

HOME ECONOMICS FOR SURVIVAL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Hospitality and tourism are important tools for economic growth and survival in Nigeria. It enables the improvement of economic well-being of the entire Nigerian population as well as fast-track economic recovery from the effects of restrictions necessitated by COVID-19. Attributes of Home economics was investigated in relation to the current scenarios in the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria, the impact of COVID-19 on Home economics in the hospitality and tourism industry, the concept of economic development and possible means of mitigating the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality and tourism sector. Essentially, the Nigerian hospitality and tourism industry needs to adopt global competitive indices as panacea to achieving a more robust economic development as well as international best practices. Noteworthy, the place of Home economics in the society is crucial to economic development, therefore this study recommends the needs for human capital development in the hospitality and tourism to ensure quality service delivery, more investments in tourism projects, more promotion and information about the industry, constant training and engagement of tourist destination managers, consistency of governments' patronage (federal, state and local) and other corporate stakeholders and finally, increased efforts by the government on the reduction of security challenges i.e. terrorism and insurgency, militancy and kidnapping in Nigeria.

Keywords: Vocation, Home Economics, Hospitality, Tourism, Pandemic, Covid 19, Education, Virus.

Introduction

Vocation is a learned skill for paid or unpaid employment built over a period of time that enables an individual or group to be competent in delivery of services. Traditionally, Vocational Education was an issue of learning on the job only to acquire specific skills with the family. At Nigerian independence and beyond emphasis was more on paper qualification for seeking white collar job. However, there remains a skill gap in vocation education especially in the hospitality and tourism industry. In the process of human development, old skills become obsolete while new skills; attitude and orientation change to meeting Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and in line with vocational education. Home economics as a vocation, is one of the vocational courses with tourism and hospitality inclusive as captured in the National Policy on Education (Omofonmwan, 2009).

Vocational Education in accordance with 6-3-3-4 system was designed in its perspective as a means to an end to solving societal problems which the liberal Arts Education has failed to resolve (Ekpeyong, 2009). In line with Toby (2000), all vocational institutions of attempt to promote the nature and structure of vocational education as a mechanism of manpower survival and development. In other words, the Vocational Home

Economics in the 6-3-3-4 system is expected to assist individuals to learn, think and work as well as develop skills for survival as requisite to hospitality and tourism industry amidst COVID 19 pandemic.

Education is a conscious and objective effort for developing human resource to be a better person. Education cannot be separated by human life and their daily activities. This may include activities such as recreation, and tourism. Education has been viewed as a systematic training and instruction designed to develop skills in individuals (Tobi, 2000). This conception of Education can be regarded as being general since it embraces formal and informal Education. Another general view of Education is that it is a process of changing the behavior patterns of individual in a particular way. In other words, the behavior changes expected in respect of the learners mode of thinking, doing things, feelings and over acting differs. In which case, it is necessary to note that Education in its attempt to affect behavior in individuals and has the primary task of preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage to the young, transforming the cultural heritage and developing the individuals (Ibukun and Aboluwodi, 2010)

This study therefore examines vocational Home Economics as key for the survival of the hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria during COVID - 19 era. Consequently, there is now a gap in vocational skills required to sustain hospitality and tourism industry. Essentially, learned skills and hands-on experiences across a wide range of skills are key to survival of hospitality and tourism industries. However, the novel COVID - 19 pandemic has increased pressure on the hospitality and tourism industries resulting to low patronage, increased pressure on health facilities and health workers as well as compromise in standard service delivery and ethics of Home economics in the tourism industry.

In Nigeria, there exist sufficient research efforts in vocational literacy (Ekpenyong, 2008). However, there is a knowledge gap in the translation of Home economics as a vocation in the hospitality and tourism sector. Both activities are similar in such a way, that nowadays, people travel to find more experience and knowledge to improve their quality of life. However, the notion of tourism education and education for tourism is also found to be different (Morrison & O'Gorman, 2008).

