

Impact of Honeypot Development in the Tourism Sector in Cross River State: A Case Study of Calabar Metropolis

Effiom, Violet Asuquo

Department of Geography and Environmental Science

University of Calabar, Calabar

violeteffiom@yahoo.com

Abstract

The tourism sector in Cross River State has experienced exponential growth in the last ten years having been strategically prioritized by two successive democratically elected governments. The paper examines honeypot in the context of the tourism sector and discusses the importance of establishing honeypots. It presents the background of the tourism sector in Cross River state; explores the ratio of the indigenes and that of the non indigenes that have been economically empowered as a result of the development of tourism honeypots by the Cross River State Government and demonstrates the implications of gender issues in tourism related firms or enterprises. The paper argues that tourism development should be targeted strategically to add more value to the people of Cross River State from whose taxes and resources the honeypots are developed. The paper concludes by making recommendations to various stakeholders for the sustainability and economic inclusiveness of all stakeholders of the already established honeypots or the yet to be established ones.

Key words: Development, Tourism, Cross River State Government, Calabar Metropolis, Honeypot.

Introduction

The tourism sector has become an industry of major importance in Cross River State as the immediate past and present governors of the state made a policy commitment to transform the state economy through the development of her tourism potentials. Thus, between 1999 and 2013, the state government systematically improved on the aesthetic value of a number of travel destinations, including the public facilities around them, whilst ensuring the rapid development of honeypots in Calabar Metropolis to attract large numbers of travelers, or tourists to patronize them most often at peak times.

Tourism honeypots can be defined as “places with special interest or appeal that are very popular with visitors and which tend to be overcrowded at peak times” (New Forest National Park, 2007, Collins, 2009 & Wikipedia, 2014). This entailed the development of attraction sites that were not originally places of interest in the state. Such spots are generally used by cities or countries to manage their tourism industry (Wikipedia, 2014 & Ste. Enimie, 2009). They have an added benefit of concentrating a large number of income-generating visitors in one place, thus developing that area, and in turn making the area more appealing to tourists (Ryan & Montgomery, 1994, Ryan, 1999 & *Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques*, 2000). Examples of such places in Calabar Metropolis are the Marina Resort, Cultural Centre Board Complex where the annual Christmas Village is set up, U.J. Esuene International Stadium Complex, Eleven Eleven Park (where the Calabar Festival, Musical and other Artistic Shows are held), Carnival Calabar twelve kilometer route, Old Residency Museum, Calabar Botanical Garden, Calabar International Convention Centre and Golf Resort under Construction, Calabar International Hospital also under construction and Tinapa Business and Leisure Resort on the outskirts of Calabar Metropolis.

Undoubtedly, Marina Resort and Cultural Centre Board Complex, two of the honeypots under focus, are centrally located in the Metropolis. These attraction sites were established and managed by the Cross River State Government and have the most fascinating honeypots attractions in and around the location. The main reasons most people visit Marina Resort and Cultural Centre Board are the attractive natural environment, the rich historical, cultural and architectural history, the parking space, the green lawn for picnics, and the conference facilities. The physical activities enjoyed in and around the Marina Resort include: the slave trade museum, speed boat ride, the carousel horse ride, film/movie theatre, cultural dances, parking spaces, shopping centres, parks, wide range of shops, eateries, playgrounds for children, cafés and accommodation. These two sites are centrally located within the very easy reach of the botanical garden, drill ranch, sports stadium, metropolitan hotel and conference hall and National Museum. The sites experience a high influx of visitors mostly during peak season (October-December) and afford

visitors a rare view of the beauty of Calabar Metropolis in a relaxed atmosphere on a pay as you use basis.

