EXPLORING ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
The recent economic recession and the drastic fall in international crude oil price depicts that Nigeria need to re-strategise from its monolithic economy to other economic option. Tourism has shown that it has economic and social force to reshape economies of developing countries. This paper therefore examined sustainable rural tourism and its economic implication for local community: in Nigeria. The study highlighted criticisms of sustainable tourism and its applicability on local community and the need to conserve the tourist products for sustainability. The study noted that quality of life in rural communities is poor due to weak basic social infrastructures (education, health and access to credit) that will enhance economic growth. This study argues that economic survival of communities in developing countries is gradually depending on rural tourism as an emerging industry that generates substantial economic benefits to local communities and tourists host countries. The study concludes that Nigeria as a developing country should explore the potentials of sustainable rural tourism as a way to boost the economy and also ensure the sustainability of the tourists products.

Keywords: Sustainable Rural Tourism, Economic, Local Community

Introduction
Tourism is recognized as a social and economic force transforming economies of developed and developing countries, however developing countries around the world now view tourism as a developmental strategy to achieve economic development in which principles of free trade apply Naylon (1967 in Opperman and Chon, 1997). Government in developing countries has shown interest in tourism investment through investment policies. Opperman and Chon (1997) argued that these policies include; investment into the tourism infrastructure in destinations and investment incentives for organisations venturing into tourism. This suggest motive why developing countries develop their rural tourism potentials. It is therefore apparent that when tapping on the economic gains effort should be directed to ensure that the point of interest for tourists is protected for sustainability.

Rural tourism takes many different forms and is pursued for different reasons. There are developmental reasons to promote tourism as a growth pole such as for regeneration following agro-industrial collapse, or diversification of a remote marginal agricultural area into adventure tourism or cultural tourism. Moreover, rural tourism preserves some depth to a world increasingly being flattened out by the forces of globalization (Tanahashi, 2010) as cited in OKECH, HAGHIRI, GEORGE (2010)

The recent economic recession and fall in crude oil price depicts that Nigeria need to re-strategise from its monolithic economy to other economic option. Tourism has shown that it has economic
and social force to reshape economies of developing countries. Exploring sustainable tourism in local community connotes that development of tourism has long been characterized as sole agent of rapid social and cultural change in local communities while the attention given to the negative changes overshadows the positive impact of tourism development as posited by Sharpley and Telfer, (2002), this emerging industry generates substantial economic benefits to local communities and tourists host countries. Argument subsist that encouragement for rural tourism has become a common policy both in developed countries (Ca`noves et al., 2004; Hall and Jenkins, 1998; Long and Lane, 2000; MacDonald and Jolliffe, 2003; OECD, 1994) and in developing ones Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004; Hall, 2004; Kinsley, (2000).

Environment of local community is particularly fragile and susceptible to damage from tourism development most especially when exploring for sustainable rural tourism for economic benefit. While trying to derive economic gains care need to be taken in ensuring the authenticity of the environment. In the perspective of Monica Iorio and Andrea Corsale (2010) Tourism is considered as a potential means for socio-economic development and regeneration of rural areas, in particular those affected by the decline of traditional agrarian activities. Peripheral rural areas are also considered to be repositories of older ways of life and cultures that respond to the postmodern tourists’ quest for authenticity Urry, (2002). Against this background for a sustainable industry to strive and explore the necessary economic impact for local community Tovar and Lockwood, (2008) noted that necessary that social impact studies are a crucial input to tourism planning and decision making. Other researchers have found that increasing attention is being given to the perceived impacts of tourism development Ap and Crompton, (1998). According to the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development OECD (1994), rural tourism is defined as tourism taking place in the countryside. According to the World Tourism Organization, 698 million people traveled to a foreign country in 2000, spending more US$478 billion. International tourism receipts combined with passenger transport currently total more than US$575 billion - making tourism the world’s number one export earner, ahead of automotive products, chemicals, petroleum and food.

