

Tourism-Driven Development: Examining the Influence of the Calabar Carnival on Employment and Infrastructure in Calabar Metropolis

By

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Abstract

This study investigated tourism-driven development by examining the relationship between Calabar Carnival and employment creation and infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. It was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 62,112 adult residents of Calabar Metropolis, including individuals engaged directly or indirectly in tourism-related activities. A sample of 406 respondents was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique involving purposive, simple random, proportional, and accidental sampling methods. The instrument used for data collection was the Perceived Impact of Calabar Carnival on Employment and Infrastructure Questionnaire (PICCEIQ). Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used for data analysis, while the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The results revealed that the Calabar Carnival has a significant positive influence on employment creation and infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis. Specifically, the carnival contributes to job opportunities in sectors such as hospitality, transportation, and event management, while also promoting improvements in road networks, public facilities, and tourism infrastructure. The study recommended increased investment in tourism-related infrastructure and the development of policies that support sustainable employment generation through tourism activities.

Keywords: Calabar Carnival, employment creation, infrastructural development, tourism-driven development, Calabar Metropolis

Introduction

More than just a display of cultural elegance and rich traditional heritage, carnivals represent an important economic enterprise with potentials for development of societies. Carnival is a segment of the creative industries and like the core real sector industries of the economy; the creative industries have the potentials to drive the growth and development of societies (Burnett & Hollander, 2017). Example in Trinidad and Tobago, carnivals are a key sector of

the economy and the sector is often supported by economic policy contents targeted at developing the creative and cultural industries for economic growth revival (Ellard, Cheek and Nickerson, 2019). Naturally, following the potentials of tourism in Cross River State, the sector is adequately positioned to drive the future growth and development of the State's economy. In search for viable and sustainable alternative revenue outlets, the Cross River State Government leveraged on the State's tourism assets, using the Calabar Carnival as vehicle to explore the State's distinctive cultural heritage for export to the global market. Reported as the "Largest Street Party event in Africa," Calabar Carnival offers a viable revenue base for the Cross River State Government to deploy for her socio-economic development strides.

Carnival is a street festival which brings communities together in celebration, largely on the back of voluntary participation the archetypal big society showcase. It encompasses highly localized traditions, such and events to more recent hybrids accommodating both local and world music and a variety of street and performing arts (Goodwin, 2018). Carnival's community spirit is the result of the cumulative efforts of many talented artists -musicians, and sound engineers. Carnival arts are now recognized by the Arts Council as a "combined art": one that, at its best, brings together many art forms and traditions in new innovative production and performance (Agnes, 2015). Investment in combined arts is considered important for future social and economic returns. Carnival can engage the communities especially young people and disadvantaged groups that more traditional art forms cannot reach. It can also create new commercial opportunities in digital and creative industries, among the priority sectors in the government's plan for growth. And the best carnivals are also major boosts for the local economy (Cole, 2016).

Carnival, according to the Chambers paperback thesaurus is a noun used to describe festival fiesta, gala, jamboree, fair holiday, jubilee celebration, merry making, and revelry. It is a recreational activity and a part of tourism. Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal place of work and residence. The activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs (Mathieson & Wail, 2018). The study of tourism is the study of people away from their usual habitat of the establishment which respond to the requirement of travellers and of the impacts that they have on the economic, physical and social wellbeing of their hosts. It involves the motivations and experiences of the tourists the expectations of and adjustments made by residents of reception areas, and the roles played by the numerous agencies and institutions which intercede between

them. Tourism is a luxury, until recently; participation was restricted to the selected few who could afford both the time and money to travel.

According to the world tourism organization (WTO, 2017) among the world's top 40 tourism earners in 1995 about 18 were developing countries including India. Regarding the number of visitors' arrivals than the population, France with a population of 57 million received 70 million visitors in 1998. Similarly, Spain with a population of 37 million received 47 million visitors during the same year (Bhatia, 2018). Tourism has also influenced expansion and modernization of infrastructure. It has been noticed that many regions in the world are not in a position to reap the benefit of tourism simply because of the lack of infrastructures. In fact, if we look at the countries and the regions within the countries, the ones having adequate infrastructure are the greatest beneficiaries. The world's top to tourist generating and recurring countries all have excellent infrastructures to support the insatiable quest of tourists' visiting the areas (Uwadiogwu, 2020).

