

Promoting Tourism in West Africa through Newspaper Constructionism, Framing and Saliency: A Content Analysis of Select Newspapers in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study focused on the potentials of the mass media, with special highlights on newspapers, to favourably project the tourism industry in West Africa with a view to not only attracting Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) but also commanding a huge traffic of tourists to the sub-region. The literature revealed that of the one billion tourist mileage recorded in December, 2012, by the global tourism industry, only 52 million tourists visited the entire continent of Africa. It was further revealed that the tourism tilt in Africa was predominantly towards South, East and North Africa; with West Africa being greatly obscured in the chart. The assumption however was predicated on the fact that the ability of newspapers to influence cognition derives from their ability to focus attention on specific events, issues and places through content subsumed in the notions of constructionism, framing and saliency. This necessitated a content analysis of three purposively sampled newspapers in Nigeria. Analysis was done with a view to streamlining how the Nigerian Press, through content, accord viability to heritage (tourist) sites in West Africa by favourably projecting them and making them market ready. Findings revealed that the coverage given to tourist sites in West Africa by the newspapers studied was significantly shrift. It was also found that the inability of the newspapers to constructively package tourist sites in West Africa is among the reasons why the sub-region is still not where it should be in the tourism business. It was therefore recommended that the Nigerian press should adopt a regional approach to tourism development by focusing content on tourism and allied issues of great tourism concerns in West Africa while encouraging content that serves to uphold cross border tourism.

Keywords: Constructionism, Framing, Newspapers, Saliency, Tourism

Overview

Tourism is life. It is also a necessity for optimal living. It is all about the embellishments that go with living such as people traveling and staying in places outside their immediate environment for leisure, business, health care, etc. Today, tourism occupies an important position in the economic well being of developed and developing nations because it offers a channel through which corporate entities and individuals utilize investment opportunities. It has been estimated by Lain, Fernandes, Masserli & Twining-Ward (2011) that tourism accounts for well over 35% of the world's service exports. Interestingly also, the entertainment industry is dependent on tourism. Since tourism is capable of making significant contributions to the economy, non-investment in that sector will amount to a colossal loss of opportunities by governments. Tourism offers to countries of the world a win-win investment opportunity. It indeed defies the economic law of comparative advantage because every country has something to offer and bring to the table. As noted by Honey and Gilpin (2009), "tourism enables communities that are poor in material wealth but rich in history and cultural heritage to leverage their unique assets for economic development" (p.2). In such a scenario, tourism provides opportunities for the poor in a given community with rich history and cultural heritage to become exporters to foreign tourists through the sale of goods and services. This invariably means increased market access for rural and urban communities.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) posits that tourism has experienced continued growth and diversification over the past six (6) decades to become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism according to Zaei and Zaei (2013) offers a vista of opportunities to many countries and has also become a key driver for socio-economic progress.

Viewed from a continuum, tourism positively reverberates on balance of payments, employment, gross domestic products (GDP), etc. It is a major instrument for regional growth, through exogenous development initiatives, since it has been rated as one of the world's largest industries as well as one of the fastest growing sectors (Ayeni and Ebohon, 2012). Vellas (2011) notes that tourism can become a driver of recovery, fostering stable and sustainable economic growth initiated through sectoral support policies. Indisputably, tourism is an essential contributor to GDP and job creation in both developed and developing countries. According to him, "countries which experienced significant recovery in 2010, following the economic crisis, took advantage of surging tourism demand, both domestic and international, to buttress the growth of their economies" (p.6). Interestingly, an increasing number of nations have opened up and invested in tourism development thereby turning modern tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress. It has however been emphasized by Bichaka, Nsiah & Badassa (2007) that tourism development is increasingly viewed as an important tool for promoting economic growth, alleviating poverty and advancing food security.

The benefits of tourism in the context of economic growth have equally been typified as its unique features which descriptively dovetail within the under listed benchmark of UNWTO (2002);

- i) Opportunity for economic diversification; particularly in marginal areas with few other export options
- ii) Targeted pull to remote areas with high values of cultural, wildlife and landscape assets. Interestingly, the natural heritage of developing countries is frequently based on such assets
- iii) Potentials for income generation through the preservation of heritage values.

In view of the foregoing, it has therefore been hypothesised by Samimi, Sadeghi and Sadeghi (2011) "that tourism can play a fundamental role for developing countries to achieve economic growth and development" (p.28). This in literature according to them is referred to as "the tourism led goal hypothesis". If the above hypothesis holds sway, then tourism portends a great silver lining for the West African sub-region whose tale of economic woes resonates with distinction in the global media. Accounts, from geography and history, show that the West African sub-region is blessed with an alluring coast line, fascinating ecology and a robust cultural heritage. An extrapolation of the foregoing, within the context of tourism, presents an undeniable and incontrovertible potential for leisure, eco-tourism, cultural tourism etc. Since these are great money spinners, why have these potentials not been turned around by governments of the region? There are indeed good beaches in Sierra Leone, Senegal, Ghana etc. The mangrove forests in Nigeria are a marvel to behold. More descriptively so, the rich cultural festivals of Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cote d' Ivoire etc as well as the awe inspiring heritage sites across the West African landscape hold great fascination. Ironically, no matter how attractive a tourist destination is, many people are unlikely to go there if they do not know about it. Since the mass media are purveyors of information, their cardinal responsibility, within the framework of the development theory, in this regard is to let the world know about the rich tourism potentials of the West African sub-region. The mass media, especially newspapers, serve as windows that provide insight into West Africa for the outside world.

