

Assessment of Tourism Entrepreneurial Ventures Towards Economic Growth in Bamba, Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Assessment of tourism entrepreneurial ventures towards economic growth in Bamba, Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State is the focus of this research with particular emphasis to identify the available tourism entrepreneurial ventures in the community and to examine the contributions of these ventures to economic growth. Employees and customers who patronised the available tourism ventures in Bamba community, including Boki Local Government Tourism members constituted the study population for this study. Samples of 110 respondents were drawn as sample representation for the study but only 101 were retrieved and used for analysis. Meanwhile, questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The research reveals various contributions of entrepreneurial ventures to economic growth which include employment generation, enhancing tourist influx to the destination and perhaps, investment opportunity and so on. The research findings also revealed some of the challenges faced by the ventures to include; security challenge, inadequate startup capital etc. and finally, recommendations such as banks, individuals, corporate bodies and government should endeavour to provide soft loan into this sector so as to be able to boost employment opportunities for the citizens of the community, the government should endeavor to work out a tax modality for these ventures so as not to cripple down their activities, which in turn affects the economy of the community and so on; were made.

Background of the Study

Entrepreneurial activities has remain the driven force for individuals and nations globally through wealth creation and economic development in a variety of ways, which governments at different levels recognize and considered as a better option for wage employment and thereby introduced peculiar policies and programmes to support and promote it through inculcating the spirit of self-reliant among the populace.

UNDP (2010) defined entrepreneurship as the process of using private initiative to transform a business concept into a new venture or to grow and diversify an existing venture or enterprise with high growth potential. Entrepreneurship is an ill-defined, multidimensional concept. The difficulties in defining and measuring the extent of entrepreneurial activities complicate the measuring of their impact on economic performance across the globe. Understanding the role of entrepreneurship in the process of growth

emanating from tourism ventures requires a framework because there are various intermediate variables or linkages to explain how entrepreneurship influences economic growth. Some of these intermediate variables are innovation, variety of supply, entry and exit of firms (competition), specific efforts and energy of entrepreneurs etc (Carree & Thurik, 2002).

Nigeria is blessed with abundant untapped resources in various spheres particular in the area of tourism where you will find numerous potentials that when harnessed, could improve the country's GDP and subsequently enhance and accelerate economic development.

Bamba community in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State is one amongst the various communities across the country that is endowed with untapped tourism potentials of substantial economic benefit when fully harnessed.

Wennekers and Thurik (1999) viewed entrepreneurship as the manifest ability and willingness of individuals on their own, in teams, within and outside existing organizations to perceive and create economic opportunities (new products, new production methods, new organizational schemes and new product market combinations) and to introduce their ideas in the market, in the face of uncertainty and other obstacles, by making decisions on location, form and the use of resources and institutions.

Statement of Research Problem

Tourism has been acknowledged as one of the significant source of revenue through its diverse nature and elements. Several tourism entrepreneurial ventures exist in Boki Local Government providing varieties of products and services ranging from souvenir, catering, accommodation and so on, to members of the public and in turn, receives a reward from such transactions, which subsequently improve the income of the proprietors and perhaps, increase the GDP of the country.

Objectives

1. To identify the available tourism entrepreneurial ventures in the community
2. To examine the contributions of these ventures to economic growth.
3. To find out the challenges faced by these ventures towards economic growth.

Justification of the Study

The findings of this study provide a clear insight to the government, tourism experts, tourism-related business proprietors and other relevant persons on the various areas that tourism entrepreneurial ventures have

contributed towards economic growth of Boki community and the country at large.

Scope of the Study

This study was designed to assess tourism entrepreneurial ventures as a tool for economic growth and was limited to Bamba Community in Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Literature Review

It is generally known that five tools are necessary for the production setting, namely: man, material, money, method and machines. In all, man is the most important of the elements. Man is the only factor that can create value. The man who creates the value is referred to in this context as "tourism entrepreneur", while the ability (knowledge and skill) to create the value is referred to as "tourism entrepreneurship" (Esu, 2015).