Travel exercises a very healthy influence on international understanding and appreciation of other people's style of life. Tourism thus is a highly complex phenomenon. It is an important human activity of great significance in addition to its economic significance. As a mass phenomenon of an essentially social nature, tourism can no longer be viewed as a fringe activity, both in the use it makes of time and space and its relationship with the production of goods and services, tourism has become one of the pivotal concerns of nations and of the international community (Bhatia 2018). It is an established fact today that tourism is a huge industry, the world's largest and arguably fastest growing industry. Every country has something to offer in tourism even the poorest nations can offer their heritage, traditional culture and national sites which today happens to be of great interest to tourists. Nigeria is a vast country richly endowed with ecological and cultural resources. The country offers a variety of tourist attractions such as extended and many rivers and ocean beaches ideal you summing and other water sports, unique and dowers wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature from tropical forest magnificent waterfalls and climatic conditions in some parts particularly conducive for holidaying. Other attractions include traditional ways of life, local customs, rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful products depicting native arts and lifestyle and the authentic unsophisticated but friendly disposition of many of the Nigerian populace. However, many of these attraction are still largely untapped and are even at their raw state, although are enjoyed by few outsiders, very rich visitors in question of exoticism or adventurous people in search of new challenges and experiences.

Calabar Carnival Festival in Cross River State, Nigeria, also tagged "Africa's Biggest Street Party", was created as part of the vision of making the Cross River State in Nigeria, the number one tourist destination for Nigerians and tourist all over the world. The carnival which begins on every 1st of December and lasts till 31st December has boosted the cultural mosaic of Nigeria people while entertaining the millions of spectators within and outside the State, and boosting industry for all stakeholders. The Calabar Carnival has gone a long way since its inception in 2004, when the then governor of the State, Mr. Donald Duke had a vision of making the State the hub for tourism and hospitality in Nigerian and in Africa. The Carnival presents a perfect platform from brand visibility for consumer and market awareness. According to Odok and Etefia (2017), the carnival aimed to include more aspects of local heritage, aesthetics and culture and at the same time strengthen the capacity of the locals to participate in an economically beneficial way. Recently, Cross River State has become the pride of Nigeria or Africa as far as carnivals and hospitality are concerned. Calabar Carnival, as it is called, is a unique display of African heritage, showcased through music, dance, drama and visual creativity, which is reflected in the design of floats, costumes and make-up. Since inception, this festival, which has become one of the biggest tourism and leisure attractions in West Africa, has grown tremendously in popularity and scope.

Tourism and carnival work as indivisible duo to produce great impact. One of the importances of tourism is that, it creates employment. The World Travel and Tourism Council had estimated that in the year 1999, travel and tourism was expected to generate almost 200 million jobs across the world economy, both direct and indirect. Looking toward, world travel and employment in travel and tourism is expected to grow at 2.6 percent per annum. The majority of the job come in the form of direct service jobs in tourist related facilities and attraction at the destination and in tourist generating areas. Tourism also makes a tremendous contribution to the improvement of social and political understanding. Travel fosters a better rapport between people with different lifestyle. Personal international contacts have always been an important way of spreading ideas about other cultures. Carnivals are thus an important means of promoting cultural exchanges and international cooperation. The experiences gained through travel have a profound effect upon the life of the individual as well as upon society as a whole

Getz (2019), noted that festivals and events are strong drivers of employment generation in host communities. Similarly, Ojo (2018) observed that cultural festivals in Nigeria significantly contribute to informal sector employment. In addition, Esu (2012) emphasized that the Calabar Carnival has become a platform for job creation and skill acquisition. Adeyinka (2014), in a study reported that festivals contribute to urban infrastructure

expansion. In the same vein, Eja and Ajake (2005) noted that tourism activities in Cross River State have led to improvements in transportation and hospitality infrastructure. Furthermore, Ajake (2015) emphasized that Calabar Carnival has influenced the modernization of the city's physical landscape. However, the study also observed that such developments are sometimes seasonal and not evenly distributed. Despite this limitation, the overall impact on infrastructure remains significant. Thus, Calabar Carnival plays an important role in promoting infrastructural development in the metropolis

