

## Community Based Tourism and Economic Development in Ikwuano

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### Abstract

*This study was undertaken to ascertain the impact community based tourism (CBT) will have on the local residents in the communities in Ikwuano as the focus of the study. Five research objectives were utilized for the study which sought to determine the extent to which cultural festivals, local foods, local products, natural environment and local entertainment can improve the economy and generate income for the teaming unemployed youth, women and men in Ikwuano if properly harnessed. Mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research design were adopted for the study. 399 questionnaires were distributed to selected communities in Ikwuano. Simple tables of mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data collected. The findings of the study revealed that the local culture (Ekpe festival), local entertainment (Ekperikpe dance), natural environment, local food and dishes, local products such as garri, palm oil, yam and other products have significant influence and effect on the income generation of local residents in Ikwuano communities. The study recommends the Ekpe cultural festival should be promoted to wider reach to attract more tourists. Eco system should be protected to sustain the natural environment, local foods and dishes be packaged and be promoted, local entertainment should be packaged and sold to the wider society using social media and other platforms. The local be encouraged by government and non-government organizations with micro credit loan to increase farming, produce the local products in larger quantities.*

**Key words:** *community based tourism, economic development, local culture, local products, local foods and dishes, local entertainment and natural environment*

### INTRODUCTION

Community based tourism (CBT) is a community development tool that strengthens the ability of rural communities to manage tourism resources while ensuring the local community's participation. CBT can help the local community in generating income, diversifying the local economy, preserving culture, conserving the environment and providing educational opportunities. As CBT may experience an exponential growth in the number of tourists, this will help the local community with alternative incomes, it becomes a poverty reduction tool, (Moayerian & McGehee 2022). Community based tourism needs to be approached in a systematic manner; from studying the suitability of the community to be involved in tourism to ensuring that community members are given the opportunity.

There are vast opportunities for the coordination of this kind of tourism in developing countries through the creation of cooperatives and other forms of social association which provide different kinds of highly labor-intensive activities, (Mtapuri & Camelleri 2022). In this sense, tourism is a very important tool in the fight against poverty, with initiatives in place such as the so-called ST-EP program (Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty) promotion of tourism development in

rural (and urban) areas in disadvantaged parts of developing countries is not, a waste either bad or good, but rather depends on different economic, social, environmental, and political factors, (Fagbolu, 2022).

Community-based tourism (CBT) is characterized by the fact that it is the community itself which has control over tourism management, and it receives a significant proportion of the benefits generated by such activity (Trejos and Chiang, 2009). Thus, this kind of tourism has emerged as a possible solution to the negative effects of mass tourism in developing countries, allowing it to simultaneously become a strategy for social organization for the local community itself. The main purpose of CBT is the creation of accommodation, restaurants, and additional services, as well as tourism management itself, (Ditta-Apichai, 2020).

At the same time, further characteristics should be added, such as a subsystem interconnected to other subsystems in the area (such as health, education, and the environment), the presentation of a sustainable development project created in the community and the interrelationship of the local community and tourists (Cioce et al., 2007). According to Hiwasaki (2006), CBT has four objectives. Firstly, this kind of tourism must have a positive impact on the conservation of natural and cultural resources in the area. Secondly, tourism must bring about socio-economic development in the local community. Thirdly, there must be an increase in the number of businesses whose ownership is in the hands of the local community through appropriate planning and tourism management. Finally, quality levels regarding the experience of tourists visiting the area must be established.

In socio economic development, CBT is useful in empowering women and youths. The community organization that operates the CBT project should be able to empower the local women and the youth by creating specific opportunities for them. Forming cooperatives, designation of roles should be based on the talents of the people within the community. In most cases local youths are suited for the role of guides, boatmen and cultural performers, (Adeleke, 2019). While women are entrusted to handle community feast, housekeeping and the production of handicrafts (Amran et al 2009), there may be relatively limited jobs for the women and the youth in the initial phase of the CBT, project entrepreneurship opportunities will often be created for them once tourist arrivals increase. There should be plans to encourage and nurture partnership, (Sumarmi *et al*, 2021).

According to Nwachukwu, (2018), Ikwuano which is made up of four clans, Oboro, Ibere, Oloko and Ariam. It has fifty-seven (57) communities which are agrarian communities, which produce cassava, yam, palm oil, fruits, and vegetables. The communities had no pipe borne water, but depended on streams for water used for laundrerings, bathing and cooking or sometimes swimming to cool off the heat from scorching sun. Womengo to their farms to pick mushrooms, snails, and vegetables like fluted pumpkin (ugu) wild spinach (ukazi) false cubeb leaves (Uziza) melon (Egusi), and firewood used for cooking food. Men's sources of income depended on hunting, farming of yam, rearing of animals like goat, sheep, keeping local fowl, harvesting ripe palm nuts for producing oil and other community activities, (Nwachukwu, 2018).