The foregoing has become even more pertinent now that global politics is gravitating towards uni-polarism. Regional collaboration on the other hand has also become a way of life among nations. Viewed against this backdrop, trade and commerce among nations of the same region can no longer be described as foreign but local. Knowing that newspapers are critical to the success of tourism coupled with the fact that trade among countries in the same sub- region can now be described as local, it is expected that Nigerian newspapers through editorial and advertorial should serve to boost tourism in the West African sub- region through adequate and favourable reportage of tourist sites in the sub- region. This presupposition is however premised on the fact that newspapers are critical to the success of any tourism venture. How Nigerian newspapers have fared in this regard therefore becomes the primary concern of this study.

The Problem

It is one thing for a country/region to be endowed with tourism potentials, it is another thing for that country/region to harness those potentials and positively project them for optimal benefits. Interestingly, opportunities in the tourism industry are endless and inexhaustible. Unfortunately, many countries/regions in spite of their huge tourism potentials fail to succeed in ventures that fall within the purview of tourism. The world Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has projected based on tourism's present 7.2% contribution to global GDP that tourism's contribution in this regard will continue to grow at over 4% per annum during the next ten years to account for about 10% GDP (WTTC 2010).

Drawing from the foregoing, one begins to wonder why this scientifically reliable forecast has not played out in the West African sub region. The literature (Ashley, Dilys & Harold,2001, Chakabrity & Chakravarti,2008 and Torkildsen,2011) further reveals that the tourism tilt in Africa is predominantly towards South, East and North Africa. By extrapolation, the destination points of repute are the wild life in South Africa, the wildlife in Kenya and the heritage sites in Egypt. Why West Africa is obscured from this chart despite its alluring coast line and rich cultural heritage becomes a question begging for answer. More so, cumulative capital receipt from tourism in the West African sub- region, as highlighted in the African Development Bank (2013) report, is discouragingly abysmal. In most cases, however, marketing has been identified as a key factor why many potentially viable tourist destinations struggle in an industry that is ripe for exponential growth. Marketing in this context refers to a set of activities and processes that allow for the creation, communication and delivery of offerings that have value for customers. These activities can, no doubt, be used to convince customers and they include information kit, websites, advertising, sales promotion as well as other ancillary below- the- line advertorials and editorials.

By failing to communicate a country's/region's tourism potentials to the world, tourism ventures become uphill tasks. Without proper communication, subsumed in information platforms, it becomes agonizingly difficult to reach potential clients who conversely may not also get to know about the existence of such tourism sites. It has been affirmed by scholars, (Lucchetti & Font;2012, Batini;,2013 and Ringbeck & Timm ; 2013), that a successful tourism business requires a brand that speaks to its target markets through content that successfully opens a vista of utilities geared towards satisfying the information needs of readily available clientele. There is indeed an important relationship between newspaper report and the people's ranking of issues. Scholarly propulsions by McQuail(2010), Rodman(2012) and Hasan (2013) reveal that studies are now shifting from newspaper use to information and cognition acquired from newspapers. The inference however is that newspapers through selective presentation and emphasis set both political and social agenda for audience members. Interestingly, McQuail(2010) notes that" the ability of newspapers to influence our cognition derives from their ability to focus attention on specific events, issues and persons through content"(p.512). The overriding summation is that the most powerful effect of newspapers on public knowledge is their ability to focus attention on certain places and issues at a given time. The foregoing therefore lends credence to the fact that newspapers can veritably turn around the tourism industry in the West African sub region through content. Invariably, newspapers, through content, can dispel fears of insecurity in the region. Newspapers can also be used to accord salience to heritage sites and cultural festivals. Newspapers through content, editorial and advertorial, can also be used to proactively promote the tourism potentials of the West African sub- region. All these are subsumed in the notions of constructionism, framing and salience. Interestingly, most of the national newspapers in Nigeria are on the virtual platform. In other words, their content can be accessed online.

