Repositioning the Nigerian Economy Through the Creative Industries

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ABSTRACT
Diversifications of the Nigerian economy have been identified as a fulcrum for the nation’s economic growth and sustainability. Over the last few years, economic experts and scholars of related disciplines have continuously engaged themselves in the presentation of scholarly papers, organization of seminars and symposia with a tilting thrust towards the need to re-focus the Nigerian economy from over relying on crude oil as the main stay of the nation’s economy. In this paper, we seek to address this worrisome state of the economy by advancing the fact that the Nigerian economy can be repositioned through the contributions of the creative industries with particular reference to the performing arts, literary arts, culture and tourism amongst others. The paper interrogates the predilection for a mono-economic policy which finds expression in crude oil by successive Nigerian governments to the outright and continued undervaluation of the creative industries. The paper concludes that the creative industries, by their very enterprising nature, if given the pride of place in Nigerian budgets, will no doubt help to reposition the Nigerian economy towards viability and sustainability.

Keywords: Diversification, Nigerian economy, fulcrum, growth, sustainability, viability, crude oil, creative industries

INTRODUCTION
Nigerian economy has gone through stages of developments. In the days of colonial administration, Nigerian economy was sustained using proceeds from cotton, timbre, cocoa and palm-oil, to mention a few. This was the situation until the late 1960s when the nation’s economy was primarily based on the petroleum industry. Nigeria has since then remained a mono-economic nation. The resultant effect has been devastating. Glaringly, there has been a downward spiral of the economy and whether we like it or not, it is only good to say that the recession is not over.

The implication of the state of the economy is that its growth or decline depends solely on oil output. According to the report presented by the Associate Director on Nigerian economy, Olanre Waju Yusuf, “Nigeria’s economy is expected to grow by about 1 percent in 2017 and 2.5 percent in 2018, based on an expected increase in oil output as well as the accelerated implementation of public and social investment projects by the Federal Government” (Sunnews online.com/ repositioning -nigeria-economy).

Indeed, it is no longer a hidden truth that scientific advances and technological changes are important drivers of economic performance in many economies of the world today. The ability to create, distribute and exploit knowledge is to say the very least, a major source of competitive advantage, wealth creation and improvements in the quality of life of the ordinary citizens in any one nation. Agreed that there are several features of transformation which a growing economy needs, some of
which include: Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Scientific Advances in New Products and Processes, a Shift to more Knowledge-Intensive Industries, amongst others, this paper avows that the Creative Industries, radiating the performing arts, literary arts, culture and tourism can, if funded and well managed by government, serve as movers and drivers of the Nigerian economy. The technological and managerial skills in the creative industries have their potentials. According to Brain (2012) “Technology is the making, modification, usage, and knowledge of tools, machines, techniques, craft, systems, methods of organization, …to a problem, achieve a goal or perform a specific function” (qtd in Uniuyo Journal of Humanities).

Background
Nigeria, though claimed to be out of recession, the realities of a down turn of the economy is still biting hard. Unemployment is on the increase, crime waves have assumed far more yawning dimensions. Hunger is registered on the faces of Nigerians. We can say without fear of contradiction that this period compared next to the days of military government when Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) was introduced. The military government of that epoch had hoped to achieve a recovery and growth into the then economy by introducing SAP in 1986. In the words of Ongugua, “Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP)…the government had hoped to bring growth to the economy; therefore it embarked on SAP. The plan was to emphasize domestic production rather than importation of expensive goods from foreign countries” (http://www.world.org/vol04no2Ogunguavol4no2.shtml). The attempt to implement this programme sparked off disturbing situation in Nigeria. There was rise in inflation that consumed the poor salaries of workers. There was an upsurge in crime, diseases, strikes, lockouts and hunger. It was also characterized by political uncertainty. This was because the 1993 election that was believed to have been won by Chief Moshood Abiola was annulled by the then military dictator, Ibrahim Babangida. At a such time in the life of any nation, there must be a diversion in the drive of the economy. It is against this backdrop that we see the beckoning of the creative industries worthwhile in the march to re-position Nigerian economy. Unlike the failed Structural Adjustment Programme which did not impact the economy in any way, the experiment in the creative industries will certainly paid off significantly if given the trial.

Conceptual Framework
The beckoning of the creative industries as a diversification technique in the Nigerian economy is to deemphasize the idea of oil as the only source of the nation’s economy. This thrust of the paper insinuates a reform and thus places the work within the ambit of the theory of Realism. Realism in the arts is the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions as well as implausible elements (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki>literary...). Realism as a movement in literature was a post 1848 phenomenon. There have been various realism movements in the arts. Finocchio Ross notes that the Realist movement was developed in France when the French society fought for democratic reforms. In this paper, we are concerned with economic reforms through the creative industries which to all intents and purposes, should be seen as a movement in the arts. The realist artist is that artist who would be able to depict life the way it is by using available materials within the local setting. The creative industries, in this context, refer to the abundance of cultural heritage which abound in Nigerian communities across the divide of North, South, East and West of the country.