There are various reasons why vocational education matters. At one level the answer is all around us. Building the infrastructure that supports modern life, curing the sick, maintaining and repairing machinery and equipment, providing hospitality and leisure services, technological innovations in telecommunications and more, are only enabled by the availability of people with occupational knowledge, skills, and expertise.

Hospitality is basically focused on meeting the needs of tourists, in the bars, cafeterias, in the hospital, hotel, tourist places and resorts. Hospitality trains people on the ways requests will be best received and treated. "guest are said to be king". They also make sure that patients that come into hospitals for treatments gets the best of needed for quick recovery. Hospitality and tourism industries are one of the world's largest sectors, amounting to over 10% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as opined by Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008) and employs huge numbers of people. The hospitality industry, with its roots in the centuries old tradition of Inn-keeping has experienced huge growth in recent years (Jovanovića, Janković-Milića, Ilića ,2015).

Unfortunately, the advent of COVID – 19 globally foresaw enforcement of adjustment in lifestyles, restriction, partial and/or total lockdown to all human activities leading to hardship occasioned by surge in health needs for vocational skills and educational trainings required to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic. COVID – 19 also known as Coronavirus was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO)

country office in Wuhan region, China on December 31, 2019 (Wu, Peng, Huang, Ding, Wang, & Niu, ... Jiang., 2020). The virus is known to spread rapidly with symptoms of pneumonia; it was initially largely disregarded by political leaders in other parts of the world amidst warning of its danger.

Consequently, global air transport had already carried the virus to all continents and, by mid-March, it had been established in 146 countries including Nigeria (McGinty, Presskreischer, Anderson, Han, & Barry. 2020). In Nigeria, efforts at curbing the spread of the virus are coordinated by Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC). The infection rate accelerated through community transmission and, by 15 April, confirmed cases approached 2 million (with over 125, 00 deaths) in over 200 countries (McGinty *et al.*, 2020).

The real total number of cases remains unknown as testing is limited in most countries. With limited vaccination to prevent the disease and struggling medical interventions available to treat it, most countries responded with various forms of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPI), including lockdown (home isolation, voluntary/required quarantine), social distancing (vulnerable or entire populations), closure of schools/universities and non-essential businesses/workplaces, cancelling or postponing events (i.e. major conferences and tradeshows, concerts and festivals, political debates and elections, sports seasons and the summer Olympics), and bans on gatherings of people over certain numbers.

Over fifty years now into its independence from British colonial rule, Nigeria is gradually developing into a player on the world economic stage. As of 2020, more than 200 million people live in Nigeria, making it the most populated country in Africa and the most populated country in the whole of black race (World Bank, 2020). Hospitality and tourism is becoming a vital part of the Nigerian economy with the rapid expansion and growth of the hospitality industry. With this economic growth in sight, it is increasingly crucial for the Home economics brace up the skill gaps through vocational and technical trainings to mitigate the impact of COVID – 19 pandemics.

Concept of Home Economics

Home economics is a discipline which is explicitly concerned with the family and all aspects of family living. From the time it was founded in 1902 during the Lake Placid Conference and until the present, its basic mission is still to improve individual and family life amid changing social, political, economic and physical conditions (Thirumorthy & Wong, 2015). It is accomplished through “the study of laws, conditions, principles and ideals which are concerned on the one hand with man’s immediate physical environment, his nature as a social being and the relationship between factors. Its broad areas of concern revolve around the goal of helping families meet their basic needs and realize satisfying personal, family and community goals based on an understanding of the physical, psychological and socio-economic needs of the family (Metilelu, 2016)

Home economics was founded for the purpose of helping individuals and families relate to change. Its uniqueness lies in the holistic view of daily living of individuals and families. Issues are approached both from its physical or material and relational dimension of life and their interaction (Morrison & O’Gorman, 2008). The UP College of Home Economics in 1990 collectively defined home economics as “the study of families and the management of resources available to them for the satisfaction of basic needs in changing environments” (Morrison and O’Gorman, 2008). Home economics as a vocation has the following career options as shown.



