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## CULTURAL ARTS AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

By

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of the study, one research question was raised which was transformed into one null hypothesis that was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Related literature were reviewed. A survey research design was employed for the study. The population of the study was made up of 774,824 adult residents. Multi-stage sampling procedure comprising of stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the senatorial districts, local government areas, as well as one thousand (1000) respondents drawn from the six local government areas for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a four point rated scale instrument title "Cultural Arts and Sustainable Economic Development Questionnaire". The instrument was validated by two experts, one in measurements and evaluation and the other in Environmental Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient reliability method was adopted to test the consistency of the test instrument. The reliability index of between 0.70 and 0.84 obtained was high enough to accept that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was administered personally by the researchers with the help of three trained research assistants. To test the hypotheses, simple linear regression was used. The result revealed that cultural arts significantly contribute to sustainable economic development. Based on the result of the findings, it was therefore recommended that appropriate levels of awareness concerning cultural arts should be created by government to enable indigenes tap into it and attract its benefits.*

**Key words:** Cultural arts, Sustainable Economic Development.



### Introduction

Economic development is often associated with economic growth, while economic growth is an increase in aggregate output. Economic development focuses on quality improvements and the introduction of new goods and services

for the general wellbeing of the citizens. Adeniji and Ekanem (2013) see economic development to mean investment in infrastructural projects, support for education, job creation and wealth creation opportunities. This implies that, all efforts made by

governments to promote the wellbeing of individuals and the nation constitute economic development activities. Adeniji and Ekanem (2013) stated that, sustainable economic development encourages the introduction of new regulations or strengthening the existing regulations to ensure the protection of human health and the environment.

Government has the sacred mandate to promote the wellbeing of the people and the nation and its people. For instance, for the past two decades, successive governments of Cross River State have invested in different programmes to promote the general wellbeing of her citizens in such areas as the Tinapa projects, garment factory, cocoa processing factory, rice seedling production, plantain plantation projects and some other projects meant to improve the economic development of the state and the living standard of its citizens. It is therefore imperative to explore other avenues and activities which will result in sustainable economic development of the state. The need to improve sustainable economic fortunes of Cross River State was the impetus for the introduction of more tourism activities by the Cross River State government in year 2002 and sustained by subsequent governments between 2007 and 2021.

Before tourism was introduced in Cross River State in 2002, the state was purely civil service oriented. Many people survived on farming and fishing as well as small scale businesses. There was little economic development in the state until the government of that time realized the need to tap into the rich natural endowment of the state by creating activities and tourism sites across the various local government areas in order to enable everyone to benefit from it.

Cross River State government invested so much in boosting and encouraging tourism activities in the state with the establishment of numerous tourists sites across the state such as Mary Slessor's Residence in Creek Town, Cercopan, Reforme lake, Nkarasi monoliths site in Ikom, Becheve canopy walkway, Agbokim waterfalls, Cross River National Park, Tinapa Business Resort, National museum, Marina Resort, Obudu Cattle Ranch

Resort, etc. To make all these places and activities fruitful, a period was set aside for leisure and recreation. This period ranged from 1<sup>st</sup> December to 1<sup>st</sup> January every year. This was to enable one enjoy his earnings and retire from hectic activities to refresh himself. The creation of this sites and activities brought in visitors from within and outside the country. With increase in tourists visit from 2,210 between October and December, 2000 to about 8,162 tourist between October and December, 2009 (Cross River State Planning Commission, 2010). Consequently the state was globally recognised as a major tourists destination to tourists visiting from around the country and around the world. This also opened up small and medium scale businesses; hotels, restaurants and eateries keyed into it too. There was massive development in the state in the areas of infrastructure and road maintenance. The state wore a new look and became famous nationally and internationally. Annual economic reports on Cross River State (2006-2016) have it that the influx of visitors annually into the state increased by the year and the government generated much income as visitors trooped in.