These days the young generation of young men and women who are more educated are not inclined to farming as they see it as old fashion community based tourism, if harnessed and well-developed will help the people. Ikwuano is situated in Abia state southeastern part of the country. This locality is under this tropical rain forest cluster with natural endowments, cultural, historic, and manmade attractions. Studies have shown that the Aba Women riot of (1929) started from palace of chief Okeugo in Oloko when they imposed tax on women, (Ndubuwu and Oko, 2021). The place is supposed to be turned to an artificial attraction to keep the story alive. It is on this premise that this study intends to examine the cultural festivals, natural attractions, man-made attractions, that are

capable of attracting tourist, which can generate employment to the teeming unemployed youth and generate income especially foreign exchange, (Ezenagu, 2020).

Abia State is home to various ethnic groups with diverse cultural heritage. These communities have unique cultural practices, festivals, and traditions that can be shared with tourists. Community-based tourism can involve residents participating in cultural performances, craft demonstrations, and storytelling to provide tourists with an authentic cultural experience, (Ugoani, 2019). Therefore, the aim of the study is to determine the influence of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) on the economic development of Ikwuano. The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To examine the influence of local culture (Ekpe Cultural festival) on the income generation of the local residents of Ikwuano.
- ii. To assess the effect of local natural environment on the income generation of the local residents of Ikwuano.
- iii. To ascertain the influence of local food and dishes on the income generation of local residents of Ikwuano.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1.1 Community-Based Tourism (CBT)**

The involvement in CBT improves the lifestyles and encourages great exchange in social and cultural among the local communities and visitors. Though CBT was generally understood as “nature conservation through ecotourism” (Zapata *et al.*, 2011), the concept has been broadening and enormous range of tourism products like traditional performances, and handicraft productions are provided to visitors. Hence, understanding the perceptions from local communities resulted from their active participation and interaction with visitors is very crucial. This understanding benefits the local community equally and ensuring the supply of tourism products to the visitors is continuously.

Moreover, the local community has the chance to manage their own resources and make decisions for the benefits of present generation without comprising the organizational structure of the future generation. At this point, CBT portrays the proper management practices resulted from good interaction between the local communities. Community-based tourism (CBT) is defined as “a means of development whereby social, environmental and economic needs of local communities are met through the offering of a tourism product” (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Goodwin and Santilli (2009) added that the “large majority of community-based tourism enterprises are based on the development of community-owned and managed lodges or homestays”. Meaning, the local communities are the decision-maker and have the power to manage their own products to benefit the present and future visitors.

The community-based tourism comprises of crucial facets like local communities, natural resources, cultures, and lifestyles. This type of tourism gives opportunities for the local communities to set up their own small-scale self-managed business. Natural resources are part of tourism products that locals offer to the visitors. Besides that, numerous culture practices by the locals are motivators to tourists who are eager to see themselves the differences of cultures, as compared to theirs. With that, guests will have the opportunity to experience and learn about the local ways of life and cultures. In fact, these activities are a complete package that can be found in a homestay program. A programme that involves active participation among the community who have “skills and knowledge already exist” in them (Dunn, 2007) and is a source of income, particularly to community in rural areas.

These facets of CBT are integrated into Malaysia Homestay Program. Malaysia Homestay Program as defined by the Ministry of Tourism, (2011) as “a form of experience that tourists staying with host family of homestay operators who have registered with the Ministry of Tourism”. During the stay, the host family will interact with visitors and educate them about their social norms and beliefs. Besides that, visitors have the chance to cook the traditional food, try on traditional costumes, and even do farming with the host family. Support on homestay program among the local communities explains the significant increase in the numbers of registered homestays throughout Malaysia. In the year 2005, there were 78 villages registered with the Ministry of Tourism (Kayat, 2007), and the number has increased to 231 villages registered until the end of the year 2011 (Ministry of Tourism, 2012).

### **2.1.2 Local Communities’ Perceptions toward Tourism.**

Zhang (2008) stated that “tourism impacts studies continued in the new century to cope with fast growth of the tourism industry, lifestyles changes and emergence of new characteristics in tourism development”. Since the quality of life of local communities is affected due to tourism development, the concern to acknowledge the impacts is increasing. Over the times, tourism develops with more visitors coming to a tourism destination and involving in tourism activities, number of facilities has increased to ensure the well-being of both local communities and visitors. However, along with the development, the local community has the tendency to perceive the outcome of tourism activities differently from each other. Thus, the understanding on differences in perceptions among the local communities is crucial.

Referring to a study of residents’ perceptions and attitudes towards tourism impacts by Brida, Osti and Faccioli (2011), the researchers noticed number of positive responds from the residents: tourism was an attractor to economic investments and spending; tourism was considered as a factor that contributes to a higher standard of living; and tourism provided more facilities and services to the residents. In contrast, a study of residents in Qatar towards the development in conservative cultures by Akkawi (2010) concluded that the residents believed the tourism increased the level of traffic congestion and claimed this impact to be the primary complaint in the study. Clearly, tourism can have both positive and negative impact on the local community’s social and cultural structure.

