

An Overview of Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives as a Tool for Promoting International Tourism

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Abstract

The concept of foreign policy being a course of action or principles adopted by a nation's government to define its relation with other countries or groups of countries gives credence to tourism being treated as an outcome of such policy as tourism is used in fostering political, economic and socio-cultural spheres of nations in this millennium. Quite a number of key trends have emerged from international tourism particularly the rise in travels to Middle East and African tourism demand which Nigeria can explore to develop its tourism industry and regain its useful place in the international community of nations. It's evident that there is little awareness about the immense importance derived from international tourism, by policy makers thus an overview of the probable benefits to be accrued where the methodology used was a theoretical application of the documentary and observation approaches where a good understanding of the industry and the events that happen on daily basis to the administration and operations in the industry was given and the facts presented. The findings revealed the importance of having an effective and functional foreign policy that would enhance efficiency and goal oriented results on international tourism for Nigeria's economic sub-sectors of paramount need now in order to harness the benefits of her role and dominance in international peace keeping and humanitarian endeavors.

Keywords: *Policy, Economy, Efficiency, International Peace*

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Background to the Study

The concept of foreign policy is a course of action or principles adopted by a nation's government to define its relation with other countries or groups of countries (Saleh, 2003). A country's foreign policy also set forth its position on a wide range of international issues as actions taken regarding external situation and domestic obstacles. It is also viewed as the study of relationships between countries, including the roles of states, inter-governmental organizations (IGOs), international non-governmental organization (INGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (MNCs). International diplomacy is an academic and public policy field of political economy and social- cultural development of Nations and Nation states in a positive or normative way as it both seeks to analyze as well as formulate the foreign policy of particular nation. International foreign institutions play a vital role in contemporary international relations through tourism and travel which had been one of the greatest tools for peace and diplomacy in our time (Sunday 2010). As people move throughout the world they learn to know and understand each other's customs and to appreciate the qualities of each nation, with this level of international diplomacy tourism would be promoted which can sharply develop tourism economic atmosphere in Nigeria (Lanfant, 1980).

Today, many countries have joined allies with international institutions to promote and boost their tourism destination to the world for their own citizens and based on statistical report of 2014 by United Nations World Tourism Organization UNWTO (2015), International tourism propelled ahead in 2014 as the number of international tourists (overnight visitors) grew 4.4% with an additional 48 million more than in 2013, to reach a new record total of 1,135 million. Furthermore, UNWTO (2015) reported that the growth in arrivals was followed closely by that of receipts from international tourism which reached an estimated US\$ 1,245 billion (euro 937 billion) in 2014, an increase of 3.7% in real terms (considering international tourism receipts (the travel item of the Balance of Payment), tourism also generates export earnings through international passenger transport services (rendered to non-residents). The latter amounted to an estimated US\$ 221 billion in 2014, bringing total exports from international tourism up to US\$ 1.5 trillion, or US\$ 4 billion a day on average.

While in Africa, international tourist numbers grew by an estimated 2%, equivalent to an increase of one million arrivals to reach 56 million tourists backed by an increase of 3% in receipts. While arrivals to North Africa were weak (+1%), Sub-Saharan Africa saw international tourist numbers rise by 3% despite the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in a few West African countries (Nigeria Inclusive) (UNWTO, 2015).

Over time, an ever-increasing number of destinations have opened and invested in tourism development, turning moderate tourism into a key driver of social- economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, infrastructure development and the export revenues earned (Reddy, 2013). As an international traded service, inbound tourism has become one of the world's major trade categories. Globally, as an export category, tourism ranks fourth after fuels, chemicals and automotive products. For many developing countries, it is one of the main sources of foreign exchange income and the number one export category, creating much needed employment and opportunity for development (UNWTO, 2016).

Nigeria's relations with other nation is in the best position to meet the demand for tourism with human face in a healthier environment because it is about time to pull all her available and vast tourism potentials together by promoting them through various international fields of institutions. The United nation (UN), African Union (AU), European Union (EU), Economic community for west African states (ECOWAS), all these are some of the international organization that describe the global association of governments facilitating co-operation in international law, international security, economic development, and social equity. These institutions could serve as vehicles for Nigeria's tourism promotion (Ibru, 2004) if good will understanding, peace and stability, international diplomacy, integration of various nations of the world are been enhance by nations of the world as well as the inter-governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Tourism today is the industry of the twenty first century (Holjevac, 2013).

Developed and developing countries worldwide are embracing tourism with great warmth and Nigeria should not be an exception especially considering her abundant natural, manmade and cultural potentials (Honey and Gilpin, 2009).

