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Perspective in African Tourism: A Comparative Analysis of Nigeria and Ghana Tourism Development Policies

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Abstract
This paper reviews the tourism policies of Nigeria and Ghana. The main focus was to compare the policy trust of the two countries in order to understand the commitment of West African Governments to tourism development in the 21st century. The study revealed some generic features of tourism policy between the two countries, particularly in the area of economic impacts. The study also shows that Ghana have made a step forward by focusing on key aspects of tourism development and the role they play in fostering growth in specific parts of the economy. Nigeria tourism policy is also seen to be uncoordinated and lack vital policy issues when compared to Ghana tourism policy.

Key words: Policy, tourism, African tourism, tourism Policy

I. Introduction

The term policy is frequently used to denote the direction and objectives an organization wishes to pursue over a set period of time. Policy serves as a benchmark through which planning considerations are related. It provides parameters and guidelines to facilitate future development in any sector of the economy on focus. A tourism policy reflects a strategic direction that a government deem appropriate to follow, although, in a democratic context the process of policy formulation is also opened to industry stakeholders, communities, development agencies and those with an interest in tourism development. While most countries of the world have followed written tourism policy for many years, others have recently developed a framework for tourism, yet some do not have written tourism policy but government support tourism financially e.g. the UK. However, Hall (2017) argues that, it is more effective for countries to follow a written tourism policy than a wider economic development strategy that incorporates tourism. This will proffer ways and serve as a guide from where successive governments can easily take a cue. In contrast to Hall's opinion, Okpoko (2020), have maintained that blue print of any country's tourism policy is good, but what matters most is its implementation. He lamented that, whether written or no written tourism policy, kudos is given to countries that pay attention to her tourism sector of the economy. Therefore, nations of the world that are willing to develop their tourism industry should not only focus on developing a policy, but give total support to tourism financially, politically, socially, and culturally. In countries where resources are scarce, priority is given to those with comparative advantage, and this can easily be achieved through set rules or guidelines. Therefore, a policy is a reasoned consideration of alternative options, which is more often referred to as a guide to action of people or organization (Okpoko 2020).

While there are certainly some generic features of a tourism policy among countries, particularly in terms of economic impacts, some governments have made a step forward by focusing on other aspects of development and the role that tourism can play in fostering growth in specific parts of the economy. Examples of such countries are Nigeria and Ghana, where their main thrust of government policy on tourism is to develop sustainable tourism by capitalizing on heritage diversity as the bases for promoting domestic and international tourism, and the realization of the tourism sectors' full potential in contributing to economic wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, environmental conservation as well as national and international cohesion. This paper therefore, seeks to assess and

compare the tourism policies of Nigeria and Ghana with a view to understand their level of tourism development and policy implementation. It begins with a review of Nigeria and Ghana tourism policies and ends with a comparative assessment of their policy implementation successes.

II. Nigeria Tourism Policy

The Nigerian tourism policy derives its inspiration from the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) baseline study on tourism and from the pronouncement and determination of the secretary general of the world tourism organization (WTO) to develop and market Nigeria as a tourism destination (Nigeria Tourism Policy, 2005). The policy is aimed at developing competitive sustainable tourism by capitalizing on heritage diversity within the confines of the world tourism market and open up Nigeria as a major tourism destination in Africa through the development of international tourism and promotion of domestic tourism. Nigeria will be encouraged to spend their holiday in Nigeria and to know more about the country. It also proposed that the months of November, December and January be recognized as Harmattan holiday season. The main objectives of the national tourism policy are:

- To protect and promote Nigeria's cultural heritage
- To encourage community and public partnership in tourism development
- To generate foreign exchange, enhance income redistribution, alleviate poverty and create employment
- To promote Nigeria as a desirable tourism destination.
- To promote geo-political integration, healthy international cooperation and understanding
- To ensure environmental sustainability in the development of tourism resources.