Given that both domestic tourism and international tourism are growing, the understanding of the social and cultural impacts attributed to the development is crucial. Witt (1991) defined social and cultural impacts of tourism as:

*“Methods by which tourism contributes to changes in value system, individual behavior, family relationships, collective lifestyles, moral conduct, creative expressions, traditional ceremonies and community organizations, i.e., social and cultural impacts are the effects on the people of host communities caused by their direct or indirect associations with tourists”.*

Besides that, such research on perceptions is crucial since development of tourism is more rapid and sustainability is vital to meet the needs of the present without harming the social and cultural organizational structure of the future generations. A study by Frater (1996) mentioned that “a number of research studies have examined the socio-cultural impacts” and are getting more important in the tourism study. The tourists leave the impacts on both social and cultural life of local community since they “behave differently” (Spanou, 2007) while on vacation. As the

impacts affect the lifestyles of the community, a study to understand the changes must be done. To generate greater understanding on the successfulness of homestay program in a destination, perceptions from local community are worth to be identified because some villages are enjoying the homestay program activities while others feel inconvenience by noise or crowd associated with the activities. Therefore, social and cultural impacts of tourism must be considered so that benefits can be maximized, and problems can be minimized.

Frater (1996) suggested that “adequate knowledge of the impact of tourism is an important ingredient which needs to be given priority by individuals involved with decision making about tourism planning and development”, given that the decision makers “determine whether the gains within the community outweigh the cost to the community” (Spanou, 2007). Among the positive impacts of tourism perceived by the study population were tourism improves the image, upgrades the lifestyle, encourages women to work in the industry, and increases pride in national culture (Alhasanah, 2008), enhances the infrastructures (Alhasanah, 2008; and Sharma & Dyer, 2006); creates employment and investment (Akkawi, 2010; Alhasanah, 2008; and Sharma & Dyer, 2006); and provides valuable experience when meeting tourists from other countries (Sharma & Dyer, 2006).

Meanwhile, from the negative perspective, studies have identified concern with effects on immoral behaviors, misbehaving among the youngster, social bonds and family structure, and increased cost of living (Alhasanah, 2008), crime (Alhasanah, 2008), and crowding, traffic congestion, and parking problems (Akkawi, 2010; Alhasanah, 2008; Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Ritchie & Inkari, 2006; and Sharma & Dyer, 2006).

### **2.1.3 Community based tourism in Nigeria**

CBT is based on the concept of sustainable development as it promotes local community participation for more just and holistic development (Stone & Stone, 2011). CBT shares the goals of sustainable development in that it strives to be socially equitable, ecologically sound and economically viable for the long-term. CBT differs from many other forms of tourism in that it does not solely aim to maximise profits for absent investors, but to maximise benefits for community shareholders. It is an alternative form of tourism with sustainable community development as its goal. With a basis on celebrating local (rural, indigenous, etc.) cultures, CBT ensures that communities do not decline and disappear and that communities themselves can be viewed strategically as an approach in augmenting the resilience of social and ecological systems, hence making a contribution to sustainable development (Ruiz- Ballesteros, 2011). Moreover, CBT alludes to a more mutually beneficial relationship between the community and the tourists where the tourists are not afforded priority but rather are part of the people” (REST, 2003). Both the academic and practice-based grey CBT literature agrees with the principle of ‘community-owned/managed’, but there are many different scenarios in reality (Blackstock, 2005; Goodwin & Santalli, 2009; Choi & Sirakaya, 2006; Manyara & Jones, 2007). There are private sector businesses providing community benefits, individually owned community-based businesses, cooperatives, community associations, and concessions provided to private sector on community owned reserves, among others. Overall, there are three main types of CBT:

1. A project in which community members are employed using a rotation system and profits are allocated for community projects or dividends to residents
2. A project that involves family or group initiatives within the communities, based on community assets
3. A joint venture between a community or family and an outside business partner. CBT “must also embrace individual initiatives within the community” (World Wildlife

Fund (WWF), 2001). It is important to note that in defining CBT, emphasis should be placed more on measurable benefits gained by community members from a triple bottom line perspective (economic, social and environmental), rather than a stronger focus on the ownership structure.

Community tourism is a new phenomenon. It is a spirit that permeates all sectors of tourism industry. In other words, it is a philosophy around which tourism products are developed (David, 2011). Community tourism is about new levels of relationships between the host community and the visitor. What is appealing to the visitor is found among the varied natural attractions, local resources and talents, and indigenous attributes of a community of an area. Through visitor-community interaction, respective cultures are explored, ideas and information are exchanged, and new fields are made, community tourism fosters opportunities at the community level for local people wishing to participate more fully in the tourism industry. This may range from establishing bed and breakfast accommodation in a rural home to creating income tourism opportunities for an entire village.

