



## **Hospitality and Tourism Management Education Versus Employment in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Hospitality and tourism [HT] are perceived all over the world including Nigeria to meet certain needs. This short paper reveals hospitality and tourism management education and expected knowledge and skills for hospitality and tourism management [HTM] employment and career in the Nigerian context, thereby, showcasing HT potentials in the country to the world.

### **Key Words**

Hospitality and tourism perception, Hospitality and tourism management education, hospitality and tourism management employment, Nigeria

### **Introduction**

People have been embarking on vacation or holiday for more than one million years ago and the activities during such trips have been identified with tourism including hospitality (Agomoh, Eze & Nwokoro, 2019). Such movement are classified and identified in a destination as a product with many product lines of tangible and intangible socio-cultural entity in a particular geographical area of tourism destination (Abiola-Oke & Aina, 2020; Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019). However, countries of the world including Nigeria perceive hospitality and tourism differently.

### **Hospitality and Tourism Perception in Nigeria**

Globally, the industry has become increasingly significant to nations' economies. In Nigeria, tourism ecosystems, natural resources and heritage sites and so on are perceived related activities as a nation, region, state, local, city showcasing culture, history, ethnicity for diversification from oil sector, foreign exchange and employment (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009). Nigeria is a West African country a developing country having a total population of over 200 million people across six geo political zones in thirty-six states and Federal Capital Territory [FCT] with a lot of potential natural tourism resources (Ahmadu, 2011; Igbojekwe, 2011; Okoli, 2001). The country is blessed and rich in tourism resources and attractions from ecotourism, mountains, water springs and fall, beaches, festivals (boat regatta, fishing festivals), religious tourism, cultural tourism, parks, museum, heritage sites, food and drinks, entertainment, events, resort, hotels, wild life parks, night life in major cities across the six geo political zones of the country.

The Nigerian government realizes overdependence on oil sector. As a result, the government identifies tourism industry as one of the prospective sectors to achieving its objective when seeking a solution to the diversification from mono economy to multi economy. The industry has become an alternative source of revenue generation to the oil and petroleum industries (Adebayo, Jegede & Eniafe, 2014; Yusuff & Akinde, 2015). HT is becoming a means of foreign exchange (Nwanne, 2017) in Nigeria. Foreign visitors engage and purchase HT products and services, thereby exchanging and spending foreign currencies. Statistics show that about sixty one percent (61%) of visitors to Nigeria spend about eighty percent (80%) of their money on accommodation, recreation, and hospitality (Apaokagi, 2011).

The sector encounters lack of sufficient trained and qualified manpower to man the resources. Executive positions are held in some five-star hotels and tourism destinations by foreigners while graduates of generic courses such as marketing, accounting, business management are found at the managerial and supervisory vacancies. In order to arrest the situation, the government organizes Tourism Master Plan Committee on HT human resources capabilities to look into the challenges facing tourism human capabilities in the country. Furthermore, in a bid to develop the sector in 2014, all the universities in the country were directed to commence HTM and other related programs in addition to the universities offering the program at undergraduate, postgraduate diploma and Masters Levels.

As a result, the number of the universities and polytechnics offering the program in Nigeria has increased significantly (Esu, 2012; National Universities Commission (NUC), 2014). Higher education sector in Nigeria has transitioned to mass providers of graduates from various tourism programs with noteworthy implications for the consumption of public and private resources. Meanwhile, the government promulgates National Tourism Policy and directing efforts towards conservation and sustainability of tourism resources. Imperatively, the impact of outputs from educational system for employability of HTM graduates for competitive advantage cannot be overemphasized.

### **Nigerian Context of Hospitality and Tourism Management Education**

According to World Education News and Reviews in brief (2017), education system section, Nigeria as a country in sub-Saharan Africa has highest number of federal, state, and private higher institutions. The nation's education system including HTME encourages undergraduate and graduate academic programs for both local and international students especially from Africa.

HTM education and qualification levels exist in Nigeria as showcased but not without challenges. Generically, the levels of the education sector are faced with several and peculiar challenges. At level one, the National Hotel and Catering Schools of Nigeria, there is lack of investment due to poor maintenance and upgrading of facilities. The next level is important for the development and the needed status for HT (Apaokagi, 2011).