Statement of Research Problem

Because of the dynamic nature of international relations which have attracted the attention of many nations over the centuries? The strength and capacities of individual countries have been to exploit, enhance and promote their economic sector. In Nigeria, there has been the tendency in the existing literature, to examine the country's huge population, oil and gas wealth and her global peace keeping efforts in accelerating her economic profile at international level.

However, an area that seems to be lacking in the existing literature in this respect is the phenomenon of tourism as a viable and alternative means of enhancing and generating revenue for her country while also enhancing its image and position in the comity of nations. It is in the light of these that an attempt is made to examine, these fundamental issues with a view to portray and advance pathways of policy framework and procedures of maximizing the country's tourism potentials vis a vis its efforts in promoting international peace, security and world as well as regional economic developments and integration.

Theoretical Concept of Foreign Policy of Nigeria

In advancing a meaning to foreign policy (Shodanga, 2001) argued that foreign policy is not separate from the national policy, instead it is a part of it consisting of national interests that are to be furthered in relation to other states. While virtually all the states determine the course of their foreign policies within the limits of their strengths and the realities of the external environment. The nonpolitical relations also fall in the scope of foreign policy (Nye, 2011). The foreign policy of Nigeria has experienced dynamism which is characterized by growing interdependencies, the mutual responsibility and dependency on others (Emmanuel, 2010). This point advocates to growing globalization, particularly with international economic interaction. The role of international institutions, and wide spread acceptance of several operating. Principles in the international system, reinforces ideas that relations are characterized by interdependence (Obiozor, 1994).

The growing concern by mankind to cope with demands of conflict and war on the one hand and coordination and cooperation among states on the other, has led to an emerging awareness of bilateralism and multi-literalism as viable instruments for promoting national interest (Adeniran, 1983). He also said the understanding of international relation has rarely devolved beyond the paradigm of sovereign nation states, selfishly persuading their diverse and sometime conflicting interest in an archaic world polity. This helps to explain why the sub-field of international relations must be seen not only as encompassing the study of foreign policy, diplomacy, international politics, international law and international organization, but also the issue of nation power as an index of national capacity (Nye, 2011).

Abegunrisn (1993) on the other hand quoted from the speech of Alhaji, Sir Abubakar in 1960 during his regime as the Prime Minister, that:

Africa was the center piece of Nigerian's foreign policy. In his words, we belong to African and Africa must claim first attention in our external relations.

Thus, successive government had carved out the foreign policies that will make Nigeria a unique and dynamic one in advancing and promoting it resources to African nations and beyond. While, Nigerian's foreign policy derives its backing from its demographic size of over 150 million people approximately, its multi-ethnic population, its vast oil reserves, highly skilled and educated peoples, the leadership was focused in the conduct of external relations (Abegunrisn, 1993).

Tourism and International Relations

Tourism involves large quantities of currency exchange whose value may be enhanced or subjects to weakening by stock market fluctuations or changes in government economic policy. Much of the industry, particularly, tour operators and air transport is controlled by multi-national co-operations who have been rightly but belatedly acknowledge as actors' international relation operating across national boundaries (James, 1988). Equally with the increasing nature of international diplomacy, it has also made tourism to be inseparable from the field of international relations because the phenomenon of tourism involves the movement of people across international boundaries on a continuous basis (Hall, 1994).

On the other hand, Urry (1990) made a convicting case for seeing tourism as the manifestation of socio-cultural processes. He has it that there seems to be little awareness that tourism is contingent upon a particular political economic system rather than being simply an autonomous and often-harmful actor in its own right. He said even within recent works which has ranged widely across Economics, Geography, Environmental Science, Sociology, Psychology and Anthropology, there is still little consideration given to the political aspects of tourism not much attention was paid to its place in the international area. But by its nature, it is difficult to evade the processes of international intercourse without the element of tourism (Mac leod, 2012).

James (1988) further lamented that, political and economic upheaval in one part of the world may affect travel to and from other parts, altering tourism flows and producing a knock on economic effect. Government should impose tourism "sanction" that are every bit as effective as commodities embargoes. James (1998) further argued that some countries have used tourism to help solve balance of trade surpluses to project an image or promote their own ideology. The very establishment and operation of a tourism industry can be viewed, depending on one's perspective and political leaning (Shodaganga, 2001) this may be either for development, modernization and progress or as an example of structural dependency and neo-colonial exploitation. These are just examples of ways in which tourism is bound up with international affairs. While the world tourism organization W.T.O. (2004) stated that, it will be extra-ordinary if such movements were shaped by the economic and political relations between different states and equally extra-ordinary if it did not affect the courses of these relations.