To ensure the success of its objectives and main thrust, the National Tourism Policy is centered on five main areas:

(i) **Security:** the government will maintain friendly relationship with other African countries by making the national security agents to be tourism friendly (Tourism Police)

(ii) **Planning:** embarking on critical planning to ensure rapid growth of the tourism industry (both domestic and international) and the establishment of tourism satellite account for collecting tourism statistics

(iii) **Research and development:** approach to development shall be holistic taking into consideration all human environments, social, economic and political factors to enhance broad circulation of tourists within the tourism zone. Communities will be involved in the planning, development and implementation of tourism projects in their localities. By so doing the local communities will benefit from tourism projects in their areas such as employment, income generation, infrastructural development and preservation of local heritage resources.

(iv) **Promotion and marketing:** promotion and marketing shall be carried out by the federal ministry of culture and tourism, supported by federal ministry of information and national orientation, Nigerian foreign missions, states government and the private sector.

(v) **Capacity building:** training programs shall be initiated in tourism, travel and hospitality industry through specialized institutions like the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (NICO), Nigerian Institute for Hospitality and Tourism (NIHOTOUR) and tertiary institutions.

(vi) **Gender, Environment and HIV/AIDS:** policy would impart gender quality through provision of special assistance to women cooperative from the tourism development fund and embark on vigorous and continuous campaign to create awareness of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in all major tourists' destinations. Policy will also ensure sound environmental practices through environmental impact assessment in all major tourism projects.

The national tourism policy focuses on the development and promotion of cultural heritage, conferences, sports, safari/ eco-tourism and shopping tourism as major aspects of tourism with comparative advantage over other tourists receiving and generating countries of the world taking into account the future trend of the tourism industry. Other aspects on focus include heath resorts, aviation related matters and transportation.

The rationales for the national tourism policy for Nigeria are as follows:

(1) That tourism is developed for economic purpose

(2) That tourism development encompasses domestic and international tourism

(3) That both private and public sectors are involvement (with active participation of the public sector) in tourism development

(4) The policy also promotes large scale tourism (mass tourism)

I appreciate the effort of the policy developers as they advocate for the development, promotion and marketing of the nation's tourism potentials thereby making Nigeria a desirable tourism destination. However, the national tourism policy for Nigeria constitutes some loopholes. These among others include: lacks of identification of tourism growth rate- the policy fails to recognize the rate of development i.e. whether the development will be slow, medium or fast. Control growth rate gives residents enough time to adjust in the areas they are deficient to receive visitors in order to avoid conflict. Thus; the implementation of the tourism policy without growth rate consideration has led to rising cases harassment and robbery of tourists particularly at points of arrival and in destination.

Location and staging of development- a country decides on where to start their tourism development. This however, is often based on areas with more potential. Certain areas are selected and developed while others are left untapped for further development. The Nigerian tourism policy however, fails to specify the location of tourism development and the type/aspect of tourism that will first receive attention. It is concern on developing virtually all aspects of tourism without specifying what and where to start the development. Characteristically, this policy lacks specification and responsiveness to social and cultural traditions of the affected areas and therefore, cannot be achieved.

III. Ghana Tourism Policy

The Ghana tourism policy evolve from the consideration of Ghana government on the benefits of tourism, after series of assessment of her tourism resources, which result to the fact that Ghana can offer a wide range of unique and exciting natural, cultural and historical resources that could be developed on a competitive and sustainable basis. The diversification of the Ghanaian economy in 1985, which addressed the need to shift focus from the over reliance on traditional commodities such as gold, timber and cocoa was another success story that brought tourism to the fore front as a major economic activity with the potential to resuscitate the ailing economy. This policy direction was justified by the Ghana Ministry of Tourism established in 1993, which emphasized government's commitment to the development of the tourism sector. The policy is striving to create appropriate environment for a private sector-led development. In specific terms, the key policy goals are as follows:

- To develop a selective number of quality tourism products that would build on Ghana's inherent attractions and cater for specific niche market.
- To achieve a high level of customer satisfaction by the proper linking of attraction sites that will deliver a complete and satisfying experience.
- To professionalized the entire tourism industry in order to be able to provide higher quality facilities and services.
- To ensure that as many opportunities as possible are created for the involvement in, and benefiting from tourism by local entrepreneurs and communities in terms of employment, income generation, training and awareness, and access to better social infrastructure.
- To ensure that the tourism industry is financed, manage and administered as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- To channel efforts toward the following themes: tourism services, basic infrastructure, product development, marketing training and investment.