Community tourism is managed tourism in its profound sense, considering evolving travel trends in such areas as the environment, study and research, senior travels, and other special interests. Community tourism products and services are geared to address these trends and to satisfy the interests of emerging travel markets, key clientele includes.

- The mature market
- Study the research groups, including schools, universities, colleges and research based.
- Organizations
- Church groups
- Environmentalists, botanist, ornithologists, and nature lovers
- The independent traveler

The vision of community tourism is to expose the local resources and talents and make the concept a reality for local people. Community tourism embraces Eco – tourism, Geo – tourism, Heritage tourism, Health tourism, Farm tourism, and all the popular interest tourism.

#### **2.1.4 Problem and Prospects of Tourism in Nigeria**

Despite the potentials and opportunities available for tourism development in Nigeria, it is still bogged with the following problems: The major problem facing the tourism industry is the lack of political will on the part of the government which give rise to the numerous problems facing the industry. Again, is the urgent need for the review of national policy on tourism to make it more encompassing, broad based proper planning and dynamism, such as giving tourism its rightful place in the constitution, offering tourism courses in universities, standardization of hotels, funding, zoning etc.

Also, the model and structure couple with technology and management still of the hotel in Western Europe is not peculiar to our environment. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't transfer such ideas, but they should be monitored, tailored, and adopted to our tradition and cultural inclinations. Another problem of tourism is that of funding. It is not advisable and not the case in place, where tourism has developed to have too much government involvement but rather government provide the guidelines then allow the private sectors and financial institutions to take up the development of tourism industry. In fact, tourism is a product of sectoral cooperation and governmental backing. More so let us not lose the sight of developing infrastructures. This is a very big problem in Nigeria. A situation where roads are in bad shape, inadequate and in some cases absence of portable water, erratic power supply, poor communication networks and other aspects of social amenities required to support tourism are not in existence will not augur well for tourism industry. Political instability,

conflicts, insecurity, and poor attitudinal changes among Nigerians will tend to scare away genuine tourists.

Nevertheless, from the catalogue of problems plaguing the prospects of this viable industry cannot be overemphasized due to the following reasons. Nigeria has all the potentials of tourist attractions from rocks and falls cut through wildlife parks and gardens down to hotels and conference centers. Though we have observed tourism policy as a problem, but the launch of the first tourism policy is an indication of government intention to that sector, coupled with the so many awareness and campaigns to instill discipline and respect by Nigerians towards visitors. Also, a relative political stability with the young democracy put in place has been achieved. Intensified effort to develop infrastructures, creation of tourism ministry and corporation are all indication towards developing a prosperous tourism industry.

### **2.1.5 Growth, Potentials, and Socio-economic Impact of Tourism**

The tourism sector has witnessed phenomenal growth across the world which has had a symbolic impact on Nigeria; with the launch of 1990 National tourism Policy in a bid to develop its tourism industry. More so, every year a substantial percentage of the world population travel on unrestricted movements both within the country and outside it. Indeed, this growth has brought about high employment worldwide, increasing wealth of nations, improving balance of payments and as a veritable tool of human development.

An acceptable index for measuring growth of tourism is usually in term of international arrivals and receipts, thus, over the past forty years, global tourism has expanded at an average of 7% a year in arrivals and 12% a year in receipts, a growth record unmatched by any other economic sector (Omotosho, 2000). This can be analyzed within the framework of Hoarrolld – Dormar model, who saw growth and development as dependent on capital formation. Moreover, WTO forecast shows that international tourist arrivals worldwide are predicted to reach 1bn by the year 2010, also receipts are predicted to reach US\$1,550. Between 1950 and 1999, movement of person across frontiers exceeded 664mn, while receipts from tourism which does not include fares paid to corners is also more than \$455bn representing per annual receipt of US\$685.

There has been a remarkable expansion in tourism activities aided modern by transportation, growth in human activities and international politics. It has become the source of wealth and economic diversification to Asia, North Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean nations. Although Europe and America were initially toping the regions, Asia and the pacific religion have dominated for the past 15years. Resent developments by tourists to discover new grounds for fun and excitement would have made Africa and indeed Nigeria very relevance, but this is not so and thus, Europe and America have taken over the dominance of this industry again.

For many centuries, international tourism has been an indispensable source of foreign currency earnings. According to the World Tourism Organization, tourism is one of the top five export categories for 83% of countries and the main source of foreign currency for at least 38% of them. The growth rates in receipts from international tourism in the different regions of the world as defined by the WTO and their perspective market shares. Thus, in 1985 when the world total receipts were 118.1b. Africa received 2.5b of the figure, Americas received 33.3b, Asia got 15.6b, Europe 63.5b and Middle East 4.2b. The trend continued in 1990, with Europe maintaining a steady growth of 143.5b receipts and a share of 54.4% of world receipt flow, followed by Americas and then Asia with more than double the 1995 figure.