Studies carried out by Patmore (1995) and Waugh (2007) have shown that the development of honeypots, or places with special interest and appeal such as sports stadia, historic buildings, places with attractive scenery (lawns, lakes) within a city has increased drastically and has created approximately 60 per cent direct employment for residents of a country like Morocco and contributed to the improvement of their economy. A study conducted by New Forest National Park (2007) revealed the desirability of Lyndhurst as a honeypot location and its attendant several impacts, some of which are: economic, social and environmental. It further highlighted that the village has been able to attract a high number of visitors, provided numerous jobs for the local population and has created a booming local housing market. However, house rent or property prices increased and often out of reach of the local population. Some houses were purchased as second or holiday homes whilst others were bought by people moving into the area, often to retire.

Obong et al, (2012) revealed among others that the Marina Resort has gainfully employed members of the community, empowered some economically and still has the capacity to empower many more. They further stated that the resort has impacted on the livelihoods of the community on marginal basis, but there was no documented evidence on the ratio of employment and social responsibility programmes in the host community in terms of skill development and provision of scholarships for willing members of the community to improve their educational level.

In examining the impact of honeypot developments in the tourism sector in Cross River State, this paper seeks to address the following objectives:

1. To identify the importance of establishing honeypots for the development of the sector;
2. To explore the extent to which honeypots development has contributed to employment for both the indigenes of the state and non indigenes comparatively;
3. To investigate the overall benefits of honeypots on the indigenes of the area.

The Study Area

This study focuses on the Calabar Metropolis, which is located between latitude *80 15I E* and *80 20I E*, and longitude *40 45I N* and *50 30I N*. The city lies on a peninsula formed by the Calabar River, Great Kwa River, the Cross River estuary and the Atlantic Ocean. (Fig.1). Calabar (also referred to as 'Canaan City') is the capital of Cross River State, coastal southeastern Nigeria. The city consists of two local administrative units namely Calabar Municipal and Calabar South Local government areas. The Metropolis is made up of three principal landlord communities known as the Qua, the Efut and the Efik kingdoms, but persons of other ethnic groups also form a core part of the metropolis by birth or long residence. As a social centre, the city boasts of being the abode of the first social club in Nigeria, (the African Club). It also has a film house/theatre, National Museum, Botanical Garden, an International Airport and Seaport, an integrated sports stadium complex, Cultural Centre, University of Calabar, a slave history park and several historical and cultural landmarks. It also boasts of several four star hotels, leisure resorts, amusement parks, local and international food cafes and restaurants. For successive years in the last decade, the government of the state has been organizing an annual Calabar Festival in the Metropolis in the month of December, which attracts thousands of tourists from within and beyond Nigeria. The highlights of the festival include a boat regatta, Charity Fashion show, Christmas Village for discount shopping, traditional display of masquerades, the Annual Ekpe festival, the Biggest Street party, etc.