Source: Morrison and O’Gorman,

2008 Home Economics Education

The central focus of home economics education is the wellbeing of people within the context of their personal, family, community and work roles. Home economics education is about becoming independent, connecting with others and taking action towards preferred futures that support individuals and families’ well-being. Through home economics education, students become empowered, active and informed members of society. Home economics education has the potential to play a major role in supporting young people to participate effectively in changing social, cultural and economic times.

In order to capitalize on this potential, teachers and curriculum leaders are connecting with students' worlds, use contemporary educational research as a guide to planning and develop practices that are empowering in terms of skill set for economic development (Akwaru *et al.*, 2014).

Home Economics as a Vocation

Vocation simply means skill for paid and unpaid employment built over a period of time that enables an individual to be fixed in the world of works. Education cannot be separated by human life and their daily activities, including their activities in doing their leisure activities, recreation, and tourism. In Nigeria, there exist sufficient research efforts in vocational literacy (Ekpenyong, 2008).

However, there is a knowledge gap in the translation of home economics vocation in the hospitality and tourism sector. Both activities are similar in such a way, that nowadays, people travel to find more experience and knowledge to improve their quality of life. However, the notion of tourism education and education for tourism is also found to be different (Morrison & O’Gorman, 2008). There are various reasons why vocational education matters. At one level the answer is all around us. Building the infrastructure that supports modern life, curing the sick, maintaining and repairing machinery and equipment, providing hospitality and leisure services, technological innovations in telecommunications and more, are only enabled by the availability of people with occupational knowledge, skills, and expertise. The need for vocational education for instrumental reasons, then, is obvious.

The Current State of Vocational Home Economics in Nigeria

The hospitality industry provides services for people who are away from home regardless of whether it is for long or short period of time. These services can vary according to the specific needs of both the person away from home and the organization

operating those services (Baker et al, 2005). The hospitality industry is important to the development of many parts of the world.

In some regions, income from it is one of the main sources of foreign exchange. The industry is important because it contributes to the growth of an economy by providing a lot of employment opportunities for the people, funding a large percentage of a country's Gross Domestic Product, thereby helping to raise the national income and by earning foreign currencies through the goods and services provided to foreign visitors, thus improving the balance of payments.

The tourism sector has a multi-sectoral dimension, with linkages to a myriad of other economic activities along the tourism value chain. The crisis has implications for both large-scale multinational companies and informal tourist related activities supporting women, youth and marginalised communities. The onset of the crisis in small states has had widespread effects, across aviation and cruise transportation; retail; business conferencing; entertainment; and cultural, ecological and sports activities, as well as in productive sectors like agriculture and fishing. This has affected jobs, livelihoods and socio-economic development globally. For small states, the implications could be even more far-reaching, given their high dependence on travel and tourism; significant levels of economic, financial and social vulnerability; exposure to external shocks and natural disasters; fragile health care systems; and limited resources to address the unfolding crisis and the changes in international travel it will bring.

There is no doubt that hospitality industry is the livewire of tourism at all levels. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) confirms that between 70% and 75% of international tourists' expenditure goes to hospitality services on annual basis (Akpabio, 2007). This confirms the strategic importance of the sector to tourism. It is estimated that there are over a million hotels in the United States of America, but in Nigeria, there are only about 12 internationally branded hotels (Amadi, 2008). Nigeria has so few internationally branded hotels due to the former perception of the country as a high – risk destination for investments, especially in hotel businesses, which are capital intensive and require long –term for the investors to recoup their money. Investors in hotels hardly look towards Nigeria due to exorbitant cost of landed property and high lending rates in Nigerian banks. It is a lot easier and cheaper to acquire land and build a hotel in USA than it is in Nigeria (Amadi, 2008). Lending rate in USA is about 6 per-cent with mortgage of about 25 years in which investor has to pay back the money. But in Nigeria, the lending rate could go as high as 25 percent, depending on who is borrowing and for what purpose.

