

## MARKETING ETHICS AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

OTOBO Perearau<sup>1</sup>INYANGA John I. N.<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Department of Business Education

Isaac Jasper Boro College of Education Sagbama, Bayelsa State

<sup>2</sup>Department of Business Education, Imo State University Owerri, Imo State

### Abstract

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing industries. Its benefits include employment opportunities, cultural integration through bridging language and religious barriers, and socio-economic development accruing to the tourist sites or destinations with environmental sustainability. Unfortunately, these benefits of tourism do not come to Nigeria as a country, and to tourism organizations and other stakeholders as expected and in spite of the many existing and potential tourism centres and festivals in the country. These is due to insecurity, political instability, scarcity of essential social infrastructure like energy or electricity supplies. Nevertheless, ethical marketing by tourism institutions is advanced as a potent leverage for tourism development in Nigeria. The paper argue that ethical marketing practices by management, staff and other stakeholders in tourism business could engender sustainable tourism development for all concerned in the country.

**Keywords:** Marketing ethics, sustainable development, tourism, tourism business

### Introduction

Tourism is one of the fastest growth industries in the world and the greatest earner of foreign exchange in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Okoli, 2006). There has been increased attention to tourism because it is one of the fastest growing industries of the world and a key foreign exchange earner (Okoli, 2006); it provide economic growth opportunities for developing countries (Akpoigbe & Nwulu, 2012) and has the potential to create jobs and foster understanding among peoples and cultures. According to Inyanga and Ukabuilu (2017), as a luxury and voluntary activity, tourism plays much roles in a nation's economic growth and development in the areas of employment opportunities, foreign exchange earnings, promotion of a nation's image internationally and reduction in inflation and other social vices.

Page (2009), sees tourism as the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment, for leisure, business, and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. In the view of Kotler et al. (2006), tourism is a stay at one or more nights away from home for holidays, visits to friends or relatives, business conferences, or any other purpose except such things as boarding, education, or semi-permanent employment. To Wall and Mathieson (2006), tourism encompass temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created and services provided to cater to their needs.

A tourist is thus one that travels to a place outside their usual environment for leisure or business (Wall & Mathieson, 2006; Cohen, 1974). A tourist could be an international tourist (one traveling across national boundaries and who remain away from home for at least twenty-four hours) or a domestic tourist (one who traveling within their own country but who remain away from home in excess of twenty-four hours). What therefore differentiate international from domestic tourism and tourist are distance, purpose of travel and length of stay.

Whether international or domestic, tourism is an important factor in a nation's socio-political and economic development. It is important to both the tourists themselves and the tourist destinations. Its impacts are both positive and negative and as such tourism requires proper planning, management and control. Sindiga (1999, as cited in Akpoigbe & Nwulu, 2012) identify that tourism impact national economies by providing jobs in the areas of tour guiding, nature and cultural interpretation, game viewing, travel and transport services, food, beverage and alcohol service and accommodation. Other tourism related employments include entertainment, handcraft and indirectly in agriculture.

Tourism also supports other areas such as banking and construction. Among the objectives of tourism offered by Kehinde (1993) are to increase inflow of foreign exchange through international tourism promotion, encourage tourism-based enterprise development, accelerate rural-urban integration, and foster socio-cultural unity among various groups. Other objectives are to promote and encourage active private sector participation, preserve cultural heritage and historical movement and generate employment and provide direct socio-cultural support (Echeta & Egwim, 2012).

The contribution of tourism to the economy of nations like the United States of America, France, Spain, Italy, China, South Africa, Tunisia, Egypt, Kenya, and Morocco has been profound. Inyanga and Ukabuilu (2017) notes that tourism is a key sources of revenue and scarce foreign currencies, employer of labour and improvement in people's living standards and quality of life of these nations. In the view of Ifegbo (2008), tourism can play similar roles in Nigeria, and also create employment in the areas of construction of tourist infrastructure, maintenance of tourist services, agricultural supplies, transportation supplies, recreation, retailing, etc. Currently, international tourism supports over one hundred thousand direct jobs and about two times as many indirect jobs in Nigeria (Odotola, 2023).