However, it lacks adequate provision of level two and intermediate level of skills in HT. Following on, level three is capable of necessitating the delivery of excellent HTM and service but the country lacks provision for level three advanced HT occupational skills courses. At level four, few institutions are offering HTM courses but faced with lack of investment, outdated curricular and system failure to update instructor educational qualification and industry awareness. Some polytechnics are offering better quality and credible training at level five. However, the existing

HTM educational courses particularly requires better in content, quality and delivery at level six. Meanwhile, the education at the next level demands availability of credible programs to meet and serve the needs and interests of private and public sectors and other stakeholders in the nation (Esu, 2012).

The Polytechnics in Nigeria have been offering hotel and catering programs at ND and Higher National Diploma (HND) education levels before Universities HTME. Two travel and tourism training courses, two certificate courses, one vocational course, four diploma courses, two National and Higher National Diploma courses and ten undergraduate (Bachelor) courses, five hospitality and/or tourism management Post Graduate Diploma courses, six Masters and one Tourism Doctoral Degree programs are available in the country for admission seekers into the program. One university named Imo State University, Owerri commenced the program at university level as hotel and catering administration and later renamed the program as HTM (Apaokagi, 2011).

Nonetheless, the level of awareness of HTM as a course amongst Nigerian citizens and students at the basic level of education is still very low. The majority of the prospective and admitted students at undergraduate level seem not to be aware of the program until when seeking for an admission to higher institutions (Babalola & Olapade, 2014).

The higher education providers in the country are also faced with the challenges of choosing a college, faculty or school where to run the program in their institutions. For instance, as at the period of this research, Imo State University offers Bachelor of Science (B. Sc), Post graduate Diploma and Masters of Science (M. Sc) in HTM under Faculty of Business Administration. University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State and Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ogun State run Bachelor of Science (B. Sc) in HTM, and home and hotel management (HHM) respectively in the Faculty of Agriculture. KWASU, Maletu offers B.Sc in hospitality, tourism and events management in the College of Humanities, Management and Social Sciences.

### **Efforts of the Government in Solving HTM Educational Issues**

The Nigerian government in her effort to address some of the problems in the sector set up the Nigeria Tourism Master Plan Committee to in order to look at the tourism related issues in the country including HT human resources capabilities in the HTME sector (Bassey & Egon, 2016; Tourism Development International, 2006). The findings of the committee on the issues are presented in Table 1 below. The findings of the committee revealed that the education sector is faced with several challenges which are affecting HTM students' academic performance achievement suitable for employment in the nations' HT industry. Nigeria Tourism Master Plan committee recommended the establishment of a National Institute for Culture and Tourism and the Abuja College of Culture and Tourism Studies aimed at becoming the premier tourism and cultural college. The institute is expected to research, plan and oversee education and training for the culture and tourism sector while the college is expected to become the premier tourism and cultural college serving West Africa.

**Table 1:** Findings of the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan Committee on Human Resources Capabilities

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| The human resources capabilities of the tourism and hospitality sectors are lagging far behind in terms of quality, standards, and skills delivery. There is a lack of balance between management and supervisory training and craft skills training. The numbers receiving craft skills training need to be greatly increased.  |
| The National Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) is grossly overstaffed and ineffective in its present role as a provider of educational services. The institute has no credible on-site practice facilities nor has it any experience of delivering skilled personnel to the work force.   |
| The various education providers do not specify skills or program outcomes. There is no way of ensuring consistent delivery of quality outcomes nor is there any way for auditing the quality of outcomes of the various training and education institutions. The conditions in the training institutes are very poor, dirty, ill equipped, badly maintained and are under-funded. The management and staff morale is poor and at a low level. A number of institutions train their course attendees in theoretical aspects but have no on-site practice training facilities. |
| There is a significant shortage of suitably qualified instructors, teachers and lecturers across the teaching faculty. They also lack industry experience and an international aspect. The consequences that the teaching methods and course content are out of date.  |

**Sources:** Tourism Development International (2006, p.7).

[http://www.ibadektyma.com/tourism\\_masterplan.pdf/18/1/2018](http://www.ibadektyma.com/tourism_masterplan.pdf/18/1/2018)

