



Perennial Problems Hindering the Growth of Hospitality Industry in Gembu, Taraba State

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to identify problems hindering hospitality development in Gembu; the study used simple random sampling, with a sample size of 350 respondents who comprised of hotel proprietors, managers, staff and guests. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. A mean of 2.50 was used as the cut-off point for decision making for each item. Any item with a mean of 2.50 and above was considered agreed. Any item with a mean of less than 2.50 was considered disagree. The result revealed that power supply and insecurity are the major factors that hinders the development of hospitality industry in Gembu. Recommendations were made based on the findings. These include; that government should tackle the insecurity challenges bedevilling Northern Nigeria which has adverse effect on the hospitality industry in the country. This is very necessary as companies in the sector are recording declining profits. Government should also provide power plant, which will supply light in Gembu, thereby reducing the cost incurred by the hospitality industry.

Keywords: Hospitality; Challenges; Development; Government

Introduction

Background to the Study

Hospitality is the combination of efforts made by an individual or group of people to make a guest feel welcome. Roundel et al., defined hospitality as friendly and generous behavior towards visitors and guests intended to make them feel welcome. Hospitality also includes food, drink, room and entertainment given to customers by a company or organization.

These services, argued are combination of physiological and psychological elements with security and level of service. He emphasized that it concerns the provision of physiological comfort within defined levels of service. Such services he continued include

providing meals, drinks, attraction, and accommodation, to people travelling to places outside their usual homes. Hospitality services like hosting is a competitive business and must endeavor to identify and meets customers' in order to be able to stay in business.

Meanwhile, hospitality industry's contributions to the economy span from boosting the employment rate, revenues generation, supporting local businesses, preserving and empowering local art and culture, and bringing beneficial foreign exchange. For instance, Kushal, argued that about 4.8% to Nigeria's GDP and utilized about 1.6% of Nigerians, in 2016. In terms of employment generation, Anake identified three types of employment that the indigenes of Obudu Mountain Resort, Nigeria, were engaged. He reported that 54 people were engaged in permanent status, 97 as casual, while 28 were engaged in petty trading. On the whole, a total of 459 indigenes were engaged between 2000 and 2007.

However, in spite of these numerous benefits inherent in hospitality industry, Goyal and Goyal, observed that several factors such as shortage of skilled employees, retaining quality workforce, shortage of rooms, intense competition, customers expectation and human resource development; affect hospitality industry. In Nigeria, apart from the above mentioned factors, Ajayi et al. added insecurity, terrorism, cybercrime, funding and power supply, as problems that hinders the growth of hospitality industry [1]. These problems has adverse effect on the hospitality industry as tourists patronage to the study area has drastically reduced thereby reducing both the benefits therein and decline in profits by the companies operating there.

Statement of problem

Currently, Nigeria has been witnessing unprecedented levels of insecurity from terrorists, kidnappers, armed robbery, cybercrime, and lack of funds. This menace, especially in the North East parts of Nigeria, has greatly affected business activities in the area.

In the study area, these problems has severally discouraged the will-be investors as well as causing the already developed business men and women to close their businesses and relocated to other areas. Lack of funds has also affected indigenes in the area, which ordinarily would have provided the basic necessary facilities to promote employment generation, promote domestic tourism and improve household income generation.

Moreover, in Nigeria, career in the hospitality profession is not considered as a white collar job, hence it has not been fully explored. It is in view of this that this study sought to identify problems hindering hospitality industry in the study area.

Aim and objective

The study set to assess the perennial problems hindering the growth of hospitality industry in Gembu, Taraba State, Nigeria. The specific objectives include:

- To identify problems affecting hospitality businesses in the area.
- To determine the effect of these problems on hospitality industry in the study area.
- To find out the roles of government and private operators in handling this problems.

Research questions

To enable the researchers attain the above objectives, the following questions were set to guide the study.

- What are the problems affecting hospitality industry in the study area?
- What impact does these perennial problems has on hospitality industry in Gembu?
- Has the government and private investors making effort to stimulate the growth and development of hospitality industry in Gembu?