### **Nigeria's Tourism Potentials**

The tourism industry can play more significant roles in in Nigeria's socio-cultural, economic and political development. This will require proper administration of tourism destinations and activities. Aiyamenkhue (2010) states that Nigeria has enormous tourism potential, which if developed, could herald large revenues. This is because Nigeria offers a wide variety of tourist attractions such as extended river and ocean beaches ideal for swimming and other water sports, unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls, new rapidly growing cities and climatic conditions in some parts particularly conducive for holidaying. Other attractions include traditional ways of life preserved in local customs, rich and varied handicrafts and other colour products depicting or illustrative of native arts and lifestyle, and the authentic unsophisticated friendly attitude of many in the Nigerian population (Agina, 2012).

Earlier, Nwizu (2003) identified strengths of Nigeria's tourism environment and resources, including good climate in many locations of interest, historical and cultural richness, natural and scenic beauty and high percentage of professional scholars to share their knowledge with tourists. Taking Cross River State as example, among the tourist centers that exist up to date are the Amazing Grace Marina at Freedom Bay, the Kwa Rapids, Tinapa (Africa's Premier Business Resort), Agbokim Water Falls and the Obudu Ranch Resort, Monoliths of Alok and Nkarasei, Mary Slessor's residence in Odukpani among many others. In other state, we have the National

War Museum in Umuahia (Abia State), Ogbunike Cave (Anambra State), Jankari National Park (Bauchi), Oguta Lake Hotel and Zoological Garden Nekede (Imo State), and Arugungu Fishing Festival (Kebbi State) (Inyanga & Ifegbo, 2007).

There are also many cultural festivals in Nigeria that has great tourism potentials, and which when properly organized and managed, will attract huge financial revenues. Prominent among them are Uzoiyi Festival, Umuoji (Anambra State), Igodo Festival, Abor (Enugu State), Okazi Festival, Emii (Imo State), Ikeji Festival, Arondizogu (Imo State), Bicycle Festival, Isiokpo (Rivers State), Ezumezu Festival, Igbere (Abia State), Ofala Festival, Onitsha (Anambra State), and Ikeji Festival, Arochukwu (Abia State). Others are Iriji Festival, Mbaise (Imo State), Ineh Festival, Ogwashi (Delta State), Nnefioha Festival, Noyo (Ebonyi State), Ikeji Festival, Awgu (Enugu State), Nwafor Ogidi Festival, Ogidi (Anambra State), Ipia Agba Festival, Enugu Ukwu (Anambra State), Ede Aro Festival, Abagana (Anambra State), Afia Olu Festival, Nnewi (Anambra State), Ineh Festival, Asaba (Delta State), Okorosha Festival, Mbieri, (Imo State), Aji festival, Isoba Okata (Cross River State), Ogene Festival, Oguta (Imo State), Ojiji Festival, Izzi (Ebonyi State), Nchaka Festival, Ogba (Rivers State), Ekpe Festival, Umuahia (Abia State), Igwa Nshi Festival, Eke (Enugu State), Odo Festival, Ngwo (Enugu State), and Igwaji Festival Egbema (Imo and Rivers States), etc.

However, the low level of tourism development has hindered the realization of the full potential tourism destinations, centres and activities in Nigeria. Nwizu (2003) observe that only 0.2% of world tourist traffic was attracted by the sector and the rate has not significantly changed positively or up to date, hence contributes very little (about 2.8%) to employment (Agina, 2017).

Factors that contribute to low development or high decline in tourism development in Nigeria includes social vices like fraud (419), corruption, kidnapping, armed robbery and incessant killings in some parts of the country like the Boko Haram disturbances in the North-Eastern parts, banditry in the North West, and herdsmen attacks in almost every state and community in the country. Political instability, dwindling economy, poverty and scarcity of tourism promotion and supporting infrastructure are additional factors. Others are scarcity of trained manpower for tourism related services, high cost of travelling within the country, communication barriers in most rural parts of the country, domestic, religious and communal disturbances and difficulties in the acquisition of Nigerian passports, and certain traditions in some parts of the country that do not support tourism (Inyanga & Ukabuilu 2017).

### **Tourism Marketing: Panacea for Tourism Development in Nigeria**

The litany of definitions of marketing notwithstanding, marketing is taken here as a social and managerial process by which individuals and groups create and exchange value with others (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). Tourism is a service-oriented business/marketing activity, as it possesses the features of services which include intangibility, perishability, inseparability, heterogeneity and simultaneous production and consumption (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007). Thus, tourism development also require ethical conduct on the part of tourism service providers.