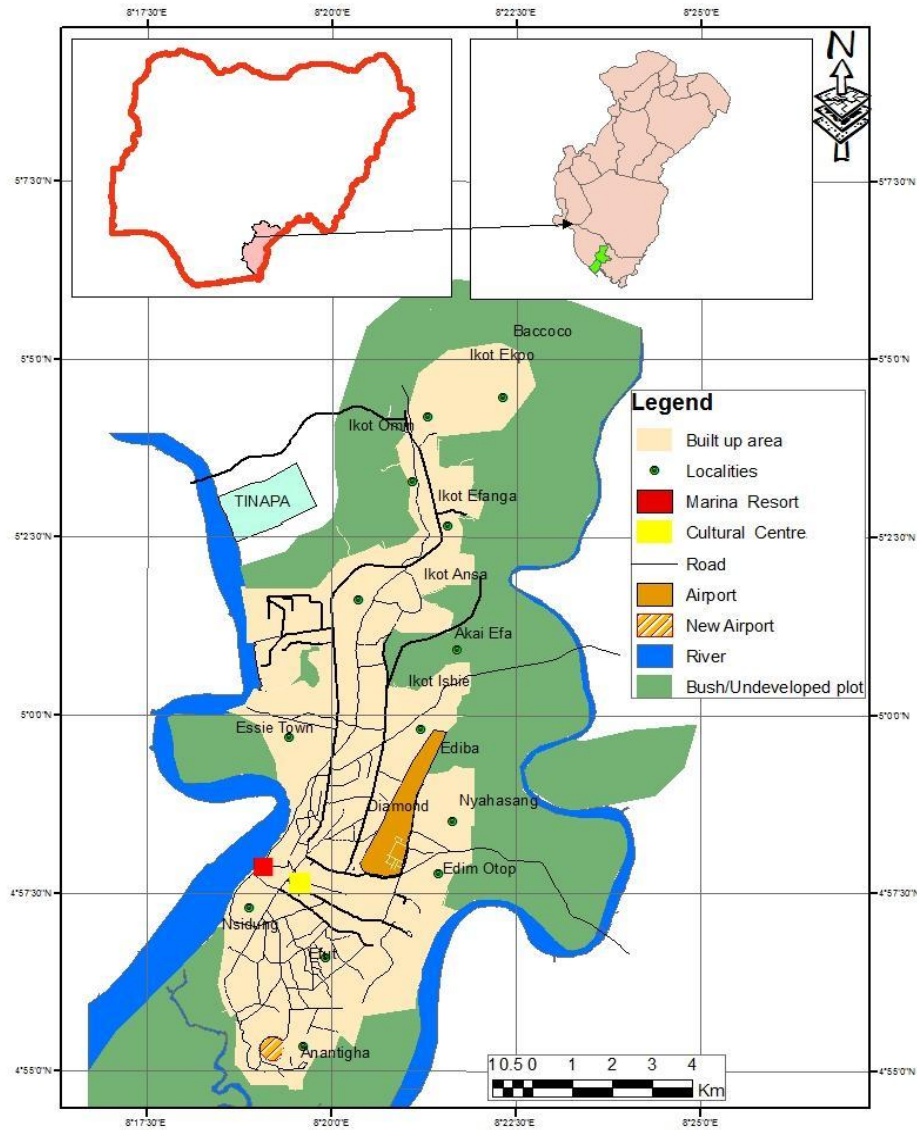


Figure 1: Map of Calabar Metropolis

Sources: Fieldwork, (2014)

Sustainable Tourism Model

Broadly speaking then, sustainable tourism is tourism that aims to provide equitably distributed benefits (meeting the needs of current generations) whilst minimizing the negative environmental and cultural impacts generally associated with tourism development: that is, to combine development and conservation (Wild, 1994).

The United Kingdom's Department of Environment developed a sustainable tourism model as shown in Fig 2 below. Brohman, (1996) and Swarbrooke, (1999) have suggested that there are three equally important dimensions to sustainable tourism, namely the environment, both natural and built; the economic life of communities and companies and social aspect of tourism, in terms of its impacts on host cultures and tourists, and the way in which those employed in tourism are treated. They stated that poorly designed (unsustainable) tourism development can result in the destruction of linkages with the domestic economy, failure to create adequate levels of local employment and income; loss of local skills and failure to provide skilled jobs for local populations, labour exploitation, inequitable distribution of cost and benefits of tourism.

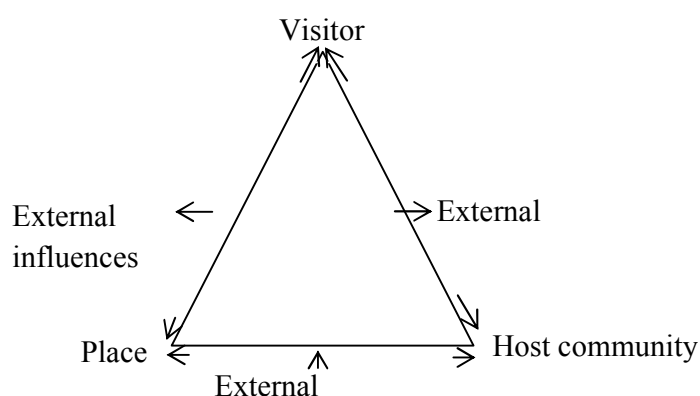


Figure 2: Sustainable Tourism Model

Source: France, (1997)

