

Public Relations Strategies and Tourism Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Non-application of public relations strategies to manage tourism in Nigeria has resulted in the degradation of reputable tourist sites that were once popular. The main objective of the study was to examine the role of public relations strategies on the development of tourism in Nigeria. The survey research design was adopted. Multi-stage sampling technique was used and the sample size was 281. Copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents to obtain primary data. Secondary sources of information were obtained from journals, magazines, textbooks, and newspapers. Data obtained were analyzed using multiple regression models in the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Findings of the study indicate that documentaries and film shows have a significant relationship with tourism development, awards and ceremonies have a significant relationship with tourism development and also facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups have a significant relationship with tourism development. The study concluded that public relations strategies are viable techniques and lubricants that are very essential to the revitalization of the tourism industry in Nigeria. The study, therefore, recommended that government at all levels should plan and develop a tourism philosophy which will form the foundation for Nigerian tourism practice that will guide the nation on the type of tourism that is consistent with our national values, aspirations, and ideologies. Destination management organizations should improve and intensify efforts on effective and efficient use of documentaries and film shows, awards and ceremonies as well as facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups to accurately position the sector as a veritable economic catalyst that can be used to stimulate investment for economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Keywords: public relations, tourism development

1. Introduction

The tourism sector is one of the veritable economic catalysts that is used to stimulate investment for economic growth and development in both advanced and developing economies globally. Essentially, the advantages associated with tourism can create and motivate a platform for the nation's Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) to host and sponsor major national and international events that can showcase and promote Nigeria's rich cultural heritages and other valuable tourist products to both domestic and international communities. This will stimulate increase tourists traffic and patronage of attractions in the country resulting in huge revenue generation and investments as well as other supporting businesses in the economy. Most importantly, tourism can result in economic diversification and drastic reduction of the nation's dependence on oil.

Meanwhile, tourism promotes cultural exchanges and international cooperation as well as contributes significantly to economic growth of many countries. The World Travel and Tourism Commission (WTTC) report indicates that in 2014, tourism made immense direct contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of nations; \$457.9b for United States of America, \$263b for China, \$112.4b for Germany and \$1.56m for Nigeria. Contribution to employment creation; 53M for United States, 23M for China, 28.4M for Germany and 883,500 thousand for Nigeria. Research reveals that 100 million Chinese tourists spent an estimate of \$164b in 2014 (National Bureau of statistics, 2015, Punch editorial 2016).

Bhatia (2006) asserts that development of tourism involves interaction with the residents and the external world, creating a strong desire and opportunity for people to visit and appreciate cultural, natural and artificial places of wonder. Ebitu (2012), Uchechukwu (2012) emphasize that tourism development equally involves development of rich content messages, from credible sources through appropriate media selection that have a wider reach to seek patronage from outbound and inbound tourists.

Public relations strategies in this direction are catalysts that can bring favourable balance of actions in the sector. Nwodu (2007) refers to public relations strategies as the different means, approaches and methods of planning the public relations activities of the organization in order to achieve the desired objectives. Public relation strategies

are action oriented arsenals to lead and guide destination management organizations towards attainment of the desired image and results. Fill (2009), Chukwu (2016) report that public relations strategies generate high levels of trust and confidence that single out public relations as an important technique use to reduce perceived risk. Thus, destination management personnel can employ public relations strategies to assist the development, improvement and revival of tourism activities and attractions in Nigeria.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Tourism is all about public relations and public relations is one of the primary functions of tourism agencies' personnel (Bhatia, 2006). Yet there is no significant and remarkable effort to apply public relations strategies in the promotion, management and administration of tourism by relevant tourism agencies in Nigeria. This has constituted a major setback or gap that Nigeria previously known for renowned major tourism sites ranch resort and other popular sites have depleted in value. Dilapidated social infrastructure like airports and airlines, road networks among others have affected movement of tourists while reputable traditional institutions have lost value. The problem of preservation and maintenance is fundamental because notable destinations known for their peculiar characteristics and beauty like National Art Theater in Lagos and other popular historical heritage sites have been reduced to nothing while the extinction of Nigerian peculiar wildlife is vanishing rapidly. Despite the impressive impact of world tourism, the paucity of reliable data and information available on tourism assets remain a standard setback that is undoing the development of tourism in the country. Thus, the under-performance of Nigerian tourism sector cannot be unconnected with overdue negligence and particularly the inapplicability of public relations strategies to communicate intelligently to the target market on the rich tourism potentials that abound in Nigeria (Ogunnubi, 2017). It is these identified gaps that have motivated the researcher's interest in this study.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to explore the role of public relations strategies on the development of tourism in Nigeria. The specific objectives include, to;

1. Determine the role of documentaries and film shows on effective development of tourism in Nigeria.
2. Examine the role of awards and ceremonies on tourism development in Nigeria.
3. Examine the effect of facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups on tourism development in Nigeria.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study;

H₀₁: Documentaries and film shows have no significant effect on the development of tourism in Nigeria.