Literature Review

Hospitality industry

The hospitality industry is a broad category of fields within the service industry that included lodging, food and beverage service, event planning, theme parks, travel agency, tourism, hotels, restaurants and bars. According to the Cambridge Business English Dictionary the "hospitality industry" consists of hotels and food service (accommodation and food service). This sector is one of the fastest growing in Europe. In 2004, more than 7.8 million people were employed and the sector generated more than \$338 billion in turnover.

According to the UNWTO, the hospitality industry is regulated by the multi-sectorial industry of tourism. In the same vain ILO, pointed out that, the hospitality business is peculiar among a sub-sector of hospitality, catering and tourism that includes fast food outlets, clubs, snack bars, guest houses, banquet halls and events tents, among others.

Jobs tend to be temporary, with irregular hours, low pay, and few career prospects. There are a high proportion of young people working in the sector. Some distribution companies use this term to define the food and beverage service trade channel or the hospitality trade [2].

Importance of hospitality industry

The importance of hospitality industry according to Okojie includes:

Foreign exchange earnings: The tourism and hospitality sector in Nigeria can generate foreign exchange earnings through international tourist arrivals and expenditures. Foreign tourists spend money on accommodation, food and beverage, transportation, souvenirs and other tourism-related services, which can contribute to the country's foreign exchange reserves. This will help to strengthen the country's balance of payments position, improve its international trade and enhance its economic stability.

Cultural preservation: Nigeria is a country with rich cultural heritage and diverse cultural assets, including traditional arts, crafts, music, dance, festivals and historical sites. The tourism and hospitality sector plays a vital role in preserving and promoting Nigeria's cultural heritage by creating demand for experiences of cultural tourism. This encourages the preservation of traditional practices, promotes cultural exchange and raises awareness about the value of Nigeria's cultural assets.

Entrepreneurship and small business development: The sector in Nigeria can provide opportunities for entrepreneurship and small business development, as it offers a favourable environment for Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to thrive. Local entrepreneurs can start small-scale businesses in the tourism and

hospitality sector, such as guesthouses, restaurants, tour guiding and souvenir shops, which can contribute to economic diversification and reduce dependence on the traditional sectors.

Forward and backward linkages: The tourism and hospitality sector in Nigeria has forward and backward linkages with other sectors of the economy, such as agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and services. For instance, hotels and restaurants rely on local agricultural products for food supply, creating demand for agricultural produce and supporting local farmers. Similarly, the sector creates demand for manufactured goods such as furniture, textiles and handicrafts, thereby stimulating local manufacturing and handicraft production.

Infrastructure development: The sector drives the development of tourism-related infrastructure such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, transportation and other facilities in Nigeria. The development of such infrastructure requires investment in construction, renovation and maintenance, which generates economic activities and creates employment opportunities in the construction and related industries.

Government revenue generation: The tourism and hospitality sector can contribute to government revenue generation through various means such as taxes, fees, permits and licenses. The government can collect revenue from the tourism and hospitality sector, which can be used to fund public infrastructure development, social services and other government programmes, contributing to the overall economic growth and development of the country [3].

Regional development: The sector can also stimulate regional development by promoting tourism in lesser-known destinations and rural areas. This can help in reducing regional imbalances and promoting inclusive development. Tourism development can create opportunities for local communities to participate in the sector and benefit from the economic gains.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow: The tourism and hospitality sector in Nigeria can attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow, which can contribute to economic growth and development. International hotel chains, restaurants and other tourism-related businesses may invest in Nigeria, bringing in foreign capital, technology, expertise and global best practices. This can stimulate economic growth, create employment opportunities and enhance the competitiveness of the sector.

Challenges of hospitality industry

Awoseyin observed that in Nigeria, just as in other nations of the world, hospitality industry is faced with a lot of problems. Okojie specifically listed these problems to include:

Inadequate tourism infrastructure: These include; inadequate transportation, accommodation and attractions, which often hinders the growth of the tourism sector.

Limited marketing efforts: Nigeria's tourism sector lacks effective marketing and promotion, resulting in low awareness and limited visibility in the international tourism market.

