

The Intermarriage Between Art And Tourism: A Case Study Of Art And Tourism Development In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria could be referred to as the ovary of Africa, because of its large population and numerous natural resources. With its high number of population, which is over 180 million, this has made Nigeria the most indigenous and most densely populated country in Africa and also the “seventh most populous country in the world.”¹ The two main common religions practiced in Nigeria is Christianity, which is widely practiced by the Southerners and Westerners, while Islam is been deferentially practiced by the Northerners and few Westerners. They are popularly known as Muslims, while the other religious group is known as Christians. This has created different tastes of religion, culture, ideology, philosophy and the aesthetic feeling for tourism, technology and structural beauty.

In Nigeria, today, it is quite disturbing that the government has decided to rely more on oil and gas and pay less attention to tourism or the creation of more sophisticated tourist attraction sites that would help to boost not only the economy but also become the main tourist ground for wealthy tourists who would invest in the country and create a lasting cordial relationship that would last for decades. For example, countries like United States, China, Italy, Thailand, Dubai, among others, have reaped immensely from tourism and have continued to pump more revenue into art and tourism, creating more elegantly massive structures for art galleries, museums and tourist gardens which normally end up being the heart of beauty for tourists who visit their countries.

A country that doesn't believe in art and tourism would have a slow growth in both their economy and technology, and the arrival of prosperity would be delayed or even eliminated. Many artists, engineers, agriculturists, physicists and scientists would leave the country to develop other countries that are ready to fully embrace art and tourism. It is therefore essential to know that art and tourism are deeply connected and can't be separated or ignored, because they create not only beauty and hope, but also heavily enrich the economy, citizens, as well as the tourists. As regards to this, I would say that the Nigerian government have not given full attention to the promotion of art and tourism, that is why the country is facing a lot of challenges in the areas of arts, tourism and culture, which needs solid attention for the betterment of the country.

The Nigerian government should have an affectionate union with artists, archeologists, engineers and scientists in order to device systematic and professional ways of working together to refine, upgrade and create unbelievable tourist attraction sites and structures that would serve as a magnetic field to attract visitors who would help to enrich, empower and promote the areas of Nigerian art and tourism.

It is therefore extremely important to acknowledge the integral role that art and tourism have played in the development and beautification of Nigeria.

KEY WORDS: Nigeria, Art, Culture, Tourism, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Art and Tourism

According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, (OECD), “ancient tourism was mainly based on cultural purpose”² but today, tourism has taken a new flexible dimension and has become more germane for tourists, businesses men and women, who would quickly help to boost the tourism of the countries they visit. Although, in this present time, some countries fail to understand the real comprehension of the depths and breadths of art and tourism, not knowing that only the countries that exhibit profound love for art and tourism can upgrade and made to progress.

Art and tourism consists of two inseparable distinctive factors: beauty and vision. It is through the successful combination of these two factors that the creation of a world-class country can be accomplished. Beauty and vision are inevitable factors that are often ignored, yet, the more people try to overlook these factors, the more they merge together like art and tourism. In fact, art and tourism are so connected that the more people try to separate them, the more their country tend to face series of difficulties in representing beauty and presenting luxurious sites. According to Craig Watson, “an area of tourism that is often overlooked is the question of the arts and tourism. One of the reasons for this consistent overlooking may be the fact that it is hard to define the term “the arts”,”³ which is more like trying to challenge the usefulness of the medulla oblongata or dive from an airplane without a parachute.

It shouldn't be hard to define the term “art” or “the arts”, this is because art is the driving force of the human existence and controls any conceptual or visual creation. Of course, art is life and life is art, and can even mean much more, from dust to flesh, water to blood; all entities, both living or nonliving, are birthed from the invisible womb of art. Undeniably, it is wise to say that anywhere there is inspiration and growth which includes science and technology, there is art. As such, one must also think of the artistic part of the artists and his artistic goals, his vision, inspiration and expression.

Leadership and tourism

Artists have tried seamlessly to enthusiastically promote and upgrade art and tourism for the betterment of a successful world-class country. Even when the government tries to use other areas to dominate and downgrade art and tourism, it always results to an excellent failure and generous tourists would never visit to explore and enjoy the popular sites that other countries have. It is extremely important for a country to put tourism first, because no country would want to partner or associate with a deserted-looking country, even if the country is blessed with crude oil, smart countries will create chaos, outsmart the country and use their crude oil to upgrade their own countries. The growth of any reliable and enviable country depends solely on the leaders or lawmakers, yes, the citizens also have roles to play, but the father of the house is always accountable for the crash of the family. This proves that a selfless leader can learn more from a poor country than a selfish leader can learn from a rich country.