Additionally, Nigerian banks will only give the investor about three years to pay back. The Nigerian hospitality industry is faced with a lot of problems. Among them are: high hotel charges and the slow pace on developing tourist sites that dot the various parts of the country (Akpabio, 2007). Others are erratic power supply, poor services and unethical behaviors by professionals in the industry (Awoseyin, 2007). Thus this research is undertaken to elaborate on the role of Home economics in the economic development of hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria

The Hospitality and Tourism industry in Nigeria

In specific terms, Nigerian tourism development has gone through many phases. Before the arrival of the colonialist, the country indeed had its diverse cultures, cultural sites, natural habitats from the mangrove swamps and forest in the Niger Delta region in the south to the flat savannah grassland in the north. Nigeria though geopolitically detached and with minimal infrastructural development, had tourism in practice in the pre-colonial and colonial era (Metilelu, 2016).

Another set of development in the industry was brought about during the oil boom of the 70's and the hosting of FESTAC (world festival of arts and culture) in 1977. This brought in hotels like Eko hotels in Lagos, Durbar hotel in Kaduna. The set of hotels brought another category of skilled, highly trained manpower to manage these hotels. This brought in the establishment of Hotel and catering Department in institutions like Kaduna Polytechnic and Kwara polytechnic. Since then the inflow of hotels had been on the increase which subsequently brought about the establishment of Hotel and catering management department in more polytechnics all over the country with the concentration of such institution in the Northern part of the country. It is pertinent to note that the Hospitality and Tourism program was first offered in the university in early 90's (Iyiade 2011).

Further attempts to develop the hospitality and tourism industry was displayed in the preservation of our objects of art, cultural heritage, forest as game reserve and the development of new tourist destination as the Obudu Cattle Ranch and TINAPA holiday resort all in the Cross River State, Source of River Ethiope in Umuaja in Ukwuani LGA of Delta State amongst other sites and tourist destination locations across Nigeria. The scope of Nigeria's tourism is as great as her land mass and size, as all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja have tourist sites.

The socio-economic benefits in the short and long term are determined by the extent of proper synergy of human and material resources already endowed to Nigeria. Okpoko and Okpoko (2006) identified some key elements that influence tourism development and human resources as the level of economic and infrastructure development in the country (transportation – railways, roads, water navigation, and air services; communication and accommodation); the amount of capital investment by public and private investors in the sector; aggressiveness of marketing and sales programmes; socio-political stability; and the herd of qualified management and skilled personnel. To this end, the problems of tourism development in Nigeria under study are summarized as the lack of investments in tourism projects; inadequate promotion and information; lack of tourist destination managers (poor human resources management); negligence by the governments (federal, state and local); and other stakeholders; terrorism and insurgency; and militancy and kidnapping; and human resource management needs.

Impact of Covid-19 on the Hospitality and Tourism Sector

The COVID19 outbreak impacts all sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, tourism, financial, service, trade, transport, and people in every field in every country with more significant economic shocks. Due to the uncertainty and fear of the pandemic, most firms were more likely to have low profits as people were advised to stay at home, with travel bans and cancellation of events, and the prohibition of mass gatherings (Horowitz, 2020). Given the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19 on tourism and the wider economy, the sector was unlikely to recover fully in the foreseeable future, even if the virus is contained. The prospects for recovery will depend on the duration of the crisis and the time it takes for the travel and tourism sector to rebound. Furthermore, the effects of the virus outbreak on tourism are likely to be asymmetrical and highly localized within countries, with some destinations disproportionately vulnerable because of their high reliance on the sector. For example, many Commonwealth small states, including small island developing states (SIDS), depend on international tourism for up to 90 per cent of their exports and for a significant share of their gross domestic product (GDP).

The COVID-19 outbreak causes sudden economic disruptions with demand and supply shocks in almost every sector of the economy (El-Erian, 2020). The travel and tourism sector was more likely to get influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic (Shretta, 2020). The global tourism sector accounts for more than 10% of the global GDP and 30% of the world's "export services (World Bank, 2017). Among all segments in the economy, tourism is one of the main sectors which impacts the economy as many governments impose travel restrictions, travel bans, shutting down airports, and mass passenger cancellations. Thus, the tourism industry cost with a loss of over US\$ 820 billion in revenue globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Ozili & Arun, 2020). Besides, the hospitality industry has been mainly affected due to the policies of stay at home and social distancing imposed by most governments and by cancellations of bookings, which may cost about US\$ 150 billion worldwide.