The application of this model in this work is essentially aimed at provoking discussion on the concept of sustainability as it applies to honeypot development in the tourism sector. This will ensure continuous balance between economic development of the territory and nature conservation through involvement of the local community. Tourism honeypots have to be a long term business so that job security can be guaranteed for those working in the places. Also, it is understandable that for a business to be sustainable the socio-economic capacities of the primary stakeholders, especially the landlord communities, must not only increase, but be assured. Furthermore, a reasonable number of the host community must be

employed to work in the industry so as to give due regard to their ownership of the sites where the honeypots are located. Besides, this model will help us to evaluate the importance of honeypots to the host communities. The model also highlights the responsibilities of the local governments to its citizens, emphasizing that the local government should recognize that they will have to become more responsible to local citizens whose lives and communities may be affected by such developments. The views and input of local residents should be a part of the development of tourism honeypots product without prejudice to their cultural integrity and right to economic survival.

Method of Study

Both primary and secondary data were collected to enable us determine:

- ❖ The social and economic importance of establishing honeypots;
- ❖ The ratio of indigenes to non indigenes employed in the honeypots; and
- ❖ The percentage of men and women employed in the selected tourist sites.

The primary data were collated through field observation, oral interviews and structured questionnaire, while secondary sources of data came from the existing records as documented by the Cross River State Tourism Bureau (CRSTB). The records showed the total number of tourism sites in Calabar Metropolis and the enabling laws for regulating and strengthening the growing industry. Also, records from the sampled sites were consulted to know the percentage of indigenes and non indigenes employed in the sites. Textbooks, journals, periodicals, and government publications were also consulted. The research was limited to two honeypot sites in Calabar Metropolis established by the Cross River State government and controlled by the CRSTB. Their contributions to the employment of indigenes of Calabar were determined. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the two honeypots owned and managed by the Cross River State Government. The rationale for adopting this technique was for convenience and also to give every site that falls within this category the opportunity of being selected.

The target population projected for the administration of questionnaire was 45 out of 152 staff in the randomly sampled sites. The rationale for using this method is to ensure a fair representation since it is a diminutive population. Forty (40) out of the 45 structured questionnaires distributed, were returned and subsequently used for analysis. This is in support of Udofia's (2006) view that 30 per cent of sampled population is ideal as a sample size.

Research Findings

The following reasons were given for the establishment of honeypot in the area.

1. Contribution to the growth of tourism in the state.
2. Attraction of tourists at peak season and most often during Christmas carnivals.
3. Potential for income generation for both the government and other businesses that supply tourist products.
4. Capacity to showcase and preserve the culture and customs of native tribes and their artifact through dance, arts and craft and cultural festivals thereby making Cross River State, the choice tourism destination in Nigeria.
5. Ability to create opportunity for local people to be directly or indirectly employed.

Although these were some of the reasons for the establishment of the honeypots, information gathered revealed that the staff were employed on the basis of professional competence. Thus, majority of those employed as permanent staff were non indigenes, while most of the indigenes were employed as contract staff. Results therefore showed that employment opportunities offered by the sites have very little positive effect on the indigenes as few of them are employed and occupy managerial positions. Many of the locals were paid low wages.

Table 2 (a) Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Employment	152	1.6447	.48018	1.00	2.00

(b) Employment

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Indigenes	54	76.0	-22.0
Non indigenes	98	76.0	22.0
Total	152		

(c) Test statistics

	Employment
chi-square	12.737a
df	1
Asymp.sig.	.000

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2013

a.o cells (0%) have expected frequencies less than 6. The minimum expected cell frequency is 76.0.

The test-statistic table above reveals a chi-square value, χ^2 (df=1) = 12.737, $P \leq 0.01$. It can be concluded that there is significant difference between the number of indigenes employed by the sites and non-indigenes. Out of a total of 152 persons, only 54 were indigenes while 98 were non-indigenes.

This agrees with the study of Mbaiwa, (2005) that tourism industry creates few jobs at Managerial and Professional levels which are often filled by expatriate labourers or by non-indigenes. Consequently, they contribute little to the socio-economic development of the area.

