

EFFECTIVENESS OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT THROUGH CONSCIENTISATION STRATEGIES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined effectiveness of tourism management through conscientisation strategies on socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State, Nigeria. Two research questions guided this study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select 1513 indigenes of the host communities with tourist attractions. Questionnaire tagged Effectiveness of Tourism Management through Conscientisation Strategies on Socio-Economic Conditions of the People (QETMCSS-ECP) ($r = 0.81$) was the research instrument used for data collection. Completed and retrieved 1500 copies of questionnaire were analyzed using mean score statistics. Results showed that village meeting, popular participation, awareness campaign, community education, and mass media programmes are the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate people on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities. Also finding revealed that conscientisation strategies through effective tourism management are capable of enhancing socio-economic conditions of the people as these will increase standard of living, employment opportunities, alleviate poverty and generate income. The study therefore recommended that all stakeholders in tourism development should endeavour to effectively manage tourist attractions through conscientisation strategies such as village meeting, popular participation, awareness campaign, community education, and mass media programmes as these will enhance socio-economic conditions of the people.

Key Words: *Effectiveness, Tourism Management, Conscientisation Strategies, Socio-Economic Conditions, People*

Introduction

In most developed and developing nations of the world, tourism is a major source of employment, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or national income, poverty alleviation, income to the tourism promoters and to the tourism destination communities. It is a catalyst for developing communities through provision of social infrastructural amenities like electricity, water supply, communication, transportation, good road network and health improvement facilities. However, in spite of these

benefits of tourism, Imo State Government, investors in tourism business and promoters and even the host communities where these tourist attractions are located seem not to bother much in developing and promoting tourism in the state.

According to Olapade (2012) not all tourist attractions are fascinating. However, most are able to attract visits due to 'genuine stories, infrastructure, events and beautifications the custodians invented and invested' and indirectly creates an enabling environment that attracts local and foreign investors, which in the long run are able to create avenue for employment, boost international patronage as well as generate huge revenue.

However, studies by Aniah, Eja, Otu, and Ushie (2009); Ajake, Egbe, Ambo, Emanghe, and Eneji (2010) showed that illiteracy has seriously led to low commitment to tourism by residents in most developing cities of the world. Most of the residents are unaware of the significance of a good environment to tourism development. As such, their activities on the environment greatly discourage tourists from visiting the areas. Nevertheless, it is pertinent to strategically conscientise dwellers of the tourists attractions host communities through village meeting, awareness campaign, mass media programmes, community education and popular participation, which could help enlighten them on the importance of a good environment for effective management of tourist attractions. The absence of either formal or informal knowledge about environmental resources has posed a devastating threat to the growth of tourism industry in some nations of the world.

Imo State whose population is predominantly rural, is endowed with both natural and cultural resources such as Ahiajoku festival, Mmanwumi, Abadaba lake, Imo wonder lake, Culture and Art centre, Rolling hills and many more that can be harnessed to aid tourism and attract inflow of people and foreign exchange to the state. In spite of the various tourism resources available in the communities of Imo State, there is still lack of preservation and maintenance of infrastructure and investments in the tourism sector and the state so far has recorded little or no revenue from tourism as many of the destinations lack the ambience found in developed tourists attractions.

However, it has been observed that transforming the economy alongside effective development of the communities through tourism has several benefits and Imo state has so much to gain from developing the tourist attractions when the dwellers of the host communities understand the reason to preserve, conserve and maintain their tourist attractions. To achieve this, Paulo Freire's conscientisation approach as a teaching and development strategy in adult education becomes handy. It is in this direction that this study examines effectiveness of tourism management through conscientisation strategies on socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were postulated to guide this study.

