

Cultural Tourism and Community Development: The Case of Egúngún Festival Ogbomoso, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines how Nigeria's cultural resources can be harnessed for community development using the Egungun festival in Ogbomoso Oyo State, Nigeria as a case study. It also exposes the rich culture and uniqueness of Egungun festival for the purpose of rural tourism and community development. Descriptive survey design was adopted, and the study employed the use of both primary and secondary data. A population of 150 respondents were investigated during the celebration of the festival. Findings indicates that the large audience generation and the presence of other tourism related industry like local markets, African dance and music, local food joint, recreational centers, hospitals, and functional public transport systems among many others during the celebration makes the Egúngún festival a feasible instrument for community development. The study attempted to situate the vital role that cultural values and tourism in promoting community development. This paper recommends that concerted efforts should be made by state and local administration to deepen tourism aspect of the event, globalize the content and reduce unnecessary hooliganism associated with it. The paper can also serve as a basis for further research in the area of cultural tourism and tourism promotion.

Keywords: Community development, cultural tourism, Egungun, festival, sustainable tourism.

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1. Introduction

With the rapid increase in technology and communication, people's tourism habits have begun to change. Tourism preferences are changing in the direction of people's needs and expectations. Intense work pressure, stress, and other psychological, physical factors bring people closer to tourism activities. Over the recent decade, tourism has been introduced as a tool for community development (Woo and Kim, 2015). For this reason, experts are trying to develop tourism role in community development by using different models. In recent years, tourism has been viewed as a resource for restructuring and sustainable development in communities, as well as bringing positive economic and social impacts (Bahrami and Noori, 2013).

Nevertheless, it is unquestionable that cultural heritage and the tourism industry in many African states, especially Nigeria, have been left untapped into for a time too long. It is also indisputable that the measure of payments or revenue in both cash and kind that a society can acquire through its cultural heritage can be immense if judiciously and resourcefully tapped into (Bahrami and Noori, 2013). By this explanation, Nigeria, can therefore, through a process of beneficial changes of its cultural heritage and through tourism develop various communities that is capable of contributing enormously to the modern world culture by projecting

African civilization and values (NTDC, 2011). Tourism is now being implemented as a means of economic development in many countries. Particularly in developing countries, tourism activities play a fundamental role in community development. Well-planned and integrated tourism in these natural, social and cultural attractions can also contribute to the development of local people (Obonyo and Fwaya, 2012).

Cultural heritage and the tourism industry in many African states, especially Nigeria, have been left in a state of listlessness for a time too long. It is also indisputable that the measure of payments or revenue in both cash and kind of a society can come through the cultural heritage, can be immense if judiciously and resourcefully tapped into (Bahrami and Noori, 2013). Also, much work has not been done to discover yet more of such cultural festivals like Yoruba Egúngún festival for community development, the festival is not globalized like other major festivals in Nigeria. This issue of undermining the role cultural heritage and tourism play in community development has led to economic retardation. There is a need to solve this problem, through a rejuvenation of the cultural heritage and, through tourism, develop a prosperous community that is capable of contributing enormously to the modern world culture by projecting African culture and values.

Festivals, whether cultural, religious, social or political are generally and specifically marked to the people. Summers (2003) simply expressed it as a thing, or a performance, or show, which amuses or interest people such as tourists, is entertainment. People travel from their destinations to other areas to acquire some of the ways life of others. Acquiring these ways is to be entertained. Egungun festival is witnessed by large number of people from far and near. According to the report from the World Travel and Tourism Council (2010), employment in tourism is expected to grow at 2.6% per annum, over 8% of all jobs worldwide will depend upon travel and tourism, and it will supply the creation of over 5.5 million jobs per year over the next decade. Tourism is the major industry and foreign currency earner in many developing countries. It is the basis of growth of many transitional corporations; its economic benefits also make it possible for tourism to account for a significant proportion of the annual disposable income of many people in many countries (Swarbroke 1999).

In the tradition of the people of Ogbomoso, and like other communities' life in Africa, festivals and religion entwine each other in all tradition activities (Okpoko 2007). Egungun festival like other festival in Ogbomoso is also marked to entertain the people. Makinde (2005) explains that traditional festivals are organized and celebrated in their 'original contexts' which is not so with the modern festival that hold sway to officially approved venues and dates by organizers. According to Ajadi (2016), who teaches African Oral Literature in the Department of English, Kwara State University, Egungun festival happens to be a salient part of the taxonomy of Africa Oral Literature. Egungun can be said to be cultural heritage of the peoples around the world, for it will be interesting to know that there is Egungun in Europe, England and the United States of America. Egúngún festival is characterized by renewal of relationships and solidarity. Disputes, quarrels, misunderstandings, family and community problems are settled during festivals which bring people together (Ajadi 2016: pers.com).

