Original Research Article

Impact of Destination Image on Heritage Tourism in Nigeria: A Multivariate Analysis

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Abstract

The primary and manufacturing sectors of the economy's restrictions and bottlenecks encourage emerging nations to look for alternate sources of income. Different tourism-based centers in Nigeria are being considered in this regard. Nigeria has the capacity to turn to tourism as its main revenue source. There are several tourist sites and a sizeable domestic tourist industry, but there isn't any political will to carry out and maintain the policies and activities related to tourism that could result in financial rewards for the country's population. This study examines the effects of destination image on specific cultural landmarks and parks in Nigeria. Five significant tourist destinations were chosen using a purposeful sampling strategy, and respondents who visited the locations were given questionnaires. The regression model's R^2 and adjusted R^2 both show that the significant factors can forecast the importance of customer satisfaction. The outcome demonstrates that some trivial variables have minimal impact on the area's development. In order to improve and raise more money, the federal government must focus on those specific areas. Diversifying efforts from micro to mega levels is necessary.

Keywords: Multivariate Analysis, Waterfalls, Customer satisfaction. Heritage culture CL: Z32

INTRODUCTION

Up until around three decades ago, the Nigerian economy was mostly dependent on cash commodities like cocoa, palm oil, and groundnuts. Since crude oil was discovered, it has received all economic attention, at the expense of and to the disadvantage of all other economic sectors that were supporting the nation before oil was discovered. The administration recognized the need for economic diversification as the well-known and highly reported oil boom experience began to fade and the tide began to turn negatively against the nation's economy. Therefore, increasing the role and contribution of tourism has drawn institutions to economic growth and development in the quest for solutions to the ongoing balance of payment deficits and global development.

Tourism is an important economic sector, given its prominent role in nation-building, for instance, in terms of economic growth and human understanding of any given nation. In Nigeria, the main source of growth since 1970 has been the petroleum sector, as mentioned earlier, and the government has emphasized the promotion of other exports. Because of this, tourism, an invisible trade item, should be vigorously developed in the country to end undue reliance on earnings from the oil sector.

It has been fashionable among developing countries to emphasize the economy's manufacturing sector to reduce dependence on the primary sectors. Many third-world counties regard industrialization as the cornerstone of their economic development process. They see it together with agricultural and structural change. Most of these countries export earnings come mainly from the export of primary commodities, the prices of which are either stagnating or falling rapidly. Similarly, developing countries do not fare much better when they try to boost their trade balance by attempting to export manufactured goods alongside their primary exports for many apparent reasons. Because of these constraints and bottlenecks of the primary and manufacturing sectors of the economy, it is advocated that developing countries should seek alternative sources of revenue. In this regard, different tourism-based centres are being considered in Nigeria. The question is, how far are these tourism centres developed?

The hospitality industry is predicted to expand at the fastest rate in Nigeria, where tourism contributed 2.8% of GDP in 2019-2020 compared to 4.5% in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a decrease in this number in 2020, but it rose to 3.6% in 2021 (Statista.com). Nigeria's tourism industry has a lot of potential and the variety of tourism assets to become a behemoth in the future, given the size of the nation and its expanding population. Nigeria has a thriving tourism industry because it has the necessary artistic qualities to appeal to tourists. The country's tourist attractions likely span from natural to man-made and cultural magnetism, but there are management, upgrading, and sustaining infrastructure deficiencies that prevent easy access and development. These tourism potentials are motionless in their natural form awaiting interested investors. Tourism today is a large market that has added significantly to the world economy. It may not be out of place to say that a country like Nigeria has yet to maximize the vast opportunities in tourism development. As earlier stated, Nigeria is mainly practising a mono-economy, and as such, her major source of revenue comes mainly from crude oil.

Accordingly, the tourist industry is arguably the only service sector that offers specific and qualified trading prospects for all nations, independent of level of development (Benavides, 2001). Not only that, but the industry also offers benefits that are unevenly distributed, and certain developing nations' social and economic stability is threatened by tourism's environmental sustainability. For many developing nations, tourism has been a significant contributor to economic development and diversification. Over 170 million individuals in the nation should have been able to create jobs, earn income, and raise money through the tourism business. When wealthy nations already make up a larger percentage of global tourism, the tourist sector presents significant prospects for developing nations (Ayeni & Ebohon 2012).

One of the best possible alternative strategies in which many local areas can be promoted is through tourism Murthy (2008). The tourism industry will provide:
• More job opportunities.
• More opening out in both public and private investment.
• Provision of infrastructural facilities.
• A tendency for environmental sustainability.
• Economic improvement.