Tourism marketing involves the application of marketing principles to satisfy the needs, wants, tastes, preferences and expectations of tourists and meet the objectives of tourism organizations. Applying marketing principle in tourism business means that satisfying tourists is considered the key to meeting corporate and marketing objectives. This is where relationship marketing gains relevance in tourism business. Relationship marketing involves creating, maintaining and

enhancing strong relationships with customers and other stakeholders. This is important because it is costlier to attract new customers than to retain existing ones; and to succeed in this venture means that tourism organizations should be ethical, hence ethical marketing in tourism business.

### **Ethical Marketing and Tourism Business**

Business/marketing ethics is an important issue in tourism because the success or failure of a business in the tourism sector frequently depend on the ethical dimension of the conducts. In business and the wider society, there are many people whose minds are induced to avoid evil and to do good more easily by example than by prohibition and precepts (Bartlett, 2000) and this concept brings ethics into this exercise. Babatunde and Adebisi (2012) observe that ethical behavior occur in business in the same way as it does in politics or sports. Ethics pervades every corner of business. When sales people promise customers of products by certain date, they are making ethical statements. When managers treat employees with respect and consideration, they are acting ethically. Every employee in every area of a business is an ethical ambassador of the business. However the ethical nature of the business resides in the heart of the business. Business decisions and behaviours may be judged ethical or unethical depending on whether the decisions and acts promote or threaten the value and standards of individuals and societies in which the human firm operates (Ojo, 2008).

According to Adewumi (1998), ethics is the moral principle that influence a person's behavior. It represents a set of moral principles, rules of conduct or values (Obara & Uwooma, 2012; Hayes, 1999); and is concerned with a set of moral principles that govern human actions with respect to the rightness or wrongness of actions and the goodness and badness of motives and ends ((Nwagboso, 2005; Random House Webster's College Dictionary, 1999).

Ethics is very important in tourism due to controversies that may surround the rightness and wrongness or legality and illegality of actions. While the legality of a conduct may be defined by criminal or civil law (Fisher & Levell (2003), its rightness is a questions of ethics. Ethical issues in tourism when not properly handled, may pose serious challenges. Business ethics are the rules and principles that determine what is right and wrong in a business dealing (Akpanabia, 2022; Gbandi & Oseyomon, 2014). It involves how businesses incorporate honesty, trust, respect and fairness into their policies, practices and decision making (Hellriegel et al., 2008).

In marketing context, Doyle (2011) sees ethics as the basis and standards upon which the practice of marketing is conducted. It is the principles and standards that define acceptable marketing conduct as determined by the public, government regulations, private - interest groups, consumers, industry and the organization itself (Dibb *et al*, 2012). Marketing practice in tourism according to Ogbuji et al. (2019) must comply with certain standards, including disclosure of all substantial risks associated with product; avoidance of false or misleading advertising, not manipulating product availability to exploit consumers; not engaging in price fixing, etc.

### **Marketing Ethics and Sustainable Tourism Development in Nigeria**

It is not enough that tourism organizations should offer good service to customers, price their services fairly, promote and distribute them to the target markets to make profits but they should be highly ethical in policy making and practice (Inyanga & Anyanwu, 2006). Tourism development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs for economic well-being and environmental quality is possible. It

only require that stakeholders in the tourism sector to adopt and practice the ethical principles of honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, loyalty, fairness, concern and respect for others, commitment to excellence, leadership, reputation and moral, and accountability (Jaszay & Dunk, 2006). In dealing with customers, management and staff should be fair, no one in the organization (the position notwithstanding) should force others into unethical conduct or practices.

Sustainable tourism development also challenge management of tourism organizations to imbibe the habit of communicating with employees frankly, openly, and honestly. Only ethical products should be produced and, and tourist organizations should be socially responsible to their host communities in particular and other stakeholders. They should maintain good and efficient public relations and sponsorships and active supports of good causes, not because of expected profits but for the benefits of all concerned. In addition they should be green in nature through green and environmental marketing to avoid unnecessary environmentalism, as well as respecting the rights of consumers (rights to safety, to be heard, return, and right to choose among alternatives) in order to avoid consumerism with its consequences on the tourism organizations.