However, Africa and Middle East marginally increased 1995 to 1998 however, we can see a remarkable change in the trend of tourist's flow. For instance, in 1998, when world receipts were

441.0b, Africa's share was 9.8b, which was 2.22%. However, the shares of other religions have continued to dwindle. Approximately 15 years, percentage receipts in America declined from 28.2% in 1985 to 26.2% in 1998 and European share also reduced from 53.8% to 52.3% in the same period. This decline in their share was quite unbelievable because most crowd-pulling major world events took place in either of the two regions.

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

### **2.2.1 Social Exchange Theory:**

The Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a sociological and psychological concept that originated in the field of social psychology in the mid-20th century. It was initially developed by social psychologists George Homans and Peter Blau, both of whom contributed significantly to its formulation. While it was initially rooted in the field of sociology, it has since been adopted and adapted by various disciplines, including psychology, economics, and organizational behavior.

Social exchange theory is a concept based on the notion that a relationship between two people is created through a process of cost-benefit analysis. In other words, it's a metric designed to determine the effort poured in by an individual in a person-to-person relationship. Social exchange theory posits that individuals engage in relationships or activities when they believe the benefits, they receive outweigh the costs. Also, it is a social psychological and sociological perspective that explains social interactions and relationships in terms of costs and rewards. It is based on the premise that individuals engage in social relationships and interactions when they believe they will gain more rewards than costs. This theory provides insights into why people initiate, maintain, or terminate relationships and how they evaluate the outcomes of their interactions.

There are key Concepts and Principles that drives the Social Exchange Theory: Central to social exchange theory is the idea that individuals assess the costs and rewards associated with their interactions and relationships. Costs refer to the negative aspects, such as effort, time, and sacrifices, while rewards are the positive aspects, including companionship, support, and emotional satisfaction. Individuals make decisions about whether to engage in or continue a relationship based on their perception of the overall outcome. The outcome is calculated as the rewards minus the costs. If the outcome is positive (i.e., rewards exceed costs), individuals are more likely to engage in or maintain the relationship.

In its application, the social exchange theory is often used to explain various types of interpersonal relationships, including romantic partnerships, friendships, and family relationships. It can help us understand why people stay in or leave abusive relationships, for example. The theory is also applied in the context of organizations to understand employee-employer relationships, job satisfaction, and employee commitment. Employees weigh the costs and rewards of their jobs when deciding whether to stay or seek alternative employment. In economics and marketing, social exchange theory informs the study of consumer behavior, pricing strategies, and customer loyalty. Consumers assess the costs and rewards of their purchases and choose products or services that provide the best value. In relations to CBT, Tourists and communities engage in a mutually beneficial exchange through CBT. Tourists gain authentic cultural experiences, while communities receive economic and social benefits, creating a win-win situation. Also, it is relevant to community-based tourism as it provides a framework for understanding and analyzing the dynamics of interactions and relationships within the context of community-based tourism initiatives.

### 2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Tomas et al (2010) in their work discussed Community-based tourism as being presented as an alternative to traditional mass tourism in developing countries. This kind of tourism allows for greater contact with residents and generates greater economic and environmental benefits for the local community. In this study, the results of fieldwork carried out on the island of *Santiago* (Cape Verde) are presented, in which both tourists and managers of small and medium-sized tourism enterprises were surveyed. Tourists were questioned to assess the opinion and perception that they have of the area, while managers were surveyed to analyze the quality of service that local community managed businesses provide and to study the potential of the tourism resources in the area. The main results of the study endorse the quality of tourism resources provided by local businesses and highlight the community's hospitality, a key element for the development of this kind of tourism. This study relates to the current study in the area of assessing the local products, food and dishes provided by the local residents.

Tomas et al (2011), emphasized that Community-Based Tourism is gaining prestige all over the world as an alternative to mass tourism. This new type of tourism favors a contact with the local community and the experimentation of different sensations. In this paper we show a study carried out in El Salvador about the opinions that residents must develop a tourist destination based on the hospitality of hosts, on the remarkable ecologic resources of the area, and in the important of the role of the residents. The methodology is based on an empirical study carried out in a rural area from September to November 2008. Most outstanding result is the local community perception that tourist development can create jobs and generate wealth, although it is necessary previous technical training from private and public institutions to fulfil these objectives.

Mehraj (2003) article aims to decipher the impacts of community-based tourism on the quality of life of traditional communities using the grounds of social exchange theory and economic exchange theory. The empirical data, collected at random by using a questionnaire survey method from the residents of two rural communities in Sikkim, India, were used for the present study. Exploratory factor analysis and multiple regression analysis were performed to analyze the data. The output of the regression analysis indicates that the three factors, economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of community-based tourism, have a positive and significant effect on the resident's quality of life. It is also demonstrated that improved quality of life has a substantial and constructive impact on the residents' support for tourism. In nations such as India, characterized by significant potential for community-based tourism to enhance the well-being of rural communities and alleviate poverty, it is crucial for policymakers to possess a comprehensive comprehension of the effects of community-based tourism on residents' quality of life and their attitudes toward tourism. This understanding is essential to facilitate the successful implementation of community-based tourism initiatives in other regions within the country.