Dovetailed within the above framework, it becomes quite pertinent to find out how well Nigerian newspapers have deployed content to favourably project the tourism industry in West Africa. In other words, do the editorial and advertorial content of Nigerian newspapers encourage in bound and out bound tourism within the West African sub- region? This is so because it is expected that if the tourism potentials of the West African sub- region are to be properly harnessed, then newspapers must play a key role. This key role, subsumed in the Development theory of the press, includes using content to encourage leisure, eco-tourism and cultural tourism within Nigeria and if it must be outside Nigeria, then newspaper content should be such that the countries and cities within the West African sub- region should be duly framed as destinations of choice with a view to encouraging cross border tourism within the sub- region. How well Nigerian newspapers have fared in this regard becomes the primary concern of this paper. By inference, therefore, the problem of this study is preconceived in the foregoing.

The Study Objectives

Since it has been widely acknowledged that newspapers can influence cognition, through content, this study therefore sought to ascertain

1. How well Nigerian newspapers have, through content, favourably projected the tourism potentials of West Africa by highlighting cities of attraction, heritage sites and rich cultural festivals within the region with a view to making them destinations of choice.

2. How well Nigerian newspapers have, through advocacy, called on the governments of Nigeria and by extension those of other West African countries within the sub- region to initiate laudable policies and projects that will encourage the growth of the industry within the region and give it a competitive edge in line with international best practices.

The Research Questions

1. To what extent have Nigerian newspapers constructed, framed and accorded salience to cities and heritage sites in West Africa with a view to positioning them as destinations of choice on the tourism chart?
2. To what extent have Nigerian newspapers, through advocacy, called on the government of Nigeria, and by extension those of other West African countries, to initiate policies and frameworks that will favourably position the West African tourism industry?

Theoretical Framework

The thrust of this study is predicated on the Development theory of the press. This theory is an offshoot of the normative theory as postulated by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) and it evolved as a result of the inapplicability of earlier postulations of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. According to McQuail (1983), some common conditions of developing countries limit the application of other theories and so another media theory has been developed for the developing countries – the Development theory. Quebral (2011), a major proponent of this theory, refers to it as “the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country and the mass of its people from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that means possible greater social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential” (para 3). McQuail (1983) notes that a major highlight of the theory is that the mass media must accept and carry out positive development tasks that are in line with the policies formulated by the political leadership. Worthy to note also is that freedom of the press should not be at variance with economic priorities of the government and the development needs of a country and its citizens. In other words, media content should be development driven and should center on socio-economic and socio-political lives of the people with a view to attaining social transformation.

Developed from the writings of Lerner (1958), Pye (1963), Schramm (1963), Seers (1969) and Quebral (1975), the Development theory of the press assumes various forms but essentially proposes that media freedom, while desirable, should be subordinated of necessity, to the requirements of economic, social and political development. The underlying notion however is that the Development theory is premised on the development needs of developing nations because for these nations, economic, social and political developments are primary national tasks to which every other institution should submit. This no doubt includes mass media institutions. One may argue that this theory is the Fifth theory of the press in line with the conventional Four (normative) theories. It is indeed the appropriate system given the social and political situation of the developing nations and their current global environment. Compared with the other Four theories, Development theory according to Manyozo (2006) would stand out distinctly as a separate type on the Siebert, et al. typology. The justification for its use and applicability dovetails within the purview of the mass media role as purveyors of information that engender socio-economic growth and political development. The presupposition however is that the mass media, as used in the developing world, should through content and operations, complement the efforts of the government in bringing about development to the people.

Operationalization of Terms

Since words are amenable to conceptual elasticity, the following words have been operationally defined within the context of this study for clarity and structural applicability.

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| Constructionism: | Using newspapers through syntax to accord reality to cities, heritage sites as well as cultural festivals. This is often done through contextualization of stories and reports. |
| Framing: | Using newspapers to favourably project an idea, place, issue or event through ideological appeals so as to affect cognition in a preconceived and desired direction. |
| Salience: | Using newspapers to accord importance to places, issues or events through editorial and advertorial placements such as front page, centre spread and back page. By inference, stories that appear on these pages are deemed important by readers. |

The Literature- Tourism, Economic Boost and the Galvanizing Role of the Media

There has been an exponential growth in the tourism industry over the past decades with promises of astronomical growth in the coming decades. Akama and Kieti (2007) note that the overall economic impact of tourism is usually maximized through enhancing linkages with other local economic sectors. According to them, “strong economic linkages between tourism and other sectors such as agriculture and small enterprises will enhance the multiplier effect thus contributing to increased revenue retention and creation of more business opportunities for local people” (p.3). The imputation however is that this often results in a greater demand for local goods and services which in turn translates into the creation of more jobs and the development of more businesses for the local community. Cores and Vanegas (2008) affirm that there exists a positive and significant relationship between tourism and economic growth. Honey and Gilpin (2009) have described tourism as having a “snow ball effect in contributing to economic growth since the development of new tourism distinctions is often accompanied by the arrival of new businesses” (p.8). It has also been subliminally observed that there is the diffusion of wealth creation since tourism encourages the transfer of wealth and income from residents of wealthier countries to developing countries or what is operationally described in a 2009 report by the UNWTO as the “democratization of the dollar”. For this to however hold sway, Fredline, Deery & Jago (2013) opine that tourism host communities must identify and protect cultural and natural assets that form the basis for comparative advantage in tourism while governments must reduce bottlenecks and constraints that hinder investments and developments in that sector.