The master plan states categorically in its action plan on tourism human resources development in section E.8 and E.9, that there is need to upgrade facilities for Yaba College and Kaduna Polytechnic [so as to] improve facilities to cater for training in tourism and hospitality. NUC [National Universities Commission] to agree and publish clear guidelines for Honors degree and Masters programs [for] university programs. (Tourism Development International, 2006, p. 27)

The report projects that demand for HT labor will receive a very important stimulus when the proposed tourism development master plan is implemented. Furthermore, the government promulgates her first National Tourism Policy during the National conference on tourism development held in Lagos between 10th and 12th July, 1990 aimed to achieve certain objectives. The catalogue of objectives of the policy is showcased in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** The Main Objectives of the National Tourism Policy

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|--|
| i. To protect and promote Nigeria's cultural heritage as a resource for home grown socio-economic development. |
| ii. To encourage community and public partnerships in tourism development.                                     |
| iii. To generate foreign exchange, enhance income redistribution, alleviate poverty, and create employment.    |
| iv. To promote Nigeria as a desirable tourism destination within the context of Africa's cultural renaissance. |
| v. To promote geo-political integration, healthy international cooperation and understanding.                  |
| vi. To ensure environmental sustainability in the development of tourism resources.                            |

**Sources:** Bassey, F. O. & Egon, C. (2016, p. 26). Nigerian tourism policy: A critical appraisal and re-appraisal. *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports*. 20(1), 26-29.

Tourism Development International (2006, p. 2).

[http://www.ibadektyma.com/tourism\\_masterplan.pdf/18/1/2018](http://www.ibadektyma.com/tourism_masterplan.pdf/18/1/2018)

The policy is informed by two sources. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) baseline study on tourism and from the pronouncement and determination of the Secretary General of the WTO to develop and market Nigeria as a tourism destination. It concentrated on several issues including capacity building. Capacity building as one of the pivot areas of the policy states that the government shall initiate training programs in the industry

through specialized institutions such as the National Institute for cultural Orientation (NICO), Nigerian Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) and tertiary institutions, especially, in the areas of tour guides, hotel and resorts management and catering (Tourism Development International, 2006).

The policy "aimed at developing competitive sustainable tourism development within the confines of the World Tourism Market and open up Nigeria as a major tourist destination in Africa through the promotion of domestic tourism" (Bassey & Egon, 2016, p. 26). Significantly, it recommends HTM training programs through the educational institutions. However, a study, Dantata (2011) reports that the institute is faced with challenges that are incapacitating achievement of its objectives including inadequate funding, security, lack of tourism matters coordination by the public sectors, and lack of tourism activities statistical records.

Nevertheless, previous studies reiterate that HTE sector in Nigeria is crucial to manpower development to fit in to a wide range of available growing HTM employment vacancies in the industry (Ahmadu, 2011; Apaokagi, 2011; Babalola & Olapade, 2014; Ugo, Igbojekwe & Ogbonna, 2011). However, there is a mismatch between degree awards and labor requirements to fill the numerous vacancies in the industry and its sub-sectors. Thus, this study developed possible strategies for academic achievement improvement of the students in order to close the gap between grades awards and employment requirements in the Nigerian HTME industry.

### **HTM Employment, Career, Expected Knowledge and Skills in Nigeria**

HT has become a means of employment generation in Nigeria as significant service economy (Yusuff & Akinde, 2015). Catalogue of some of the employment opportunities in the country are presented in Table 3. below.