According to Beech & Chadwick (2006), an increase in a country's real output per capita income led to economic development generally measured by references to changes in the gross national product (GNP) over an economic period. Due to its rapid growth and sustainability in the world economy, tourism has been considered a main factor in the service economy (Cooper et al. 2005). However, when maintaining and utilizing economic or productive resources, economic sustainability can be attained by keeping them intact for continuity. For a sustained economy, there should not be overused or used economic resources without replacement (Goodland 2014). Murtalai Alamai (2019) observes that Nigeria can potentially increase its revenue through tourism. The citizens cannot gain economically from the great domestic tourist market with various enticements, which should bring more revenue. Because the country has no political will to execute and sustain it because of tourism policies and actions.

Nigeria is one of the world's top oil producers and is well renowned for exporting petroleum. Crude oil is moreover the mainstay of the nation. However, in order to participate in the trial, the government intended to diversify its economy away from crude oil extraction in order to increase employment possibilities and produce more foreign revenue (Ayeni & Ebohon 2012).

Destination image and its various elements are essential factors supporting heritage tourism development. One of the key factors of a successful cultural heritage /park is its positive image or customer satisfaction. In any city, one of the most important objects of tourists is substantial and insubstantial cultural heritage [Hall,1990; Good B, 2000; Chabbra,2010]. It is a vital asset in creating the image of an attractive destination [Frost et al. 2006]. Based on various methods widely discussed in the literature, the content requires the research that creates the image. Customer satisfaction has been the most significant factor upon which the destination image's overall performance is based. Due to the complex nature and impact on the tourist decisionmaking process, destination images are based on two criteria: selection and future behaviours. [Castro et al.,2007]. It is established in the literature that destination image influences tourist satisfaction positively [Abubark &Makando,2014; Devesa et al., 2015; Wang &Hsu 2010]

Overview of Nigeria's Tourism Industry
Several tourist attractions in Nigeria, each unique scenery and structure, had different historical backgrounds. This paper uses the purposive sampling method to select five tourist attraction centres in Nigeria: namely: Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls, Kainiji National Park, Obudu Mountain resort, Okomu National Park, Osun Osogbo.

Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls

Olumirin Waterfalls, located in Erin-Ijesha, are the Erin-Ijesha Waterfalls. In Nigeria's Osun State, the Oriade local government serves as a tourist hotspot. It was discovered in 1140 AD by one of the daughters of Oduduwa, the Yoruba people's founding father. The Nation (journal) claims, however, that "hunters discovered the Olumirin waterfall in 1140 AD." People traveled from all over the country to drink water from the waterfall because they thought it may cure them and had healing abilities. Given its steep admission fee and picturesque surroundings, the Erin Ijesha Waterfalls are also a popular excursion destination for schools in the area, particularly for first- and last-year students of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

Kainji National Park

In 1978, Niger and Kwara States in Nigeria established Kainji National Park. Its perimeter is roughly 341 km2 (2,062 sq m). The Zugurma Game Reserve to the east, the Borgu Game Reserve to the west, and a portion of the Kainji Lake, where fishing is restricted, are all included in the park. The protected region has been referred to as Yankari National Park and a Lion Conservation Unit since 2005. The Federal National Park Service (FNPS), which manages the park and receives direct government financing, is owned by the state and is in charge of it.

Obudu Mountain Resort

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Okomu National Park

About 60 kilometres to the northwest of Benin City is the Okomu National Park. The previous name of the place was Okomu Wildlife Sanctuary. The forest Reserve is located in Nigeria's Edo State's Ovia South-West Local Government Area. Within 1,082 square kilometers, there is a forest block there. It is a compact, dense forest with enclosed areas that provide habitat for a number of threatened species. Continues to get smaller as communities encroach on it; it is presently less than one-third of its original size. Due of logging concessions near the park, as a result of their involvement in plantation expansion, strong corporations pose a threat to it. The park preserves a portion of the lowland forests that formerly stretched 50–100 km across Nigeria from the Niger River in the west to the Dahomey Gap in Benin. The forest was divided from the coast in the south and southeast by mangrove and swamp woods, merging to the north into the Guinean Forest-Savanna Mosaic ecoregion.