Furthermore, the positive impact on online traveling agencies, hotels, bars, restaurants, and other traveling agencies was revealed. Scholars have identified the impact of various previous epidemics on the economy and the tourism industry. The earlier studies have determined that such pandemics have relatively less impact than the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020. The notable epidemics and pandemics which influenced the world economy are H1N1 influenza, SARS, HIV AIDS pandemic, Ebola virus, Zika virus, and now, COVID-19.

Those pandemics and epidemics create huge economic losses globally. The SARS epidemic was the most influential disease in the tourism industry, as it affected international air travel for six months. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 outbreak may cause relatively greater influences than other previous pandemics. As the COVID-19 epidemic spread globally, international tourist arrivals were forecasted to decline in 2020 by up to 30%, with a loss of worldwide tourism revenue of US\$ 450 billion (Shretta, 2020). This is ten times more than the global financial impact of the SARS epidemic (Shretta, 2020).

Thus, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 outbreak is expected to critically impact international tourism compared to the previous pandemics and outbreaks in the world. The tourism industry's decline may severely impact employment and supply chain income. Countries that heavily depend on the tourism sector may experience massive recessions in the labor market and the GDP of the country.

The main sub-sectors involved with the tourism sector are health, financial, constructions, trade, air transport, accommodations, food and beverages, transportation, and communication. Thus, all such sub-sectors are negatively influenced by the decline of the tourism sector. The tourism industry is more likely to recover slower than the other sectors in the economy, as the previous pandemics have taken more than 19 months to recover.

Sectors Affected by the Pandemic

➤ International Tourist Arrivals

The COVID-19 outbreak created critical challenges for the global tourism sector. Thus, UNWTO estimates that global international tourist arrivals could decline between 20 percent to 30 percent with a loss of US\$ 30 to 50 billion. The available data in UNWTO has pointed out a 22% decrease in international tourist arrivals in the first quarter of 2020, with a 57% reduction of tourist arrivals in March. This represents a loss of 67 million international entries in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the same period last year.

In the case of the regions, Asia and the Pacific region, the first region to suffer the impact of COVID-19, experienced a 35% decrease in tourist arrivals in the first quarter of

2020. With a 19% decline in tourist arrivals, Europe was the second-most affected region in the tourism industry. The international tourist arrival information in 2020 by months was difficult to collect due to the lack of available data. As explained earlier, the decline of the tourism industry may impact various sectors in the economy, especially the hospitality and air travel industry that supports the tourism industry. The impact on each sector with the spread of COVID-19 is further demonstrated in the following sections. Concerning Nigeria, 3.5m fewer passengers resulting in a revenue loss of \$0.76 bn and risking the loss of 91,380 jobs and \$ 0.65bn contribution to Nigeria's GDP (Shretta, 2020).

➤ **Air Travel Industry**

The air travel industry is one of the hardest affected sectors in revenue due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It is common in most countries with travel restrictions, travel bans, and cancellations of flights with the coronavirus issue. The available data on the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) indicates a 38% decrease in world total air capacity in March 2020. According to ICAO data, the number of international passengers declined from 44% to 80% in 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak (UNWTO, 2020 as cited by Shretta, 2020). The air bookings show the highest decline worldwide. Asia and the Pacific region (-98%) show the biggest drop and started to decline earlier, with the introduction of travel restrictions in China. Air bookings from Europe (- 76%), the Americas (-67%), Africa, and the Middle East (-65%) all had severe declines in the first quarter of 2020 (UNWTO, 2020 as cited by Shretta, 2020). IATA forecasts a total loss of 113 billion US\$ to the airline industry (Shretta, 2020).