One would have expected a continuous increase up till now but the reverse became the case when suddenly, some famous activities such as mountain race, Ekpe masquerade festival, and other sites such as Obudu ranch resort, Tinapa Business Resort, Kwafalls, became non-functional, while some are gradually becoming less functional like the Calabar Old Residency Museum, Marina Resort, Cross National Park, among others. The collapse in these sites and activities have crumbled the one time flourishing businesses thereby leading to poverty and rise in social vices like armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killing, prostitution, etc. This is because people no longer have a means of survival. A onetime hospitable and clean looking state wears an ugly look.

Obudu Cattle Ranch has now decayed into a sorry state as well as the Bebi air trip which assists in taking passengers to the ranch. The cable cars are also faulty and not functioning, Obudu mountain race that

complement activities at the ranch was discontinued in 2015 and all athletes both local and international that won cash prizes are yet to be paid. Electricity at the ranch is poor as the generators are faulty while the few staff on ground are being owed salaries (Cross River State Planning Commission 2020).

Cultural arts is still untapped in Cross River State. Arts tourism is based on experiencing the places and activities that authentically represent historic, cultural and natural resources of a given area or region. It is an activity commonly regarded by visits to historic places or sites. Historic sites are official location of building, sites, structure where pieces of political, military or social history are preserved and which are of local, regional or national significance. Historic sites have lasting records of past lives and endeavours as such people are motivated to visit these sites as a result of nostalgia for by-gone eras to learn about the historic context of the sites. These according to Iwuagwu, Alex-Onyeocha & Lydia, (2015) have given rise to heritage tourism.

Cross River State is blessed with so many historical sites from the soaring plateau of the mountain tops of Obudu to the rain forest of Afim, from the waterfalls of Agbokim and Kwa to the spiralling ox-bow Calabar river which provide sights and images to the Tinapa Business Resort, Calabar Marina Resort, Calabar Residency Museum and the Calabar Slave Park are fascinating and thrilling event for eco-tourism. Other tourist attractions are the Ikom monoliths (a series of volcanic stone monoliths constructed between 2500BC and 1AD), the Mary Slessor tomb, Calabar drill monkey sanctuary, Cross River National Park, Afi mountain walkway canopy, Kwa falls, Agbokim waterfalls among other construction (Cross River Watch, 2013).

Agbokim and Kwa falls do not have good access roads and are not even developed to the level of attracting tourists. Iconic places in Calabar like Mary Slessor tombstone and the European (Colonial cemetery) are poorly maintained. The Marina resort is gone with the cinema shut down, as the state government is unable to come up with its 25% counterpart

funding, thereby causing the contractors to pull out. As such there is low patronage. The drill rehabilitation centre in Buanchor, attracted patronage but currently it has poor access road.

It is on this background that the researchers wonder if anything can be done to reinstate the lost glory of Cross River State by reviving tourism activities to bring about sustainable economic development

Cultural arts has become a major raw area of tourism demand because of people's inclination to seek out novelty including traditional cultures. Heritage tourism one of the most important parts of cultural arts is based on experiencing the places and activities that authentically represent historic, cultural and natural resources of a given area or region. It is an activity commonly regarded by visits to historic places or sites, arts and crafts (Garrod & Gyll, 2001). Cultural arts is an integral part of any nation which reflects its culture and tradition of a particular region.

Historic sites is an official location of building, sites, structure where pieces of political, military or social history are preserved and which is of local, regional or national significance. Historic sites are lasting records of past lives and endeavours. People are motivated to visit these sites as a result of nostalgia for by-gone eras or learn about the historic context of the site. This has given rise to heritage tourism (Iwuagwu, Alex-Onyeocha & Lydia, 2015).

Cultural arts is quite a new phenomenon as part of cultural tourism but its routes can be traced back to the ancient times of human history (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1998). Its demand has rapidly grown in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The recent trend of extra ordinary growth of heritage tourism development are due to several phenomena experienced in social life, the increase of education level of the population and the trends of the tourism industry.