## References

- Adewumi, W. (1998). Ethics in professional practices in Nigeria, *Association of Professional Bodies in Nigeria*.
- Aqina, E. K. (2017, May 31). Tourism marketing and economic growth of Nigeria, Seychelles and South Africa. Proceedings of 1st Academic Conference of Department of Marketing, Rivers State University: Re-inventing the wheel of nigeria's economic growth through marketing: Where are we now?
- Akpanabia, N. H. (2022). *Business ethics and social responsibility: A practical approach*. Zubic Infinity Concept.
- Akpoigbe, O. E., & Nwulu, C. S. (2017). Tourism marketing as an emerging concern in developing economics, *Journal of Business and Economic Research*, 7(1), 31-37.
- Babatunde, B. O., & Adebis, A. O. (2012). Business ethics and social responsibility: The role of individuals and managers in building sustainable organizational image. *Journal of Management and Entrepreneurial Studies*, 1(1&2), 96-106.
- Bartleft, R. (2000). *England under the Norman and Angerlin Kings, 1075 – 1225*. Vaerendon Press.
- Cohen, E. (1974). Who is a tourist? A conceptual clarification, *Sociological Review*, 22, 527-553.
- Dibb, S., Simkin, L., Pride, W. M., & Ferrell, O. C. (2012). *Marketing concepts and strategies (6th edition)*. Cengage Learning EMEA.
- Doyle, C. (2011). *Dictionary of marketing*. Oxford University Press.
- Echeta, S. O., & Egwim, A. I. (2012). Cultural and historical attraction and their potential for tourism development: A case of Ohaji/Egbema LGA of Imo State. *The Enterprise: International Research Journal of Development*, 13(12), 72-84.
- Fisher, C., & Lovell, A. (2003). *Business ethics and values*. Prentice Hall Financial Times.
- Ghand, K., & Osyomon, L. (2014). *Ethical theory and practice (2nd edition)*. Oxford University Press.
- Hayes, R. (1999). *Principles of auditing: An international perspective*, McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.

- Hellriegel, D., Jackson, S. E., Slocum, J., & Oosthuizen, T. (2008). *Management (3rd edition)*. Poronto Publications.
- Ifegbo, L. I. (2008, November, 19th -22nd). Tourism and hospitality industry as a tool for job creation and poverty alleviation. Proceedings of the 8th National Conference on crisis in the Nigerian Economy: Crisis in the Nigerian Economy: The Way Forward.
- Inyanga, J. I. N., & Anyanwu, A. (2006). *Marketing and society*. Avan Global Publications.
- Inyanga, J. I. N., & Ukabuilu, E. (2017). Non-traditional marketing and sustainable tourism development in Nigeria. *The Social Educator*, 3(2), 43-53.
- Jaszay, C. & Dunk, P. (2006). *Ethical decision making in the hospitality industry*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kehinde, E. O. (1993). Towards evolving a variable concept of tourism in B. A. Choker (Ed.) *Environment and tourism in Nigeria*. National Library of Nigeria.
- Kotler, P., Bowen, J. T., & Makens, J. C. (2006). *Marketing for hospitality and tourism (4th edition)*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2004). *Principles of marketing (10th edition)*. Prentice Hall of India Private Ltd.
- Lovelock, C.; & Wirtz, J. (2007). *Services marketing: People, technology, strategy (6th edition)*. Pearson Education Inc.
- Nwagboso, J. (2008). *Professional ethics, skills and standards*. Inspirational Media.
- Obara, L. C. & Uwaoma, I. (2012). Ethical concept, professional judgment and financial reporting in Nigeria, *Reiko International Journal of Business and Finance*, 4(3), 48-62.
- Odutola, S. A. (2023, March, 7). Tourism industry in Nigeria. *The Guardian*.
- Ogbuji, C. N., Onuoha, A. O., & Azugama, M. (2019). Marketing ethics and society: An Introduction, in A. D. Nkamnebe & A. V. Anyanwu, (Eds). *Marketing ethics and social responsibility: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ogwo Ekeoma Ogwo*. SCOA Heritage Nigeria Ltd.
- Okoli, O. (2006). Culture and tourism in Nigeria: Integrating mutualism and synergy with European Development Strategy. *Journal of Women Academics*, 1(1), 25-34.
- Osugwu, L. (2004). Unethical marketing practices in Nigerian organizations. *Nigerian Journal of Marketing*, 5(1).
- Page, S. (2009). *Tourism management (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Elsevier Publishers.
- Random House Webster's College dictionary (1999). Random House.