It is therefore only reasonable that we use this theory of Realism as our conceptual framework, believing that the depiction of the creative industries in the diversification of the economy of the nation will be truthful, sincere and result oriented if given the attention it deserved.

Analysis of the creative industries
The analysis of the creative industries as conceived in this paper will revolve around the subject matter of culture and tourism – this is because the ingredients of the performing arts and the literary arts are subsumed in culture and tourism. The performing arts encapsulate music, dance, drama or theatre, puppetry, acrobatics, to mention a few. It is a truism that no national process of reform, change or diversification of the economy can afford to neglect the heritage of culture and tourism. It is
the intention of this paper that if Nigeria’s vast and rich cultural heritage can be made to partner tourism, Nigerian economy would no doubt be repositioned.

**Culture and Tourism**

The Centre for Advance Research on language acquisition defines culture as “shared patterns of behavior and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization”

Tourism, on the other hand is concerned with people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes (Richards, 1996). Both concepts work together especially when thought of in business terms as conceived in this paper.

It is a hard fact to face that tourism cannot flourish effectively without the cultural components. In most of the communities in Nigeria, whether in the north, south, east or west, cultural events manifest through the organizations of festivals. Oyin Ogunba (1978) locates this by saying that:

> In many communities in Africa today, except those already totally overrun by foreign religions, traditional festivals are staged from time to time. In a town of modest size, say twenty thousand inhabitants, there may be as many as ten to fifteen festivals in a year’s cycle of ceremonies (Ogunba, 1978:3).

In putting together these festivals, some could be music festivals, dance festivals, puppetry festivals or a combination of all these in one festival. The craftsmanship that typifies the performance in any one festival is alluring and offers good opportunities for tourism.

For the purposes of illustration, we showcase for practical reason, the Puppetry Naabiradee Festival of the Ogoni people in the South-East Senatorial District of Nigeria and the Izara Traditional Initiation Festival of the Amo people in the north central Nigeria. These festivals, represent very many of their types that are scattered in Nigerian communities.

![Figure 1: A Scene of Custodians and Puppets in Performance in Ogoni](image)
Implications on Nigerian Economy

Because Nigeria is so rich in cultural heritage scattered across the six Geo-political spread of the country, it is only reasonable that these be harnessed into greater usability for the country’s economic growth. The thesis of this paper is that culture and tourism, as ingrained in the creative industries should be seen as one area of diversification of Nigerian economy.

For this to be realizable, the federal government must position the Ministry of Information and Culture from the federal down to states in a such a way that the ministry would be able to plan and execute cultural tourism as sources of revenue for the economy. If adequate fund is invested into culture and tourism, Nigeria will certainly overcome its present challenge of economic meltdown.

All that is important is for the government of Nigeria to establish a strong partnership with interested foreign countries on symbiotic grounds in developing and marketing its potentials to boost patronage of local and foreign tourists. There should be sincere coordination, collaboration and partnership between performing artistes, museums, states and communities that are blessed with natural and
cultural endowments. If this is supervised to a result-oriented level, the resultant cultural tourism synergy will be intimidating at designated points of cultural performances across the country. Nigeria should give more emphasis to the creation and preservation of museums because museums serve as cultural bank of any nation. The point has been made in several quarters of academic discussion that museums, if well developed and equipped, can serve as both a significant source of a nation’s ‘living history’ and a destination honeycomb (Wikipedia). Again, we wish to stress that the symbolic relationship between culture and tourism, when developed and well managed, could be channeled to broaden the country’s economic base as well as provide employment for the teeming jobless youths across the length and breadth of Nigeria. Culture and tourism are undoubtedly foreign exchange earners for several developed countries of the world. It is our hope that Nigeria should be found amongst these countries because of the enormous rich cultural tourism heritage at her disposal. A country like Israel for instance, depends for the most of its foreign exchange earnings on tourism. Indeed, tourism in Israel is one of Israel’s major sources of income, with a record 3.6 million tourist arrivals in 2017, and 25 percent growth since 2016 and contributed NIS 20 billion to the Israeli economy making it an all-time record (Amir, 2018). In each year, tourists from United States, Russia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, China, Italy, Poland and Canada do embark on a tourist journey to Israel with United States accounting for 19% of all tourists. Aside from tourism, countries such as America, Asia and Europe have equally used the creative industries personified in cultural heritage to uplift their economic development. Nigeria can do the same. It is about time for Nigeria to encourage the production, organization and projection of its creative industries in the performing arts, literary arts, and craft works lying waste in various regions of the country. Below are spectacles of some tourist and cultural icons that are waiting to be harnessed and used for cultural tourism.