Rufai (2012) also pointed out that, tourism has been identified by G20 as one of the sectors that can spur the global economic recovery, the G 20 underscore the role of tourism in the economy and committed to work on advancing travel facilitation to stimulate demand and spending. The G20 Heads of government added that the sustainability and promotional development of this sector would make a significant contribution to the three dimensions of sustainable development, generate trade opportunities and create decent jobs for the host country. International tourism involves movement of people from their country of origin or resident to another country for specific tourism purpose(s) namely leisure, business, health, culture, education, Okoko and Okpoko (2002) in Da'silva, (1985), this form of tourism helps to enhance international co-operation, generate foreign currency and promote inter-cultural exchange amongst people of other countries of the world which will broaden the socio-cultural understanding among people.

Peter, (1969) is of the view that international understanding has been a major vehicle in promoting international tourism by way of bringing people together of diverse background and culture (Etim, 2006). International relations in this way can greatly enrich and promote tourism through friendship and goodwill of people belonging to different languages, cultures and backgrounds. Peter (1969) added that, different countries, practicing different life styles and speaking different language can come together to make friends and boost global peace and understanding (Etim, 2006). Above all, international relations have helped to breakdown prejudices, barriers and suspicious that exists between Nations.

Nigeria's Foreign Policy as a Tool in Promoting International Tourism

In the words of Charles and Abdul (1996) the foreign policy of a state usually refers to the general principles by which a state governs its reaction to the international environment. This thus, presupposes a nexus between the domestic environment and the international arena. Similarly, Millar (1977) advanced that foreign policy is presumably something less than the sum of all policies, which influences National Governments Relations with international governments. This ever-present relationship can be gleaned from Plano and Ohon (2000), analysis of foreign policy being the strategy or planned course of action

developed by the decision makers of a state vis-à-vis other state or international entities aimed at achieving specific goals defined in-terms of the National interest. This is parallel to the position of Anderson and Christol (2006), where they argued that foreign Policy involves:

“the formulated and implementation of group of principles which shape the behaviors and the behavioral pattern of a state while negotiating with other states to protect or further its vital interest”.

It is thus, revealing from the foregoing that foreign policy is a dynamic process involving interaction between the domestic and the external environment. It will therefore be useful to conclude that foreign policy is essentially the instrumentality by which states influence or seek to influence the external world, and to attain objectives that are in consonance with their perceived National interest (Marleku, 2013). Hence, Nigerian's foreign policy can be conceived as the explicit objectives which Nigeria wants to pursue and achieve in her external relations interest. It is with this instrumentality by which Nigeria influence the global environment through which she realizes objectives that are in conformity with her perceived National Interest.

Lanfant (1980) also refers to tourism as non-political activities which fit into this mould. If the element of tourism is highly integrated into the foreign policy of Nigeria, the tendency is that people coming into the country and Nigerians moving out can collaborate in non-conflict matters that are mutually beneficial to Nigeria and the countries of the tourists coming into the country (Ayeni, 2013). Equally, Lanfant (1980) sees tourism and international relations being the best strategy a country can use in getting to know another country and when vast numbers of people interact in various ways, the narrow or rigid bandanas, that keep people in compartments will be made to shrink and a positive move toward better international understanding begins to crystallize (Gligorijević and Petrović, 2009).

Nigeria's Foreign Policy Objectives (1999) Constitution

- i. The promotion of the national interest of the federation and its citizens.
- ii. Friendship and Co-operation with all nations of the world which recognizes and respects.
- iii. Security of the Country's borders and the maintenance of the territorial integrity.
- iv. Assistance to African states in search of solution to their problems and encouragement of the development of ties among all African States to foster cooperation among countries of Africa as far as, it is compatible with Nigerians national interest.
- v. Protection of her immediate environment and the African Continent from Pollution through dumping of toxic and hazardous waste.
- vi. Eradication of racism and apartheid on the African Continent.
- vii. Non-alignment to any power blocs
- viii. Support for the United Nation in its task for worldwide maintenance of peace security and disarmament.

- ix. The promotion and defense of justice and respect for human dignity, especially the dignity of the black man.
- x. The creation of necessary political and economic conditions in Africa and the rest of the world which facilitate the defense and territorial integrity of all African Countries while at the same time, fostering national self-reliance and rapid economic development (Ayade, 2003).