**Table 3: Hospitality and Tourism Management Employment Opportunities**

| <b>Sector</b>  | <b>Employment: Supervisor/Manager/Senior Executives/Entrepreneurs</b>  |
|--|--|
| Consultancy  | Consultants in different operating sectors.  |
| Education  | Academic staff: Hospitality and Tourism management and other related courses instructors.<br>Non-academic staff: Technologists, Chef and Curators  |
| Events Planning and Management                           | Special events, conventions, and exhibitions.  |
| Entertainment  | Music, theater etc.  |
| Food and Beverage  | Chef/Cooks/Waiters/Caterers offering food, drink, and rendering hospitable services.   |
| Lodging/<br>Accommodation                                | Housekeepers/Accommodation Staff in Commercial and Non-commercial sectors.<br>Commercial: Inns, hotels, resorts, motels, camps, bed and breakfast.<br>Non-commercial: Private, non-profit, private homes, hostels, home exchange and shelters. |
| Tourism<br>Destination<br>Management Organization        | Public and Private:<br>Marketing, adventure, attraction, entertainment, events, and recreation museum curators, travel and tour guides and tourist souvenir businesses   |
| Tourism, Planning,<br>Development and Policy<br>Analysis | Hospitality and Tourism planning, development and policy analysts.   |
| Transportation   | Land (car and shuttle busses), rail, sea (ferries) and air transporters (cargo, and scheduled)<br>Crews, baggage handlers, controllers.  |
| Travelling Agency and Tour<br>Operators                  | Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Tourism and Travel Officers, Activity Providers, Trip Planners, Tourism Bureau Operations, and Language Translators.  |

**Sources:** Hotnigerianjobs.com (2017a). <http://www.hotnigerianjobs.com/hotjobs/114279/assistant-manager-food-and-beverage-atintercontin.html/6/2/2018>

Jobnaij (2017). job.naij.com/Business+Development+Executivejob115847?ts=alljobs/

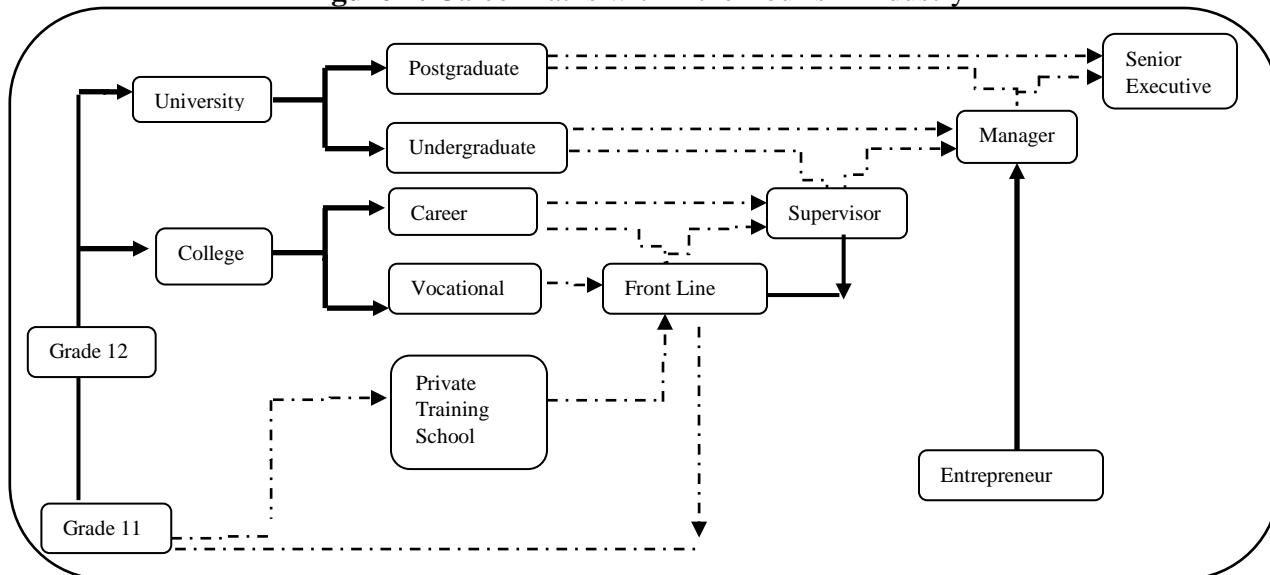
6/2/2018

Ng.3wjobs.com (2016). <http://ng.3wjobs.com/votEfEEE,html12/1/2018>

The employment opportunities center on the public and private tourism sectors creating and generating employment among the locals and foreign experts. HT employment attracts and encourages career paths as depicted in Figure 1 below. The employers expect the graduates to possess specific degree awards, knowledge and skills relevant to the employment (Apaokagi, 2011). The framework provides basic craftsills programs for different categories from the entry level to level seven, that is, Masters Degree.