Entrepreneurship has to do with the activities of individual persons. The concept of economic growth is relevant at levels of firms, regions and nations. Hence, linking entrepreneurship to economic growth means linking the individual level to aggregate levels. In order to consider this link we first pay attention to a definition of entrepreneurship by Lumpkin & Dess (1996): "Entrepreneurship is the manifest ability and willingness of individuals, on their own, in teams, within and outside existing organizations to perceive and create new economic opportunities (new products, new production methods, new organizational schemes and new product-market combinations), and to introduce their ideas in the market, in the face of uncertainty and other obstacles, by making decisions on location, form and the use of resources and institutions".

Koh and Hatten (2002) also defined tourism entrepreneur as "a creator of touristic enterprise motivated by monetary and/or non-monetary reasons to pursue a perceived market opportunity legally, marginally or illegally". Tourism entrepreneurship covers a range of activities that are relevant in the creation and operation of a legal tourist enterprise. Legal tourism enterprise here refers to those businesses that operate on a profitable basis and seek to satisfy the needs of tourist and visitors.

The tourism industry is a mixture of public and private organisations that are actively involved in the development, production and marketing of both products and services that satisfy the needs of tourists (Esu, 2015). Tourism entrepreneurs are categorized into 4 groups; inventive, innovative, imitative, lifestyle, social marginal and closet entrepreneurs. An inventive entrepreneur is one whose offering is genuinely new to the tourism market. An innovative entrepreneur is one whose offering has no significant

difference from other established offerings in the tourism market. Social entrepreneur is one who establishes a non-profit touristic enterprise for support social ideas and norms. Lifestyle entrepreneur is one who launches a tourist enterprise to support his/her lifestyle and/or hobby/interest with no/little interest in growing his or her enterprise. A marginal entrepreneur is one who operates his/her tourist enterprise in the informal sector of the tourism industry and the closet entrepreneur is one who operates a touristic enterprise alongside a fulltime job for various reasons (Koh&Hatten, 2002).

Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth

The relationship between unemployment and entrepreneurship has been shrouded with ambiguity. On the one hand, one strand in the literature has found that unemployment stimulates entrepreneurial activity, which has been termed as a "refugee effect". On the other hand, a very different strand in the literature has identified that higher levels of entrepreneurship reduce unemployment, or what has been termed as a "Schumpeter effect". Taken together, these two relationships result in considerable ambiguities about the relationship between unemployment and entrepreneurship (Audretsch *al*, 2002).

Entrepreneurship is an ill-defined, multidimensional, concept. The difficulties in defining and measuring the extent of entrepreneurial activities complicate the measurement of their impact on economic performance. Understanding their role in the process of growth requires a framework because there are various intermediate variables or linkages to explain entrepreneurship influences economic growth. Examples of these intermediate variables are innovation, variety of supply, entry and exit of firms (competition), specific efforts and energy of entrepreneurs etc.

Entrepreneurship has to do with the activities of individual persons. The concept of economic growth is relevant at levels of firms, regions, industries and nations. Hence, linking entrepreneurship to economic growth means linking the individual level to aggregate levels. In order to consider this link we first pay attention to a definition of 'entrepreneurship'. Lumpkin & Dess (1996) describe entrepreneurship as the manifest ability and willingness of individuals, on their own, in teams, within and outside existing organizations to perceive and create new economic opportunities (new products, new production methods, new organizational schemes and new product-market combinations), and to introduce their ideas in the market, in the face of uncertainty and other obstacles, by making decisions on location, form and the use of resources and institutions.

Entrepreneurship has been recognised as an essential aspect and functioning of organization and economies (Dickson, 2008). It contributes in

immeasurable ways toward creating new job, wealth creation, poverty reduction and income-generating for both government and individuals. Schumpeter in (1934) argued that entrepreneurship is very significant to the growth and development of economies (Keister, 2005, cited by Garba, 2010). Entrepreneurship leads to poverty reduction, for instance, the Federal Government had since 1999 been injecting funds into different skills acquisition programmes, small businesses, support for the informal sector through the provision of credit facilities for boisterous economic activities at the rural community level. This is a decision in the direct direction as the majority of the population live in the rural areas and an improvement in the quality of life would prevent migration of the residents of the rural communities to the urban centres.

The implication of this is that it will create employment opportunities; thus, leading to greater reduction in social maladies or vices. The widespread and acceptance of entrepreneurship education is a clear indication of its usefulness and importance in the present realities. The development of entrepreneurship will go a long way in providing the necessary impetus for economic growth and development. It will be crucial in boosting productivity, increasing competition and innovation, creating employment and prosperity and revitalising economies (SBS, 2002, cited by Ritche and Lam, 2006).

