

Production and Preservation of Local Crafts: A Panacea for Income Generation and Tourism Development in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study analyzed local craft production and preservation made from raffia for tourism development in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study is on production and preservation of local crafts. A panacea for income generation and tourism development. The people of Annang Communities have developed exceptional skills in transforming raffia fibers into shoes, footmats, handbags and numerous articles of fashion. Primary data were collected using well structured questionnaire from four hundred and thirty-seven respondents selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Three objectives and three research questions were formulated to guide the study. The instrument were face validated by three research experts and A coefficient of reliability was established using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method (PPMC) which yielded a coefficient of 0.8 confirmed that the instrument is reliable. Data were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, 4-point rating scale and multiple regression model to test the two hypotheses. The result showed that null hypotheses were rejected while the alternative hypotheses was accepted. The result further showed the mean rating of traditional craft that should be preserved as Raffia Sandals (S=3.43), Raffia Wall Mat (S=2.83), Raffia Wallet (S=3.60), and Raffia foot Mat (T=3.22) respectively. Findings further showed that fashion, religious believe, model legal system, packaging & western education, influences the appreciation of local crafts products respectively. Findings also showed that tourism development contribute to Revenue, Tax, Foreign exchange and Employment respectively. There is need to embrace proper preservation and documentation of traditional crafts which would enhance sustainable development.

Keywords: Tourism Development, Production of Local Crafts, Preservation of Local Crafts, Technology, Modernization, Local Craft



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Introduction

Local crafts made from raffia has a high value and is unique to a specific culture and plays an important role in defining an identity of Annang Communities. Like many tropical societies, the Annang people have developed a unique and exceptional skill in transforming raffia palms fibers into bags, hats, baskets, shoes, foot mats, decorative apparels, bangles and numerous articles of fashion for tourism development. Presently the market for local crafts made from raffia products is limited and cannot go round the demands of customers. Knopfli (2001) has rightly observed that raffia palms are among the most common plants in tropical countries, where they often dominate the rural landscape. In Nigeria, several cultural groups had well established traditional craft practices before having contact with western civilization. Oloidi (2014) made reference to Ekiti people of South-Western Nigeria who had well-developed smelting, smithing, pottery and weaving technologies before colonialism. In their book titled "Tourism in Nigeria," Okpoko and Okpoko (2002) remarked that Awka and Nkerre people in South-east and south-south Nigeria respectively are acknowledged masters in blacksmithing, the Annangs in Akwa Ibom State are noted for producing amazing variety of cane and raffia crafts while in Kano, Sokoto and Borno states, high quality leather goods are produced. They also mention the people of Benin Kingdom as high quality brass workers and the Nupe people as acclaimed glass ware producers.

This wonderful creative production of craft attracted the tourists to crave and experience the material culture of host communities such as their artistic ingenuity and purchase authentic and exquisite handcrafted ware as souvenirs. Pottery is also relevant to tourism. In the small community of Ushata in Bwari Area council of Abuja, Nigeria, pottery is spearheading the development of tourism.

Again, in tourism business development, Richard, (2001). observed that culture, crafts and tourism are rapidly becoming inseparable partners, local crafts are important elements of culture and people travel to see and experience other cultures, tradition and ways of living.

Local craft will be seen here as a traditional branch of business, which embodies the knowledge acquired by a particular people or society in their struggle to adapt to the natural environment. It is pertinent to note that these traditional crafts are always an important aspect of culture, because they constitute viable cultural attractions. Okpoko (2002) noted that, cultural attractions are indispensable components of tourism development schemes; they provide foundation upon which tourist trade should be built. There is need therefore, to identify and document cultural heritage as a basis for sustainable tourism promotion.

Preservation of local craft is the act of safeguarding the products made from raffia materials for future use. It is a key element and fundamental part of cultural heritage. In the past, various crafts were significant components of daily living. This means people earned their livelihood from local crafts. Traditional handicrafts from a certain region are an integral part of the local cultural heritage just as traditional handicrafts of a certain group or nation are an inseparable part of the ethnical and national heritage (Noella, 2017).