**Concept of sustainability**

Sustainability has gained significant global attention and extensively discussed in the literature as a sub-concept of sustainable development Hall, (2008). The diversity of opportunities by the local economy gives special attention to vulnerable and degraded areas Miller and Twining-Ward, (2005) this situation warrants the need to live sustainably. The Stockholm Conference in 1972 on global issues related to the environment was the first time the discussion on the emergence of Sustainability emanated between environmentalism and economic development. It is appropriate to note that it was the Brundtland Report (1987 In Liu, 2003) which brought sustainable development into the global political arena and had a positive effect on governments and non-governmental organisations (Hardy et al, 2002). Sustainable tourism and sustainable tourism development are two terms used interchangeably or at random but have two meanings depending on its applicability. According to Butler (1999), Harris and Leiper (1995) opined that the sustainable tourism concentrates on the life conditions for future generations sustainable tourism should reduce tensions and frictions between the tourism industry, tourists, the
environment and the host communities so that long-term capability and quality of human and natural resources can be maintained (Bramwell and Lane, 1993). Whereas sustainable tourism development is more about management and improved conditions for the people involved in the process, such as the local community. Sustainable tourism primarily focuses on changes and movements (Hall, 2008) this suggests that sustainability “as everyone’s concern”. However, there are divergent opinions on the credibility of sustainability as Butler (1999) argues that the term “sustainability” is meaningless without indicators. Hall, 2008 and, in order to make tourism more sustainable Miller and Twining-Ward (2005) suggest developing indicators as a way to monitor any progress towards sustainability.

**The role of sustainable tourism**
Managing Sustainable tourism is critical for community development both for long term and short term benefit therefore sustainable tourism management strategy should be based on a relationship between host, guest and the environment. Page and Connell, (2006), Wall and Mathieson, 2006; Liburd, (2007). This suggests that to derive maximum economic gains is not to distort the sustainability of the environment. Liburd (2007) aver that cooperation between local community, tourist businesses, tourism development, managers need to be equal to achieve sustainable development. According to Roberts and Hall (2001) and Hall et al. (2004) as cited in M. Iorio, A. Corsale / Journal of Rural Studies 26 (2010) 152–162, the trend in developing countries to support rural tourism is premised on the expected benefits it may provide to local community as highlighted below.

- Diversification and stabilisation of the local economy through employment creation in tourism business;
- Provides supplementary income in farming, craft and service sector;
- Enhance opportunity to realize the economic value of specific, quality-based production of food products, as well as of unused and abandoned buildings;
- Expands social contacts, not limited to tourists sites alone;
- The opportunity to re-evaluate the heritage and its symbols, the environment and the identity.

Evidence in the literature on sustainable tourism suggests that there are divergent views on the concept of sustainability as Swarbrooke (1999) posit that sustainable tourism is not producing a straightforward outcome because sustainability can be interpreted in many ways depending on the contextualisation. However, Gunn (1994:16) noted “that there is no other form of development that has so many far-reaching tentacles as does tourism”. Despite divergent perspective the UNWTO (2004) advocates that sustainable tourism should respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities and ensure viable optimal use of environmental resources. Hall (2008) and UNWTO (2004) adds that sustainable tourism development is a very complex issue which involves local community, tourist products and tourism investors.

**Sustainable tourism: criticism**
Global awareness reveals that the trend of new tourism attracts lots of well-educated and high spending conscious tourists though many destinations will focus on a smaller number of high spending tourists in the future so as to mitigate pressure on the attractions. Elite continuously search for nature based environment to explore in the process it thus improve economic development of
community, however attention must be given to the tourists products in order to ensure its sustainability. Hall and Lew (1998) argues that sustainable tourism appears difficult to interpret and understand, this therefore suggests sustainable tourism can probably never be achieved but remains as an illusion since there are no correct interpretations.