Tourism’s contribution to economic growth and development could be seen from its exports and this, according to UNWTO (2010) figures, represents over 40% of all service exports which puts it as the highest category of global trade. This no doubt plays out in two ways. First, tourism enhances efficiency through increased competition among firms and other tourist destinations and second, by facilitating the exploration of economies of scale among local firms. No doubt, it has been aptly projected in literature - (Song and Gang (2008) and Chu (2014) - that growth forecasts for tourism may exceed 4.2% over the next ten years. By inference therefore tourism will continue to grow, out space growth of the wider economy and become a leading generator of jobs. In a study by Dwyer and Spurr (2010), it was found that tourism made a direct contribution to the economy of Australia in 2009. Figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics as cited by Dwyer and Spurr (2010) show that tourism “contributed \$40.639 million in GDP and 5.7% of total employment” (p.1). Gilpin and Honey(2009) further note that: In 1990, just fifteen destinations - primarily European - accounted for 98% of all international arrivals. By 2007, that figure had fallen to 57%. Once essentially excluded from the tourism industry, the developing world has now become its major growth area. Tourism is a key foreign exchange earner for 83% of developing countries and the leading export earner for one-third of the world’s poorest countries (p.2).

Drawing from the above, it is has been hypothesized by the United Nations that tourism is obviously one of the methods poorer countries might use to meet the millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indisputably, tourism can serve to alleviate poverty. In a study by Vaugeois (2010) -Tourism in developing countries : Refining a useful tool for economic development – it was found that manufacturing though a desirous option for many developing countries seems to be more successful in nations that are richly endowed with skilled labour. In this regard, it was inferred that “tourism may be a more viable alternative for developing countries’ (p.4). According to the study, most developing countries have the basic raw materials required to establish a tourism industry; whether using its heritage, architecture, landscape, water or people. The deduction however is that a mix of natural and cultural resources is what makes a destination unique and marketable to visitors.

The Zimbabwean case study as reported in African Business and cited by Vaugeois (2010) seems to aptly capture the thrust of this study. According to the report; Tourism is one of the most promising aspects of Zimbabwe’s economy, attracting thousands of visitors and earning millions of dollars. Over the past 10 years, Zimbabwe’s tourist sector has scored impressive annual growth rates of nearly 20%. According to the Zimbabwean Tourism Authority (ZTA), total tourism receipts account for 4.6% of the country’s GDP. It is estimated that tourism employs close to 100,000 Zimbabweans, up from 40,500 in 1990. This growth in employment is impressive considering the fact that Zimbabwe’s unemployment rate is more than 50% of the potential workforce and that employment figures have remained static since 1990 (p.32). For African countries, the UNWTO (2006) report shows that tourism is much more important across a broader range of African countries than is commonly recognized.

The report further notes that although some two-thirds of international tourism receipts in Africa are concentrated in four key countries – South Africa, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia – tourism is important to a much broader range of African countries. Tourism constitutes more than 10% of total exports for more than half the African countries. According to Reo, et.al (2004); “In the Gambia and Ethiopia, international arrivals only number some 200 and 400 tourists each day respectively. However this trickle of visitors contributes significantly to the total exports of these two countries” (p.16). The summation however is that the tourism drift to other sub- regions in Africa is twice that of the West African sub- region. As deduced from the foregoing report, this is not totally pessimistic but however serves to provide insight into the vista of opportunities for tourism growth in the West African sub-region. There is therefore a dire need to harness these potentials. Okaka (2007) posits that mass media communications technologies, of which the newspaper is an integral component, “are imperative for frontline investments for sustainable globalised tourism development indicators because the powerful effects of media communications technologies can dawn on the African continent with sweeping changes among the key actors in the tourism industry” (p.1). Lending credence to this, Okon (2013) notes that the “prosperity of nations is no doubt intrinsically linked to the reverberating role of communication in global socio-economic as well as socio-political trends (p. 95). Nistoreanu (2006) notes that the main issue related to the marketing of tourist services is not their production, but their sale and promotion so as to ensure that all the consumers’ needs are comprehensively satisfied. The imputation however is that for tourism to thrive, destinations ought to stimulate or generate demand for the services they have to offer so as to facilitate marketability. The promotional strategy here rests on a platform through which potential clients may be adequately informed.