Cultural festival promotes relationship between tourist and members of the host community. It encourages world peace people from different countries gather for recreation purpose during the festival period putting aside their country's differences and interacting with each other. It also exposes some of the hidden cultural values of the local community and serves as a motivating factor for travel as some sites directly or indirectly acts as a tourist center. Cultural festival also helps to lessen various prejudices among people and leads to mutual respect among nations as well as creating the objective condition for the spiritual elevation of individuals.

Apart from job opportunity that the festival can create for the community, the emergency of it can help to put host community in the limelight of the world as a tourism destination. others include the festival helps to develop and attract the attention to the economic improvement of rural people; the festival is also an ideal destination for people who wish to restore their form after their hustle and bustle of life (come to spend their

leisure time); It establishes much needed foreign exchange, generate revenue for the government through taxes, and levies; development of tourist facilities and recreation opportunities available in the host community.

According to Ajadi (2016) who teaches oral tradition agreed that one of the characteristics of under development is that of deficiencies in the basic infrastructure which lie at the root of a series of serious problems related to the development of tourism. The tourism industry illustrates primarily the need for basic infrastructure and social amenities which include good roads, schools, hospitals, electricity, portable water, drainage system among others.

This study examined the role of cultural tourism in community development, using Masquerade (Egungun) festival in Ogbomoso as a case study. Specifically, the study examined the possible ways Egungun festival can be sustainably developed in this town towards socio-cultural and economic growth, expose the rich culture and uniqueness of Egungun festival in Ogbomoso for the purpose of tourism and community development, Egungun festival as a true representation and a means of showcasing the cultural heritage and the factors militating against the development of Egungun festival.

3. Methodology and Data Collection

The method adopted is descriptive survey design, because it generally gathers data with the intention of describing the existing condition, identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared or determined as well as the relationship that exist between specific events at a particular point in time (Cohen et al 1994). Primary data is observed from interview and questionnaires and observation. A set of questionnaires were used to gather information from respondents; these questions were characterized by close-ended or pre-coded questions. One hundred and seventy were administered, one hundred and fifty were returned. Key informant interview was conducted, this method was to capture information on Egungun festival in Ogbomoso-land.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Result

This section of the research work dealt with result findings. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and presented in form of tables and percentages.

Table 1.0: Distribution of respondents by sex

	Frequency	Percent
MALE	98	65.3
FEMALE	52	34.7
Total	150	100.0

Section A, Table 1.1: I believe cultural tourism has a role to play in community development

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	1.3	1.3	1.3
DISAGREE	4	2.7	2.7	4.0
UNDECIDED	10	6.7	6.7	10.7
AGREE	60	40.0	40.0	50.7
STRONGLY AGREE	74	49.3	49.3	100.0

Total	150	100.0	100.0
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Table 1.2: The festival improves investment, development, and recreational facilities and infrastructure in Ogbomoso

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid STRONGLY DISAGREE	41	27.3	27.3	27.3
DISAGREE	42	28.0	28.0	55.3
UNDECIDED	18	12.0	12.0	67.3
AGREE	25	16.7	16.7	84.0
STRONGLY AGREE	24	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 1.1 indicates that most of the respondents agreed that cultural heritage has a role to play in nation building, 49% strongly agreed, 40% agreed to this. Table 1.2, revealed that majority of the respondents also disagreed that the festival improves facilities such as recreation facilities, civic centers, and primary health care facilities. By implication it means there is much to be done for the festival to enhance community development.

Table 2.1: It increases demand for historical and cultural exhibition

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid STRONGLY DISAGREE	7	4.7	4.7	4.7
DISAGREE	11	7.3	7.3	12.0
UNDECIDED	12	8.0	8.0	20.0
AGREE	78	52.0	52.0	72.0
STRONGLY AGREE	42	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 2.1 shows that the festival also increased the demand for historical and cultural exhibition.

Table 3.1: It improves the understanding and image of different communities and cultures in Ogbomoso

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid STRONGLY DISAGREE	20	13.3	13.3	13.3
DISAGREE	12	8.0	8.0	21.3
UNDECIDED	22	14.7	14.7	36.0
AGREE	54	36.0	36.0	72.0
STRONGLY AGREE	42	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.2: I believe that Egungun festival is a means of showcasing Ogbomoso cultural heritage

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	6	4.0	4.0	4.0
DISAGREE	15	10.0	10.0	14.0
UNDECIDED	12	8.0	8.0	22.0
AGREE	62	41.3	41.3	63.3
STRONGLY AGREE	55	36.7	36.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.1 shows that another social-cultural benefit of the festival is that it improves the understanding and image of different communities, and cultures in the study area. . In Table 3.2 36.7% strongly agreed, 41.3% simply agreed, 8% undecided, 10% disagreed and 4% strongly disagreed that egungun festival is a means of showcasing Ogbomosos’ cultural heritage. From this analysis, it shows that majority believed Egungun festival is a means of showcasing Ogbomoso cultural heritage to the world.