Tourism has gradually become the world's largest industry with a trend toward an increased specialization among travellers and cultural arts is the fastest growing segment of the industry. Arts industry is now a major pillar that can be used to boost local culture and aid

the seasonal and geographical spread of tourism (Hollinshead, 2003). According to Kaufman, (2009) the Travel Industry Association Travelometer listed visiting historic sites as one of the top five activities for travellers in North America.

Tourists often view visits to cultural arts as opportunities for cultural and educational experiences. They are seeking authentic experiences that are tied to a specific historic places rather than just leisure in a resort that could be anywhere. Macleod, (2006) report that cultural arts involve visiting historical sites, arts and crafts that may include old values and the overall purpose is to gain appreciation of the past. Peterson (2004) revealed three major reasons for visiting historic sites: to experience a different time or place, to learn to enjoy a cerebral experience and to share with other or teaching children the history of the site.

Traditional arts and crafts (handicrafts) have been since man’s earliest days in accordance with the prevailing environmental conditions. Handicraft were later improved and adapted according to environmental conditions and accepted as an art that reflects the artistic sense, feelings and cultural characteristics of a society. It forms a rich mosaic by bringing together genuine values with the cultural heritage of the different civilizations. Arts and crafts include carpet making, cloth-weaving, tile-making, rug-making, ceramics and pottery, embroidery, leather manufacture, musical-instrument making, masonry, copper work, basket-making, weaving, wood-work, etc. A study was carried out by Reynolds (2009) on that taking up arts and crafts in later life with the aim of exploring the experiential factors that older women perceive as encouraging their take-up of and participation in visual art-making during later life. Twelve older women (aged 61-80 years) were recruited through a magazine for an older readership. The findings revealed that distal and proximal factors encouraged the take-up of art-making in later life. This study reveals that taking up arts and crafts in life aids in improving the standard of living.

The rapidly developing relationship between tourism and cultural arts arguably heralds a ‘creative turn’ in tourism development. Arts and crafts have been employed to transform cultural tourism, shifting from tangible heritage towards more intangible culture and greater involvement with the everyday life of the destinations. The emergence of cultural arts reflects the growing integration between tourism and different place making strategies, including promotion of the creative industries, creative cities and the ‘creative class’ (Yang, Shafi, Song & Yang, 2018).

In a study carried out by Philips, Indar and Thorne (2017) on the analysis of the art and craft sector and its potential for sustainable tourism development in the Caribbean. This study undertook a survey of the sub-regional art and craft sector as well as a case study value chain analysis of two Caribbean countries – Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. The findings confirm that art and craft hold significant potential for bolstering the regional tourism economy. Moreover, the dynamics of the tourism sector appear, in turn, to provide a good driver for the future development of the sub-sector.

Another study on promoting employment and preserving cultural arts: arts study of handicraft products tourism in Pokhara, Nepal by Upadhyay (2020). The paper was aimed at exploring the role of handicraft products in promoting employment as well as preserving the cultural heritage of Pokhara. The study result revealed that there is a significant level of correlation and dependency between handicraft products and tourist’s arrival, job creation and the increase in income and social status of artisans and handicrafts shop keepers. As a unique experience for tourists, handicraft products have enriched national economy, identity and promote cultural heritage, uniqueness and authenticity and cultural commercialization. However, arts and crafts is not just about commercialization of displaying and selling products, it is about allowing tourists to truly understand the skill and the craft at rear and realize handicrafts unique tradition, linking

tourists to artisans to facilitate them understand and appreciate the art.

Iwuagwu et al (2015) conducted a study on assessment of potentials of historic sites in boosting tourism development in Imo State, Nigeria. The aims of the study were to: identify the historic sites and characterize their tourist potential for economic development; to identify the possible ways of conserving and managing cultural heritage sites for economic development, etc. The study area was Arondizogu in Imo State of Nigeria. The study made use of interviews and personal observation in order to get adequate information about the place. Two hundred (200) copies of questionnaire were administered in order to ascertain the level of awareness of the people on the historical sites in their community and also to examine their level of patronage to these sites. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data.

