

**CONTRIBUTION OF HOTELS ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND
STANDARD OF LIVING IN UYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, AKWA IBOM
STATE, NIGERIA**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the contribution of hotels to community development and the improvement of the standard of living in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The researcher focused on Uyo Local Government Area in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The population for the study was made up of ten percent (10%) of the total number of registered hotels in Uyo Local Government Area. A simple random sampling technique was used select 120 respondents from the population. A research instrument titled Contributions and the Impacts of the Hospitality Industry Questionnaire (CAIHIQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The findings from revealed that the respondents agreed on some hotels in Uyo LGA actively participate in road construction projects, enhancing connectivity and accessibility within the community as the most significant contribution of hotels in community developmental projects The study concluded that hotels play a significant role in promoting community development through infrastructure support such as road construction, provision of clean water, and collaboration with local authorities on safety and security One of the recommendation made was that Government should collaborate more with hotels to encourage them to participate in community development projects such as road construction, water supply, and infrastructure improvement.

KEYWORDS: Hospitality industry, hotels, community development, standard of living.

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian hospitality industry has improved over the past decades. This growth has not been limited to traditional travel and hospitality as digital innovation has created entirely new travel segments and competitors, such as new accommodation models, ridesharing, reservation apps, hotel and airline apps and other new entrants, (Webhaptic, 2022)

The tourism and hospitality industry is known for the vast opportunities that a nation can explore. Its transformation power to change society into an accommodating environment makes it a standout sector that contributes immensely to economic development. When talking about dynamism in the development of a nation, the industry cannot be left out of the economic plan of such a nation. The sector is essential for developing many parts of the world (Sanni, 2009). In some regions, income from it is one of the primary sources of foreign exchange (Adeola et al., 2016). Nigeria which is a monoculture economic country has neglected the potential inherent in the tourism and hospitality industry. Although Nigeria is a rich nation, a study by Ajani et al., (2017) reveals that Nigeria's economy has solely depended on oil proceeds for several decades. As such, many sectors of her economy suffer major setbacks due to over-dependence on the oil sector. As a nation of over 200 million residents, her economic potentials include cultural practices, natural and man-made resources but lacks adequate infrastructure and enabling environment required to develop, grow and promote the tourism sector (Fagbolu,

2022). However, the government is making efforts geared towards diversification to other sectors with tourism inclusive. According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2014), the tourism and hospitality industry plays a vital economic role in local communities throughout the world as it helps to transform those communities from a state of inactivity to a commercial and accommodating environment.

People are directly or indirectly employed in the industry to offer services to the customers of hotels, restaurants, guesthouses, resort centres, tourist destinations, etc. many accommodation and destination managers have subsidiaries providing other services for them in the form of supplies of materials needed to serve their customer better. The industry's economic importance can be seen in foreign exchange generation and employment creation, which will eventually transform into economic growth and development, (Journal of Social Sciences, 2022).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Nigerian hospitality industry has witnessed significant growth over the years, particularly with the expansion of hotels driven by increased travel, tourism, and digital innovation. Despite this development, the expected level of socioeconomic impact on host communities remains uneven, especially in many parts of Nigeria, including Akwa Ibom State.

In Uyo Local Government Area, where the number of hotels has increased considerably, there is still concern about the extent to which these hotels contribute to meaningful community development. While hotels are expected to support local infrastructure, create employment opportunities, and improve the standard of living of residents through corporate social responsibility and economic activities, many community members still experience challenges such as unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, and low income levels.

Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence clearly showing how hotels in the study area directly influence community developmental projects such as road construction, water supply, security enhancement, and street lighting. It is also not fully established how far hotel operations have improved the living conditions of people in the area through job creation, training opportunities, and welfare support.

This gap in knowledge creates the need for a systematic study to assess the actual contributions of hotels to community development and the standard of living of people in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State.

Objective of the Study

1. Determine the contribution of hotels to community developmental project.
2. Evaluate the extent to which hotels have improved the standard of living of the people in the study area.

Research Questions

- 1) What are the contributions of hotels with regards to community developmental projects in the study area?
- 2) What is the extent hotels have improved the standard of living of people in the study?

LITERATURE REVIEW CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Hospitality Industry

The hospitality and hospitality industry concepts are changing rapidly because of changing environment and customer mobility (Crick, Spencer, 2011). Furthermore, nowadays the definition of the hospitality is associated with the help for the guests, involving them into common activities, conversations. The hospitality service providers are expected to become involved in the game with consumers despite the fact that it might seem not a serious activity, having clear define result in this way (Crik, Spencer, 2011). However, according to Kandampully et al., (2014), there is no accepted hospitality definition until this moment.