Table 4.1: I believe the use of magical substances during Egungun performance has reduced the number of participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	31	20.7	20.7	20.7
DISAGREE	25	16.7	16.7	37.3
UNDECIDED	18	12.0	12.0	49.3
AGREE	31	20.7	20.7	70.0
STRONGLY AGREE	45	30.0	30.0	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2: The acceptability of Christianity and Islam has affected the level of participation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
STRONGLY DISAGREE	13	8.7	8.7	8.7
DISAGREE	21	14.0	14.0	22.7
UNDECIDED	3	2.0	2.0	24.7
AGREE	37	24.7	24.7	49.3
STRONGLY AGREE	76	50.7	50.7	100.0
Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3: Government needs to improve the conduct of the festival as well as the conduct of the participants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	STRONGLY DISAGREE	25	16.7	16.7	16.7
	DISAGREE	20	13.3	13.3	30.0
	UNDECIDED	5	3.3	3.3	33.3
	AGREE	60	40.0	40.0	73.3
	STRONGLY AGREE	40	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	150	100.0	100.0	

Furthermore, in Table 4.1, 30% strongly agreed, 20.7% agreed, 12% undecided, 16.7% disagreed, 20.7% strongly disagreed, that the use of magical substances has reduced the number of participants at the event. Table 4.2 shows the effect of foreign religion (Christianity and Islam) on the festival; while 50.7% strongly agreed, 24.7% agreed, 2% was undecided, and 14% disagreed that the acceptability of Christianity and Islam has affected the level of participation.

Table 4.3 shows that 26.7% strongly agreed, 40% agreed, 3.3% undecided, 13.3% disagreed, 16.7% strongly disagreed, on the fact that the conduct of the festival and that of the participants needs to be improved.

4.2 Discussion

This study makes significant contributions towards understanding the role cultural tourism plays in community development if properly harnessed. Findings indicates that Egungun festival has not really improve or develop recreational facilities in Ogbomoso. It has not help contribute significantly to the development of infrastructural facilities within Ogbomoso community. The findings of this research is in line with Ajadi (2016), he argued that one of the characteristics of under development is that of deficiencies in the basic infrastructure which lie at the root of series of serious problems related to the development of tourism. The tourism industry illustrates primarily the need for basic infrastructures and social amenities which include good roads, schools, hospitals, electricity, portable water, drainage system among others. The study shows that cultural tourism has increased demand for historical and cultural exhibition, and also majority of respondents agreed that Egungun festival is a means of showcasing Ogbomoso cultural heritage to the outside world.

The study shows that the festival has helped improve the understanding the image of different communities and culture within Ogbomoso which is in line with Medilk (2002), he argued that when tourists comes in contact with the place he visits and its population, a social exchange take place, his social background affects the social structure and mode of life in his destination, he is in turn affected by it and sometimes carries back home with him new habits and way of life. The study also shows that the use of fetish power during Egungun performance has decreased the number of spectators likewise the acceptability of Christianity and Islam has affected the level of participation, the study suggests that the conduct of the festival should be improved as well as the conduct of the participants. In an interview with Chief Simeon Adebayo Akano (Baale of Moleyo), he explained that the conduct of participants and followers who engage in drinking of alcohol, hooliganism and indecent attitudes needs to be checked. He also perceived that the celebration of the festival involves a lot of fetish things. Also, according to Pa Ajani another key informant, large audience generation and the presence of other tourism related industries like local markets, African dance and music, local food joint, recreational centres, hospitals, and functional public transport systems among many others during the celebration makes the Egúngún festival a feasible instrument for community development but the number of foreign (outsiders) participant are few most of the participant are indigenes.

5. Conclusion

Community development requires appropriate targets and strategies that focus on communities and on the sustainable use of available resources (Obonyo and & Fwaya, 2012). This study attempted to situate the vital role that cultural tourism plays in promoting community development. It adopted as an empirical ladder the Egungun festival in Ogbomoso, arguing that the festival has succeeded to some extent in attracting tourist to the community, but it has not really assisted in boosting the economy of study area. The large audience generation and the presence of other tourism related industries like local markets (a place where tourists can get various artifacts and materials), African dance and music (which serve as entertainment), local food joint, recreational centers, hospitals, and functional public transport systems among many others during the celebration makes the Egúngún festival a feasible instrument that can be used to sustainably develop Ogbomoso towards socio-cultural and economic growth. During this period tourists' demand for local products such as artifacts and art works, accommodations, local food and other related service is always on the increase which consequently affects the economy of the town therefore improving the overall income of the study area. It is therefore important to state here that lack of introduction of captivating and innovating programs during the festival such as performance competitions, cultural exhibition, exposition, and local game competition is responsible for it. There is a need to work on the innovations to make the festival more viable. Also, the conduct of the festival is another hindrance coupled with Christianity and Islam. Lastly Egúngún festival like many other festivals could be developed to be a leading cultural tourism industry for community development in Ogbomoso. This can be achieved through concerted efforts made to deepen the tourism aspect of the event, globalize the content and reduce unnecessary hooliganism associated with it.

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