

CALABAR CULTURAL FESTIVAL AND THE WELLBEING OF EFIK PEOPLE, NIGERIA

Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Felix Ojong¹ Odere, F. E.²

¹Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria

²Graduate Student, University of Calabar, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The study examines the correlates between Calabar cultural festival and the wellbeing of the Efik people of Cross River State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formed on the main variables to guide the study. Survey method which allows for the use of questionnaire was adopted. Information was gathered from 300 respondents. Data collected was subjected to Pearson product moment correlation analysis. Result revealed that the Calabar cultural festival significantly contribute to the wellbeing of the Efik people in areas of income and employment generation as well as infrastructure development. The study recommended among others, policy option that allows more private sector participation in the festival.

Keywords: Cultural festival, wellbeing, job creation, income generation, infrastructure development.

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural festivals and events are one of the fastest growing forms of tourism globally and is increasingly popular in Cross River State. The Calabar cultural festival is one important component mix of the Cross River tourism industry which attracts tourists across the world (Ukwayi, Ojong & Augustine, 2012; Attah, Agba, & Nkpoyen, 2013). The cultural festival is an annual event that has the potentials of contributing significantly to the wellbeing of the Efik people, that is the host community. Key features of the festival include – colourful masquerades, indigenous music and dance, and entertaining band processions (Esu, Arrey, Basil & Eyo, 2011; Agba, Ikoh, Basse & Ushie, 2010). The festival is developed to have the potentials of becoming the major driver of the Cross River State economy (Achonwa, 2007; Ingwe, Agba & Ndum, 2014).

Calabar cultural festival is capable of weaning Cross River State of dependence on the monthly federal allocations and also providing a viable means of income for individuals engaged in

tourism related business (Achonwa, 2007). The festival is as old as the Efik kingdom, but was popularised and was given international recognition by Governor Donald Duke of Cross River State in 2004 (Odere, 2015; Attah, Agba, & Nkpoyen, 2013). Since then, the socio-economic consequences of the festival have attracted remarkable research and debates. However, investigations on the effect of the festival on the wellbeing of the Efik people (the immediate host community) has received lease consideration. The study is posed to bridge this empirical gap by investigating the effect of the festival on job creation, income generation, and infrastructural development among the Efik people of Calabar.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Calabar cultural festival and job creation

The economic role of Calabar cultural festival is based on the fact that they act as catalyst for attracting visitors and increasing average spending and length of stay in the destination. The festival/carnival contributes to the income generation and prosperity of the destination (Agba, Mbotto & Agba, 2013). This is because, it generates new employment opportunities (Prentice & Anderson, 2003). There is an agreement among experts that festivals bring about the emergence of small and medium size enterprises in tourism destinations (Bachlestiner & Zins, 2009). The benefits of Calabar cultural festival include provision of community facilities, job creation and the promotion of the area for tourism (Hall, 2004). Calabar cultural festival creates employment and business opportunities for both local community and tourism investors (Compton & Love, 205). According to Falassi (2009), Calabar cultural festival is an industry that is labour intensive; it has great potential in creating employment opportunities, particularly in Cross River State.

According to Hall (2004), economic impact of event is the total amount of additional expenditure generated within a city that can be directly or indirectly attributed to the staging of a major event. This implies that events such as the Calabar cultural festival to a large extent influence socio-economic development such as job creation. Furthermore, Lindberg (1996) economic impact studies focuses on the changes that take place in sales, income, jobs and other parameters generated by economic events and concluded that the aim of every economic activities is to generate substantial revenue for the state. As reported by Achonowa (2007), investment in tourism has brought about income generation activities such as job creation for its increasing population. The Calabar cultural festival has an immense socio-economic benefit for the the host community. The event over time has been perceived to be a high revenue earner for the state as well as creating thousands of job to tackle the issue of unemployment in the state and the nation. This is reflected in the fact that the potential of the event is transformed into sources of economic empowerment and job creation for the people.

2.2 Calabar cultural festival and income generation

Cross River State earns much income from influx of tourists during the period of the festivals, as more hard currency flows into a state, the more development and generated income the state and its people can boost of (Etefia, 2014; Agba, Mbotto & Agba, 2013). The National Institute for Cultural Orientation (2014), reported that the cultural festivals if properly harnessed can pull imaginable revenue for the country and enhance tourism, but unfortunately, not much has been done to convert these assets into economic wealth (Nico, 2014). They also asserted that the Calabar carnival festival has the charity dimension and highlighted activities geared towards generating money for the under privilege in the state. Thus, it is a veritable source of income, as the state makes its highest internally generated revenue during the festival.