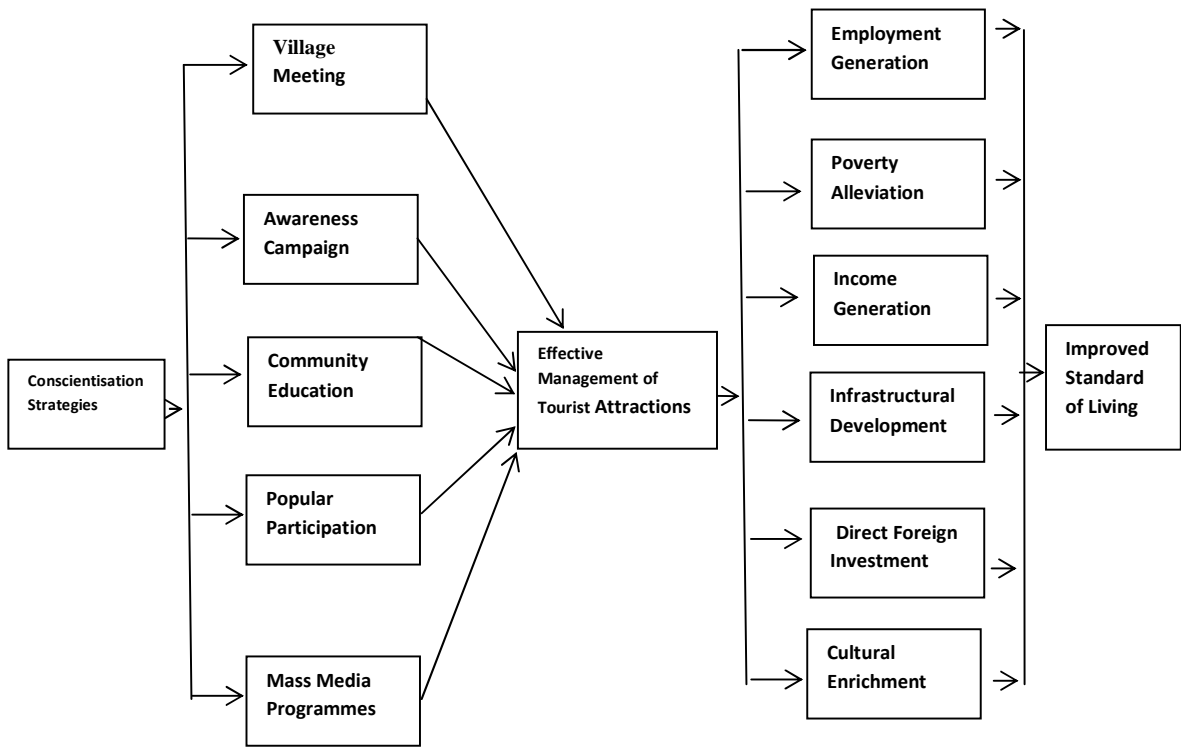
1. Ascertain the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on the action for effective management of tourist attractions in Imo State.
2. Ascertain how effective tourism management through conscientisation strategies would enhance the socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study.

1. What are the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on the action for effective management of tourist attractions in Imo State?
2. How would effective tourism management through conscientisation strategies enhance socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State?

Model Design for the Study



Developed by Nwogu, G. A. (2015)

The above model and approach serves as a road map to the present study. Here, the study identified five conscientisation strategies that severally and jointly can ensure effective management of tourist attractions for development of communities. Below is the explanation of the conscientisation strategies.

1. Village Meeting: This is a situation where experts in the area of tourism management interact with residents and leaders of the tourist attractions host communities on tourism related issues. This should happen within the community, not anywhere outside host community.
2. Awareness campaign: This refers to using the town crier and megaphone for market campaign on tourism related issues.

3. Community Education: This refers to using history, taboo, culture, music and dance to inform the tourist attractions host communities on the need to discover, preserve and maintain natural and cultural resources for community development.
4. Popular participation: This is total involvement of the residents of tourist attractions host communities in planning, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring of tourism development programmes in their communities.
5. Mass Media Programmes: These are film showing, discussion on radio and television, bill boards, and documentaries on the benefits and protections of tourist attractions.

In a nutshell, adoption of the aforementioned conscientisation strategies for managing tourist attractions are expected to bring about employment generation, income generation, infrastructural development, poverty alleviation, direct foreign investment, and enrich cultures of the communities, which will in turn lead to improved standard of living of the people.

Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 6,054 indigenes of host communities with tourist attractions in six selected Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Imo State, Nigeria. The study adopted multi-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, random sampling technique was used to select two LGAs from each of the 3 Senatorial Zones in Imo State. In the second stage, proportionate sampling technique was used to select 25% of the population from each of the six host communities with tourist attractions. This translates to 1513 indigenes of the host communities with tourist attractions selected for this study. A 10-item self-developed research instrument tagged "Questionnaire on Effectiveness of Tourism Management through Conscientisation Strategies on Socio-Economic Conditions of the People" (QETMCSS-ECP) with $r = 0.81$ was used for data collection. The completed and retrieved 1500 copies of questionnaire were analyzed using mean (\bar{x}) statistics to answer the research questions. Criterion mean for taking decision was 2.5 (4+3+2+1 divided by 4 = 2.5). All items whose values are below 2.5 were rejected while items equal or above 2.5 were accepted.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data is presented below.