Oladimeji et al. (2019) in their work discussed the population and structure of trees in Omo Biosphere Reserve (OBR) were assessed. Systematic cluster sampling technique was used to select eight 50 m × 50 m temporary sample plots. All trees encountered were identified and classified to species level. Total height and diameter at breast height (DBH) of all identified trees were measured. Data were used to compute several trees (NT)/ha, basal area (BA), stem volume (SV), species diversity index (SDI), and similarity index. All tree species were grouped into diameter classes (small ≤40 cm, medium= 41–60 cm, and large >60 cm). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation analysis at α0.05. OBR had total species composition ( $78.0 \pm 0.115$  species/ha). The most common species was *Strombosia pustulata* ( $58.0 \pm 0.10$ /ha) followed by *Funtumia elastica* ( $57.00 \pm 0.10$ /ha) and *Scottelia coriacea* ( $52.00 \pm$

0.00/ha). The mean DBH for OBR is  $39.59 \pm 5.41$  cm. NT for OBR is  $595.0 \pm 2.10$ /ha. BA and SV values in OBR are  $47.0 \pm 1.50$  m<sup>2</sup>/ha and  $229.0 \pm 0.35$  m<sup>3</sup>/ha, respectively. SDI and species evenness (E) values were 3.7 and 0.81, respectively. Diameter distribution displayed an inverted J-shaped structure in OBR. About 78% of trees encountered in OBR belonged to DBH class 10–20 cm, while 14.8% were above 48 cm. BA and DBH had positive and strong correlation (0.9) in the reserve. There were few large trees in the reserve, although population and structure indicated high species diversity. It highlighted the success of the Omo Forest Reserve CBT initiative in Ogun State. The study reveals that involving local communities in eco-friendly tourism activities has reduced deforestation and poaching, increased income for residents, and improved conservation efforts.

Amos and Idris (2018) evaluate the Kajuru Castle project in Kaduna State, emphasizing the engagement of the local community in promoting tourism. The project has created jobs, increased revenue for the community, and enhanced the region's attractiveness to tourists. Etim and Udoh (2020) investigate the economic effects of CBT in Cross River State. Findings show that CBT has led to increased household income, poverty reduction, and improved livelihoods among participating communities.

Ajala and Rufus (2017) examine the relationship between CBT and sustainable livelihoods in rural Nigeria. The research demonstrates that CBT initiatives have diversified income sources for rural households, reducing their vulnerability. Gana (2019) identifies common challenges faced in implementing CBT projects in Nigeria, including limited infrastructure, lack of funding, and insufficient community capacity.

Olajire et al. (2018) investigate the role of CBT in biodiversity conservation in Nigeria's forests. The research emphasizes how involving local communities in eco-friendly tourism activities can contribute to forest protection and wildlife preservation. Anyadike et al. (2019) examines the level of community involvement in CBT projects. The findings underscore the importance of community participation in decision-making and revenue-sharing for the success of CBT initiatives.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research design**

As for this study, the methodology adopted mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative research designs. The research design involves gathering data from a target population using questionnaire and interviews and subjecting such data to statistical analysis for the purpose of drawing conclusion for the subject matter of the study and providing solutions to the identified problems. The motive for the choice of this method is due to its suitability in carrying out research of this kind. Quantitative and qualitative research designs are probably the best method available to social scientist interested in collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population too large to be observed directly.

#### **3.2 Population of the study**

According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) population projection (2022), the total population of Ikwuano LGA numbering 200,800 as at 2022 will be chosen as the population in this research work. However, the population of the study includes all the local residents in Ikwuano communities from 18 years and above.

### 3.3 Sample size and sampling procedures

As Johnson and Christenerisen (2000) point out, in random sampling, the researcher specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then tries to locate individuals who have those characteristics. Aggarwal (1988) amplifies this fact by saying that random sampling approach is useful where it is necessary to include a very small number of units in the sample. In other words, the sampling procedure chosen by the researcher was simple random sampling where the local residents are randomly selected and believed to be reliable for the study.

The respondents were the local residents and chosen for the minimal economical costs in terms of carrying out the study.

The sampling size was derived using the Taro Yamani formula. Yaro Yamani formula as quoted in Nwabuoeki, (1981) was applied and it is stated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n=sample size

N= Total population size

1 is constant

e = the assume error margin or tolerable error which is taken as 5%(0.05)

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n=sample size

N= 200,800

1 is constant

e = the assume error margin or tolerable error which is taken as 5%(0.05)

$$n = \frac{200800}{1 + 200800 (0.0025)}$$

$$= \frac{200800}{1 + 502} = 503$$

$$= 399.2$$

$$n = 399$$

### 3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire and Interview were used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire consists of questions of the respondents and questions which sought information relevant to the objective of the study. The interview was used to elicit responses from the community leaders.