However, it has become a thing of abundant indigence that the leaders, who are suppose to protect the citizens are the ones who are totally reckless, and the evidence of their carelessness is irrefutable and out of control. It is simply difficult to fathom the reason why they are called leaders or lawmakers and what they derive from slaughtering the country's image, depriving the citizens from enjoying both international and national cordial relations and reception. It is clear to see that the modules of most African leaders have never been about developing but damaging, and creating breath taking problems. They don't understand the laws of preservation, saving and conservation or how to carefully manage the environment and natural resources. All they have mastered are the laws of mismanagement and embezzlement. Their nobleness and righteousness is betraying and obviously defined by their greed. They have become compulsive looters, putting the citizens into an elegiac state of impoverishment and have also become the terrorists of tourism. The Nigerian government has not made any rules which can stop these rascally looters.

I therefore challenge the leaders to adopt sincerity, change their ways and wholeheartedly makeup with integrity, by taking up the responsibilities that they have sworn oaths to oblige by. They should also ignore frivolities and create a safe and better country where tourists can visit and find luxurious galleries, industries, hospitals, schools, museums, companies, factories and scenic tourist sites where visitors could explore, relax, be entertained and bask in the grace of the country.

Citizens and tourism

The concept of citizens and tourism is definitely as merged together as art and tourism, because for decades, many citizens had given their indubitable affection for tourism, thereby, unconsciously promoting art, culture and logically building a force to be reckoned with. Generally, humans are inquisitive, acquisitive and nomadic in nature. They love to explore, acquire and posses, this has created a strong desire for tourism and a compulsive need for exploration and engagement in activities related to entertainments that feed them with ineffable joy.

The relationship between the citizens and tourism can easily be defined as the obsession for exploration, which has uniquely changed the way explorers and tourists see other people's

community. This has also made tourists alert and to fully connect and understand other people's religion, culture, traditional morality and history. Tourism can also engage the tourists to create an exceptionally grand society for both the government and the people. For example, recently, the owners of big technology companies visited Nigeria to tour and teach aspiring young engineers how to connect faster with their dreams, work smarter and aim higher. This has brought good results, because young Nigerians have been at the forefront of making the international news for either developing high-tech computer software program, applications or creating new age sensitive drones and robots that have proven to be unusual and outstanding.

Without the help of tourists, most geniuses won't be inspired or made to realize the true essence of their talent. Other technologists have also been employed to work with technology companies of their dreams, companies they never believed they could work for. Today, they occupy offices in these big companies. Some of the engineer's upgrade to become share holders and corporate partners with these companies. This shows that it is very relevant to have a great knowledge of the integral role tourism induces into human existence. Tourism aims at upgrading human psychological taste and also targets at showcasing the main cultural and religious experiences of different tribes that pay absolute reverence to their authentic way of life.

The citizens are the main factors that decide the fate of tourism in any country, and they also have the power to negatively or positively add to the development the government has already set up for tourism purposes. A country or state with citizens who give zero tolerance to tourism will always have cultural diversity, less attractive structures, low budget theatre houses and empty art galleries and museums, and worst of all, tourists would have no memorable sites to visit when they arrive. It is therefore important for citizens to start believing in themselves and know that they can achieve anything with a knowledge they have no knowledge of, and develop innovative ways to upgrade tourism that would be friendly and would suit all kinds of tourists.

For instance, tourists coming from highly religious countries should be able to find temples or places of worship that accommodates their religious status, and the different food types of foreigners should also be respected. For example, a Chinese man should be able to find a Chinese restaurant in any country that has love for tourism. Such country should also be able to boast of high-class structures, modernized trains, improved transportation, undisrupted electricity, sophisticated technology and selfless service from the citizens. All these would help the country in gaining respect, promoting and attracting wealthy tourists, philanthropists and art connoisseurs.

Government and Tourism

As stated in the Art & Cultural Tourism Strategy for Western Australia, "The Western Australian Government recognizes the dynamic interaction between the arts and the tourism market and has made a coordinated approach to marketing Western Australian arts and culture a priority".⁴ But in Nigerian, a politician would sit in the comfort of his fluffy sofa and say that the Nigerian government is trying its best in making sure that they make tourism more suitable for both the citizens and tourists. To be very candid, I would say that their best is not enough. This is

because, for several years, the government has continuously reduced the level and amount of enthusiasm and money spent on upgrading tourist attraction sites. Now they complain that citizens are lazy. It is also disheartening to say that oil producing states which are supposed to be the heart of tourist attraction grounds are mostly the states that glow with poverty, that is the same manner in which the leaders have mismanaged the revenue gotten from crude oil and turned the people into slaves in their own country. Misplaced priorities have become the order of the day, while corruption, starvation and death rate is on a high toll, and thuggery and hooliganism is being celebrated as a part of nobility. The Nigerian lawmakers are creatively looking for ways to create and glorify laws that would suit their drastically fantastic incompetence and immoralities. The electoral system is being bamboozled with outdated voting system which makes it highly possible to be manipulated, and they shy away from e-voting that would make the electoral process smooth and transparent. The worst is the marauding amount of salaries been paid to the law makers which make them forget their duties.

