at the Leatherwork for over five years and were familiar with operation of the company.

On how often people visit the company, 83.3% of the respondents with $x = 4.56$ ($SD = 0.97$) indicated that people visit the Leatherwork more frequently for site seeing and frequently for purchase shown by mean score of 3.86 and SD of 1.45 (See table 1). This shows that the Naraguta leather company is popular in Plateau and known to many visitors and tourists. Looking into the Visitor Book, more than 400 persons visited the company between January and May 2014, with most of the visits recorded on weekends. These patrons consist of students on excursion, visitors and tourists to Jos and some few people from the locality who came to buy preferred products. A glance at the ‘purpose of visit’ column of Visitors’ Book of the company revealed that most of the patrons came for sight-seeing and for purchases.

Table 2 shows the degree of likeness of the art products and customer service by patrons. This response was obtained from the staff of the company. The mean score of 4.67 with SD of 0.51 shows that the patrons ‘like very much’ the products of the company as well as its customer service represented by $x = 3.92$ and $SD = 1.04$. An interview granted by two of the patrons during one of the visits to the company indicates that the people mainly buy the products as souvenirs and for personal use. An interview session held with few patrons met on site proves the position of the company staff right as they admitted that they liked the leather works very much. This implies that the market value of products is increasingly determined by a product’s uniqueness, performance, and aesthetic appeal, making creativity a critical competitive advantage to a wide array of industries (Ellis, 2005)

The contribution of arts and crafts to tourism cannot be overemphasized. It was strongly agreed that they promote tourism export, cultural heritage and aesthetic or visual appeal of tourist lodging, in addition to revenue generation and economic empowerment (Table 3). All the responses were closely clustered. This position emphasizes the relevance of art and culture in cultural tourism enumerated by Douglas and Wassall (2006)

The company needs to overcome some challenges. Asked about suggestions frequently made by patrons, Table 4 reveals that the patrons would want fashionable shoes, more types of art and craft works and products made for specific occasions like weddings, anniversaries and other social events of different Nigerian origin. Table 5 shows that the company needs more funding, modern equipment and training of its staff in order to be able to perform better. This suggests that both the public and private sectors should develop interest in investing in order to increase the quality and quantity of production of art and craft works. This coincides with (Adora, 2010; Mwathe, 2011) who advocate for mutual interest from government and private investors in the business of tourism. This is what is in place in African countries like Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania (Mwathe, 2011)

Conclusion

The arts and crafts have the potential to offer numerous benefits to tourism and state economies in general. This includes opportunity to create jobs, attract investments, generate tax revenues, and stimulate local economies through tourism and consumer purchases. In addition, they make creative contributions to tourism products and services, and infuse culture into community development

Government can support arts and crafts by incorporating arts into economic development and community development plans, supporting arts education and promoting arts assets as boosts to cultural tourism. This includes offering incentive policies targeted at the arts and culture sectors as well as development

initiatives, entrepreneurial training, marketing programs, or public-private collaborations to encourage growth and invest in specific creative clusters.

Attracting and retaining creative workers; and strengthening the creative abilities of all workers through training and other development programmes are powerful strategies for getting the best from arts and crafts. By investing in the arts and incorporating arts and culture into economic development plans, the economic, social, civic, and cultural benefits that shall result will lead to livable community for tourism to thrive.

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APPENDICES

Table 1: How often People Visit Naraguta Leatherwork for:

	Site seeing	Purchases	Educational
More frequently		45	30
Frequently	10	13	15
Not sure	0	2	0
Less frequently	3	8	10
Seldomly	2	7	17
`.Mean	4.55	3.85	3.12
SD	0.97	1.45	1.65

Table 2: How Patrons Like Art and Craft :

	Products	Customer service
Liked very much	41	20
Liked much	18	25
Undecided	1	10
Dislike	0	5
Disliked very much	0	0
Mean	4.67	3.92
SD	0.51	1.04

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Table 3: What contribution do arts and crafts make to promotion and growth of tourism in Nigerian economy?

	SA	A	U	D	SD	x	sd
Tourism export promotion		41	18	1	0	0	4.67 0.51
Employment opportunities		50	10	0	0	0	4.83 0.37
Rural industrialization	20	30	4	6	0	4.67	0.89
Revenue generation		55	5	0	0	0	4.92 0.23
Cultural promotion		38	13	7	2	0	4.45. 0.83
Boosting aesthetics of tourist lodging	28		21	2	6	3	4.08 1.16

Table 4: Suggestions frequently made by patrons

	SA	A	U	D	SD	x	sd
Make more different styles		12	21	10	12	5	3.82 1.54
Make products for special occasions		37	10	1	8	4	4.13, 1.32
Advertise the company services on different media		16	14	17	8	5	3.47, 1.25
Art and crafts are traditional and against religion			2	9	2	39	8 2.30, 0.99
Train your service staff		15	21	4	13	7	3.40, 1.37

Table 5: Current challenges faced by the Leatherworks in promoting tourism in Plateau State and Nigeria

	SA	A	U	D	SD	x	sd
1. Inadequate funding	30	11	4	5	10	3.77	1.53
2. Inadequate government attention	39	12	1	8	0	4.37	1.03
3. Need for staff training		23	13	7	7	10	3.53 1.5
4. Low publicity		4	12	1	26	17	2.33 1.26
5. Lack of modern equipment	10	2	0	30	18	2.27	1.37