Arguments in the existing literature suggests that Is sustainable tourism for the elite only? Butler (1999:19) is also suspicious about sustainable tourism because he notes that "the key problem is the current inability to define to the satisfaction of all, or even most, of the stakeholders in tourism, exactly what is meant by sustainable tourism". Evidence in the literature suggests that tourism is a positive thing, Krippendorf (1987 In Stabler, 1997) opines that tourism's role is seen as a "potential burden on cultures, economies and environments". However Croall (1995:1 In Stabler, 1997:27) noted negative view of tourism as: "a spectre is haunting our planet: the spectre of tourism". This align with the perspective of Romeril (1989) that sustainable tourism can mean just about anything to anyone because the term is very broad. to harness the potential of sustainable rural tourism despite negative impacts the concept of sustainability central to tourism planning and development is germane Yuksel, Bramwell and Page and Connell (2006).

**Study area**

The emergence of Lagos as a port city originated on a collection of islands, which are contained in the geographical map as present in the various Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Lagos Island, Eti-Osa, Amuwo-Odofin and Apapa. It is imperative to note that the islands are separated by creeks, fringing the southwest mouth of Lagos Lagoon, while protected from the Atlantic Ocean by barrier islands and long sand spits. The increasing population of Lagos and rapid urbanization of city expanded to the west of the lagoon to include areas in the present day Surulere, Ajeromi-Ifelodun Lagos Mainland, and this led to the classification of Lagos into two main areas - the Island, which was the initial city of Lagos, before it expanded into the area known as the Mainland.

Among the few sandy beaches in Lagos by the Antlantic ocean a few are Badagry beach, Eleko Beach, Elegushi, Alpha beach, Bar Beach and Lekki Beach. This study focus on the Badagary beach. The 2006 Census reveals that Badagary has a population of about 241,908 with total area of 170sq mi (441km).
Figure 1: Map of Lagos State, Nigeria showing study Areas as amended from Jim-Saiki et al (2016)

**Concept of sustainable tourism development**

There has been robust academic debate on Sustainable tourism development over time this suggests why there are over 70 different definitions of sustainable development in the literature Steer and Wade-Gery (1993 In Sharpley and Telfer, 2002). The Brundtland Report’s (WCED, 1987:8) captured sustainable development as: “development that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”, which is people centred based on ethical attitude rather than protection of the environment alone but this report hardly mention tourism (France, 1997; Hall, 2008). WTO (2001 In Liu, 2003: 460) research is more specific in its definition as highlighted below:

"STD meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems”.

This paper argues that Agenda 21 – a plan of action for the future, and the Rio Declaration on Environmental Development came in 1992 and were developed on the Brundtland Report’s and Eurostat, 2007; France,(1997) contextualise that the agreements on environmental issues and sustainable development be put to use by various tourism stakeholders in order to minimise environmental costs and maximise the benefits. In spite of the enormous potential of sustainable tourism the WCED (1987:46) suggests that: “that sustainable development is not a fixed state of harmony, but rather a dynamic process of changes which are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. Considering the various arguments in the literature the study concur with the perspective of Lane, (1994); Müller, (1994) In Dymond, (1997) that Sustainable tourism development is often mentioned as having a triangular relationship between host areas, tourists and the tourism industry.

**Economic implication of sustainable rural tourism for local community**

Attention has increased globally towards sustainable rural tourism as most developing countries recognize the enormous potential benefits of tourism development, particularly as social as economic force in reshaping economy of most nations. Therefore exploring economic implication of tourism strategies should consider the need to explore it as a vehicle for foreign exchange earnings and employment generation Wall and Mathieson, (2006); Tosun, 2000 In Liu, (2003). According to Inskeep,(1994) to achieve sustainable rural tourism it requires an understanding of environmental, socio-cultural and economic assessment in order to plan, develop and manage sustainable rural tourism successfully.. It is therefore necessary to consider why sustainable rural tourism is central to economic development and to what extent is the selling point of rural tourism impact on the host community. This support the summation of OECD, (1994), p.15) as it views ‘Rurality is the central and unique selling point in the rural tourism package, however this suggests that rural tourism takes place in rural

To achieve successful outcome through effective synergy long-term perspective and a broad public participation in the decision-making process is crucial in sustainable development Hall, (2008); Wall and Mathieson, (2006). The economic realisation for the local community is dependent on their involvement at all levels of decision making. The challenge in future planning for tourism is a greater effort to incorporate community involvement in the planning process because: “Local residents obviously become part of the tourist product attracting tourists through their culture and hospitality, and consequently the residents, as a community member, is affected by tourism in all its positive and negative manifestations” France, (1997).