Several authors, such as Crick and Spencer (2011), Barrow et al., (2012), Walker (2013), Wood (2013) state that hospitality industry business is unimaginable without its essential structural components. The elements are as follows: polite and well-wishing meeting, greeting and appealing to the quest by name, customer's needs foresight and their correspondence, care of the quests, polite behavior with the customers, tolerance with respect to the quests, involving quests into various activities and polite farewell. Furthermore, according to Kandampully et al (2014), the hospitality industry relates to the specific services provided the service industry, which services are vitally for everyone. Authors also note that the most important aspect in this industry within service providing is the interaction between the employee and the customer, what must be based on the emotional proposal, which requires an emotional connection with customers, warmth and generosity. Bagdan (2013) marked that "the hospitality industry is the service industry" and it covers accommodation and catering sectors, as well as travel agencies services. Nevertheless, the hospitality concept is even wider. It also includes the private clubs, casino, resorts, events, entertainments, etc. (Barrows et al., 2012). Therefore, previously the hospitality has primarily been associated with accommodation services such as travels, attractions, meetings and others, beginning to relate with hospitality industry.

The main sectors of hospitality service industry are accommodation, food and beverage and tourism sector. Nevertheless, majority of the authors usually divide hospitality industry into two broad categories, which considered as the main: accommodation and food and beverages. Therewith, there is no commonly accepted system for the hospitality industry classification.

According to Bagdan (2013), the most important role in the hospitality industry played by the customers, because business success depends on their needs. For this reason, the hospitality service providers must search new ways for the customer needs and their expectations satisfaction (Caruntu et al., 2014). Globalization, changes in the business environment as well as consumers' demands have an impact on the hospitality service business. Recently, organizations are more dependent on their customers, especially in the service

industry. For this reason, it is important to understand the current and future customers' needs, meet their requirements and try to exceed their expectations.

Community Development

Tourism in its own nature has the capacity to create employment opportunity specially to host community in AkwaIbom State (Akpan et al., 2012). The hotel employment opportunity has engaged many youths and adults in the host communities thereby discouraging them from idleness.

An attractive environment appeals to hoteliers and tourists, whether natural or built, and the development of hotels in a locality will relate to the surrounding area. The term 'environment' refers to the physical setting in which tourism takes place, this could be coastal resorts, historic cities, mountain ranges, pictures villages, sites of cultural interest including museums and national monuments which provides the stimulus for travel (Zaei, 2013).

Tourism and hospitality itself will affect the environment in positive ways. The following lists summarize these effects:

- Increased investment in the area (may improve facilities, access and enable development).
- Conservation of features encouraged (buildings, wildlife, and countryside).
- Increase income for upkeep and preservation of facilities

The tourism and hospitality sector in Nigeria has forward and backward linkages with other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and services. For instance, hotels and restaurants rely on local agricultural products for food supply, creating demand for agricultural produce and supporting local farmers. Similarly, the sector creates demand for manufactured goods such as furniture, textiles and handicrafts, thereby stimulating local manufacturing and handicraft production.

Standard of Living Improvement

Due to numerous economic benefits of the tourism and hospitality industries and the potential growth, they help in the increase of standard of living of the people by offering new and better jobs, which in terms helps them to improve the quality of life and their families (Zaei, 2013). Tourism helps in the improvement of health and family welfare by adopting the direction of the advance countries in this direction. Health conference, convention, seminars, exchange of views of the leading experts helps in this regard (Zaei, 2013).

Tourism and Hospitality Industry in AkwaIbom

The hospitality industry in AkwaIbom State is experiencing a phenomenal growth that is fast assuming the nature of a revolution. This growth is in tandem with the fact that the state is emerging as a tourism and hospitality destination not only in Nigeria, but also in the West African sub-region. Over 2,000 hotels have so far been registered in the state, to ensure standardization of operations, in order to make them function in line with international best practices (Ndifreke, 2021).

The changing hospitality landscape in the state has come as a result of the very conducive economic environment the government created, which has attracted investors from within and outside the state, and in turn spurred massive investments in the hospitality

industry. The impact of the booming hospitality sector in AkwaIbom is already being felt in the area of job creation, as hundreds of young men and women have been employed to cater to the needs of the growing number of visitors to the state on business and leisure. The development has spurred hospitality operators to embark in training and retraining of staff to enable them to acquire skills that are needed to provide the manpower that is expected in running a specialized industry that operates with the highest standards (Ndifreke, 2021). As the Akwalbom hospitality industry expands and becomes more sophisticated, so also will it guarantee employment generation for the youths of the state the come out every year from institutions of higher learning, with the certainty of improving standard of living. It is helping to achieve the job creation goal of the government.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher focused on Uyo Local Government Area in AkwaIbom State, Nigeria. The population for the study was made up of ten percent (10%) of the total number of registered hotels in Uyo Local Government Area. A simple random sampling technique was used select 120 respondents from the population. A research instrument titled Contributions and the Impacts of the Hospitality Industry Questionnaire (CAHIQ) was used for data collection. Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration.