Again, preserving this unique crafts work has great potential of boosting the countries economy through tourism. The main essence of safeguarding this raffia product is to sustain the wealth of knowledge and skills that are transmitted through it from generation to next so it will not go on extinction.

Statement of the Problem

Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District in Akwa Ibom state is popular in the production of handmade raffia items that meet the practical needs of everyday life such handicrafts are also an expression of their skill and identity. Today local craft is at risk of becoming extinct because of rapidly cultural changes in the study area, oral parts are being blocked as people no longer stay in homogenous community. In addition, people are sent to formal schools with little or no time left for learning the craft. The young stars are becoming disinterested in their native culture because of outside influence provides them with a negative view of their culture and traditional practices thus there is a risk that within one generation the knowledge could be lost forever as the knowledge systems of these artisans have never been recorded systematically in any form hence they are not easily accessible to researchers and development practitioners. It is obvious from all indications that local crafts made from raffia products are under threat of extinction. The technological changes sweeping the country in the last decade seem to have a serious threat to customs, local crafts and work practices. Some of these skills involving the production of ropes, baskets, placemats, hats, shoes, bags and textiles still take place on a very small scale due to influence of technological changes in the environment.

Moreso, preserving local craft has become an issue these days as many of the local craft products are destroyed as a result of technological developments in the study area. Most of the sites, for example raffia palm, palm trees, bamboo palms etc are fell down hence creating scarcity of materials for production. Most of the raffia sites have been converted for the construction of recreational centres, schools, hospitals and homes. This situation is likely to create scarcity of supplies of raffia products and also result in redundancy of craft producers.

Raffia products shops, show rooms and stores are very limited and cannot go around the demands of customers. Thus, causing a hike in the prices of the craft products. It leads to the professionalization of the work force, since many of the tasks performed are substituted by automated machines in crafts making. However, industrialization plays a pivotal role in the production and preservation of local crafts made from raffia.

In spite of the importance attached to the knowledge and ability of an entrepreneur to ascertain the stage of his/her business and adopt strategies capable of enhancing its development; most present day entrepreneurs are either not paying full attention to the specific stages in the industry or lack the capacity to identify the stage in which their business is operating.

Objectives of the Study

The overall objectives of the study is to determine the production and preservation of local craft made from raffia for tourism development in Ikot Ekpene senatorial district.

The specific objectives are:

1. identify crafts made from raffia in the study area.
2. determine the influence of modernization/technology on crafts production.
3. assess the contribution of traditional crafts to economic growth in the study areas.

Research Questions

The study therefore sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What crafts are made from raffia in the study area?
2. What are the factors that influence the production of crafts from raffia in the study area?
3. In what way does local craft made from raffia contribute to economic growth in the study area?

Null Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Ho₁: Modernization/technology factors have no significant effect on the production of local crafts made from raffia in Ikot Ekpene senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: Contribution of local crafts made from raffia has no significant effect on the development of tourism in the study area.

Significance of the Study

After oil sector and agriculture, local crafts play a vital role in income and employment generation and have also been recognized worldwide as a tool for poverty reduction. The preservation of local craft is a fundamental part of cultural heritage. In the past, various crafts were a significant component of daily living and many people engaged in local craft business as a source of livelihood.

For the host communities, they will enjoy basic infrastructure as government will be interested in the provision of good roads to facilitate the conveyance of the product to the market. Taxes levied on the producers will be used to further enhance the welfare of the people. The outcome of the study would serve as a working tool for the government in formulating policies that would be favorable to craftsmen and also provide conducive working environment for these craftsmen which would motivate them in engaging in craftsmanship.

To students and future researchers, the findings would provide ready literature and would be used as reference material for further research studies. Knowledge gained from this research work will help empower local craft producers in the expansion of their businesses and income generation. Finally, this study is carried out to enable students in Business Education and Home Economics Departments as well as the College to appreciate the value and benefits

of Local Crafts made from raffia. Students after graduation can venture into Local crafts business for livelihood and self-reliance hence contributing to the economy of the state.

Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for this study. This was necessary in order to adopt the survey tool of questionnaire in gathering primary data for the study. The study was conducted in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District which comprises of ten (10) Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State, but eight local government area are popularly known for craftsmanship, these eight local government areas are IkotEkpene, EssienUdim, Abak, ObotAkara, Ukanafun, EtimEkpo, Ika and OrukAnam all in Akwa Ibom State Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District is known as regional centres of commerce, with notable exports of palm products, especially palm oil, kernels, raffia products, carving of mask and drums, making of mortar, building of canoe, figurine product, raffia fibres and its wine, ground crops of yams cassava, taro, and corn. The population was made up primarily of the Annang people with a small number of Igbo traders and Hausa suya vendors. Significant exports also include basket weaving, sculpture and most notably, raffia cane furniture (hence the colloquial name of the town). Under the British the town became the seat of both the (Annang).

Annang communities have traditions of self-improvement from its sons and daughters, both near and far. Several groups are working together to recapture and rebuild what they fondly called “The Raffia City.” Many foreign organizations and churches are present in the areas. Four institutions of higher learning have added richness to the town: the Akwalbom state Polytechnic, IkotOsurua, the School of Nursing, the St. Joseph Major Seminary and Ritman University.

The population for the study comprised of craft producers in the ten (10) Local Government Areas that make up Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. Based on information from craft producer’s association as cited in the work of Morgan et al. (2019) out of the ten (10) Local Government Areas that made up the senatorial district, there are 786 craft producers spread across the senatorial district, which formed the population for the study. A total of four hundred and fifty (450) respondents that were used for the study as the sample size.

A multi stage sampling technique was adopted for this study. In the first stage eight (8) local government areas out of the ten (10) Local Government Areas that make up Akwa Ibom North West (Ikot Ekpene) Senatorial District were purposively chosen. In the second stage five (5) Local Government Areas were randomly sampled from the selected eight (8) Local Government Areas. The five Local Government Areas sampled were Ikot Ekpene, Abak, Essien Udim, Ukanafun and Etim Ekpo. In the third stage, 10 Villages were randomly chosen from the selected five (5) Local Government Areas making 50 villages and these ten (10) villages were the only villages that involved in craft production. In the fourth stage ninety (90) respondents were randomly selected from the ten (10) villages in each local government

proportionally based on the sample sizes of the villages. The instruments used for the study were observations, questionnaires and in-depth interviews (guided by the interview schedule). A total of 450 questionnaires were produced and administered to craft producers spread across the sample villages and Local Government Areas. Out of the 450 questionnaires administered 437 were returned while 13 could not be retrieved. Hence the total sample size reduced to 437. The structured questionnaire was divided into three sections: A, B and C, which sought answers to the questions being considered in the study. Response to assess traditional crafts that could be preserved were measured on a 4-point rating scale. The 4-point rating scale was graded as Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), Very Low Extent (VLE) with attributed values of 4,3,2 and 1 respectively.

The validity of the instrument was established by three experts in the department of hospitality management and tourism, College of Applied Food Science and Tourism Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. The reliability of instrument was determined using the test-re-test method as used by Akinbilie (2004). The coefficient of relationship was obtained with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method (PPMC) which showed how consistent this tool is in measuring what it intends to measure. A coefficient of reliability R^2 of 0.8 confirmed that the instrument is reliable. Simple descriptive statistics (table, frequency and mean) were used to analyze objective one on the identification and documentation of some traditional crafts that could be preserved in the study area. Objective two and three were analyzed using rating scale. Correlation coefficient and regression model were used to test the hypothesis.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the crafts made from raffia in the study area?

Table 1: The mean rating of crafts made from raffia in the study area

Craft Product	VHE	HE	LE	VL	Total Re	Total Weight	Mean	Std. Dev.	Decision
Raffia	(960)	(432)	(104)	(1)	437	1497	3.43	.699	Accepted
Wall mat	240	144	52	1					
Raffia	(320)	(606)	(308)	(1)	437	1235	2.83	.718	Accepted
Wallet	80	202	152	1					
Raffia	(1216)	(279)	(80)	-	437	1575	3.60	.651	Accepted
Sandals	304	93	40						
Raffia	(888)	(444)	(38)	(48)	437	1418	3.39	.782	Accepted
Foot mat	222	148	19	48					
Grand Mean							3.30		

Source: Field survey. (2021). Criterion Mean = 2.50.