Gender issues in the junior and senior cadre held by men and women

A survey of the number of women and men employed in the selected tourist sites reveals that majority of the workers at the Cultural Centre Board and Marina Resort were women with a total percentage of 60.5, while the percentage of males at both sites is 39.5. The test results in table 3 (a), (b) and (c), show a chi-square χ^2 (df=1) = 6.737, $p \leq 0.01$. The inference here is that significant difference also exists in the gender populations that are employed by the two tourist sites. The table reveals that out of 152 persons, 92 of them were females, while 60 were males.

It can be observed that more females are gainfully employed in these sites. Even the few males that were employed got low skilled

jobs and low paid positions. The result therefore reveals that jobs created were actually sex selective. Despite the generally positive effects on employment, the implication is that since more women than men were employed in the sites, the security of women is not guaranteed following their unguarded exposure to travelers or visitors. Some of the women may likely be exposed to sexual harassment and other social vices which are detrimental to the sustainability of the industry.

Table 3 (a) Descriptive statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Sex	152	1.6053	.49041	1.00	2.00

(b) Sex

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Males	60	76.0	-16.0
Females	92	76.0	16.0
Total	152		

(c) Test statistics

	Sex
chi-square	6.737a
df	1
Asymp.sig.	.009

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2013

a.o cells (0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 76.0.

Socio-economic benefits of honeypots development

Findings revealed the following benefits to the indigenes of the study areas as a direct outcome of the establishment of honeypots:

- i. Enhanced employment opportunity;
- ii. Exposures to international visitors;
- iii. Security of lives and properties as a result of enhanced government presence;
- iv. Increase in commercial activities and outlets;
- v. Beautification of the environment;

- vi. Infrastructural development like better road network, telecommunication and water system.

The findings further revealed that the host communities do not have direct advantage over others from the honeypots, but rather that the state government has benefitted significantly from the establishment of honeypot sites through the relatively higher income generated mostly at peak seasons, higher employment rate of residents of the state who are mostly non indigenes of the host communities, taxes and investments, and greater attention on Cross River State by other Nigerians and foreigners. There is however still a great demand for pristine natural areas at the sites and this concern will have to be addressed by the government and other relevant stakeholders.

Though honeypots developments may have minimal contributions to the socio-economic development of Calabar Metropolis, however many jobs have been created as a result. Businesses thrive and make profit and tourists are attracted because of the facilities at the sites. However, the seasonality of activities as well as low employment opportunities for the indigenes of the host communities remains a problem. Also, honeypots development in the Metropolis has suffered from problems of *overcrowding*, including littering of the environment with wastes, vandalism and strain on facilities and narrow or congested transport networks. The government of the day should not fold their arms for expatriate labourers to come and benefit unduly from the resources in their environment to the detriment of the indigenes who have to compete unfairly.

Conclusion

Honeypot is essential for the development of the tourism sector and even the growth of the economy of a state or nation, but this development should not be at the expense of the primary stakeholders, and key developmental and sustainability issues. It is therefore important that all tourist sites should employ a higher percentage of the indigenes of the host communities. The following recommendations therefore suffice.

1. The enabling laws need to make provisions for female employees to be protected in the course of rendering services to the industry.

2. Government and Non Governmental Organizations should empower the youths of Calabar Metropolis by way of training (NDE) to enable them start up small businesses on their own e.g. arts and crafts, which when produced could boost tourism.
3. Foreign investments and private sector participation in the tourism sector should be encouraged, but with a policy that will ensure that the indigenes benefit maximally in terms of employment, and income etc.
4. Calabar Metropolis has to be kept clean and green, services and products of the honeypot sector must be environmentally friendly. This could be achieved not only by the Cross River State Ministry of Environment, but also by introducing the department of environment in every tourist site that will be dedicated to caring for the environment within and around the resort/cultural centre.
- 5) Bins should be provided at appropriate places and emptied regularly. Also, there should be warning signs to encourage people to be responsible and reduce litter.

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