Research Questions One (RQ₁): What are the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on the actions for effective management of tourist attractions in Imo State?

Table 1: Mean Scores of Responses Showing the Conscientisation Strategies that Can be Used to Educate the Citizens on the Actions for Effective Management of Tourist Attractions in Imo State

S/No	Items	Responses				Total	Mean \bar{x}	Remark
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)			
1.	Village meeting is one of the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State	500 (2000)	450 (1350)	200 (400)	350 (350)	1500 (4100)	2.7	Accepted
2.	Popular participation is another conscientisation strategy that can be used to educate Imo citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State	450 (1800)	550 (1650)	300 (600)	200 (200)	1500 (4250)	2.8	Accepted
3.	Awareness campaign is a conscientisation strategy that can be used to educate the citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State	300 (1200)	590 (1770)	220 (440)	390 (390)	1500 (3800)	2.5	Accepted
4.	Community education is another conscientisation strategy that can be used to educate the citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State	440 (1760)	560 (1680)	290 (580)	210 (210)	1500 (4230)	2.8	Accepted
5.	Mass media programmes are conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate Imo citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State	350 (1400)	560 (1680)	200 (400)	390 (390)	1500 (3870)	2.5	Accepted
Grand mean (\bar{x})							2.7	

Table 1 shows the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on the actions for effective management of tourist attractions in Imo State. On this, item 1 with a mean score of 2.7 reveals that village meeting is one of the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State. For item 2, the result ($\bar{x} = 2.8$) shows that popular participation is another conscientisation strategy that can be used for effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State. Item 3 with mean score of 2.5, reveals that awareness campaign is a conscientisation strategy that can be used for effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State. The result on item 4 ($\bar{x} = 2.8$) shows that community education is another conscientisation strategy that can be used to educate Imo citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State. The mean score of 2.5 generated on item 5 shows that mass media is

a conscientisation strategy that can be used to educate Imo citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in their communities.

In response to research question one, a grand mean of 2.7 recorded confirmed that village meeting, popular participation, awareness campaign, community education, and mass media are the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State.

Research Questions Four (RQ₂): How would effective tourism management through conscientisation strategies enhance socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State?

Table 2: Mean Scores of Responses Showing How Effective Tourism Management through Conscientisation Strategies Would Enhance Socio-Economic Conditions of the People in Imo State

S/No	Items	Responses				Total	Mean \bar{x}	Remark
		SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)			
6.	Standards of living of residents of tourists attractions host communities will increase considerably due to new business opportunities tourist attractions will create	350 (1400)	560 (1680)	200 (400)	390 (390)	1500 (3870)	2.5	Accepted
7.	Effective tourism management would attract more investors and this will improve employment opportunities in Imo State	290 (1160)	520 (1560)	330 (660)	360 (360)	1500 (3740)	2.5	Accepted
8.	The quality of public services in the tourist attractions host communities would be better due to tourism investment	450 (1800)	550 (1650)	300 (600)	200 (200)	1500 (4250)	2.8	Accepted
9.	Effective management of tourist attractions would transform our economy in terms of poverty alleviation and income generation	590 (2360)	410 (1230)	305 (610)	195 (195)	1500 (4395)	2.9	Accepted
10.	Tourist attractions would provide the tourists opportunities to having knowledge of the host communities culture and tradition	470 (1880)	500 (1500)	200 (400)	330 (330)	1500 (4030)	2.6	Accepted
Grand mean (\bar{x})							2.7	

The analysis of data on research question four as contained in table 2 shows that item 6 with a mean score of 2.5 reveals that the standards of living of residents of tourist attractions host communities will increase considerably due to new business opportunities tourist attractions will create. For item 7, the result ($\bar{x} = 2.5$) shows that effective tourism management would attract more investors and this will improve employment opportunities in Imo State. Item 8 with mean score of 2.8, reveals that the quality of public services in the tourist attractions host communities would be better due to tourism investment. For item 9, the result shows that effective management of tourists attractions would transform our economy in terms of poverty alleviation and income

generation as the mean score 2.9 is greater than the criterion mean of 2.5. The mean score of 2.6 generated on item 10 shows that tourist attractions will provide the tourists, opportunities to having knowledge of the host communities culture and tradition.