Another benefit includes increased leisure; higher incomes and greatly enhanced mobility have been combined to enable more people to partake of tourism. It promotes infrastructural development such as improvements in transportation, health, security, attraction sites; the proliferation of accommodation, and the growth of inclusive tours and others form of relatively cheap vacation travel, have further extended the opportunity to travel for pleasure. Today the majority of people in the developed world and increasing numbers in developing countries are tourists at some time in their lives. Tourism is no longer the prerogative of a few but is an accepted and accustomed, even expected, part of the lifestyle of a large and growing number of people. Tourism is of major economic and social significance because about 270 million tourists spend \$92 billion (US) annually in places outside their own countries. This is one of the largest items in the world's foreign trade. It is the most important export industry and earner of foreign exchange in many countries. Looking at benefits and relevance of tourism, it could be in terms of its economic significance, where receipts from international tourism can provide a valuable source of earnings for both development as well as developing countries. Visitors spending generate income for both public and private sectors, besides effecting wages and employment opportunities. (Rao, 2020).

Despite these efforts and investments, there remains a divergence in public opinion regarding the actual impact of the Calabar Carnival on socio-economic development. While the carnival is expected to contribute significantly to employment creation, income generation, infrastructural development, etc, many residents perceive that these benefits are not sufficiently evident in the study area which among other necessitated this study

Statement of the problem

Although Calabar once served as the capital of Nigeria, many of its infrastructural facilities have remained underdeveloped or have deteriorated over time due to inadequate maintenance and limited investment in renewal and expansion. The situation is further worsened by the state's low federal allocation, which is insufficient to meet basic recurrent expenditures such

as salary obligations, thereby leaving little or no funds for meaningful capital and infrastructural development.

In an attempt to address these fiscal and developmental constraints, the state government has relied heavily on internally generated revenue through taxation of individuals and corporate organizations operating within the metropolis. However, this approach has generated concerns among residents and business owners, as the increasing tax burden is perceived to negatively affect business growth, investment opportunities, and overall economic stability in the area.

In response to these challenges, the Calabar Carnival was introduced in 2004 as a tourism-driven development strategy aimed at diversifying the state economy, promoting infrastructural development, enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the environment, and generating revenue for sustainable development. The carnival has since grown into a major cultural and tourism event, attracting both local and international attention, as well as participation from government, private sector stakeholders, and non-governmental organizations.

Despite these efforts and investments, there remains a divergence in public opinion regarding the actual impact of the Calabar Carnival on socio-economic development. While the carnival is expected to contribute significantly to employment creation, income generation, infrastructural development benefits are not sufficiently evident in the study area..

Purpose of the study

This study investigated tourism-driven development by examining the influence of the Calabar Carnival on employment creation and infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. This study will specifically seek to;

- Examine the impact of Calabar carnival on employment creation in Calabar Metropolis as perceived by the dwellers
- Find out the impact of Calabar carnival on improved infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis as perceived by the dwellers..

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and employment creation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.
2. There is no significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State..

Methodology

This study adopted a survey research design to examine the relationship between Calabar Carnival and employment creation and infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria. It was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 62,112 adult residents of Calabar Metropolis, including individuals engaged directly or indirectly in tourism-related activities. A sample of 406 respondents was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique involving purposive, simple random, proportional, and accidental sampling methods. The instrument used for data collection was the Perceived Impact of Calabar Carnival on Employment and Infrastructure Questionnaire (PICCEIQ). Mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) were used for data analysis, while the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Results

This section presents the data analysis based on the stated hypotheses of the study. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

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There is no significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and employment creation in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.