The entrepreneurship contributes to the economy through the goods or services produced for which they are paid for by consumers, through generation of economic activities such as buying, selling, marketing, payment of taxes to the government, undertaking corporate social responsibility to the various stakeholders within the community in which the enterprise is operated.

Entrepreneurs are the heroes and heroines in the economic sphere. In any market oriented economy, entrepreneurs are the agents of social and economic transformation and change. Entrepreneurship has been recognized all over the world as a critical element in the development process of nations. In developing countries in particular, entrepreneurship is being vigorously advocated because of its potential to:

- Create jobs through the formation of new enterprises especially small and medium scale enterprise.
- Raise productivity through various forms of innovation
- Facilitate transfer of technology or the adaptation of existing ones.
- Harness resources that might otherwise remain idle and put them into productive use.
- Stimulate growth in those sectors which supply it with inputs.
- Reinvigorate large scale enterprises and also public enterprises.

- Encourage and sustain economic dynamism that enables an economy to adjust successfully in a rapidly changing global economy and enable individuals to use their potential and energies to create wealth, independence and status for themselves in society

Problems of Entrepreneurial Development in Nigeria

Despite existing policies on financial support for small businesses, very few entrepreneurs receive financial help when they need it. Mambula (2002) find that 72 percent of entrepreneurs he studied in Nigeria considered lack of financial support as number one constraint in developing their business. Although in some African countries banks are by law required to set aside a certain percentage of their profits for small business loans, many banks would rather pay a fine than make what they believe to be high risk loan to SMEs.

Akwani (2007) suggests that basic physical infrastructure required for economic development, such as good roads, ample power supply, and good rail and river transportation facilities, are in very poor shape in most African countries. In addition to the problems noted above, the information and communication infrastructure in most African countries are weak. Cogburn&Adeya (2000) find that access to information infrastructure is considered as an indispensable condition for widespread socio-economic development in this age of globalization and information economy SMEs and other small African firms have challenges to join international market and sell their products in their home market.

Small business assistance from governments of African countries is weak and inadequate. Most research studies on African entrepreneurship have concluded that training programs for entrepreneurs have been few and far between and different content than what is need (Wallace, 1999). The technology involved in the training tended to be beyond what trainees can afford to buy and use. In most cases there was no after-training follow up services.

Access to bank loans and direct government financial support are reported in surveys of entrepreneurs as a serious problem for small businesses in Arica (Honohan& Beck, 2007). Better financial assistance is needed to address this problem. According to Honohan and Beck (2007), African firms finance a significant percentage of their investment with internal funds, about 68 percent. This observation highlights lack of financial assistance to small-scale enterprises. Policies to address this problem should be established with input from lending institutions

Honohan and Beck (2007) suggest that the concerns of banks should be taken into consideration in developing financial support policies for small businesses. Governments should work with lending institutions to lower the risk of loan default. While governments need to play an important role, other sources of assistance to small businesses, such as venture capitalists, should be considered. It is also important that entrepreneurs recognize the benefits of education and training in ensuring the success of any business endeavor.

Despite all the challenges facing entrepreneurship in Africa, economic growth rates across much of Africa are rising, and there are successful entrepreneurial ventures across the continent (BBC News, 2006). This observation suggests that opportunities exist for African entrepreneurs, and some of these opportunities have already resulted in some international and local business successes.

Study Area

Bamba is a community under Boki Local Government Area of Cross River State. Boki was created on the 28th of August, 1991 and its capital is Boje. The region has a contiguous border the Republic of Cameroon to the East as well as five other Cross River State Local Government Areas: Obudu and Obanliku in the North, Ikom and Ogoja in the West and Etung to the South. Boki is known internationally as a commercial center for agricultural commodities such as cocoa, coffee, timber and palm products. The population of Boki local government area was estimated to be 186,611 people (2006 census projection). However, Boki lies on longitudes 6°16'26" N and latitudes 9°00'36" E covering a total land mass area of about 1,070 sq mi (2,771 km²) (Wikipedia, 2017).

Methodology

Proprietors, employees and customers who patronized the available tourism ventures in Bamba community including Boki Local Government Tourism committee members constituted the study population for this study. 110 respondents were drawn as sample representation for the study.