Security concerns: Challenges including issues of insurgency, terrorism and crime have affected Nigeria's image as a safe and secure tourist destination, leading to decreased tourist arrivals. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), survey, 66% of vacation travellers say crime is an important consideration when choosing a vacation destination and 62% of travellers thinking

about travelling plan. Ajayi et al, observed that despite Nigeria’s powerful cultural assets and rich natural beauty, the Bokoharam rebellion in the Northeast keeps domestic and foreign investors away from natural attractions.

Limited tourism product development: The diversity and potential of Nigeria’s tourism products have not been fully developed, resulting in limited options for tourists and reduced competitiveness in the global tourism market.

Inadequate service quality: Service quality in the hospitality sector in Nigeria can be inconsistent, with issues such as poor customer service, lack of trained personnel and substandard facilities.

Non-access to finance: The difficulty to access finance for tourism/hospitality businesses, especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can be challenging in Nigeria, hindering their growth and expansion. Goyal and Goyal, pointed out that the Indian authority established dedicated funding schemes or venture capital funds specifically for the tourism/hospitality sector, to provide affordable and accessible financing options for businesses.

Lack of skilled manpower: There is scarcity of skilled workforce, especially in tourism destinations’ areas; hence there is the need to urgently provide the necessary trainings.

Lack of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs): Lacked of Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), in the local, regional and national levels is affecting the promotion and development of tourism and hospitality industry.

Inadequate information and data: There is lack of availability and accessibility of accurate and up-to-date information and data on Nigerian hospitality and tourism industry.

Limited community involvement: The local communities are not adequately involved in tourism and hospitality industry planning, development and decision making process.

Power supply: The inadequate power supply, according to Austin, is a major immediate problem, especially where power generators have to run for 24 hours in a hotel, thereby making the cost of running businesses high.

Theory of reasoned action

According to Buttle, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TORA) is anchored on the understanding that humans make rational decisions based on the factual information available to them. The theory posits that human decision making is informed by the possible implications

stemming from the execution of the decision. Cedicci, argued that in tourism/hospitality, TORA could be used as a business/marketing strategic tool as it could be used to assess the variance in the intention to consume tourism/hospitality services on the next business trip. Cedicci and Trehan, further assert that of the two predictors in the TORA, attitudes towards the act are the most significant contributor, thus it could be inferred that attitude rotates around service quality expectations and reflects the implications for business/marketing strategy. Draw from the forgoing; the theory of reason action is adopted as the theoretical and analytical framework for the study [4]. It is because it provides importance of service quality and the implications for business and marketing strategy, which act as contributors to the growth of hospitality industry in the study area.

Methodology

This study used survey design to gather the views of hospitality staff, hotel guests and other key stakeholders on problems affecting the hospitality industry in Gembu, Nigeria.

The survey was conducted in Gembu, the administrative headquarters of Saduana local government area of Taraba State. In all, there are 12 major hospitality establishments in the area and 25% of this number in the area was chosen for the study, which resulted to 3 hospitality establishments; Fast Track Hotel, GECHEAN Restaurant and Daula Hotel.

The population for this study consists of 30 hospitality staff and 21 hotel guests (51), from the 3 major hospitality establishments chosen in the area. The sample size for the study is 45, drawn from the population of the study of 51 using Taro Yemen’s formula [5].

The major instrument used in the collection of data for the research work is questionnaire which is used to obtain information from the staff and guests of the selected hospitality establishments on how the perennial problems have hindered the growth of hospitality industry in the study area [6]. The data collected through the questionnaires was analysed using simple percentage and mean statistic.

DATA presentation and analysis

Research question one: What are the problems affecting hospitality industry in the study area?

To answer the above research question; the mean scores of the responses of the hotel proprietors, managers, staff and guests were computed. The problems were determined for each of the items. The findings are presented in Table 1.

S. no	Constraints hindering hospitality development	Mean score	Decision
1	Security affects or hinders the development of hospitality industry in Gembu	3.33	Agreed
2	Power supply is affecting the development of hospitality industry in Gembu	3.69	Agreed
3	Road affects the development of hospitality industry in Gembu	3.76	Agreed

4	Insufficient fund by hotels owners affects the development of hospitality industry in Gembu	3.17	Agreed
5	Lack of private capital investment is affecting the development of hospitality industry in Gembu	3.12	Agreed
6	Inadequacy of competent and trained hospitality personnel affects the development of hospitality industry in Gembu	3.37	Agreed
7	Unethical behaviours by professionals in the industry can hinder the development of hospitality industry	3.45	Agreed
8	High hotel charges hinder the development of hospitality industry	3.23	Agreed

Table 1: Mean responses of the hotel proprietors, managers, staff and guests on the problems hindering hospitality development in Gembu, Taraba State.