➤ **Hospitality**

Hotels around the world face cancellations of bookings due to the pandemic situation. Thus, the Hotel industry lost US\$ 150 billion, mostly affecting the employees in the industry. Thus, the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on the hospitality industry can be evaluated using room booking cancellations and the status of hotel industry workers. The hotel industry in all world regions recorded a massive drop in the global revenue per available room, e.g., Asia (-67.8%) and Europe (-61.7%). The global occupancies in countries decreased significantly in March 2020, from 20% to over 70% worldwide (Shretta, 2020). The negative relationship between virus outbreaks of the tourism sector has been illustrated by prior studies based on the Ebola virus and the outbreak of SARS (Kongoley-MIH, 2015).

The COVID-19 epidemic is the most severe virus outbreak, which profoundly influences the world economy compared to the previous outbreaks. The UNWTO data further illustrated that 850 million to 1.1 billion fewer international tourist arrivals with a loss of export revenues from tourism 910 billion US \$ to 1.2 trillion US \$ in 2020 due to the coronavirus epidemic worldwide. It also enhanced that 100 to 120 million direct tourism jobs are at risk. The above findings revealed a negative relationship between the COVID-19 outbreak and the tourism sector.

Role of Home Economics on Economic Development

The ability of Nations to develop its workforce is dependent upon her sustained contribution towards human capital. According to Lajili (2012), specific vocational skills and training is essential for growth driven environments. The indication that human capital is the combination of skills and knowledge acquired by individual to increase their worth in labour market remain crucial in developing any sector in the economy, therefore this suggests that organizations acquire human capital through individual's employment relationship.

Akwara *et al.*, (2014) opines that experience and training harmonized individual human capital that they bring to the organizations, it portends the general expectation that the greater the human capital the more successful the organization due to its competitive advantage of human capital stock. Nigeria with her population has failed to fully explore the enormous potential of the hospitality and tourism industry, the realization of tourism as an economic strategy arose from the establishment of National Tourism Development Corporation Act in 1992 with decree 82. F

urtherance to this was the articulation of a well-documented National Tourism Policy for Nigeria in 2005. The former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo^{GCFR} led administration considered tourism as in the six priority areas for economic and social development, this led to the constitution of a Presidential committee for the Nigeria Tourism Development Master Plan that facilitates collaboration with United Nation World Tourism (UNTD) and United Nation World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) on the request of the Federal Government of Nigeria to produce a Master plan for Nigeria (Esu, 2012). Among key issues raised in the Nigeria Tourism Master Plan is the level of human capital development in the sector that lags far behind to competitively deliver quality service. This obviously reflects in the quality of service in hotels and tourism outlets in South-West Nigeria.

This trend shows that successive government in Nigeria had paid little attention to the development of the hospitality and tourism sector. Such expositions are unsatisfactory because they complement the lamentation that hospitality and tourism industry in Nigeria lacks the perquisite to attract the needed foreign exchange, while the report of World Travel and Tourism Council (2008) maintain that the major driving force for tourism development is the economic benefits. The integration of tourism as a developmental strategy is premised on its potential for foreign exchange earnings, income and employment generation. Government poor attention towards hospitality and tourism education development will continue to impact delivery in the various training institutions offering hospitality and tourism programmes in Nigeria, thus hampering the industry's ability to provide the needed expertise for the industry growth.

Conclusion

It is concluded that Home economics has contributed to the survival of hospitality and tourism sub-sector in Nigeria in particular and the world in general. It was also concluded that Covid-19 affected the world economy globally, most especially hospitality and n tourism industries. Finally, it was also concluded Home economics contributes to Gross Domestic Product of Nigeria.

Recommendations

It has been observed under study the role of the vocational home economics is pivotal for an impact driven economic development. Thus, the following recommendations are summarized;

- i. Needs for human capital development in the hospitality and tourism to ensure quality service delivery
- ii. Needs for more investments in tourism projects
- iii. Adequate promotion and information hospitality and tourism industry
- iv. Training and engagement of tourist destination manager
- v. Consistency of governments' patronage (federal, state and local) and other corporate stakeholders

- vi. Increased efforts on the reduction of security challenges i.e. terrorism and insurgency, militancy and kidnapping.

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