I believe, anyone in his or her right senses of reasoning would support the fact that if they make the salaries of the law makers less attractive, Nigeria would become more attractive and proactive to tourism, education, agriculture, architecture, production and wastage would become instinct. Nigeria, as a country, cannot continue to survive in the hands of destructors and manipulators who would go any length to stifle power and not mind injuring the hopes and reputation of the country and citizens. It doesn't matter how broken, confused and dismantled Nigeria has become, what matters is how fast we cultivate the manner of rejecting oppressors, soul diggers and dream eaters, and learn how to pick up the newness of our boldness and begin to wear it around. Moreover, there should be a full sanitization where both the general public, government workers, politicians, teachers and workers would go through a thorough rehabilitation of both the mind and spirit. Without doubt, Nigeria needs to go back to the drawing board and critically check where they got it wrong. Only then, will Nigeria wake up, sit up and enjoy what other fruitful countries are enjoying.

Without this, Nigeria will continue to swim in a bathtub infested with snakes of all kinds and sharks of odd incompetence.

Tourists and Tourism

Tourists engage in tourism to have a firsthand knowledge of other people's culture, behaviour, religion and truly understand their way of life and also have an integral connection with their language. This is why it is crucial for citizens to cultivate the habit of being kind and always encourage the tourists by appreciating their presence, which will definitely help to retain a more cordial relationship. Consciously and unconsciously, tourists are gaining knowledge from travelling around the world. This has also been advantageous to them, as they are able to associate, communicate and engage in business activities with any tribe or country of their choice. This is because they have acquired different specific cultural traits which allow them to be flexible and diversified.

Most of the tourists who travel for business activities, pleasure or research purposes prefer to stay in places that are clean and safe. The tourists tend to settle in areas that are free from congestion and noises caused by traffic, beer joints and night clubs that make the environment infested by pick-pockets, prostitutes and hooligans. However, tourists are becoming wiser and more experienced, as they never visit countries that are going through crisis, hardship and lack the ability to protect foreigners in time of conflict.

It is therefore important for any government to make security their number one focus in order to curb insecurity and protect both the citizens and visitors. This will not only lead to the betterment of the country, but will also lead to opportunities for collaboration, will help to promote the country, and also serve as a removal of political impunities and impurities.

Signs of how to know when citizens don't care about tourism:

When citizens don't care about tourism, they automatically stop being affectionate and adventurous. They begin to live in denial, loose interest in art, traveling and always blame the government for not organizing parties for them. It is quite unfortunate that they don't even understand what they want or need. They will begin to exhibit these signs:

1. Blame game will be activated.
2. Inquisitiveness will be deactivated.
3. Determination will die off.
4. Competitive spirit will run off.
5. Attractiveness will wear off.
6. Hatred for art and new inventions will be pronounced.
7. Argumentation would louden.
8. Aggression would be on default mode.
9. Deceitfulness would upgrade.
10. Greed would become their creed.
11. Bribery and corruption would flourish.
12. They would lack foresight or scope.
13. They would lack intimacy for adventures.
14. Finally, they would become dispirited and incommunicado.

These are the common signs citizens show when they have no admiration for tourism.

Interview with tourists and intellectuals:

1. Prof. Helen from Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Nigeria is a lovely country blessed with natural things one could possibly wish for. The people are accommodative, their food is something else —extremely sweet, but the

Nigerian government should add more strength in making sure that this marvelous beauty of a country is not destroyed by corrupt beings and leaders. I can't wait to visit again.

2. Prof. Emeritus Ola Oloidi, Nigeria

— Dr. Oluwafemi: Do you think that the Nigerian government is doing their best in making sure that tourism is the main focus or one of the agendas used to make the country better?

—Prof. Emeritus Ola Oloidi: Well, the Nigerian government is trying, but they are not doing enough, because more is expected. I believe they would do better if they make tourism their top priority.

3. Dr. George Odoh, Nigeria

—Dr. Oluwafemi: What do you think about the Nigerian government's attitude towards tourism?