The investigation concluded that cultural arts has a great potential for skills development; it provides avenues for generation of knowledge which is an indispensable feature of the heritage sectors; it fosters innovation and transmission of cultural heritage to the new generation; it also helps in the provision of basic services like schools and health centres which are fully equipped with facilities. The heritage sectors are also innovative not only where it overlaps with the creative industries but also in its core activities related to conservation and restoration.

The study further concluded that the development of these sites has the potentials for the generation of direct and indirect economic benefits, industrial development; also induced jobs along with drawing investment and tourists, it provides an efficient tool for providing social cohesion. Heritage sites can serve as efficient means for the policy of social inclusion, intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution. It was also concluded that heritage tourism has the advantage of consistently attracting tourists from home and abroad. Socio-economically, it helps to foster community growth and development in terms of social amenities such as electricity, water,

good health centres and also infrastructures such as roads, shopping malls, etc.

The study recommended that development of any nation, country, state and community relies much on harnessing their resources through advanced technology, planning and managing. Based on the study, public sectors are supposed to cooperate with the private sectors in order to conserve and rehabilitate cultural heritage sites. Careful planning is needed to protect the visual integrity of historic places and sites. Ukpere and Wabah (2018) emphasized that the artifacts and socio-facts of our various environment are the living memoirs of our rich cultural heritage. These artifacts which are the ingenuity of artists and literacy icons are the very museological infrastructures of our material culture that keep us in touch with history, by linking us with the past, the present and the future.

The various museums and potential historical sites across Nigeria are veritable centres for tourists' attraction. They are good sources of revenue and employment generation. In western countries, visits to museums and historical sites are a regular activity and a big enterprise. Thousands of people spend their hard earned monies in scrambling for tickets to enter museums or buy artifacts of home and office decoration. Thus, in countries like the USA, Brazil, India, China, Israel, Egypt, Frances, Italy, Germany, Costa Rica and Saudi Arabia, eco-tourism is successfully enhancing economic development due to the contributions of museums, cultural fiestas and historical sites (Adebayo, 2009; Okey, 2003).

A well co-ordinated cultural heritage tourism or eco-cultural tourism through museums, artifacts, cultural fiestas and historical sites is economically benefited. Thus, the expansion and rehabilitation of existing museums and establishment of new ones in every local government areas of Nigeria, according to Ukpere and Wabah (2018) will be of immense economic development benefit. Ukpere and Wabah commented that the several cultural festivals (socio and religious, including folk tales and dance) in every state of Nigeria is a strong motivator to the use of cultural

heritage to generate wealth, create employment and promote sustainable peace and development.

According to Akoda (2011) cultural festivals such as Eyo festival of Lagos, the Dubai festival of Katsina, the Argugu Fishing festival in Kogi State, the traditional wrestling and dance festivals of the Ijaws of the Niger Delta, etc. are appreciated and accepted by all ages of Nigeria and even foreigners. These constitute viable sustainable economic development sources. Both the print and electronic media especially the television stations are doing a lot in showcasing these festivals specially, local wrestling, traditional music and dance to entertain, educate and inform both local and international viewers and listeners.

Scholars (Adewale, 2012; Adebayo, 2009) strongly admitted that a viable and sustainable cultural heritage business through the use of museums, historical sites and cultural festivals is a veritable tool for the logical prosecution of the war against unemployment, youth restiveness and security challenges poverty; high income disparity, unfavourable balance of trade and payments, rural inaccessibility and underdevelopment.

