EMPOWERING FAMILY OWNED TOURISM BUSINESS IN OBUDU MOUNTAIN RESORT

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To Allah, the most beneficial, the most merciful
To Prophet Mohammed
To my beloved mother and father
And to my lovely wife (Fatima)
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ABSTRACT

Family owned tourism business development and sustainability has tremendous contribution to family life, community viability, destination development and industry competitiveness. They are nowadays arguably effective vehicles for the economic transformation and revitalization of rural communities. With their copious benefits, very little academic attention has been given to the phenomenon as a promising approach for rural communities’ empowerment in the context of developing countries. The existing approaches to rural communities’ empowerment such as Community Based Tourism (CBT), Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) and Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) are laudable initiatives but, they have limitations in terms of understanding the family system and their ability to provide wide spread empowerment for all strata of rural communities. In order to explore this contemporary phenomenon, Obudu mountain resort whose host communities still live in poverty was chosen. It is currently relatively the most organized tourist destination in Nigeria with the existence of active family owned tourism businesses. Thus, factors affecting the development and sustainability of micro and small tourism businesses were examined. Using a qualitative case study research strategy, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 38 members of 14 family owned tourism businesses and 10 management staff members of the government and private agencies. The collected data was analysed thematically. The study found inadequacy of disposable capital and extreme seasonality as the main factors affecting the development and sustainability of family owned tourism businesses in the mountain destination. While the low capital base impedes industry specific training and effective marketing, extreme seasonality impact severely on the entire business and family system as the owners depend solely on the businesses for survival. Despite the effects of seasonality, the ability of the operators to remain in business all year round, adopting varying strategies indicates that the “familiness” of family owned tourism business has the potential of reducing seasonality effects in rural areas. As a way of promoting the development and sustainability of family owned tourism business in Obudu mountain resort, for rural poverty alleviation and communities’ well-being sustainability, a multi-stakeholder framework was designed to guide the government, private organizations and the existing and prospective tourism entrepreneurs.
ABSTRAK

Pembangunan dan kemampanan perniagaan pelancongan berasaskan keluarga memberi sumbangan besar terhadap kehidupan keluarga, kedayahidupan komuniti serta pembangunan dan dayasaing sesebuah destinasi. Ia dilihat sebagai pemacu yang berkesan dalam transformasi ekonomi dan pemulihan komuniti luar bandar. Dengan manfaat yang besar, perhatian terhad diberi oleh ahli akademik terhadap fenomena tersebut melalui pendekatan memperkasa komuniti luarbandar dalam konteks negara membangun. Pendekatan sedia ada dalam memperkasa komuniti luar bandar seperti Community Based Tourism (CBT), Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) dan Community Benefit Tourism Initiatives (CBTIs) adalah inisiatif yang baik tetapi mempunyai batasan dalam memahami sistem kekeluargaan dan keupayaan untuk menggalakkan pemerkasaan secara menyeluruh semua lapisan masyarakat luar bandar. Dalam usaha untuk meneroka fenomena kontemporari ini, Obudu Mountain Resort yang mana komunitinya masih berada dalam kemiskinan telah dipilih sebagai kajian kes. Ia merupakan destinasi pelancongan tersusun di Nigeria dengan kewujudan perniagaan pelancongan keluarga yang aktif. Faktor-faktor yang membelah kesan terhadap pembangunan perniagaan pelancongan keluarga telah dikaji. Menggunakan strategi penyelidikan kajian kes kualitatif, temubual terperinci separuh struktur telah dialamkan terhadap 38 anggota daripada 14 buah perniagaan pelancongan keluarga dan 10 kakitangan pengurusan dari pihak kerajaan serta agensi swasta. Data yang diperolehi dianalisa secara tematik. Kajian mendapat kekurangan modal boleh guna dan pengaruh musim sebagai faktor utama yang memberi kesan kepada pembangunan dan daya saing perniagaan pelancongan milikan keluarga di destinasi pergunungan. Sementara itu, asas modal yang rendah telah memperlahankan latihan khusus industri dan pemasaran berkesan dan pengaruh musim memberi kesan yang negatif kepada keseluruhan perniagaan dan sistem kekeluargaan kerana pemilik bergantung sepenuhnya ke atas perniagaan tersebut untuk terus hidup. Walaupun kesannya adalah disebabkan musim, keupayaan pengusaha dalam mengekalkan perniagaan sepanjang tahun dengan menggunakan pelbagai strategi menujukkan faktor kekeluargaan boleh mengurangkan kesan bermusim di luar bandar. Sebagai langkah untuk menggalakkan pembangunan dan kemampanan perniagaan pelancongan milikan keluarga di Obudu Mountain Resort, rangkakerja bagi pelbagai pemegang berkepentingan telah direkabentuk untuk pembasmian kemiskinan luar bandar dan kesejahteraan komuniti mampun. Ia juga adalah bertujuan untuk membimbing pihak kerajaan, organisasi swasta dan usahawan pelancongan sedia ada dan berpotensi.