### 3.5 Method of Data Collection

Primary data was used in this study. For the primary sources, questionnaires and interview were administered to respondents and information concerning the subject matter under study were elicited. In addition, the study used library materials which constitute the secondary sources from which concepts, theories and related studies were reviewed. In this regard textbooks, research project, journals, conferences, and seminar papers as well as workshop manual etc., were used and duly documented.

### 3.6 Method of Data Presentation and Analysis

The research questions were presented using qualitative and quantitative analysis technique. The qualitative data were presented and analysed using themes of the study. The quantitative data were presented with descriptive statistics such tables, frequency and percentages. method of qualitative data collection is by interviews and focus groups. The inferential statistics used in analyzing and testing the stated null hypotheses are the Spearman's Rank Correlation.

## 4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Presentation and Interpretation of Data

#### 4.1.1 Analysis of the Study's Survey Response Rate

**Table 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution/Return Response Rate**

Questionnaire	Total	Percentage %
Returned	358	89.7%
Invalid	23	5.8%
Not returned	18	4.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>399</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Field Survey, 2021.**

A total of three hundred and ninety-nine (399) copies of questionnaire were distributed to the local residents in the selected communities in Ikwuano. Out of three hundred and ninety-nine (399) copies of questionnaire distributed for the study, three hundred and fifty-eight (358) were returned. 23(5.8%) and 18(4.5%) copies of the questionnaire were invalid and unreturned respectively. This represents 89.7% rate of return.

### 4.2 Testing of Hypotheses

The hypotheses stated in chapter one of this study were tested statistically in this section with Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result of the statistical testing was used to either accept or not to accept the Null hypotheses formulated at 0.01 level of significance.

#### Hypothesis one

**Ho:** Local culture (Ekpe cultural festival) has no significant influence on the income generation of local residents in Ikwuano.

**Table 4.2: Correlations result between Local culture (Ekpe cultural festival) and income generation of local residents in Ikwuano.**

		Local Culture (Ekpe cultural festival)	Income Generation
Local Culture (Ekpe cultural festival)	Spearman's rho	1	.922**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	358	358
Income Generation	Pearson Correlation	.922**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	358	358

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** SPSS 20.0

From table 4.2 above, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.922$ ) between local culture (Ekpe cultural festival) and income generation is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ) reveals a significant relationship between local culture (Ekpe cultural festival) and income generation. Based on that, the null hypothesis that Local Culture (Ekpe cultural festival) has no significant effect on income generation in Ikwuano is not accepted. Therefore, Local Culture (Ekpe cultural festival) significantly contribute to income generation of the local residents in Ikwuano communities.

### **Hypothesis Two.**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Local natural environment has no significant effect on the income generation of local residents in Ikwuano.

**Table 4.3: Correlations result between Local natural environment and income generation of local residents in Ikwuano.**

		Local natural environment	Income Generation
Local natural environment	Spearman's rho	1	.897**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	358	358
Income Generation	Pearson Correlation	.897**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	358	358

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** SPSS 20.0

From table 4.3 above, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.97$ ) between Local natural environment and income generation is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ) reveals a significant relationship between Local natural environment and income generation. Based on that, the null hypothesis that local natural environment has no significant influence on income

generation of Ikwuano communities is not accepted. Therefore, local natural environment significantly contributes to income generation of local residents in Ikwuano communities.

### Hypothesis Three.

**Ho:** Local food and dishes have no significant influence on the income generation of local residents in Ikwuano.

**Table 4.4: Correlations results between Local food and dishes and income generation of local residents in Ikwuano.**

		Local food and dishes	Income Generation
Local food and dishes	Spearman's rho	1	.941**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	358	358
Income Generation	Pearson Correlation	.941**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	358	358
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

**Source:** SPSS 20.0

From table 4.4 above, the correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.941$ ) between Local food and dishes and income generation is strong and positive. The significant value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.01$ ) reveals a significant relationship between local food and dishes and income generation. Based on that, the null hypothesis that local food and dishes has no significant influence on income generation in Ikwuano communities is not accepted. Therefore, local food and dishes significantly contribute to the income generation of local residents in Ikwuano communities.