H₀₂: Awards and ceremonies have no significant effect on development of tourism in Nigeria.

H₀₃: Facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups have no significant effect on the development of tourism in Nigeria.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study centered on public relations strategies that are pivotal to the development of tourism in Nigeria. Hence, the study covers as much as possible public relations strategies, like documentaries and film shows, awards and ceremonies and facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups that will stimulate advancement of tourism in Nigeria. The unit of analysis is the identified tourism management organizations in Nigeria that are charged with the responsibility of tourism development.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Concept of Public Relations

There are many definitions of public relations but for the purpose of this study, definitions related to the study were adopted. First, public relations are aspect of management science that is essential to the growth and development of tourism business, other business and non business sectors of the economy. Modern public relations function as a catalyst that engineers the development of tourism as an environmental social programme. By means of definition, one of the most outstanding definitions is the Mexican statement of 1978 which refers to public relations as the art and science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organization leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organization and the public interest (Benson-Eluwa, 1999). Public relations is the systematized function that evaluates public attitudes and behaviour, harmonizes the goals, policies and procedure of an individual or organization with the public interest and executes a programme of action to earn public understanding, acceptance and supportive behaviour (Center, Jackson, Smith

& Stanberry, 2008). Public relations could be referred to as a process by which organizations establish positive relationship that leads to positive behaviour (Neliaku, 2011).

Public relations can fine tune and forge tourism relationship with distinct and relevant stakeholders who are capable to build and sustain strong socio-economic bridges that will propel tourism understanding and initiative to bring about positive changes in the standard of living of the people.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework discussed the identified variables that guide the study.

Documentaries and film shows and tourism development: This is a film, a radio or television programme that gives facts about an event or idea. It also has to do with documentation of a fact or programme for future purposes. Documentary gives records of or report on fact especially by using pictures or recordings of people or the event concerned. Film show has to do with a series of moving pictures recorded with sound that tells a story, shown on television or at the cinema or movie theater. It shows the moving pictures of real event and also serves as evidence for future purposes. Hence, tourism organizations that do not consider documentaries and film shows as important are heading to imminent failure and collapse. Therefore, documentaries and film shows are essential to the success of any tourism organization (Wood 2007). These will direct the attention of destinations management on tourists and help the organizations to determine what product(s) to supply that can satisfy the tourists. It is a mechanism that if put in proper perspective will enhance effective analysis of tourism trends, aimed at identifying the opportunities and problems.

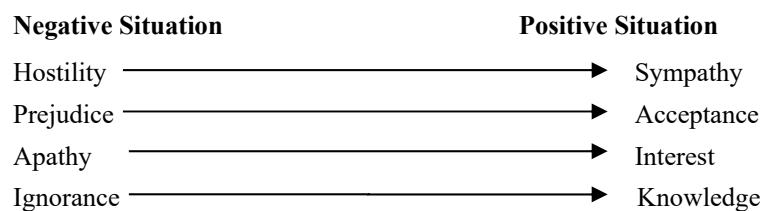
Awards and ceremonies and tourism development: Ceremonies are planned public or social occasion, often important, interesting and memorable. Ceremony can also be a public or religious occasion that includes a series of formal or traditional actions, awards, wedding or marriage. It is usually a joyous occasion and indeed, a celebration. Once in a while, somebody has to call on relations, friends, well wishers, colleagues and even the public to come together for a social function. Ceremonies are therefore important public relations package (Okoli 2007). Destination management organizations can also organize awards for something that somebody has done. Awards can therefore build a strong and good will image to the tourism organizations. The award presentation is another opportunity to sink in a public relations campaign message of the tourism organization. The essence of all these is to draw public attention on the rich cultural heritage of the tourism organization.

Facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups and tourism development: This is done to maintain contacts with professional bodies, women societies, youth clubs etc. The tourism organization can invite and sponsor relevant institutions for an excursion in order to have a firsthand look and experience about the natural places of wonder. Sponsorship of discussion groups by the destination management organization is designed to draw the attention of those involved (tourists) on the tourism products. Therefore, tourism organizations that desired to develop can achieve this by sponsoring relevant bodies like student groups, clubs, companies, religious groups etc for a facility visit. This will create a goodwill image about the tourism organization and its publics. The tourism sector needs tourists facility visit to aggressively put the information of the sacred tourism prospects right through sponsorship.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The following theories were considered relevant to the study:

Public Relations Transfer Model: This model was propounded by Jefkins (2005). The theory demonstrates and explains the catalytic function that public relations can play in converting worst negative situations to favourable situations that can benefit any system.



Public relations transfer model diagram

Source: Jefkins, F. (2005). Public relations, Harlow: McGraw Educational.

This theory explains hostility to mean the existence of problems in an organization, the nature and the reason of the problems and on the other hand sympathy is the task that is most sorted and used to overcome this problem. Prejudice may be as a result of educational, cultural, social, religious, class influences and diplomatic

misunderstanding. It is an established position that most publics of an organization hold strongly old ways of doing things. Apathy means loss of interest in issues and could be as a result of selfishness, lack of foresight, poor creativity and imagination. The truth about successful public relations information is that it must be interesting and of high value to motivate public. Ignorance is a common pitfall especially in the current dynamic and technologically advanced business world with customers taste changing continuously. The application of the hostility in the model subscribes that most western tourists are hostile and hate to visit Nigeria for various reasons. Prejudice exists in many different forms, like negative western media reportage that Nigeria is underdeveloped and primitive. Ignorance has traditionally deprived many people of the knowledge about attractive tourists products in Nigeria.

Source Credibility Theory: The theory was propounded by Hovland, Janis and Kelly (1996). The source credibility theory states that people are more likely to be persuaded when the source of a presented message is credible, reliable, reputable and widely acceptable. The high point of the theory in the study is that tourists tend to believe seasoned and reputable travel writers, editors and travel journalists including personalities from their home countries. Again, tourists believe strongly the stories written by travel writers who have visited beautiful destinations, witness fantastic festivals among other colourful events in such countries.

2.4 Empirical Review

Empirical studies available on public relations and tourism development are relatively rare. Deboski (2013) carried out a study on assessment of marketing communication as a tool of building tourism destination competitiveness. The result of the study was that word of mouth communication was a very effective form of tourism promotion. The study recommended that tourism organization should consider it necessary to nurture tourists' satisfaction as to stimulate expression of positive opinions about destinations. A desk research was conducted by Bogan (2016) on communication and promotion policy in tourism marketing. The study stated that promotion components are very important because they express a destination image at all levels but promotion mix hardly focus on creating new tourist products. The study recommended that promotion must always be combined with the quality of products offered in order to ensure the development of tourism in any tourist destination.

3. Research Methods

This study adopted the survey approach. The population of the study comprised staff of identified Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in Nigeria that are charged with the responsibility of tourism development. The researcher sought from the Tourism Department, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture, the staff strength statistics of the six zonal offices of Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC). The search revealed a population figure of 949. The Taro Yeman formula was applied to arrive at a sample size of 281.

3.1 Sampling Procedure

The study adopted multi-stage Sampling technique. Based on the population of the six zonal Offices of Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) and Federal Ministry of Information and culture, Abuja, Tourism Department (FMI & C(TD)), the proportions were calculated as follows:

S/n	Zonal offices & FMI & C (TD)	Stratified multi-stage sample	Sample size
1.	NTDC S/South	142	42
2.	NTDC S/East	161	48
3.	NTDC S/West	126	37
4.	NTDC N/West	123	36
5.	NTDC N/East	148	44
6.	NTDC N/Central	173	51
7.	FMI & C(TD)	76	23
	Total	949	281

3.2 Instrument of the Study

The instrument of this study was the questionnaire. The questions were based on the variables of the study. Copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents by the researchers and with the help of the research assistants in these zones and also waited patiently to receive the completed copies of questionnaire.

4. Results

Out of the 281 copies of questionnaire that were distributed across the six zonal offices of NTDC and FMI & C(TD), only 252 were returned and found useable. This represents 90% response rate. The following are the presentation of results and data analysis.

Table 1. Gender distribution of respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Male	140	55.6
Female	112	44.4
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 1 above shows that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 140 (55.6%) were males while 112 (44.4%) of the respondents were females.