Table 1 above shows that all the eight constraints that hinder the hospitality development in Gembu had mean ratings of 3.76 to 3.12. These scores are greater than 2.50 which is the cut-off point. This implies that the six constraints hindering Hospitality development in Gembu should constitute a focus for hospitality development in Gembu, Taraba State.

Research question two: What impact does these perennial problems has on hospitality industry in Gembu?

Data for answering this research question is summarized in Table 2. All the hotel proprietors, managers, staff and guests responded to items on impact of hospitality industry in Gembu.

S. no	Impact of hospitality industry development to economic growth	Mean score	Decision
1	Hospitality industry development contributes to the economic growth of Gembu	3.38	Agreed
2	Development of hospitality creates job opportunities to the people in Gembu	3.14	Agreed
3	Hospitality industry development would improve the social life of the people in Gembu	3.45	Agreed

Table 2: Mean responses of the hotel proprietors, managers, staff and guests on the impact of hospitality industry in Gembu, Taraba State.

Table 2 indicates that all the three are impacts of hospitality industry development to economic growth with the mean ratings of 3.45 to 3.14. These scores are greater than 2.50 which is the cut-off point. This implies that the three impacts of hospitality industry development in economic growth should constitute a focus for hospitality development in Gembu Taraba State.

Research question three: Has the government and private investors making effort to stimulate the growth and development of hospitality industry in Gembu?

The factors that enhance growth and development of hospitality industry were separately indentified for each of the six items under study. The hotel proprietors, managers, staff and guests responded to items on the factors that can enhance growth and development of hospitality industry (Table 3).

S. no	Factors that can enhance growth and development of hospitality industry	Mean score	Decision
1	With innovation, the hospitality industry would improve the quality of products as well as services.	3.2	Agreed

2	The quality of service provided by the hospitality industry depends on the employee' ability to provide the service	3.7	Agreed
3	Using of the latest technology in the hospitality service will allow enjoyable experience for their customers	2.69	Agreed
4	Adequate power supply would improve the quality of service provided by the hospitality industry	3.17	Agreed
5	A secured hospitality destination attracts guests	3.51	Agreed
6	People tend to patronize the hospitality industry if it is easily accessible by road.	3.3	Agreed

Table 3: Mean responses of the hotel proprietors, managers, staff and guests on the factors that can enhance growth and development of hospitality industry in Gembu Taraba State.

Table 3 shows that all the six factors that enhance growth and development in hospitality industry had mean ratings of 3.70 to 2.69. These scores are greater than 2.50 which is the cut-off point. This implies that the six factors enhancing the growth and development in hospitality industry should constitute a focus for hospitality development in Gembu, Taraba State.

Findings

The following findings were made:

Six constraints hindering hospitality development in Gembu, Taraba State.

These are organized as follows:

- Security affects or hinders the development of hospitality industry in Gembu.
- Power supply is affecting the development of hospitality industry in Gembu.
- Road affects the development of hospitality industry in Gembu.
- Insufficient fund by hotels owners affects the development of hospitality industry in Gembu.
- Lack of private capital investment is affecting the development of hospitality industry in Gembu.
- Inadequacy of competent and trained hospitality personnel affects the development of hospitality industry in Gembu.

Three imperative of hospitality industry development to economic growth in Gembu, Taraba State.

They are organized as follows:

- Hospitality industry development contributes to the economic growth of Gembu.
- Development of hospitality industry creates job opportunities to the people in Gembu.
- Hospitality industry development improves the social life of the people in Gembu.

Six factors that can stimulate the growth and development of hospitality industry in Gembu, Taraba State.