Nigeria's Tourism Policy and Objectives (1990)

The national tourism policy (1990) objectives are:

To protect and promote Nigeria's cultural heritage as resources for home grown socio economic development

1. To encourage community and public partnerships in tourism development
2. To generate foreign exchange, enhance income redistribution, alleviate poverty and create employment.
3. To promote Nigeria as a desirable tourism destination within the context of Africa's Cultural renaissance.
4. To promote geopolitical integration, healthy international cooperation and understanding
5. To ensure environmental sustainability in the development of tourism resources.

The legislation further provides that for government of Nigeria to realize the socio-economic benefits, a destination marketing organization with name Nigeria Tourism Development corporations needs to come in play to perform the following functions-

- a) To encourage people leaving in Nigeria to take their holidays there in and people from abroad to visit Nigeria.
- b) To encourage the provision and improvement of tourism amenities and facilities in Nigeria including the development of hotels and ancillary facilities.

In addition to the above specific functions conferred on the corporation, it shall also

- i. Provide advisory and information services
- ii. Promote and undertake research in the field of tourism
- iii. Render technical advice to the state and local governments in the field of tourism
- iv. Register, classify and grade all hospitality and tourism enterprises, travel agencies and tour operators in such manners as may be prescribed
- v. Assist in the development of Museum and historical sites.

The corporation thus should set up a tour operating company to be known as the National Travel Bureau to operate tour services within and outside Nigeria. The dynamic nature of the tourism industry requires an ongoing process of analysis including the definition of policy and its application in order that the benefits from tourism can be maximized and cost minimized (Tourism Policy, 1990).

Methodology

This study used secondary research based on existing information on the subject matter in order to clarify the research question. The advantage of secondary research method is that data is usually inexpensive and readily available; and it can improve the focus of any primary research one prefers to conduct (Finn, Elliotte-White and Walton, 2000). Although the data has uncertain accuracy, lacks specificity or does not precisely address the question of concern, it is appropriate in this study as identified by Do (2017). In order to have good understanding of the tourism industry, its events; and concern in promoting political, economic and socio-cultural issues of a nation, observation technique was employed for further examination of theoretical application of international tourism documentary.

The Political and Economic Benefits of Nigerian Tourism

Based on the currently still fragmented information from countries with data available, tourism contribution to worldwide gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated at some 5%. Tourism's contribution to employment tends to be slightly higher and is estimated in order of 6-7% of the overall number of jobs worldwide (direct and indirect) United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2012). More so, for advanced, diversified economies, the contribution of tourism to G.D.P. ranges from approximately 2% for countries where tourism is a comparatively small sector, to over 10% for countries where tourism is an important pillar of the economy (UNWTO, 2012).

Etim (2008) mentions that Nigeria is a country richly endowed with a lot of potentials thus, when the nation lost its place in the world market due to fluctuations in the price of oil being its major source of foreign-exchange, tourism readily becomes the best potential alternative item of international trade but sadly this has not been harnessed. Tourism being a displacement activity is one of the fastest growing sectors of any economy, Nigeria inclusive has a viable goldmine which when properly tapped could take the country to a great height in terms of generating foreign exchange with the receipts from international tourism providing a viable source of earnings for many countries both developed as well as developing (UNWTO, 2012). Also, of the world's top forty tourism earners about eighteen are developing countries (Esu, 2015).

Findings

As observed by Ajayi (2005), Nigeria's foreign policy and its leaders shuttle diplomacy is quite insufficient in tying the nation's economic diplomacy and international economic relations for economic development being that accessibility for easy visa procurement by Nigerian business people, scholars and Nigerians in general was not incorporated into such policy thrust.

Secondly the nation's foreign policy has failed to make visa agreement with other countries which serves as a component of the nation's diplomatic relations to lessen the pains of Nigerians in securing visas from foreign embassies while also making entry into the country easily accessible by tourists too.

Thirdly also, as observed by Pine (2011), since this phraseology of Africa being the center piece of the country's foreign policy appeared on the Nigeria foreign policy scene, it has continued to reproduce itself, like the ever recurring mathematical decimal where the foreign policy elite and political leadership of successive governments seems to be carried away by its philosophical allure rather than its rational ideation. In this sense, therefore, considerations of the economic benefits, continental political leadership, national interests, and military partnerships and strategic engagements are sacrificed on the altar of good neighborliness and psychological gratification. Fourthly, the trend is changing with recent pronouncements by government while Quoting the minister of information and tourism Lai Mohammed, on Nigerian Television Authority news of February 26 2017, Justice (2017) said "types of visas currently reviewed include Visa on Arrival (VoA) processes, Business Visas, Tourist Visas and Transit Visas. Mohammed further explained that "Business Visas are available for foreign travelers who wish to travel to Nigeria for meetings, conferences, seminars, contract negotiation, marketing, sales, purchase and distribution of Nigerian goods, trade fairs, job interviews, training of Nigerians, emergency/relief work, crew members, staff of NGOs, staff of INGOs, researchers and music concerts.