In this hypothesis, the independent variable is Calabar Carnival while the dependent variable is employment creation in Calabar Metropolis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for testing the hypothesis, and the result is presented in Table 1. The result in Table 1 showed that Calabar Carnival had a mean score of 23.29 with a standard deviation of 3.17, while employment creation had a mean score of 16.69 with a standard deviation of 3.12. The result further revealed that the calculated r-value of 1.214 is significant at 0.05 level of significance and 404 degrees of freedom. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and employment creation in Calabar Metropolis.

Table 1 : Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) of relationship between Calabar Carnival and employment creation (N = 406)

Variables	Mean	SD	r-value	df	p-value
Calabar Carnival (X)	23.29	3.17	1.214*	404	0.000
Employment creation (Y)	16.69	3.12			

*Significant at 0.05 level; $p < 0.05$

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State.

In this hypothesis, the independent variable is Calabar Carnival while the dependent variable is infrastructural development. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used and the result is presented in Table 2. The result showed that Calabar Carnival had a mean score of 23.29 with a standard deviation of 3.17, while infrastructural development had a mean score of 17.40 with a standard deviation of 2.18. The calculated r-value of 1.198 was significant at 0.05 level of significance and 404 degrees of freedom. Since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and infrastructural development.

Table 2: PPMC of relationship between Calabar Carnival and infrastructural development (N = 406)

Variables	Mean	SD	r-value	df	p-value
Calabar Carnival (X)	23.29	3.17	1.198*	404	0.000
Infrastructural development (Y)	17.40	2.18			

*Significant at 0.05 level; $p < 0.05$

Discussion of the findings

Calabar Carnival and Employment Creation

The result of hypothesis one indicated that the null hypothesis was rejected, implying that there is a significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and employment creation in Calabar Metropolis. This conclusion was based on the fact that the calculated correlation coefficient was significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that the carnival plays a meaningful role in job creation. The findings suggest that the carnival provides both direct and indirect employment opportunities for residents, especially during the festive period. Many individuals engage in temporary jobs such as event management, security services, transportation, catering, and street vending. This seasonal employment contributes to reducing unemployment levels, particularly among youths. The study further revealed that the influx of tourists increases demand for labour across different sectors. This finding aligns with the work of Getz (2010), who noted that festivals and events are strong drivers of employment generation in host communities. Similarly, Ojo (2018) observed that cultural festivals in Nigeria significantly contribute to informal sector employment. In addition, Esu (2012) emphasized that the Calabar Carnival has become a platform for job creation and skill acquisition. Therefore, the study confirms that Calabar Carnival is a viable tool for enhancing employment opportunities in the study area.

Calabar Carnival and Infrastructural Development

The result of hypothesis two revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a significant relationship between Calabar Carnival and infrastructural development in Calabar Metropolis. The findings showed that the organization of the carnival has necessitated improvements in roads, public facilities, and event venues. Government investments in infrastructure are often intensified in preparation for the carnival, leading to urban renewal. The study also found that improved infrastructure enhances the overall attractiveness of the city to tourists and investors. This supports the assertion that tourism-driven events can stimulate physical development in host communities. The findings are consistent with the study of Adeyinka (2014), who reported that festivals contribute to urban infrastructure expansion. In the same vein, Eja and Ajake (2005) noted that tourism activities in Cross River State have led to improvements in transportation and hospitality infrastructure. Furthermore, Ajake (2015) emphasized that Calabar Carnival has influenced the modernization of the city's physical landscape. However, the study also observed that such developments are sometimes seasonal and not evenly distributed. Despite this limitation, the overall impact on infrastructure remains significant. Thus, Calabar Carnival plays an important role in promoting infrastructural development in the metropolis

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Calabar Carnival has a significant and positive influence on the socio-economic development of Calabar Metropolis. The carnival has proven to be an important driver of employment creation, as it provides both temporary and permanent job opportunities for residents. It also contributes to infrastructural development through government and private sector investments aimed at improving the city's physical outlook. Furthermore.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and relevant stakeholders should expand the scope of Calabar Carnival activities to create more sustainable employment opportunities beyond the festival period, particularly by supporting small businesses, artisans, and youth-driven enterprises.
2. There should be continuous investment in urban infrastructure such as roads, transportation systems, and public facilities to ensure that improvements associated with the carnival are maintained and benefit residents year-round.

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