Osun-Osogbo

The Osun-Osogbo Grove is one of the last remaining sacred forests that, before to widespread urbanization, typically bordered most Yoruba cities' boundaries. Just outside of Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria, the Sacred Grove is a sacred woodland that may be located along the banks of the Osun river. The Sacred Grove's importance to the world and cultural value led to its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005. The Osun-Osogbo forest was desecrated in the 1950s: shrines were neglected, and priests left the forest as traditional obligations and punishments diminished. Before an Austrian named Susanne Wenger arrived and put an end to the misuse in the grove, most prohibited activities like fishing, hunting, and tree-felling were common. "Wenger formed the New Sacred Art movement" to fight land speculators, fend off poachers, guard shrines, and start the protracted process of bringing the sacred place back to life by reestablishing it as the holy heart of Osogbo with the help of the Ataoja (the king of Osogbo) and the locals.

Framework for Analysis and Research Methodology

This research focuses mainly on the primary data using a questionnaire, and a few desks works. This research answers how Nigeria's tourism industry can be improved and sustained under the groaning economy using destination image. Customer satisfaction has been the most significant factor upon which the destination image's overall performance is based. It is represented by Y. Based on the study done by other researchers, other elements are taken into account, such as the destination environment, heritage resources and attractions, entertainment and leisure activities, destination culture, and pricing and value. Environmental factors allow travellers to achieve their personal objectives. As a result, visitors become active, assume control over circumstances, and experience flow (Wu & Liang, 2011; Wöran & Arnberger, 2012).

Because each traveler constructs their own notion of their cultural membership, cultural identification is significant (Phinney, 2005). Individual travelers can interact with others and create their own sense of self through their cultural identities. An individual is more devoted to the values and norms of the group when their sense of cultural identification is greater (Alden et al., 2010). The connection between cultural identification and behavioral intention has been supported by numerous studies. To provide the best experience for visitors, tourism depends on a number of variables.

The things that greatly impact the tourism experience are leisure and entertainment. Hugues and Allen (2008) and Kirillova et al. (2014) see relaxation, escapism, enjoyment, and joy as the foundation of entertainment and leisure. The following variables are represented on the model as a result of the above:

From the above, the following variables take representation on the model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5$$

X_1 = Heritage resources and attraction
X_2 = Destination Environment
X_3 = Entertainment and Leisure
X_4 = Destination Culture
X_5 = Price and Value
Y= Customer satisfaction

Moreover, β_0 *is the constant and* $\beta_1 \ldots \beta_5$ are the parameters of variables of interest.

Data
The data for the analysis was collected using a questionnaire administered for six months in every five locations specified above. One hundred questionnaires were extracted from all the selected areas. Unattended questionnaires were discarded. The paper adopted both descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate the questionnaires. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were conducted with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 28.

Results of the Analysis
Demographic Characteristics-Descriptive analysis
(i). Gender:

S/No.	Tourism Location	Male	Female
1	Erin-Ijesha waterfalls	64	34
2	Kainji National Park	58	42
3	Obudu Mountain Resort	66	34
4	Okomu National Park	72	28
5	Osun Osogbo	48	52

Table 2: Age of the Tourists

Location/Age	18 - 25	26 – 35	36 - 45	46 -55	56 – 65	Above 65
Erin-Ijesha waterfalls	28	24	17	10	7	14
Kainji National Park	23	19	34	8	5	11
Obudu Mountain Resort	32	25	28	7	7	1
Okomu National Park	29	37	16	8	5	8
Osun Osogbo	21	37	32	5	3	2

Table 3: Marital status of Tourists

Location/Marital status	Married	Unmarried	Widowed
Erin-Ijesha waterfalls	38	54	8
Kainji National Park	47	38	15
Obudu Mountain Resort	51	45	4
Okomu National Park	44	54	2
Osun Osogbo	69	29	2

Table 4: Occupation of the Tourists

Location/Income level	Employed	Self-employed	Unemployed	Retired	Student
Erin-Ijesha waterfalls	46	26	12	12	4
Kainji National Park	32	34	13	19	2
Obudu Mountain Resort	41	29	9	5	16
Okomu National Park	45	37	4	11	3
Osun Osogbo	51	37	5	4	3

Table 5: Purpose of Trip

Location/Purpose	Business	Govt. Officials	Visit family/friends	Sightseeing	Vacation
Erin-Ijesha waterfalls	13	3	15	33	36
Kainji National Park	15	7	18	26	34
Obudu Mountain Resort	16	6	3	24	51
Okomu National Park	11	12	13	30	37
Osun Osogbo	17	5	14	26	41

There are more females than males in all the selected areas except Osun Osogbo, which historically has some blessings for women only. The respondents aged 26- 35 visited the area of the research report more frequently than other ages in the study. Table 3 shows that more married people visit the tourist centre except for the parks. Most of the people who visited were doing one work or the other. In most cases, most of the tourists are employed. Table 5 shows that people who visited the study area were either on vacation or sightseeing, representing 58% of the respondents.