A grand mean of 2.7 recorded on research question two confirmed that effective tourism management through conscientisation strategies is capable of enhancing the socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State with increase in the standard of living, improvement in employment opportunities, better quality of public services, poverty alleviation and income generation.

Discussion of Findings

Research question one, which sought to ascertain the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate the citizens on the actions for effective management of tourist attractions in Imo State, shows that village meeting, popular participation, awareness campaign, community education, and mass media are the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate people for effective management of tourist attractions in the communities of Imo State. This finding is consistent with Sanoff (2000) who maintains that the main purpose of community participation is to involve people in the design and the decision making processes. It is further argued that community participation in decision making increases peoples' trust and confidence with the tourism industry. It also provides the local community with a voice in design and decision-making in order to improve plans, service delivery, and finally, promotes a sense of community by bringing together people who share common goals.

According to Geoffrey and Alister (2006) in Enemu and Amaechi (2015), mass media is a non-personal channel of broadcasting a message to the general public through television, radio, newspapers, journals and internet etc. Therefore, a profound knowledge of mass media is very necessary if tourist attraction has good reputation because it is the most economic and effective way to promote tourist attractions.

The finding also supports Jamal and Stronza (2009) who asserted that involving the rural communities in tourism development within and around protected areas is crucial in bridging the gap between governance and use of the resources in a tourist destination. Apart from the economic contribution that the rural communities can accrue from tourism, their involvement in tourism development can as well be beneficial to tourism development because they can create an effective environmental stewardship that builds on indigenous, local and scientific knowledge, economic development, social empowerment, the protection of cultural heritage and the creation of interpretive and nature-based experiences for tourist learning and cross-cultural appreciation.

Research question two, which sought to ascertain how effective tourism management through conscientisation strategies would enhance the socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State, revealed that effective tourism management through conscientisation strategies would enhance socio-economic conditions of the people in Imo State through increase in the standard of living, improvement in employment opportunities, better quality of public services, poverty alleviation and income generation. This finding supports Steiner (2006) who found tourism to be resilient and associated with positive impacts in terms of generating foreign exchange earnings, creating employment and income, and stimulating domestic consumption. Consequently, tourism is widely acknowledged as an effective tool for socio-economic development, because of the possible backward and forward linkages with the rest sectors of the economy, which allows it to facilitate employment opportunities, income, local economic development, and enhance the quality of life (Hall, 2007).

In the same vein, Honey and Gilpin (2009) saw tourism as having a snowball effect in contributing to economic growth, since the development of new tourism destinations is often accompanied by the arrival of new businesses and NGOs. The finding also affirms Olajide and Nwogu (2012) who noted that tourism has been discovered to be a very important instrument for poverty alleviation, attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and sustainable development of communities. Thus, tourism has the potential to contribute to the growth and development of the economy of communities.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that village meeting, popular participation, awareness campaign, community education, and mass media programmes are the conscientisation strategies that can be used to educate people on effective management of tourist attractions in the communities. Also the conscientisation strategies through effective tourism management are capable of enhancing socio-economic conditions of the people with increase in the standard of living, improvement in employment opportunities, better quality of public services, poverty alleviation and income generation. This study therefore, established that conscientisation strategies serve as tools, which enhances the discovery, development, preservation and maintenance of tourist attractions potentialities by members of the communities.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study.

1. Tourism development experts and education professionals should adopt village meeting, popular participation, awareness campaign, community education, and mass media programmes as conscientisation strategies that can be used for effective management of tourist attractions in the communities.
2. All stakeholders in tourism development should endeavour to effectively manage tourist attractions through conscientisation strategies as this will enhance socio-economic conditions of the people by improving their standard of living, creating employment opportunities, having better quality of public services, alleviating poverty, and generating income.
3. Effort should be made by government and all stakeholders toward sensitizing and informing members of the communities on the essence of supporting and contributing to the promotion of the tourism industry by emphasizing the conscientisation strategies as educational and promotional tools.

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