Table 1. presented the mean rating of traditional craft made in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial district Akwa Ibom State. The mean score of 2.5 was used to identify craft products made from

raffia in the study area based on the responses from the respondents of the study. The findings revealed that raffia wall mat ($M = 3.43$), raffia sandals ($M = 3.60$), raffia foot mat ($M = 3.39$), raffia wallet (2.83).

Research Question 2: What are the factors that influence the production of crafts made from raffia in the study area?

Table 2: The mean rating distribution of factors that influence the production of craft made from raffia in the study area

Variables	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Dev	Rmarks
Fashion	3.32	0.79011	.8140	Serious
Religious belief	2.98	0.61002	1.60421	Serious
Modern legal system	3.17	0.54320	.8231	Very serious
Modern life style	2.80	0.89214	1.7421	Serious
Western education	3.49	0.90100	.5891	Very serious
Technology	3.16	0.83012	.86400	Very serious
Packaging	3.29	0.70152	.70640	Serious

Source: field survey 2021 Note: Very serious, Serious, Less serious, Not serious

The result in the Table 2 showed the variables with their corresponding mean values on a 4-point rating scale. They include: fashion (3.32), religious belief (2.98), modern legal system (3.17), modern life style (2.80), western education (3.49), technology (3.16) and packaging (3.29).

Research Question 3: In what way does local craft made from raffia contribute to economic growth in the study area?

Table 3. Summary of mean rating distribution of contributions of traditional crafts to economic growth in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District.

Variables	Mean	Remarks
Revenue	3.71****	Very serious
Tax	2.71**	Less serious
Foreign exchange	3.47****	Very serious
Employment	3.35***	Serious
Well being/livelihood	3.71****	Very serious
Poverty reduction	3.39****	Very serious
Souvenir	3.63****	Very serious
Tourism	3.64**	Less serious
Intercultural mix	3.82***	Serious

*Source: field survey 2021 Note: **** Very serious, *** Serious, ** Less serious, * Not serious*

The result in Table 3 showed the variables with their corresponding mean values on a 4-point rating scale. They include: revenue (3.71), tax (2.71), foreign exchange (3.47), employment (3.35), wellbeing/livelihood (3.71), poverty reduction (3.39), souvenir (3.63), tourism (3.16) and intercultural mix (3.29).

Null Hypothesis 1: Modernization/technology factors have no significant influence on the production of local crafts made from raffia in Ikot Ekpene senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Analysis of variance for the test of significance of the regression model

	<i>Df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>	
Regression	7	45.03698	6.433854	1798.002	.000	
Residual	429	1.535106	0.003578			
Total	436	46.57208				

Test for the significance of the parameter estimates

<i>Modernization /technology factors</i>	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>
Intercept	4.900314	0.037032	132.3251	0	4.827527	4.973102
X1	-0.84086	0.031848	-26.4022	6.16E-92	-0.90346	-0.77826
X2	-0.23398	0.029869	-7.83345	3.77E-14	-0.29268	-0.17527
X3	-0.07372	0.025174	-2.92839	0.003589	-0.1232	-0.02424
X4	0.197801	0.028824	6.862273	2.38E-11	0.141147	0.254456
X5	-0.0712	0.037604	-1.89339	0.048978	-0.14511	0.002712
X6	0.02917	0.01879	1.552456	0.121291	-0.00776	0.066101
X7	-0.00019	0.034675	-0.00534	0.995738	-0.06834	0.067968

Looking at the values of the coefficient of determination obtained from the analyses of the contribution of local crafts to tourism development, as shown in table 2, 4.9, it can be seen that local crafts contribute (77.1%), (78.9%), (57.9%), (69.4%), (77.4%), (31.4%), (56.1%), (76.3%) and (11.8%) to revenue, tax, foreign exchange, employment, well-being/livelihood, poverty reduction, souvenir, financial empowerment and inter-cultural mix respectively. It can also be deduced that local crafts contribute least to inter-cultural mix.