Table 6: Result of Regression Analysis

Location/Variable	Constant (β_0)	Heritage Res.(β_1)	Destination environment (β_2)	Entertainment & Leisure (β_3)	Destination Culture (β_4)	Price and Value (β_5)
Erin-Ijesha waterfalls	3.331 (0.932)**	0.290 (0.230)**	0.287 (0.252)*	0.388 (.294)*	-0.114 (0.257)	-0.807 (0.252)
Kainji National Park	2.670 (1.040)**	0.434 (0.197)**	-0.195 (0.241)	-0.164 (0.310)	-0.144 (0.441)	-1.177 (0.314)
Obudu Mountain Resort	3.153 (1.268)**	0.068 (0.276)	0.255 (0.123)	-0.619 (1.070)	-1.315 (0.276)	0.276 (0.284)*
Okomu National Park	3.540 (1.047)**	0.187 (0.262)	0.417 (0.305)*	0.479 (0.622)	0.915 (0.026)	0.225 (0.275)
Osun Osogbo	3.395 (0.929)**	0.217 (0.106)*	0.287 (0.049)**	0.382 (0.296)*	0.094 (0.037)	0.409 (0.311)*

The figures in the bracket represent the variance, while the ones in the parenthesis are significant levels. (*= significant, ** highly significant)

(i). Erin-Ijesha Water Falls: The heritage resources are significant according to table 6; this motivates tourists to visit the place. The clean and neat environment attracts tourists to the area as it is significant with 0.287 and a standard variance of 0.252. The entertainment and leisure activity of the place is crucial as it has much entertainment with 0.388 and a standard variance of 0.294. The destination culture is not significant as it does not have distinct architectures. Also, the tourist does not attach much importance to transportation fare and accommodation price; hence it does not appear significant, according to table 6.

(ii). Kainji National Park: The undisturbed canopy attracts tourists and makes the heritage resources significant. All other variables are insignificant, for example, price value: the tourist claimed that accommodation is high, including transportation fare.

(iii). Obudu Mountain Resort: Most of the variables under the Obudu mountain resort are not significant. The major reason why Price value is significant needs to be looked into, though; the high price and performance ratio is very significant. The tourist attracts more value to the transportation fare and accommodation price.

(iv). Okomu National Park: Only the destination environment is significant with 0.417 and a standard variance of 0.305; that means the clean environment, safe environment, and agreeable climate attract tourists. All other variables are not so significant.

(v). Osun Osogbo: The heritage resources: traditional art, the scripted grove, and the shrine attracted tourists to visit the place. It is the significance with 0.217 and a standard variance of 0.106. The destination environment is highly significant; the site had a safe environment, agreeable climate, clean and neat environment, and friendly host community. It has a significant value of 0.049 with a standard variance of 0.296.

Only destination culture is not significant, possibly due to the different religions surrounding the place. The strength of the relationships in the model was high, indicating a good measure of the strength of relationships between the model of this study and the dependent variable. The R^2 and the adjusted R^2 in the regression model also indicate that the significant variables can predict the value of customer satisfaction. According to Ekinci and Hosany (2006) findings, these variables

provide evidence for the predictive validity of customer satisfaction by heritage. These variables have a place as they had contributed to making visitors comfortable during their visits and, by so doing, significantly impacted the overall destination image of the area. Customer satisfaction generally had a direct, significant, beneficial impact on heritage resources and attractions, according to the inferential statistical analysis. The study came to the conclusion that some factors have a significant role in influencing how devoted travelers are to a particular travel destination.

Limitations of the study
Since only five tourist destinations were chosen out of around twenty, the study's geographic range can be expanded to accommodate greater coverage.

CONCLUSION

For Nigeria, the research of destination image in heritage tourism is significant because it examines a topic that hasn't gotten much attention. The preferred and most promising characteristics and variables that can be addressed in many domains have been identified by the current investigation. According to the analysis, a few minor factors have minimal impact on how the region develops. To raise more money, the federal government must focus on these areas that can be improved. The community where the centers or attractions are located, including Nigeria, can make more money from tourism. It can lower unemployment and lessen poverty. Actions from micro to macro scale, such as planning for product creation and marketing, policy, and investment, all require diversification.

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