To achieve maximum economic benefit from tourism there is a need for total integration from the local resident, tourism investors and government to set up goals and machineries that will enhance economic activity in community that is desirous of deriving benefit from tourism. This suggests that sustainable tourism development requires participation of all relevant stakeholders at all levels UNWTO, (2004) and the need to have the political leadership that will facilitate consensus building and such strategy for sustainable tourism should be a continuous process.

This study argues that sustainable development is a complex issue and entails universal challenges because development theories and specific models may differ from country to country or region to region because of their own unique environments and cultures Sofield, (2003). However environments depict the model of Sustainable approach towards development in deriving economic benefits.

**Methodology**

Lagos State being the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria still portrays several rural areas that have great potentials of rural tourism. Attempt by successive government to develop tourism has yield some level of positive results but adequate attention has not been given to sustainable tourism development.

**Findings and discussion**

Table 5 reveals that there are two questions where all 12 respondents agree 100%:

1. That Badagary beach area is highly dependent on tourism contribution to the local economy and
2. That it is important to monitor and keep strategies and development plans up to date in order to maintain a quality destination.
Table 1: Impacts of tourists on the local economy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts – Economic</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>NANDA</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The tourists encourage to patronise locally produced souvenirs in order to avoid economic leakage in Badagary Beach area</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Badagary beach area is an area with a high percentage of seasonal opening hours</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage seasonal workers to retain the money within the local economy to avoid leakages</td>
<td>15% 70% 15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create linkages between local major business operators and local suppliers to avoid economic leakage</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a wide difference between the number of tourists in the peak and low season</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Badagary beach area is highly dependent on tourism’s contribution to the local economy</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents move away from the Badagary beach area to larger towns for jobs and further education</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important for the local economy to increase the number of local employees, to avoid leakage</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5% 5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage local residents to apply for tourism jobs at all levels instead of letting the higher skilled jobs go to non-locals</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an imbalance between tourism- wages in Badagary beach area and in larger cities and the capital area of Lagos</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to monitor and update strategies and development plans to maintain a high quality sustainable destination</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 1 all respondents either strongly agree or agree that it is important to encourage tourists to buy locally produced food and products and create a link between front-line businesses and local suppliers in order to avoid financial leakage.

Table 2: Impacts of tourism on quality of life for local residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts – Socio-cultural</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>NANDA</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men and women should have the same rights and opportunity to be considered for tourism jobs whether it is high or low skilled jobs</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential pressure on community and natural resources based on tourism volume and seasonality</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local level of satisfaction with tourists, whether they would like to see more, less or about the same level in the future</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to educate and give information about tourism trends and create awareness in order for locals to welcome tourists and see the benefit of tourism</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to involve the community in the decision making process and planning process in order for them to feel ownership</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to have qualified and skilled people to serve tourists as destinations face high competition from other destinations</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage to local settlement create attractive conditions for newcomers</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Destinations can have interesting attractions, great weather, five-star accommodations, and great amenities, but if there are no qualified and skilled employees to provide the services and to operate the facilities, tourism at the destination will not be sustainable, (UNWTO, 2004). The respondents stress the importance of communication with local residents in the decision making process. Education and communication with public groups and stakeholders are mentioned as some of the key issues in Pastille’s (2002) report. The only statement with which most respondents disagree is that they do not think that
there is any potential pressure on the community and on natural resources because the volume of tourism and seasonality

**Conclusion**

The study examined the literature on sustainability and sustainable tourism development, research indicates that sustainability is a complex concept under economic, socio-cultural and environmental categories. However ensuring sustainable development remains critical for tourism panners and policy makers.

**Recommendation**

The study recommends that Nigeria as a developing country should explore the potentials of sustainable rural tourism as a way to boost the economy and also ensure the sustainability of the tourists products.
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