In order to consistently achieve each of the above listed objectives, the following key thematic areas have been identified with clear presentation of the policy context.

Product development

Although Ghana possesses a diverse variety of potential attractions, the key to success of these features in attracting tourists is their proper development and management. Therefore, the government will embark on the provision of sufficient infrastructure in and outside Accra to enhance free flow of tourists to local communities where the bulk of these attractions lie. These among others include telecommunications, rail and road networks, rest stops, water and energy supply, signage, information centres, conventions and conference facilities etc. Appropriate tourism infrastructure, particularly in the rural areas will help to diversify the tourism market and bring direct benefits to the rural poor in terms of employment, sale of local agricultural products, land fees and general appreciation of tourism facilities in their place.

Tourism resources management and protection

To effectively manage and conserve the cultural, environmental and historical resources of Ghana and balancing economic utilization with sensitivity, the government will promote and encourage sustainable tourism development by providing incentives to private enterprises and communities. Also, the conduct of integrated environmental management planning and environmental impact assessment (EIA) for all tourism projects will be made mandatory.

Quality and standard

In order to increase visitor satisfaction levels, efforts will be required to develop and improve appropriate visitor's facilities, reliable credit card facilities, effective interpretation of tourist's features and their continuous maintenance. Management of high standard and quality services will be maintained in order to be internationally competitive.

Marketing and promotion

An important success factor in the development of tourism in Ghana is effective and creative marketing and promotion of the country. Thus; government will the promotion and expansion of international, regional and domestic tourism by developing Ghana as one of the preferred tourist's destinations in Africa.

Tourism financing

The availability of finance to develop and promote the tourism industry is critically important for further growth. In order to meet this need, the government will ensure public and private sector access to adequate reliable finance for tourism infrastructural development through the establishment of a Ghana tourism fund, build up from the collection of airport or departure tax, various tourism levies, government grants and international donor funding to provide finance for tourism enterprises and activities.

Tourism investment

To promote investment in tourism development by both local and foreign investors through the establishment of financial policy to develop the tourism sector as well as the provision of tax holidays exemption (zero rating) on import duties on basic furnishing equipment and their spare parts, subsidies, grants and locational investments. Foreign investors and companies that will promote and implement responsible and sustainable tourism will be encouraged through the provision of such concessions as franchise and package tour arrangements, but upon assurance that substantial leakages do not occur and that sufficient socio-economic benefits accrue locally will reduce negative tourism impact.

Human resource development

While the tourism industry has tremendous potential to create jobs and provide on-the-job training, the government recognizes that appropriate skills and experience are necessary to facilitate employment growth as well as international competitiveness. The Ghana government will therefore establish more professional industry training schools, high level industry-based advisory council to efficiently coordinate the training, certification and accreditation procedures for advancement of tourism, develop and enforce national training regulations; minimum qualification levels for all tourism positions, linked to licensing of tourism enterprise and establish accreditation of training institutes, standardized across the entire tourism sector, linked with international accreditation systems, in line with the national technical, vocational, educational and training policy (TVET) to ensure that human resource capacity (quality and quantity) required for tourism development is in line with demands of the industry so as to ensure its competitiveness (i.e. professionalized staff at all levels).

Tourism education and awareness

Tourism development is hampered by a general lack of knowledge and awareness of its requirements, socio-economic impacts and financial returns. To eradicate these problems and standardize tourism in Ghana, the government will create and promote tourism awareness at all levels of society through: (i) the introduction of a country wide sensitization programme aimed specifically at policy and decision makers regarding the potential role of tourism in the national and local economy and how their leadership is required at the various levels to realize these potentials.