RESULTS PRESENTATION

Research Question 1: What are the contributions of hotels with regards to community developmental projects in the study area?

Table 1: Contribution of hotels to community developmental projects

Roles	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Rank
Hotels assist in community development by supplying clean water (through borehole project), ensuring a vital resource for local residents	55*(45.8)**	16*(13.3)**	34*(28.3)**	15*(12.5)**	2.93	2
Hotels through their resources aid in the maintenance of local roads, helping to keep transportation networks in good condition.	20(16.7)	68(56.7)	29(24.2)	3(2.5)	2.88	3.5
Some hotels actively participate in road construction projects, enhancing connectivity and accessibility within the community	53(44.2)	41(34.2)	24(20.0)	2(1.7)	3.21	1
Hotels contribute to community development by providing street lighting, enhancing safety and improving quality of life for its residents.	35(29.2)	38(31.7)	41(34.2)	6(5.0)	2.85	5
Hotels collaborate with local authorities to enhance safety measures and security in the security in the community	44(36.7)	31(25.8)	31(25.8)	14(11.7)	2.88	3.5

Note: * and ** = frequencies and percentages; rank 1 is the most significant contribution of hotels with regards to community developmental projects while rank 5 is the least significant contribution.

Research Question 2: What is the extent hotels have improved the standard of living of people in the study area?

Table 2: Contribution of hotels to the standard of living of people in the study area.

Roles	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Rank
Through stable income 5 hotel employment can improve individuals ability to access better housing conditions and security	70*(58.3)**	34*(28.3)**		14*(1.7)**	2*(1.7)**	3.43
Hotels employees receive healthcare benefits, ensuring access to medical facilities and improving the overall health and well of individuals and their families	22(18.3)	67(55.8)	26(21.7)	5(4.2)	2.88	3
Hotels often offer comprehensive training programs thereby equipping individuals with valuable skill for careers in hospitality industry	44(36.7)	36(30.0)	31(25.8)	9(7.5)	2.96	1
Hotels provide educational opportunities, such as training programs and scholarships, enabling employees to access further education and skill development	37(30.8)	40(33.3)	39(32.5)	4(3.3)	2.92	2
Hotels promote and preserve local culture and traditions, enriching the cultural landscape and cultivating local pride	38(31.7)	35(29.2)	27(22.5)	20(16.7)	2.76	4

Note: * and ** = frequencies and percentages; rank 1 is the most significant contribution of hotels to the standard of living of people while rank 5 is the least significant contribution.

Discussion of findings

The findings from table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed on some hotels in Uyo LGA actively participate in road construction projects, enhancing connectivity and accessibility within the community as the most significant contribution of hotels in community developmental projects. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Mgbawu et al., (2016) that hospitality and tourism has been identified globally as a very potent instrument for executing community developmental projects like road construction etc. the least accepted contribution by the respondents was that hotels in Uyo LGA contribute to community development by providing street lighting, enhancing safety and improving quality of life for its residents.

The findings from table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed that the most significant contribution of hotels to the standard of living of the people was that hotels often offer comprehensive training programs thereby equipping individuals with valuable skill for careers in the hospitality industry. According to Zaei, (2018), hospitality industries helps to increase the standard of living of the people by offering trainings, new and better jobs, which in terms helps them to improve the quality of life and their families. According to statistic research department (2022), revenue in the Nigerian hotels was \$106.10 million and projected to reach \$1.22 billion dollars at the end of 2023.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is evident that hotels play a significant role in promoting community development through infrastructure support such as road construction, provision of clean water, and collaboration with local authorities on safety and security. The study also established that hotels contribute positively to the standard of living of residents by creating employment opportunities, offering training and skill acquisition programs, and improving access to education and professional development within the hospitality sector. These contributions collectively enhance income generation, improve living conditions, and support socioeconomic growth in the study area. Therefore, the hospitality industry remains a key driver of local development and should be further strengthened to maximize its benefits to host communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should collaborate more with hotels to encourage them to participate in community development projects such as road construction, water supply, and infrastructure improvement.
2. Hotels should be encouraged or mandated to engage more in CSR activities that directly benefit host communities, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.
3. Hotel management should prioritize the employment of qualified individuals from host communities to reduce unemployment and improve living standards.

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