Gray (2008) affirmed that the cost of the Calabar carnival festival is often not evident from the festival goers' perspective. These include organization, security and policing, traffic control, medical treatment, water requirements, clean-up and damage to public property. The key to a successful festival is to create finances to assist cities and towns in providing these social services. (Natario, 2014). Festival organizers have an assortment of potential funds to tap into providing payment to local government units for services (Getz, 2001). Entrance fees, fees for exhibitors' individual and corporate gifts and markets promotional fees, all provide revenue generation for the State (CRTB, 2008).

Natario (2014) asserted that carnival is among the largest income-generating festival in the world and a reliable source to stimulate sustainable economic opportunities for small and medium-size businesses. According to Coffrey (2012), the Calabar cultural festival provides training for the local traders in hospitality, financial management and development of local trade initiatives, to maximise income generated from the increased trading activities. Through investing in the festival, greater income generation opportunities are enhanced

2.3 Calabar cultural festival and infrastructure development

Dominic (2011) observed that the Cross River State government through the cultural festival have ensured the provision of basic infrastructure facilities; namely roads, water, electricity, communications and hotels to cater for tourist. Thus, the provision of the basic social infrastructures like roads, recreational facilities, schools, hospitals, power, water supply and communication facilities, enhances high standard of living and improve community life among Efik people as well as promote sustainable development in Cross River State (Ottong & Bassey, 2009). Greve and Hodge (2005) in their study on public private partnerships, looking at the Australian experience noted that, organizations of the cultural festivals have helped developed infrastructures system in the state. They reported that a developed infrastructure system improves

production capacity of the state, and also creates positive impacts on the overall economic performance. However, it is increasingly clear that the Cross River State cannot provide all the funds needed to finance and maintain infrastructure. This call for private sector participation to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the infrastructure which is of central importance to attain social and economic stability (Moran, 2006). The cultural events have triggered off a lot of development of the economy in terms of expansion in hotels, guest houses, facilities have been put on ground such as the Christmas Village etc. to make the Calabar carnival more attractive; existing facilities has been restructured and new ones erected with higher standard to meet the demands of future event in the state. The cultural festivals activities in Cross River State enhance the facilities to boost the tourism industry and accommodate tourists and visitors during the event.

3. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION

3.1 Unbalanced growth theory

The theory of unbalanced growth was popularized by Albert Otto Hirschmann (Jhingan, 2006). This theory is a direct opposite of the doctrine of balanced growth theory by Ragnar Nurkse. The unbalanced growth theory states that "investments should be made in selected sectors rather than simultaneously in all sectors of the economy". No underdeveloped country possesses capital and other resources in such quantities as for their rapid development and the economic accruing from them can be utilized for the development of other sectors. Thus, the economy gradually moves from the path of unbalanced growth to that of balanced

The theory contends that deliberate unbalancing of the economy, the pre-designed strategy is the best way to achieve economic growth in underdeveloped country. According to Hirschmann, investment in strategically selected industries or sector of the economy will lead to new investment opportunities and so pave the way to further economic development. He maintains that development has of course preceded in this way, with growth being communicated from the leading sectors of the economy to the followers. From one industry to another, from one firm to another.

The theory has relevance for the present study especially here in Cross River State with lack of incentives for people or capital to engaged in new enterprise. Also with little or no manpower for rapid growth. Development could successfully strife if investment pattern is induced in one sector like what is being practicalised with the Calabar Carnival festival. Based on the study, Calabar Carnival festival enhances cultural tourism which can boost ecotourism as well as agricultural sector.

Therefore, concentration on the Calabar carnival festival in our underdeveloped state serve as a corrective stage of unbalanced growth coming into play to restore equilibrium to facilitate authentic development. It implies clearly that Cross River State being underdeveloped do not possesses capital and other resources in such quantities as to invest simultaneously in all sectors. The available capital and resources cannot be put under pressure to induce simultaneous development of the entire state's economy instead one selected sector like the Calabar cultural festival which is cultural tourism could be invested upon to promote ecotourism and perhaps the agricultural sector which can instigate the socio economic status of Cross River and visitors alike. In this way, the economy gradually moves from the path of unbalanced growth to that of balanced growth.

4. STUDY AREA

The study area is Calabar Metropolis in Cross River State. The study site is the Calabar cultural festival in Cross River State. The state is one of the 36 states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It has three senatorial districts: North, Central, and South. Cross River State is located at the tropical rain forest belt of Nigeria. It lies between latitude 4°28' and 6°55' North of the equator and Longitude 7°50' and 9°28' East of the Greenwich meridian. It shares common boundaries with the Republic of Cameroon in the East, Benue State in the North, Ebonyi and Abia States in the West, Akwa Ibom State in the South-east and Atlantic Ocean in the South. It has a total landmass of 22,342.185km², with a population of 2,888, and 966 people (NPC, 2007; Ukwayi, Agba, Inyang, & Eraye, 2011).