(ii) country-wide education and sensitization campaign aimed at the general public addressing issues of littering, solid waste disposal, visitor harassment etc. (iii) awareness campaign aimed specifically at local communities on the potential benefits of tourism and the role required of the local communities in ensuring that such benefits are indeed developed and sustained. (iv) integrate sustainable tourism as a subject in the national educational curriculum.

Security, safety and privacy

The government will ensure the health, security safety, and privacy of all tourists and tourists' sites while safeguarding against negative side effects of tourism on local communities. Both short and long term actions and strategies to reduce traffic accidents will be undertaken through rehabilitation and construction of new roads and overhead bridges in congested areas. Crime and violence on tourists and incidence of visitor harassment by hawkers and beggars will be critically checked.

Regional and international cooperation

Government will collaborate with neighbouring countries in support of tourism development initiatives on the continent and West Africa in line with NEPAD, ECOWAS, and UNWTO through the establishment of appropriate bi-lateral relations with neighbouring countries in order to ease travel, lift restrictions and promote movements. It will also promote adoption of common visa regime for tourists to ECOWAS countries in order to facilitate cross-border visits between these countries, while collaborating with immigration and security matters.

Tourism research and management information system

Accurate and up-to-date understanding of the tourism industry for effective and efficient tourism planning, marketing and promotion purposes will be maintained through the establishment of tourism research and management information system for all the themes and at all levels (national, regional and district) as well as ensure thorough information on tourism attractions and facilities and adequate road signage to ensure maximum customer satisfaction.

The rationale for the Ghana tourism policy is to support and promote the achievement of the overall vision of the government of Ghana aimed at achieving a per capita income of $1, 000 by 2025 through the realization of the sector's full potential in contributing to economic wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, environmental conservation, national and international cohesion as well as achievement of real tourism growth rate of 20% per annum by 2025 (Ghana National Tourism Policy, 2015).

The policy adjudged cultural and historical heritage useful for development, promotion and marketing on a competitive and sustainable basis. However, for a better appreciation and achievement of the set objectives, the Ghana tourism policy highlighted the role of tourism in environmental, cultural and socio-economic development. It also looks at Ghana tourism potentials, existing policy framework, current performance and the future of tourism in Ghana as well as identification of key stakeholders' role in tourism. The policy is strongly informed by, and intends to contribute towards the implementation of Ghana's Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2015-2025 (GPRS II), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and the Revised Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Despite the comprehensiveness of the Ghana tourism policy, it has been discovered that the policy fails to identify the tourism growth rate, which seek to monitor the speed of tourism development. It is necessary to control tourism growth rate for (i) social reason- this is to enable residence to have adequate time to adjust to tourism development in many areas that they are deficient to receive visitors. (ii) development reason- to enable them balance tourism with infrastructural development and other various demands on limited capital resources. (iii) man-power planning reason- to allow sufficient time for training people to work effectively in tourism. (iv) economic reason- integrating tourism development with various aspects of the economy. Thus, the absence of growth rate in this policy can limit its effectiveness and implementation.

IV. Comparative analysis of Nigeria and Ghana tourism policies and their implementation

It is important to understand that all details cannot be reached when developing a tourism policy. However, there are some key issues that are indispensable if a policy must achieve its aims and objectives. For instance, a tourism policy must consider economic and non-economic factors, international and domestic tourism, aims and objectives etc. in order to be well coordinated and satisfactory (Okpoko, 2016). The Nigerian tourism policy lacks some of these ingredients when compared to her Ghana counterpart. The policy, which was launch in 1990 to provide guidelines for

tourism operators (Okpoko, Okonkwo & Diminyi, 2008) has since passed through several modifications, yet the possibility of meeting its objectives is still at bottle neck. A review of Nigeria and Ghana tourism policies reveal that the tourism policy of Nigeria is uncoordinated and lack vital policy issues that are contain in Ghana tourism policy. For instance, the policy document of Ghana provides broad policy guidelines for successful development and implementation of concrete projects and programs by key stakeholders- national government, local authorities (district assemblies), the private sector, civil society, development partners, academic and research institutions, tourists as well as communities and traditional leaders. This key stakeholders' role is absent in the Nigerian tourism policy. Again, the policy failed to recognize the relevance of product development, tourism education and awareness raising, evaluation of existing challenges as well as guiding principles, which are incorporated in the Ghana tourism policy.