According to Okey (2003) in Ukpere and Wabah (2018), the development of a functional and more formidable policy to drive the tourism sector is preferable to relying on fossil fuels and non-renewable resources like coal, bitumen, crude oil and natural gas. This will help to facilitate the emergence of a viable eco-cultural tourism business using museums, historical sites, artifacts, art galleries and cultural festivals across the country. Preservation of cultural heritage as a tourism product boosts sustainable economic development by stimulating growth in both GDP and GNP, encourage employment and wealth generation, foster growth in ancillary industries, promote indigenous intellectual artistic skill and capacity building, encourage community development through the opening up of the hinterlands and provision of basic social amenities.

According to Mewforth and Munt (2008) in Ukpere and Wabah (2018), the geo-

spatial alignment of these three: museums/monuments, historical sites/tourist centres and artifacts/cultural festivals is very crucial because they are the driving forces for sustainable eco-cultural tourism in Nigeria. Mewforth and Munt stressed that the opportunities provided by the various landscapes of northern highlands and eastern Nigeria scarp lands with diverse geographical features, the sand beaches and coastal/marine features and the biological diversities provided by the freshwater, rainforests and mangrove swamp forests of southern Nigeria are additional boosts to tourism industry in Nigeria. This has the capacity to promote sustainable economic development.

According to Ukpere and Wabah (2018), heritage tourism plays vital roles in wealth generation and sustainable national development. These are:

1. Income/revenue generation to government, communities, groups and individuals through tollgates, sales of artifacts, costumes, etc and for other allied sectors such as food and fashion industry.
2. Provision of job opportunities (e.g. artists, tour-guides, hotels, bar and restaurant operators, photographers, film makers, stylist, etc).
3. Encouragement of the growth of ancillary industries such as the paint and film industry, textile and costumes production, transport and hospitality industry, etc.
4. Skills acquisition and promotion of artists' creativity.
5. Preservation of cultural values and promotion of regional and national identity and integration.
6. Opening-up of the hinterlands that hitherto were inaccessible.
7. Social transformation of places through the provision of basic amenities.
8. Cultural transmission and innovations diffusion.
9. Community development and capacity building.

10. Income re-distribution, increase in GDP and encouragement in economics of agglomeration.
11. Through eco-cultural tourism, our abandoned museums can be resuscitate, new ones established, monument erected and potential tourist centres developed for maximum benefits.

Museums, monument and historical sites play major roles as tourism heritage in sustainable economic development.

### **Statement of the problem**

The economy Cross River State has degraded in that the issue of sustainable economic development has been a serious concern to policy makers and other concerned stakeholders in Nigeria generally and Cross River State in particular.

Cultural arts are part of tourism which has the potential to bring about great development. The past governments in Cross River State had recorded successes in tourism sector like influx of visitors into the state during the Calabar Carnival event, Ekpe masquerade festival, Leboku new yam festival, Mountain race, etc. The state benefitted and there was a rise in the small scale business sector and these helped to boost the economy of the state. One would have expected a continuous rise, but the reverse is what we are witnessing, like closure of some tourism sites and activities while others are gradually becoming less functioning.

However, the state government has made efforts to revive the sector by introducing zero taxation on small scale business amongst others, yet, there is still low level of socio economic wellbeing of people, evident in low income generation, poverty rates, high level of criminal activities and high unemployment rates, in Cross River State.

In this circumstance, what could be done to ensure sustainable economic development in the state? What are the activities that can boost sustainable economic development in Cross River State? With these questions in mind, the researchers are poised to find out if tourism activities in form of cultural arts have any influence on sustainable economic development in Cross River State.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to: examine, whether cultural arts influence sustainable economic development in Cross River State;

### **Research question:**

One research question was raised to guide the study;

Thus, to what extent does cultural arts influence sustainable economic development in Cross River State?

### **Statement of hypothesis**

Based on the purpose and research question put forth for the study, a hypothesis was formulated to guide the study.

Thus, there is no significant influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State.