Cross River State has Calabar Metropolis as its capital with the Efik people being one of the dominant cultural group in the area. It is characterized by diversity in ethnic composition as well as its natural heritage which have a potential of enhancing the tourism industry of the state and country at large. The people of Cross River State are noted for their warm hospitality. (National bureau of statistics, 2014).

The capital city of Calabar has a lot of bars, restaurants, hotels, motels etc. and hosted the annual 32 days long Christmas festival and Calabar cultural festival celebration during the Christmas period. The Calabar festival is a collection of colourful event. The cultural event is held in two days: 26th (children carnival) and 27th (the carnival proper) December. The impact of this study is limited to the main event that held on both 26th and 27th December.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the Survey design, which allows for the use of questionnaire, was adopted in this study. Three hundred (300) respondents were selected using convenience sampling method which is cost efficient and allows for easy randomisation. Information was gathered via

structured questionnaire administered to 300 respondents. The instrument was divided into two sections: section A focused on respondents’ persona information, section B on the main research variables which are job creation, income generation, and infrastructure development.

Information gathered were analysed using Pearson product moment correlation. The analysis was done based on the three hypotheses that guided the study. Data analysis was done hypothesis by hypothesis, testing each at 0.05 level of significance.

6. RESULTS

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between Calabar cultural festival and job creation among Efik people of Cross River State. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used for data analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 1. From table 1, the calculated r-value of 0.935 was found to be greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 needed for significance of 0.05 level, with 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Calabar cultural festival and job creation was rejected in favour of the alternative hypothesis. This means that Calabar cultural festival has a significant relationship with job creation among Efik people of Cross River State.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between Calabar cultural festival and job creation

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Job creation (X_1)	1695	15650	11570	0.935*
Calabar cultural festival (Y)	1320	8990		

(N = 300)

Significant at $P < 0.05$, $df = 298$, $Crit-r = 0.195$

Hypothesis two:

Calabar cultural festival has no significant relationship with income generation among Efik people of Cross River State. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used for data analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 2. From table 2, the calculated r-value of 0.892 was found to be greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 needed for significance of 0.05 level, with 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that Calabar

cultural festival has no significant relationship with income generation among Efik people of Cross River State was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was retained. This means that Calabar cultural festival has a significant relationship with income generation among Efik people of Cross River State.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between Calabar cultural festival and income generation

(N = 300)

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
	$\sum Y$	$\sum Y^2$		
Income generation (X ₂)	1675	15525	11325	0.892*
Calabar cultural festival (Y)	1320	8990		

Significant at P<0.05, df = 298, Crit-r = 0.195

Hypothesis three:

Calabar cultural festival is not significantly related to infrastructure development among Efik people of Cross River State. Pearson product moment correlation analysis was used for data analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 3. From table 3, the calculated r-value of 0.881 was found to be greater than the critical r-value of 0.195 needed for significance of 0.05 level, with 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that Calabar cultural festival is not significantly related to infrastructure development among Efik people of Cross River State was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. This implies that Calabar cultural festival is significantly related to infrastructural development among Efik people of Cross River State.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between Calabar cultural festival and infrastructure development

(N = 300)

Variable	$\sum X$	$\sum X^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Infrastructure development (X_3)	1602	15425	11190	0.881*
Calabar cultural festival (Y)	1320	8990		

Significant at $P < 0.05$, $df = 298$, Crit-r = 0.195

7. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Findings obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis one showed that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate hypothesis was retained. This means that the Calabar cultural festival has a significant relationship with job creation among Efik people of Cross River State. This finding is in agreement with the work of Compton and Love (2005) who observed that Calabar cultural festival creates employment and business opportunities for host community and tourism investors. The finding also supported Hub (2002) and Falassi (2009) who maintained that the Calabar cultural festival is an industry that is labour intensive; it has great potential in creating employment opportunities particularly in Cross River State.

Findings obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. This means that Calabar cultural festival has a significant relationship with income generation among Efik people of Cross River State. This implies that Efik people and indeed Cross River State earns much money or income from the influx of tourists during the period of the festival. The finding of this study is in agreement with th Coffey (2012), CRTB (2008), the National Institute for Cultural Orientation (2014), and Natario (2014) that the Calabar cultural festival has the charity dimension and highlighted activities geared towards generating money for the underprivileged in the state. Thus, it is a veritable source of income as the state makes its highest internally generated revenue during festival periods.