Apart from the above problems, one of the main objectives of the Nigerian tourism policy is to promote Nigeria as a desirable tourism destination. This objective is contradicting and has proved abortive since Nigeria image is getting darker rather than bright in the face of the world following every day killing and destruction of properties resulting from religious violent and extremism in northern part of the country coupled with kidnapping in the south-east and south-south areas. Although, Ghana is not 100% conducive, but extreme cases of religious violence and incessant kidnapping have not been recorded. The economy and socio-political stability of Ghana is appealing and favourable to tourists than that of Nigeria where there are series of cases of militants in the Niger-delta/eastern states as well as Muslims-Christian's problems in the north. The recent bomb blast of 1st October, 2010 at the eagle square is an excellent revelation of the insecurity of the country to the world. This is a clear indication that tourism will likely flourish in Ghana than Nigeria irrespective of her vast tourism resources.

Another point of worry is the issue of capacity building exemplified in item (v) of the Nigerian policy target areas. Tourism industry is regarded as the largest employer of labour worldwide. These employees in tourism require adequate skills to function efficiently and effectively. NICO and NIHOTOUR are not enough to produce the required human resources in the tourism industry. Even the least available human resources are not given the chance to work in the tourism industry due to corruption and political manipulations, which is likely not obtainable in Ghana. Hence, it will be difficult for tourism to flourish where non-experts are piloting it. The Nigerian tourism policy seek to promote and market tourism using the Federal Ministry of Culture and Tourism and its parastatals, supported by Ministry of Information and National Orientation, Foreign Missions and States government. It is a truism that Nigeria does not attach tourism officers, who can promote and market Nigeria abroad to her foreign missionaries, and even within the country, only about 1% of the 36 states of the federation are interested in developing, promoting and marketing of tourism. In a situation where certain areas incorporated in the policy are not functioning, there is no how such a policy can achieve its objectives. Again, one of the major aims that the policy highlighted is to encourage Nigerians to spend their holiday in Nigeria and to know more about Nigeria. Without incentives or pay holiday this cannot be actualized. Nigeria is a poor country with very low level of economic development, where the disposable income of her citizens is still lingering around 0.5 to 1%. Based on this critical economy and hardship on the citizens, it is obvious that the issue of holidaymaking will only remain paper story and cannot be actualized.

Conclusion and recommendation

This study has successfully reviewed the tourism policies of Nigeria and Ghana. A comparison of the two country's policies revealed that Nigerian government have not demonstrate the expected political will towards developing tourism. The study has also exposed a number of factors militating against tourism development and policy implementation in Nigeria, which includes lack of key policy issues, uncoordinated policy guidelines, collaboration of stakeholders, education, pay holiday and the saddened situation of Nigerian people who live below poverty line. Although these challenging factors a glaring in the face of tourism development, they are by no means the only problems hampering the growth of the sector. Therefore, one would not be out of place to say that Ghana tourism is presently waxing higher than that of Nigeria. For Nigeria to achieve her policy target, the following critical success factors will need to be in place: political will to make tourism a national priority; political and economic stability within Nigeria; conducive institutional structure; suitable supportive infrastructure; appropriate regulations and incentives; strong linkages with other sectors of the economy; active involvement of local communities; effective tourism training, education, and awareness programs; sustainable environmental management practices; innovation and creativity for product development and marketing; professionalism at all levels; focus on quality first.

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