In corroboration, Warta (2011) observes that print and vision media play a key role in the marketing of tourist services as they are used to both inform potential customers as well as to promote the sale of specific services. Newspapers play a key role in this regard since they can serve to promote the sale of tourist services, by providing the customer with requisite information through tangible messages and images. It is however essential for newspaper reports to use informative and engaging content so as to eliminate the need for further enquiries. The agenda setting function of the press draws relevance from the foregoing context. Agenda setting scholars (McCombs and Estrada, 1997) postulate that beyond merely providing cues about salience of certain topics and issues, newspapers also tell people how to think about these topics and issues. This according to Rogers and Dearing (1997) is often done by way of framing which is referred to as “a second dimension of agenda setting” (p.246).

Contemporary media studies (Dominick;2011, Harvey; 2011 and Hasan;2013) also tend to focus on the way the mass media employ the techniques of news reporting to represent reality. Shoemaker and Reese (1996) suggest that the mass media transmit much more than information and accurate facts. The media content takes elements from the environment, magnifies them and feeds them back to an audience thus imposing their logic in creating a “symbolic environment” (p.60). This symbolic environment is epitomized by the alluring promises a tourist destination offers. Okon (2013) posits that “mainstream journalism, in line with international best practices, requires diligent investigation and non-evasive advocacy geared towards accuracy and social constructionism” (p.112). Newspapers in this regard can through constructionism create a picture of the “world outside” of actual events and other mediated knowledge of those events. Through framing and salience, newspaper readers can therefore understand the potential promises inherent in a tourism package. Summarily, constructionism, framing and salience are veritable tools for promoting sustainable tourism. These core elements of promotion are embellished in the newspaper notions of publicity, editorials and advertorials. It is therefore not in doubt that these can lend themselves to the promotion of tourism in the West African sub- region.

The Methodology

This study by design and nature employed content analysis. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) describe content analysis as an “efficient way to investigate the content of the media such as the number of editorials and advertorials in broadcasting or the print media” (p.140). The justification however is that content analysis is a valuable tool in answering many mass media questions. To this end, content analysis will be used to ascertain the extent to which newspapers in Nigeria employ content, in the context of constructionism, framing and salience, to promote the tourism industry in the West African sub- region. Descriptively, the study entailed an analysis of the content of three Nigerian newspapers – The Guardian, The Nation and The Punch for a period of six months from January to June, 2013, with a view to synthesizing how content can serve to psychologically position cities and festivals in the sub- region as tourist attractions so as to stimulate a pull to these destinations.

The period of study highlighted above was considered cognate and appropriate based on timing taking into consideration the fact that it precedes the summer which is usually when much of tourism takes place. The three newspapers studied were purposively selected based on their national dominance and virtual visibility. In other words, they are highly rated national dailies with highly robust online platforms meaning they can be accessed from any part of the world. In view of the foregoing the population for the study by aggregation stood at five hundred and forty three issues of the three newspapers bearing in mind the period of study – six months (181 days). By disaggregation, the newspapers had 181 issues each within the study period. In terms of sample size, thirty six issues of the newspapers were sampled and studied using a composite method as outlined in the constructed calendar. According to Riffe, Aust and Lacy (1991), a composite week sampling technique is superior to a random sample when dealing with newspapers. Specifically, the issues that fell on 7th and 29th January, 13th and 28th February, 1st and 16th March, 7th and 21st April, 13th and 20th May as well as 4th and 19th June, 2013 were selected and sampled based on the method outlined above. See figure 1 for the constructed calendar.