Conclusion

Nigeria's foreign policy has largely been driven by domestic forces. The country's foreign policy also set forth its position on a wide range of international issues by conceptualizing its political and socio-economic development in international field through its domestic policies. However as observed foreign policy is a major tool for promoting Nigeria's international tourism market to the world mostly with the country's effort in sustaining and maintaining global peace and security since independence. Global tourism has been one of the fastest growing industries and all stages of development are increasingly dependent on it as a veritable source of revenue, an important employer of labor and a stimulus for other socio-economic benefits, for a country like Nigeria with abundantly endowed natural resources of high international tourist appeal. Plagued persistently with balance of payment deficits and intent on achieving sustainable development and promotion can tailor all its international diplomacy towards better economic investment through tourism and its numerous benefits to the nation.

Recommendations

In view of that, the researchers are offering the following recommendations:

1. Nigerian government, should admit/come-up with a suitable foreign policy strategy that will thoroughly define and reflect on issues as they relate to tourism policy in the international arena. The Nigeria ministry of foreign affairs should come-up with intensive and acceptable standardized foreign policy strategies that will synchronize her domestic policy as matters of national Interests to the country and to work hand in hand with Nigerian embassies abroad in harmonizing existing relations between Nigeria and other nations.
2. Nigeria government should also base appointments into all tourism establishments at various government levels based on professionalism and

competence, rather than politicizing such appointments. This will enhance efficiency and goal oriented results in tourism policy formulation and implementation with a clear cut of communication, co-ordination, sufficient funding and monitoring assessment as well as evaluating the effect of the policy change. The ministries of information, culture and Tourism, foreign affairs, Trade and finance should as a matter of urgency go back and implement the recommendations of the tourism master plan of 2006 to harness all tourism potentials in Nigeria, package it to meet international standard and there after embarked on an aggressive marketing and promotional strategy both at home and abroad.

3. It is also important that the Nigerian government should make multiple approaches through consultations with Nigerian diplomats or representatives abroad, experts in the universities, polytechnics, National institutes, the business community, leaders of thought, tourism experts, law makers, etc. before taking decisions and this will promote and enhance a conducive atmosphere for a cordial relationship between Nigeria and other nations of the world as well enhance benefits of its efforts towards maintaining international peace to its domestic economy. Nigeria's comprehensive foreign policy must have genuine political, economic and military dimensions that will project a nation that is truly ready to be independent while also able to protect its borders and sovereignty. This is beyond a ministry; it's a national task that may even require cultural re-orientation towards patriotism.

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Appendix 1

Implementation of Tourism Policy Guidelines by FMOC & T; NTDC; FMOT & I; NCT, State Ministry of Tourism and Boards.

The above institutions are to accomplish the entire policy objectives; and implementation shall be through the following broad guidelines:

- i. Identifying the designate centers of attraction for tourism purpose by the three tiers of government with the private sector in the physical planning and promotion of such centers.
- ii. Encouraging domestic and foreign private sector investment in tourism development by putting together a package of incentives capable of attracting such investment.
- iii. Establishing agencies and organs for promotion and marketing of tourism in and outside Nigeria including well defined roles for the three tiers of government.

The strategies to be adopted in achieving the above guidelines, includes the provision of basic infrastructural facilities namely good roads, water, electricity, communication etc., to centers of attraction. These will help to accelerate their development for the purpose of exploiting fully their tourist value. Also, state government is to provide without any restrictions land for tourism development at concessional rates and conditions to attract investors (Suleiman, 2010).

Institutions to Implement the Strategies at All Levels of Government:

Based on the strategies outlined in the 2005 master plan for tourism in Nigeria, the following institutions work to implement the strategies at all levels of governments shall put in place.

- i. Federal Ministries of Tourism, foreign affairs, Finance and Trade
- ii. National Councils on tourism, foreign affairs and trade
- iii. Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation
- iv. State ministries responsible for tourism
- v. State tourism boards
- vi. Local government tourism committee.

In view of the recognition of the potentials of tourism in generating foreign exchange, government shall in addition set up a tourism development fund to which all level of authority in the industry as well as the private sector will contribute.