These are as follows:

- With innovation, the hospitality industry would improve the quality of products as well as services.
- The quality of service provided by the hospitality industry depends on the employee' ability to provide the service.
- Using of the latest technology in the hospitality service will allow enjoyable experience for their customers.
- Adequate power Supply would improve the quality of service provided by the hospitality industry.
- A secured hospitality destination attracts guests.
- People tend to patronize the hospitality industry if it is easily accessible by road.

Discussion

The six constraints hindering hospitality development were identified by the study. All the problem items were rated above average by the respondents. The high mean scores obtained on the problems identified are an indication that these constraints were appropriate for hindering hospitality industry development [7]. This findings is consistent with those of Akpabio and Amadi who pointed out that high hotel charges, slow pace on developing tourist sites, erratic power supply and poor services hinders the development of hospitality industry.

Nwosu and Awoseyin are of the view that unethical behaviours by professionals in the industry can hinder the development of hospitality industry.

The security challenges currently bedevilling Northern Nigeria is having adverse effect on the hospitality industry in that part of the country as companies in the sector are recording declining profits. Shortage of fund, inadequacy of competent or trained personnel affects the development of identified hospitality industry.

The findings further revealed that the three imperative of hospitality industry development to economic growth is necessary for achieving development in hospitality industry [8]. Zappino is of the view that hospitality industry ensures economic development through its tourism, hotel and restaurant products and services.

Aref and Redzuan, reported that the hospitality industry plays a vital economic role in local communities throughout the world. Travel and tourism is one of the world's largest industries, generating US\$6 trillion or 9% of global GDP and supporting 260 million jobs. Many

of these jobs are created by the hotel sector, giving the industry a tremendous opportunity to help local communities prosper.

The findings also show six important factors that enhance growth and development of hospitality industry. In line with the above statement, Chang et al. observed that the hospitality industry enterprises could improve the quality of the products as well as services, reduce the costs, meet and satisfy the changing customers' needs better, increase the profit, gain the competitive advantage [9]. Various types of innovation development and implementation (for example, service innovation, product innovation, administrative innovation) could lead the hospitality enterprises to the application of novel ideas, services and products.

According to Barrows, the customer's opinion about the enterprise and the quality of it providing services depends on the employees' ability to provide the services. Competent managers should therefore empower the employees to provide the highest quality services in order to maintain and attract new customers [10].

Conclusion

Hospitality industry constraints identified by this study revealed the problems that are hindering the development of hospitality industry in Gembu. These problems include lack of security, power supply (electricity) access roads, poor services, unethical behaviour of professionals, poor water supply, unskilled workers and high cost of hotel charges.

The imperative of the hospitality industry identified by the study emphasized its necessity for economic growth in hospitality development, as well as creating job opportunities for the people, thereby improving the life of the people in Gembu.

Factors that enhance the growth and development of hospitality industry were also identified to include, innovation especially in the area of services, product and administration, and the use of computer and labour saving devices, adequate power supply, availability of access roads, infrastructural development, provision of employment, high quality services to attract and maintain new and old customers with special attention paid to the customers.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made;

- This study finding should be made available to proprietors, managers, staff and guests of hospitality industry to be aware of the constraints affecting the hospitality industry and the factors that can enhance the growth and development of hospitality industry in order to provide solution to the identified needs.
- Seminars, workshops and conferences should be organized by professionals of hospitality and tourism industry to popularize the identified constraints, imperatives of hospitality industry and the factors that can enhance its growth and development.
- The findings should be used as a guide by the professionals in hospitality industry in the area of study in planning, implementation and evaluation of hospitality students.

- This study should be made available to hospitality professionals, personnel or students on job training through seminars, workshops, conferences and publications.
- This study would thus provide a proper standard for hospitality industry trainees.
- The trainees should be given opportunities to acquire practical experiences in hospitality industry environment with regards to the identified problems and how to find solutions in the area of services to customers.
- Government should tackle the security challenges bedevilling Northern Nigeria which is having adverse effect on the hospitality industry in the country as companies in the sector are recording declining profits.
- Government should provide power plant, which will supply light in Gembu, thereby reducing the cost of fuel incurred by the hospitality industry.
- Government should construct good roads that will be accessible by the customers in the hospitality industry.
- Management of the hospitality industry in Gembu should use the latest technology in the hospitality service which will allow enjoyable experience for their customers.

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