Constructed Study Calendar 2013

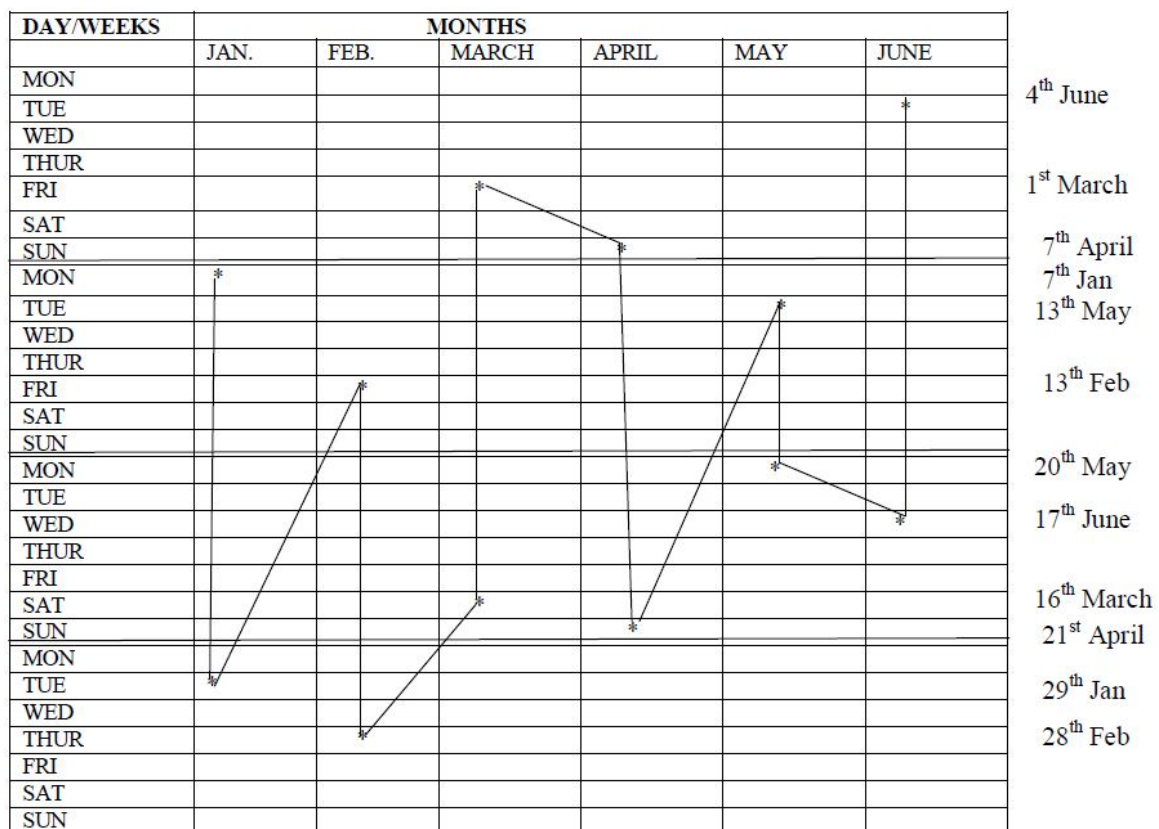


Fig 1: Constructed Study Calendar

The procedure for analysis consisted of an operationalization of the subject matter. To this end, the subject matter was defined thus, “any story, straight, feature, editorial and advertorial, that favourably projects places/festivals of interest in West Africa with a view to attracting tourists to those places”. As a corollary, the subject matter was further elaborated to include advocacies on the government of Nigeria and by extension West African countries by the newspapers studied on ways the tourism industry in the region can be better positioned for enhanced profitability. To this end, any content that fell within the purview of this definition was measured. News space was measured in column centimeters and this formed the basis for quantitative analysis. Based on the foregoing, coding of content into categories was made along the line of straight news, feature, editorial and advertorial. Reliability of the coding sheets was done using Holsti (1968) formula with a view to computing the differences in coding with the second professional coder. A total of 432 items were categorized. Based on the categorization, the coders agreed on 390 categories and disagreed on 42 categories. The inter-coder reliability was computed thus;

2(C1.2)

C1+C2

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Where} \quad C1.2 &= \text{Number of category assignments agreed on} \\
 C1+C2 &= \text{Total number of assignments made by both coders} \\
 r &= \text{Correlation} \\
 &= 2(390) \\
 &= 432 + 432 \\
 &= \frac{2 \times 390}{864} \\
 &= \frac{780}{864} \\
 &= 0.90
 \end{aligned}$$

The computation shows a high correlation which no doubt holds validation for the coding categories.

Data Presentation**Table 1: Content Distribution in the Guardian Newspaper**

Content	Allocation of space in column centimeters	Space in percentage
Straight news	179,484	17.00
Editorial	4,836	.48
Features	136,500	13.69
Advertorials	629,436	63.10
Sports	47,244	4.73
Total	997,500	100

The content of The Guardian newspaper was spread along the categories shown on the table. Drawn from the above table, content distribution shows a preponderance of advertorial (63.10%). This means that more space was allotted to advertorials than any other category outlined on the table.

Table 2: Content Distribution in the Nation Newspaper

Content	Allocation of space in column centimeters	Space in percentage
Straight news	335, 436	49.92
Editorial	4,080	.61
Features	132,996	19.79
Advertorials	104,988	15.62
Sports	94,500	13.06
Total	672,00	100

Unlike The Guardian, content distribution shows a dominance of straight news (49.92%). The imputation however is that more space was allotted to straight news.

Table 3: Content Distribution in the Punch Newspaper

Content	Allocation of space in column centimeters	Space in percentage
Straight news	201,144	29.93
Editorial	7,692	1.14
Features	126,000	18.75
Advertorials	305,664	45.49
Sports	31,500	4.69
Total	672,000	100

For The Punch more space was allotted to advertorials than any other category listed above. Obviously, tables 1, 2 and 3 present a clear outline of the content distribution of the newspapers studied. How this news space, as highlighted in these tables, was deployed to promote tourism in West Africa becomes the focus of the succeeding tables.

Table 4: News Space Allotted to Tourism in West African by the Guardian

Content	Allocation of space in column centimeters	Space in percentage
Straight news	8,400	0.88
Editorial	-	-
Features	10,500	1.10
Advertorials	52,500	5.52

N=950,256 col.cms

The tourism industry in West Africa did not enjoy a fairly commendable editorial and advertorial in The Guardian for the period under study. A systematic inquiry will reveal that the marginal space given to tourism was spread across three categories as shown on the table.