—Dr. George Odoh: The Nigerian government has the attitude of quick-term benefit; they want to sow now and reap now, forgetting that they have to develop to a certain high level before they can fully understand and reap tourism's long term benefits. Security should also be in place before tourists would start coming in. Another huge challenge that Nigeria is facing is the lack of maintenance culture. In fact, Nigeria doesn't have a maintenance culture and she has not made tourism her main priority.

4. Dr. George Emeka Agbo, Nigeria –

— Dr. Oluwafemi: As regards to tourism in Nigeria, do you think that the Nigerian government is doing their best?

— Dr. George Emeka Agbo: Is that a question I should respond to?

— Dr. Oluwafemi: No, the gods can answer on your behalf. *Laughter*

— Dr. George Emeka Agbo: Laughs.

— Dr. Oluwafemi: Okay, Doc, please respond to the question.

— Dr. George Emeka Agbo: I don't think so, because the tourist industry is not well developed in Nigeria. Seems like nobody is interested especially because we have oil and

we hardly realize that in some other places, tourism is a big business; like in South Africa, Kenya and so on.

— Dr. Oluwafemi: Thank you for your direct response. Do you think that a time would come when Nigerians will come back to their senses and forget about developing other people's country and develop theirs instead?

— Dr. George Emeka Agbo: Yes, I think it would come and many of us are praying it would happen. Many of us pray that either the oil economy crumbles or the oil runs out, so that the government would come back to their senses. It is the oil economy that has ruined us in Nigeria, where most people who work for the government, don't work because they are interested in the work, but they just want to work and if possible ghost-work and collect money from the federal government. Corruption has eaten deep into the Nigerian system. The government itself knows that they are paying workers not because of what the workers have produced, but because they have oil, so the pay doesn't come from the work the workers do, but from oil revenue. So when oil runs out or when the international oil market crumbles and Nigeria won't be making any money from oil, they would begin to look into other areas like tourism, agriculture and so on.

— Dr. Oluwafemi: What do you think is the cause of Nigeria's excessive lack of maintenance culture?

— Dr. George Emeka Agbo: It is corruption and nothing more than that, especially, when you look at the political formation of Nigeria. When Nigeria practiced the regional system of government, things were a bit better. But now, that entity called Nigeria is like something Nigerians don't have attachment to. If you are a politician in your village, members of your community would tell you to go and steal money and come back home. They don't see Nigeria as a home for all of us. They see it as a different entity, like a bush where one goes to hunt and bring back the animal. So that is part of the problem.

CONCLUSION

Art and tourism are the main roots that have socially and culturally helped to upgrade and beautify Nigeria. It has helped to exhibit the country's cultural heritage, through numerous creative ways and have also served as a major economic backing. Art and tourism has not only served as a "major employment generator"⁶ and an intellectual weapon, but it has also made intellectual workers to engage in creative literary, artistic and scientific excises. Naturally and strategically, art and tourism motivates the humans' curiosity and creates a tremendous urge for people to go places and meet different kinds of people with deferent types of customs and beliefs.

If a country lacks respect for other people's traditional and religious belief, tourists would also lack interest and dissociate themselves from anything that has to do with the racist country. But if a country embraces and accommodates other people's tradition and cultural beliefs, this would create room for expansion and growth and also successfully present the country in a positive light. This would help to positively exhibit and promote the country in the eyes of other highly developed countries. It is therefore important to applaud the efforts of the ebullient artists, engineers, archeologist and scientists who have showed concern, given their time and played major roles in the development of a powerful country. These highly-spirited inventors have not only helped in the development of a powerful country, but have captured the minds of tourists with fantastic tall malls, real-life-looking sculptures, colourful mural wall paintings, exclusive cinema theater houses, transparent elevators, artistically shaped high scrappers, neat beach houses, colourful love-gardens, amusement parks and elegant hospitals and churches. All these help in attracting tourists who have undoubtable admiration for art and tourism.

The government has to put in all their best in making sure that contractors or private sectors who have been contracted to build good roads, deluxe structures and outstanding tourist sites would not just collect money, shabbily carry out half of the job, bribe off some officials and disappear. The act of using huge funds to build substandard structures and roads in Nigeria has become one of the major problems which have put the country in a state of condensed mockery and has also dumped the promotion of art and tourism into a bin of promise and fail.

It is highly important for the government to develop strategies on how to solve the problems of mismanagement and also partner with sincere inventors and earnestly recognize the integral roles they have played in the restoration and rehabilitation of the country. This will help to exonerate the leaders, rejuvenate and reunite the people and also thicken the marriage between art and tourism.

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