The career path takes cognizant of HT intellectual/academic understanding, development of skills and knowledge academic/intellectual development through the studies. The principal aim is to prepare students for careers in the different areas of HTM industry. Some of the expected knowledge for employment includes excellent working knowledge of Microsoft (MS) Office, corporate travel management (CTM)/Global Distribution Systems (GDS) solutions knowledge, good knowledge of HT industry and knowledge of international travel regulations, customs and currencies are considered very necessary. Employees are also expected to possess knowledge of travel and expenses (T & E) reporting and processing, strong knowledge of the Travel and Tourism Industry, good knowledge and understanding of outbound and inbound travel and tourism

**Figure 2: Career Paths within the Tourism Industry**



**Source:** Goeldner, C. R. & Ritchie, J. R. B. (2009, p. 206). *Tourism principles, practices, philosophies* (11th ed.). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

including ticketing, outbound destinations and visa regulations of various countries (Hotnigerianjobs.com; 2017a; 2017b; Job.naij, 2017).

Anticipated skills for employment into sectors comprise resources, entrepreneurship, interpersonal communication, negotiation and time management, excellent oral communication and fluency in spoken and written English language communication and negotiation, a good team work, how to be a leader and player, passionate about travelling, providing related services and package tours on behalf of suppliers. Furthermore, employers embrace managing travel requirements for business or holiday, good relationship with management and customer-oriented

approach, good organization and reliability, an analytical mind with strong business acumen, organizing, reliability and flexibility as well as investigative and analytical abilities and a mind with strong business acumen skills for the employment (Ng.3wjobs.com, 2016; 2017; Ngcareers, 2016). The skills are essential for three major purposes. First, to perform assessment of HT potentials and operation forecast. This is followed by management of different types of HT institutions. Lastly, for managing tourist destinations and areas effectively (Adele, 2013; Adeleke & Ogunsusi, 2019, Esu, 2012; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2009).

### **Academic Qualifications set Standard for HT Employment and Career in Nigeria**

Apart from the expected graduate skills and knowledge, the academic grades set standards for employment by the employers remain major factors affecting the employability of the job seekers in the labor market (Babalola & Olapade, 2014; Igbojekwe, 2011). The National Diploma academic awards enable the graduates to secure employment into junior management level four. Higher National Diploma (HND) and University degree academic awards are designed to provide employment for the graduates into senior management level five and seven respectively. According to higher education policy, HND and University First degree graduates who are not more than thirty years of age are expected to proceed and engage in one-year mandatory national service. They are issued with National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Certificate on completion of the service year while those who are more than thirty years are issued with an exemption certificate upon graduation.

In addition to the mandatory NYSC certificate, graduates seeking admission into studying for M.Sc. in HTM program must possess at least a first degree in the field with at least a second class lower, the NYSC and O' Level certificates. The private and public employers in Nigeria first consider Higher National Diploma graduates with not less than upper credit, grades or University graduates with not less than Second Class Upper degrees for employment during recruitment exercises.

Employers consider the required academic qualifications more important for employment than the employable knowledge and skills, whereas, only few graduates are meeting the required degree awards upon graduation. Consequently, graduates who fail to achieve the degree awards set standards by the job recruiters are facing unemployment challenges in the country (Akinyemi, Ofem & Ikuenomore, 2012; Asuquo & Agboola, 2014).

### **Conclusions**

HT industry has become a source of diversification tool for economy development, foreign exchange earnings and education. However, HTM education sector remains the preliminary and pivotal point in the human capital to provide skills and development to undertake the employment considering the availability of numerous employment opportunities in the various tourism sectors. Nevertheless, the employment condition and requirement in terms of degree awards is creating gaps between the graduates of HTM and employment in the country.

### **Recommendations**

1. The government needs to improve on infrastructure such as roads, power supply, power supply, stadium upgrading, human capacities building through HT education in order to achieve diversification agenda to other sectors of economy including HT industry and its operating sectors.

2. Further studies are required to develop strategies to improve academic achievement of HTM students in order to close match between the graduates and HTM employment in Nigeria.

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