Table 5: News Space Allotted to Tourism in West Africa by the Nation

Content	Allocation of space in column centimeters	Space in percentage
Straight news	24,600	4.26
Editorial	-	-
Features	21,000	3.64
Advertorials	-	-

N= 577,500 col.cms

The highlight on tourism in West Africa by The Nation within the study period came in the form of straight news and features. The table no doubt shows that the news hole assigned to the two categories highlighted above was marginal.

Tale 6: News Space Allotted to Tourism in West Africa by the Punch

Content	Allocation of space in column centimeters	Space in percentage
Straight news	21,000	3.28
Editorial	-	-
Features	19,700	3.07
Advertorials	23,200	3.62

N = 640,500 ol.cms

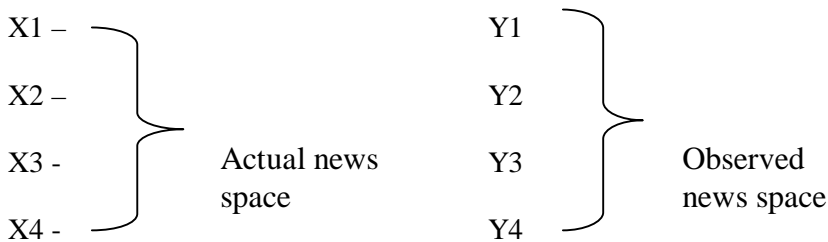
The tourism industry in West Africa was given a slight boost in the form of straight news, features and advertorial by The Punch within the study period. In other words, The Punch, in content, was commendably different compared to the other newspapers under study.

Table 7: Aggregation Index

Newspaper	Content							
	Straight news		Editorial		Features		Advertorial	
	X1	Y1	X2	Y2	X3	Y3	X4	Y4
The Guardian	179,484	8,400	4,836	0	136,500	10,500	629,436	52,500
The Nation	335,436	24,600	4,080	0	132,996	21,000	104,988	0
The Punch	201,144	21,000	7,692	0	126,000	19,700	305,664	23,200
Total	716,064	54,000 (7.5%)	16,608	0 (0%)	395,496	51,200 (12.9%)	1,040,088	75,700 (7.3%)

Figures in Parentheses Represent Percentage calculations

Legend



Discourse

As inferred from the tables, the coverage given to tourism in West Africa by the newspapers studied was significantly shrift. Cumulatively, the newspapers studied devoted 7% of their straight news space to straight news reporting while no space was devoted to editorials on the subject matter. For features, approximately 13% was devoted to the subject matter while for advertorial 7% of the advertorial space was devoted to the subject matter. Descriptively, the subject matter- tourism in West Africa- did not enjoy a commendably fair coverage, both in terms of editorial and advertorial, by the newspapers studied. Drawing from the collaborative trade protocol by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the sub- regional body, one would have expected the Nigerian press to stimulate growth in the tourism industry through an effective public information strategy. Quantitatively, therefore, the coverage given to the subject matter by the Nigerian press was grossly inadequate. On the flip side of the coin, the coverage given to the subject matter by the newspapers studied was unequivocally devoid of constructionism in the sense that the reportage did not smack of any deliberate attempt to build appeals with a view to subtly encouraging and precipitating a boost in the industry. More so, the newspapers studied did not present tourism in West Africa within a context that accorded a favourable frame to the subject matter. In other words, the framing of the subject matter by the newspapers studied was not such that could elicit a favourable disposition.

As for salience, the subject matter was not given any pride of place in the layout of the newspapers studied. The subject matter did not make the front/back page; neither did it enjoy any editorial nor centre spread. Note worthy is the fact that newspaper reportage uses placement to accord salience to any subject matter. Ironically, many readers usually exhibit impatience in the course of newspaper readership, hence the reasoning behind the placement of stories such that readers' attention may be easily drawn to them. Unfortunately, the placement of the subject matter in the newspapers studied was not such that readers' attention could easily be drawn to it. By inference therefore, the newspapers did not accord salience to tourism in the West African sub region. The data further revealed that the newspapers did not engage in any form of advocacy geared towards encouraging government's support for the tourism industry through the initiation and entronement of favourable policies. This however explains why tourism in West Africa is commonly referred to as an "unexploited gold mine". Government role in this regard can not be downplayed because tourism is one sector of the economy where government support should be clearly visible. Even when the government may, by body language, appear apathetic, in the light of the subject matter, it is expected that the media should shake off this apathy by proffering solutions on how to reposition and grow the industry. This is further corroborated by the fact that there was 0% editorial content on the subject matter as inferred from the newspapers studied. This becomes even more worrisome when viewed against the backdrop of the fact that the editorial column is a foremost platform for advocacy in newspapers. More unfortunately so, advocacy on the subject matter in the form of public service announcement (PSA) was also found not to have been proactively utilized by the newspapers studied. The foregoing however is graphically represented in figure 2.