Null Hypothesis 2: Contribution of local crafts made from raffia has no significant effect on the development of tourism in the study area

Table 5 Contribution of local crafts made from raffia for tourism development

Proxies for Tourism Development	Coefficient of Determination, R^2	Calculated F	Tabulated F	Remark
Revenue, X21	0.771264	734.98*	1.00	Significant
Tax, X22	0.789392	815.22*	1.00	Significant
Foreign Exchange, X23	0.57911	299.26*	1.00	Significant
Employment, X24	0.693859	492.96*	1.00	Significant
Well-being/Livelihood, X25	0.774068	743.18*	1.00	Significant
Poverty Reduction, X26	0.314467	99.56*	1.00	Significant
Souvenir, X27	0.56142	277.76*	1.00	Significant
Financial Empowerment, X28	0.763092	699.00*	1.00	Significant
Intercultural mix, X29	0.117544	28.89*	100	Significant

*significant at 5% level of significance.

Since the calculated F values for all the analyses are greater than the tabulated F (1.00) in Table 3, the null hypothesis of no contribution of local crafts to the development of tourism (indicated by its proxies) is rejected. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected because there is a significant contribution of local crafts to revenue, tax, foreign exchange, employment, well-being/livelihood, poverty reduction, souvenir, financial empowerment and inter-cultural mix.

Discussion of Findings

Research Objective one revealed various traditional crafts made from raffia in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State that could be preserved and documented which includes; raffia foot mat , raffia wall mat, raffia wallet , raffia sandals , etc. This implies the creativity of the application of local materials to showcase the cultural identity of Annang people known for craftsmanship. This is in line with that of Okpoko . (2002). who remarked the Annangs in Akwa Ibom State are noted for producing amazing varieties of raffia crafts which ought to be preserved and documented for tourism development scheme.

Research Objective two revealed various factors that influences modernization/technology on local crafts appreciation in Ikot Ekpene Senatorial District as fashion, religion belief, modern legal system, western education, modern lifestyle, technology and packaging. The study showed that modern legal system, religion belief, fashion western education and modern lifestyle has a negative influence on modernization/technology on local

crafts appreciation in the study area while technology and packaging positively influence modernization/technology on local crafts appreciation in the study area. This finding is further supported by the study of Agalamanyi (2004) who evaluated the religious and political authority in traditional societies, reported that religion belief and other factor negatively influences the appreciation and adoption of local crafts in traditional societies. Data analyzed also shown that most religion sees traditional craft as devilish most especially the ones used by traditional worshippers.

Research Objective three revealed the various contribution of local crafts made from raffia for tourism development to include; revenue, well-being/livelihood, tax, foreign exchange, poverty reduction, souvenir, financial empowerment and intercultural mix. The results showed that revenue, well-being/livelihood, tax, financial empowerment, poverty reduction, inter-cultural mix, souvenir and foreign exchange positively contributed to local crafts made from raffia for tourism development in the study area. This finding supported Robinson (1995). who found out that local crafts contribute to tourism development and income earning spent in places visited. Another study Inskeep (1991). Reported that local crafts contribute to major direct effect of tourism development and relates to employment generation. Gee, F. M. (1989).

Conclusion

The study therefore concluded that production/preservation of local crafts made from raffia for tourism development is a source for income generation, poverty reduction and retention of traditional skills for future use. The local crafts producers that participated in craftsmanship were married with household and relatively with low educational level. Respondents were with low educational qualification. Respondents were mainly crafts producers and with the age bracket of 30-50 years. Craft production is paramount in Akwa Ibom state especially Ikot Ekpene senatorial district of the state but influenced by modernization/technology factors such as fashion, religious belief, modern legal system, western education and modern lifestyle. Production and preservation of local crafts made from raffia is key in the development of tourism due to various contributions of traditional crafts to sustainable development of human capital as well as the economy.

Recommendations

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need to embrace proper preservation and documentation of traditional crafts which would enhance sustainable development through tourism development.
2. Since the local craft products has tourism potentials, it will be important to develop eco-tourism facilities to attract more tourists, thereby encouraging the preservation of crafts industry.

3. Crafts producers in the study area should form themselves into cooperative organization to enable them access soft and revolving loans from government for the expansion of their enterprise.

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