Figure 4: Koo Maiden Dancers of Ogoni
Figure 5: Female drummers also thrilled at the maiden edition of Nigerian Drums Festival held recently in Abeokuta

Figure 6: Idanre hills, Ondo State
The point has been made in this paper that cultural tourism is a serious foreign exchange earners for several countries of the world. Statistics have shown that countries such as the ones below have made so much money from tourism. According to Wikipedia (Free Encyclopedia), in 2015, U.S.A made $177.20 billion, Spain, $65.20 billion, China, $56.30 billion, Germany, $43.30 billion, Australia, 42.20 billion, United Kingdom, $45.30 billion, Hong Kong $41.30 billion, Thailand $35.40 billion. In Africa, South Africa grossed $35.00 billion, Morocco $ 34.00 billion, Namibia $33.80 billion, Kenya $32.00 billion, Tunisia $31.80 billion while Nigeria, the giant of Africa trailed behind with a depressing $2.79 million earning.

These statistics, as in 2015 indicate that Nigeria is still miles away when it comes to cultural tourism of the creative industries. We agree with the central theme of this conference that Nigerian Economy can be repositioned through Technological and Managerial Skills. In Nigeria, art is everywhere, culture abound. Indeed, we are endowed in tourism. The missing links in contemporary Nigerian artistic and cultural landscape are the managerial functions of planning, organizing, leading, controlling and effective leadership and coordination of the available massive cultural materials in the country.

Nigeria should respond to the wake up calls now and do something positive in the direction of re-focusing the economy into other areas of endeavours especially, the area of cultural tourism. One way of making this work is to make the creative industries people-oriented. Our education curriculum should be designed in such a way that it can promote and sustain our cultural heritage. Nigerians should develop a sense of pride in themselves and in their culture.

The private sectors too, should diversify their strategies and begin to think of investing in the country’s creative industries not just to provide a vibrant market for Nigerian cultural enterprises, but also to endorse Nigeria’s creative and cultural leadership on the African continent. There is no doubt that the art and craft market will contribute significantly to Nigeria’s quest to tap from the abundant resources from creative industries for use in addressing some of the nation’s challenges, especially in the area of wealth creation, poverty alleviation and employment-generation for our teeming youths.

Not just this, the creative industries can aid development. The Federal Government can use the outcome of these industries to boost the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It is on record that Britain, for example, gets 40 percent from the creative industry. This is possible because the government of Britain invested in the creative industry. We are sanguine of hope that if the Federal Government of Nigeria can do the same by investing in the creative industries, these sectors would definitely do much more better than the oil and gas industry.
Benefits of Repositioning the Economy

- Repositioning the Nigerian economy from oil to the creative industries will help power the branding of the Nigerian project through the activities of the performing arts, film and home video (Nollywood). This will improve and boost our economy, sustain our image and identity at home and abroad.
- Repositioning the Nigerian economy through the creative industries will lead to meaningful and sustainable financing. The creative industries will enhance and strengthen the growth of the economy as well as contribute to stem youth restiveness and criminality.
- Besides serving as driver of our national economic development, the creative industries, if developed, will also serve as catalyst for national integration.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that for Nigeria to leap from its present status in terms of economic developments, there must be a willing and determine change in the direction of the economy. The paper made references to countries of the world where the use of cultural tourism have helped to boost their economies. Israel, United States, Germany, China, Poland to mention, a few were used as case study. The paper, having examined what it takes to diversify a nation’s economy, makes a case for the Nigerian economy to be repositioned through investment in the creative industries where the resources of the performing arts, literary arts, culture and tourism can be tapped and harnessed for the nation’s economic growth, viability, reliability and sustainability. Doing this, will place the creative industries as a priority area in the nation’s foreign earnings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having x-rayed the benefits that will accrue to Nigeria as a nation if the economy is repositioned through the creative industries, the following points of interest are recommended.

i. That cultural industries should be set up in each of the 774 local government areas in Nigeria. If this is done, government would be able to reach the grassroots for cultural conscientisation and re-orientation programmes.
ii. That government should come up with sound strategies for funding and marketing of cultural tourism products in Nigeria.
iii. That the Nigerian government should include art education in the school curriculum. This, if done, will build students’ characters through arts participation and build self-confidence in them.
iv. That there should be the development of cultural tourism calendar events across the country. This will serve as a guide to both local and foreign tourists.
v. That there should be a National arts competition among secondary and tertiary students across Nigeria.

REFERENCES