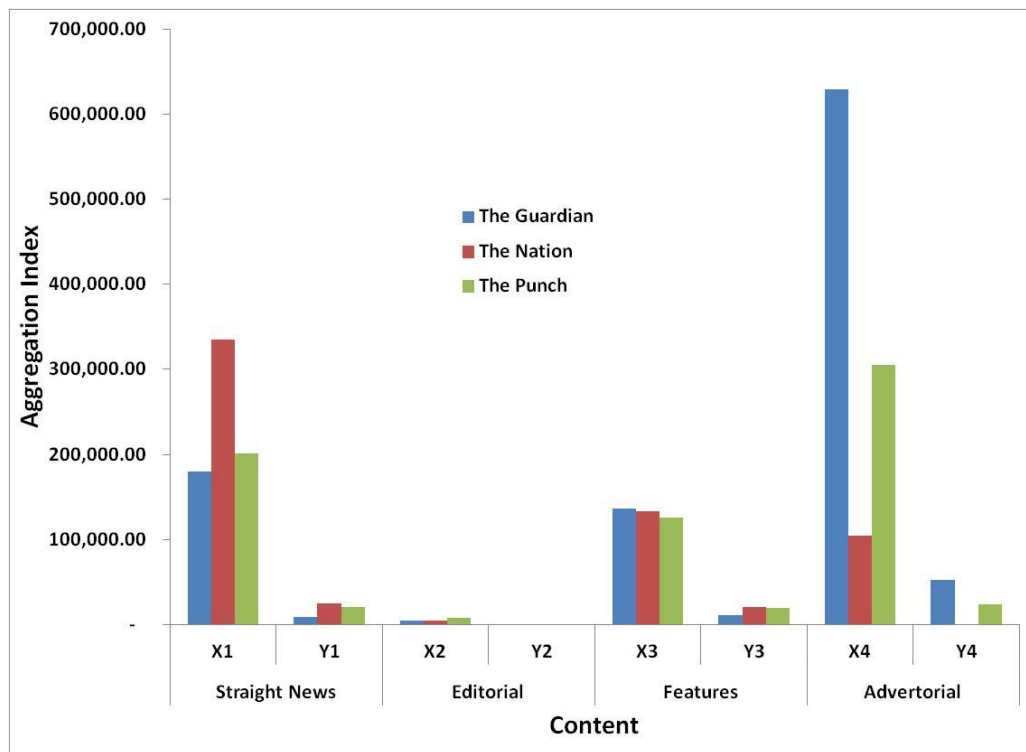


Fig. 2: Tourism in West Africa as Reported by three Nigerian Newspapers

The chart shows that the newspapers did not functionally utilize the major media tools of advocacy – editorial and features – to construct, frame and accord salience to the issue of tourism in West Africa. This is aptly shown on bars Y2 and Y3. It should however be noted that economic news function is a sub set of the surveillance function of the press. The tourism sector can indeed enjoy a boost through newspaper reportage. By common sense, how an issue is reported in the newspaper accords importance to that issue in the minds of the readers. Unfortunately, this was not so as revealed by the findings of this study. Conversely, in as much as the subject matter did not receive adequate coverage in the newspapers studied, this seemingly insignificant coverage lacked the propulsion to encourage tourism within the West African sub- region. Nevertheless, it implicitly served to perpetuate the stereotype of key European and Asian countries as destinations of choice. Ironically, content served to encourage visits to such places rather than visits to West African cities and sites. The imputation however is that the coverage given to tourism in West Africa by the newspapers studied lacks the propensity to spur readers to visit places within the sub- region either for eco-tourism, cultural tourism, leisure etc. This becomes incongruous when viewed against the back drop of the fact that the sub- region is blessed with fascinating ecology and a rich cultural heritage. A synthesis of the findings further shows a complete lack of editorial/advertorial boost to tourism in West Africa by the newspapers studied. The extrapolation however is that the unenviable state of tourism in West Africa has been partly precipitated by a complete lack of zeal and commitment to proactively package and market the industry through public information and promotional campaigns by Nigerian newspapers.

Recommendations

- 1) Nigerian newspapers should proactively focus content on tourism and allied issues of great tourism concerns in West Africa. These issues may border on the scenic ecology as well as the exotic festivals and rich cultural heritage of the countries within the sub- region.
- 2) Nigerian newspapers should use their editorial columns as platforms to constructively engage in advocacy geared towards proffering solutions on how the government and stakeholders can reposition and grow the tourism industry in West Africa.
- 3) There should be an increased zeal by Nigerian newspapers to deploy content in the light of framing and salience to uphold and encourage cross border tourism amongst the citizens of West African countries. This can be done by positioning places and events within the sub- region as destinations of choice through editorial and advertorial appeals.

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