Primary method of data collection was employed through observation of the various tourism entrepreneurial ventures and the administration of structured questionnaire. 101 questionnaire were retrieved and used for analysis.

Purposive, simple random and accidental sampling methods were adopted to select tourism ventures, proprietors of the ventures, employees, tourism staff and customers (i.e. ventures proprietors, employees, tourism staff were purposively sampled while customers were accidentally

sampled. 10 different tourism ventures of various natures, 10 proprietors, 4 employees each and 6 customers each were sampled for the study.

The data generated was subjected to analysis using SPSS and the results were presented in frequency and percentage for easy and better understanding.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Available Tourism Entrepreneurial Ventures in the Community

S/No.	Variables
1.	Weaving Centers
2.	Catering, restaurants and fast food centers
3.	Bar Joints
4.	Relaxation centers
5.	Viewing centers
6.	Hotels, motels and guest houses
7.	Gymnasiums and athletes centers
8.	Commercial transport businesses
9.	Museums and Zoo

Source: Personal Observation, 2018

Table 2: Contributions of Tourism Entrepreneurial Ventures to Economic Growth

Variables	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	\bar{X}	Ranking
Employment generation	27	20	1	0	0	4.54	1 st
Adding to the number of goods and services in the economy	17	24	6	1	0	4.19	6 th
Income generation to individuals	21	25	2	0	0	4.40	4 th
Source of revenue to the government	28	13	5	2	0	4.40	4 th
Promoting foreign exchange	25	18	5	0	0	4.42	3 rd
Enhancing tourist influx to the destination and perhaps, investment opportunity	27	17	4	0	0	4.48	2 nd

Source: field survey, 2018

From the above table, the research findings reveals that the major contribution of tourism entrepreneurial ventures to economic growth was Employment generation ranking 1st while "Adding to the number of goods and services in the economy ranked 6th. Other rankings include Enhancing tourist influx to the destination and perhaps, investment opportunity ranked 2nd, Promoting foreign exchange ranked 3rd, Source of revenue to the government and Income generation to individuals both ranked 4th.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Entrepreneurial Ventures

Variables	Extremely Challenging	Challenging	Neutral	Not Challenging	Completely Not Challenging	\bar{X}	Ranking
Inadequate startup capital	23	20	5	0	0	4.38	2 nd
Poor infrastructural facilities (e.g. Power supply)	13	31	4	0	0	4.19	5 th
Access to loan	17	27	4	0	0	4.27	3 rd
Heavy Taxation from local, state and federal authorities	16	27	5	0	0	4.23	4 th
Security challenge	20	28	0	0	0	4.42	1 st

Source: field survey, 2018

The research findings reveals that the major challenge faced by the entrepreneurial ventures was "Security Challenge" ranking 1st while the least was "Poor infrastructural facilities" which ranked 5th. Other challenges included "Inadequate Startup capital" ranked 2nd, "Access to loan" ranked 3rd, while "Heavy Taxation from local, state and federal authorities" ranked 4th.

Summary

In summary, the research findings reveal that there are numerous tourism ventures available in the community ranging from Weaving Centers, bar Joints, Viewing Centers to Museums and Zoos, to mention but few. The findings also reveal that the entrepreneurial ventures contribute positively to the economic growth of the community. However, these ventures, as shown in the findings, face a number of challenges among which are: inadequate startup capital, poor infrastructural facilities, and security challenges among others.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be agreed that Bamba Community is a home to numerous entrepreneurial ventures which contribute positively to the economic growth of the community thereby contributing a great percentage of revenue earning for the government and source of livelihood for its populace especially the youths, and not to mention, its contribution to tourism in particular. However, it is also agreed that a number of challenges is faced by these ventures, which may in-turn affect the steady growth of the economy in general and sustenance of these ventures in particular.

Recommendations

- Banks, individuals, corporate bodies and government should endeavor to provide soft loan into this sector so as to be able to boost employment opportunities for the citizens of the community.
- The government should endeavor to work out a tax modality for these ventures so as not to cripple down their activities, which in turn affects the economy of the community.
- Adequate infrastructure should also be provided for by the government where these ventures can prosper (location matters in business).
- Finally, it is recommended that the government should provide adequate security to curb some of the security threats faced by these entrepreneurial ventures in the community.

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