## 5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary

This study examined the influence of community-based tourism (CBT) on economic development of Ikwuano. In order to achieve the main and specific objectives of this study, five research questions were developed and five hypotheses formulated to guide the study. The literature review for this study focused on three main headings: The conceptual review, theoretical review and empirical review. Under the conceptual review, the concepts of the major variables on the research topic were reviewed. The conceptual review was on Concept of Community-Based Tourism, Local Culture, Natural Environment, Local Food and Dishes, Local Entertainment, Local Products, and Economic Development. The theoretical review discussed the Social Exchange Theory and Destination Life Cycle. Empirical studies relevant to the present study were reviewed taking cognizance of the research design, purpose of the study, population of the study, sample of the study, instrument of data collection, method of data analysis, findings of the study among others. The design of the study was a descriptive survey. The study was carried out in Ikwuano, Abia State. The population of this study consisted of 200,800 adults in Ikwuano communities. Thus, the sample size of the study was 399. The instruments for data collection were a questionnaire titled: Community-Based Tourism and Economic Development Questionnaire (CBTEDQ). The questionnaire was administered to the respondents by the researcher and two research assistants

who were properly briefed to acquaint them with the purpose of the study, the modalities for administering them in an appropriate and effective way. The instrument was validated by three experts, one of the experts was a Statistician, and two were lecturers in the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike.

In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was trial tested on 25 local residents and those staying outside the communities who visit regularly during festive periods. Cronbach Alpha method was used to calculate the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of 0.88 for cluster A, 0.82 for cluster B, 0.87 for cluster C, 0.78 for cluster D, and 0.72 for cluster E. The overall reliability co-efficient of the instrument was 0.84. This shows that the instrument was reliable for this study. Mean and standard deviations were adopted to answer the research questions that guided the study. The hypotheses were tested using Spearman's Rank Correlations at 0.01 level of significance.

The findings of the study revealed that Community-Based Tourism (CBT) practices: Local culture, local environment, local food and dishes, local entertainment, and local products had significant influence on income generation of local residents in Ikwuano communities. The methods used for this research work was explained. This study was concluded, followed by recommendations, contribution to knowledge and suggestion for further studies.

## 5.2 Conclusion

Despite the fact that there is no formalized programme at the community level to develop and promote Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in Ikwuano communities, the study found that Community-Based Tourism (CBT) practices enhance income generation of local residents in Ikwuano communities. These CBT practices include: local cultural festival such as Ekpe festival, natural environment, local food and dishes, local entertainment, and local products. Cultural festivals can be a powerful driver of economic growth and income generation for local residents. Cultural festivals attract tourists, both domestic and international. This influx of visitors leads to higher spending in the local economy on accommodations, food, transportation, and entertainment. Cultural festivals can have a significant impact on the income generation of local residents in various ways, such as increased tourism, job creation, boost to local businesses, and market for local products. The findings of the study revealed that local culture (Ekpe cultural festival) had a significant influence on income generation of the local residents of Ikwuano communities. The findings also, revealed that local natural environment had a significant effect on the income generation of local residents of Ikwuano Communities. Ikwuano communities are blessed with various forms of natural environment. Visitors coming to the communities like exploring the natural environment. Local residents make extra income by guiding the tourists and selling other local goods to the visitors. Local food and dishes can significantly influence income generation for local residents in several ways. Local cuisine can attract tourists who are interested in experiencing authentic, traditional foods. This culinary tourism can lead to increased spending in local restaurants, food markets, and street vendors. Local food markets and food vendors often see increased business from both tourists and locals. The findings revealed that local food and dishes had a significant influence on the income generation of local residents of Ikwuano communities. Ikwuano communities are notable for their various forms of local food and dishes such as Achara soup, Yam and Ugba sauce, Cassava chips and cocoonut, vegetable soup, etc. and local food vendors experience significant sales especially during festive periods due to high number of visitors and tourists coming to the communities. In addition, local entertainment and local products

were also found to contribute significantly towards income generation of local residents in Ikwuano communities.

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is a veritable tool for wealth creation, income generation, and community development. CBT is capable of generating employment, infrastructural development, security, agricultural development, and peaceful coexistence in the communities. Therefore, government at all levels, community leaders, tourism enthusiasts, and other stakeholders should put more efforts in developing community-based tourism due to its multiplier effect on community development and economic growth of the country.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Local culture such as Ekpe festival entertains the locals and visitors, and also enhances income generation of the local residents. Therefore, government at the local level and community leaders should do more, in collaboration with other stakeholders to formalize and promote the festival for wider reach and attract more tourists to the destination.
2. Communities in Ikwuano should do more in protecting their ecosystem and the sustainability of the natural environment. There should be a ban on bush burning, illegal hunting, cutting down of trees, and polluting the streams and rivers in the communities.
3. There are different kinds of local food and dishes available in Ikwuano communities, but most of the dishes are unknown to outsiders and tourists. Therefore, there is a need to package, promote and deliver such dishes in a sustainable way in order to attract more tourists to the communities.
4. Local entertainment in Ikwuano communities enhances income generation of local residents but not well publicized outside the communities. Therefore, there is a need to package the local contents and leverage the social media and other platforms to promote the entertainment sector of the communities in order to attract more visitors to the communities.
5. Local products produced in Ikwuano communities enhance income generation of the local residents and contribute to economic development of the communities. Therefore, local residents should be encouraged with micro credits to facilitate the production of quality products for the visitors to purchase.

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