### **Methodology**

The research design used for the study was survey. To obtain a representative sample, multistage (stratified and purposive) sampling procedure was used. The state was stratified into the existing three (3) senatorial districts (southern, central and northern) while the purposive sampling technique was adopted to select the local government areas with tourism sites in each stratum. These local government areas were Akamkpa, Calabar Municipality, Ikom, Obanliku, Ogoja and Yakur. Precisely two LGAs in each senatorial districts were selected. Five (5) members of staff of the tourism commission from each of the six tourism sites and (30) from 12 mostly used hotels in the LGAs (60), 10 members of staff from the Cross River State Tourism Commission and one hundred and fifty (150) persons from each L.G.A visited in the three senatorial districts (i.e  $150 \times 6 = 900$ ). Total respondents were  $60 + 30 + 10 + 900 = 1000$  respondents. Therefore, the sample was 1000 adult citizens.

The instrument used for this study was a 20 items questionnaire titled; "Cultural Arts activities and Sustainable Economic Development Questionnaire " The 20 items questionnaire was divided into 3 sections. Section A elicited responses on the respondents demographic information data such as senatorial districts and LGA. Section B elicited responses on respondents' view on cultural arts items in the questionnaire. It consists of 8 items designed in a structured 4 points rating scale instrument of strongly agree up to strongly disagree. The items assessed the opinion of adult men and women as it related to cultural arts activities. Section C consists of 10 items designed on a four point rating scale of SA to SD. The items assessed the opinion of adult men and women on sustainable economic development. The data collected were analysed using simple linear regression analysis.

The instrument was validated by two experts, one in measurements and evaluation

and the other in Environmental Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient reliability method was adopted to test the consistency of the test instrument. The reliability index of between 0.70 and 0.84 obtained was high enough to accept that the instrument was reliable

### Results

The result of the analysis was presented based on the study hypothesis.

Ho; There is no significant influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State. The independent variable in the hypothesis is cultural arts, while the dependent variable is sustainable economic development. Simple linear regression was used to test the hypothesis. The summary of the result of analysis is presented in Table 1

Table 1

Simple linear regression analysis of cultural arts and sustainable economic development

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	4740.939	1	4740.939	199.278	.000 <sup>b</sup>	.408	.166
Residual	23743.052	998	23.791				
Total	28483.991	999					

\*\*significant at 0.05 level, df = 998

The result of the analysis presented in Table 3 showed that  $R = .408$  which implies that there is a significant influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development. This means that the more the cultural arts, the more sustainable economic development. The  $R^2 = .166$  which implies that the variation on sustainable economic development can be explained by 16.6% contribution of cultural arts. Even though the percentage contribution was small, a careful look at the analysis of variance ( $F = 62.059$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The significant influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State, is due to the sig. value of  $p$  (.000), which is

less than the acceptable value of  $p$  (.05). Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

### Discussion of findings

Cultural arts and sustainable economic development ;

There is no significant influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State. The result of the analysis presented in Table 3 revealed that there is a significant influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State. The significant influence of cultural arts on sustainable economic development in Cross River State, is due to the sig. value of .000, which is less than the acceptable value of .05.



This could be due to the fact that cultural arts involve the acquisition of skills and techniques in creating something new. That is, skills in crafts that can make people independent of the government and society. It can help create jobs and additional income to individuals. Cultural arts also remind one of the past (history) upon which generation will inherit knowing well that when history is known, the mistakes of the past will be overcome, development will also be achieved.

### Conclusion

The study concentrated on tourism activities and sustainable economic development in Cross River State, Nigeria. The result obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses in the study revealed that there is significant relationship between cultural festivals, carnival events, cultural arts, hospitality industry and sports with sustainable economic development.

The need to mobilize people towards active participation in tourism activities has become imperative in sustaining the economy of Cross River State which in turn will help to improve the standard of living of the citizens.

### Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study the researchers recommended that, appropriate levels of awareness concerning cultural arts should be created by government and other cultural and environmental stake holders to enable indigenes and other residents tap into this area and benefit from it.

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