Findings obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis three revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis. This signifies that there is a significant relationship between Calabar cultural festival and infrastructure development among Efik people

of Cross River State. The finding is in agreement with Dominic (2011) that infrastructure development has in recent times assumes a central importance in Nigeria's fight to attain social and economic stability. This situation brings to the fore the need for Cross River State Government to spend on festivals to drive infrastructure development. Thus the provision of the basic social infrastructure like roads, recreational facilities, schools, hospitals, power, water supply and communication facilities, enhances high standard of living which will improve community life as well as promote sustainable development in Cross River State. This finding strongly agreed with Greve and Hodge (2005) that the Calabar cultural festival has helped development infrastructure system in the state and among the Efik people in particular. They reported that a development infrastructure system will in-turn improves production capacity of the state, and also creates positive impact on the overall economic performance.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Calabar cultural festival demonstrated that tourism is a significant major player in job creation, income generation and infrastructural development. It is instrument per excellent in changing the socio-economic wellbeing and fortune of host communities. It is a catalyst that fast tract economic diversification and enhance wellbeing of society. However, the expenditure in running the festival is high and is mostly shouldered by the Cross River State government. To expand the horizon of its benefits to the Efik people and Cross River State as a whole, private partnership should be encouraged. Effective networking among organisers with outside world should be encouraged. The Cross River State Tourism Bureau should be properly funded to ensure sustainability and improvement in the organisation of the festival.

REFERENCES

- Achonwa, R. E. (2007). Tourism and our economy. *Mofinews*, 7(2), 30-54.
- Agba, A. M O., Ikoh, M. U., Basse, A. O., & Ushie, E. U. (2010). Impact of tourism industry on Efik's Culture, Nigeria. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 4, (4), Pp. 355-365,
- Agba, A. M. O.; Mbotto, W. A. & Agba, M. S. (2013). Wages or other conditions: A critical assessment of factors in workers performance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3 (7), 489-505
- Attah, F. M.; Agba, A. M. O. & Nkpoyen, F. (2013). Carnival fiesta and socio-economic development of Calabar Metropolis, Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2(6) 33-41,

- Bachlestiner, S. & Zins, E. (2009). Hotel and tourism development in Vietriam. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 7(1), 85-93.
- Compton, J. L. & Love, L. L. (2005). The predictive validity of alternative approaches to evaluating quality of a festival. *Journal of Travel Research*, 34(11), 11-24.
- CRTB (2008). *Pre-event brochure*. Calabar: Teamwork.
- Dominic, O. (2011). *Public private partnership as a tool for infrastructural development in Nigeria*. Lagos: Talkback Publishing Ltd.
- Esu, B. B.; Arrey, V. M.; Basil, G. & Eyo, E. E. (2011). Analysis of the economic impacts of cultural festival: The case of Calabar carnival in Nigeria. *Tourismos: An international Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*, 6(2), 333-352.
- Falassi, A. (2009). Festival: Definition and morphology in Waterman's editor, carnival for elves? *The Cultural Politics of Arts Festivals Progress in Human Geography*, 54-74.
- Hall, O. (2004). Meaningful experience creation and event management: A post-event analysis of Copenhagen carnival. *Culture Inbound Journal of Current Cultural Research*. 3(17).
- Hirschman, A. O. (1969). The strategy of economic development. In Agarwal, A. N. & Singh, S. P. (eds.), *Accelerating investment in developing economy*. London: Oxford Press.
- Ingwe, R., Agba, A. M. O. & Ndum, V. E. (2014). Natural resource abundance, exploitation and agitation for resource control in Nigeria's Niger Delta: A Marxian analysis. *The Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, 9(1), 87-109
- Jhingan, M. L. (2006). *The economics of development and planning*. Delhi: Vrinda Publications Ltd.
- Lindberg, B. (1996). *A comprehensive review of tourism as a component of the Robson Valley LRMP*. Unemployment Research Report Independent Study.
- Odere, F. E. (2015). *Socio-economic implications of Calabar carnival on the people of Cross River State*. Unpublished M.Sc thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- Prentice, N. & Anderson, R. (2003). *Travel and tourism: A North American-European perspective*. Huntington, England: Elm Publications.

Ukwayi, J. K., Agba, A. M. O., Inyang, J. D. & Eraye, Christopher (2011). Associate factors in street crime in Calabar Metropolis, Nigeria. *European Journal of Scientific Research*, 62(2), 34-43.

Ukwayi, J. K., Ojong, F. E. & Austine, A. B. (2012). Socio-economic impact of festivals on community development. *Journal of Development Studies*, 2(8), 1-2.