Table 2. Age distribution of respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
20-30	66	26.2
31-40	131	52.0
41 and above	55	21.8
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2 above reveals that out of the 252 respondents surveyed, 66 or 26.2 percent of the respondents were between the age bracket of 20-30 years, 131 or 52 percent of the respondents were the range of 31-40 years while 55 or 21.8 percent were between 41 years and above.

Table 3. Marital status of respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Married	136	54.0
Single	116	46.0
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 above shows that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 136 or 54 percent were married while 116 or 46 percent were single.

Table 4. Academic qualification of respondents

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
SSCE	31	12.3
ND/NCE	78	31.0
B.SC/HND	104	41.2
M.SC/MBA and above	39	15.5
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4 above shows that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 31 or 12.3 percent of the respondents were senior secondary school certificate holders, 78 or 31 percent were National Diploma or National Certificate of Education holders, 104 or 41.2 percent had B.Sc/HND certificates while 39 or 15.5 percent of the respondents had M.Sc/MBA and above.

Table 5. Respondents responses on organization having public relations department

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Yes	59	23.4
No	193	76.6
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 5 above shows that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 59 or 23.4% percent said yes while 193 or 76.6% percent responded no.

Table 6. Respondents' responses on effect of documentaries and film shows on the development of tourism in Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	120	47.6
Agree	84	33.3
Undecided	17	6.7
Disagree	21	8.3
Strongly disagree	10	4.0
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 6 above reveals that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 120 or 47.6 percent of the respondents strongly agree that documentaries and film shows effectively affect the development of tourism in Nigeria, 84 or 33.3 percent agree, 17 or 6.7 percent were undecided, 21 or 8.3 percent disagree while 10 or 4 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that documentaries and film shows effectively affect the development of tourism in Nigeria.

Table 7. Respondents' responses on the effect of awards and ceremonies on the development of tourism in Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	106	42.1
Agree	88	34.9
Undecided	26	10.3
Disagree	23	9.1
Strongly disagree	9	3.6
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 7 shows that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 106 or 42.1 percent strongly agree that awards and ceremonies affect the development of tourism in Nigeria, 88 or 34.9 percent agree, 26 or 10.3 percent undecided, 23 or 9.1 percent disagree while 9 or 3.6 percent of the respondents strongly disagree that awards and ceremonies affect the development of tourism in Nigeria.

Table 8. Respondents' responses on the effect of facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups on the development of tourism in Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	116	46.0
Agree	85	33.7
Undecided	19	7.5
Disagree	22	8.8
Strongly disagree	10	4
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 8 above reveals that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 116 or 46.0 percent strongly agree that facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups affect the development of tourism in Nigeria, 85 or 33.7 percent agree, 19 or 7.5 percent undecided, 22 or 8.8 percent disagree while 10 or 4 percent strongly disagree that facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups affect the development of tourism in Nigeria.

Table 9. Tourism development is influenced by marketing and public relations strategies.

Options	Frequency	Percentage%
Strongly agree	99	39.3
Agree	93	36.9
Undecided	25	9.9
Disagree	16	6.3
Strongly disagree	19	7.5
Total	252	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 9 shows that out of 252 respondents surveyed, 99 or 39.3 percent strongly agree that development of tourism is influenced by marketing and public relations strategies, 93 or 36.9 percent agree, 25 or 9.9 percent were undecided, 16 or 6.3 percent disagree while 19 or 7.5 percent strongly disagree.

5. Test of Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were tested using multiple regression models in SPSS version 20. The single dependent variable (tourism development) was regressed against the three independent variables (documentaries/film shows, awards/ceremonies and facility visits/sponsorship).

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics		
	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tourism Development	3.93651	.20256
Documentaries and films	4.12301	.10628
Awards and ceremonies	4.02781	.10198
Facilities visit and sponsorship	4.09131	.11295

Table 11.

Correlations					
		Tourism Development	Documentaries and films	Awards and ceremonies	Facilities visit and sponsorship
Pearson Correlation	Tourism Development	1.000	.946	.972	.954
	Documentaries and films	.946	1.000	.961	.987
	Awards and ceremonies	.972	.961	1.000	.972
	Facility visits and sponsorship	.954	.987	.972	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Tourism Development	.	.000	.000	.000
	Documentaries and films	.000	.	.000	.000
	Awards and ceremonies	.000	.000	.	.000
	Facility visits and sponsorship	.000	.000	.000	.

N	Tourism Development	252	252	252	252
	Documentaries and films	252	252	252	252
	Awards and ceremonies	252	252	252	252
	Facility visits and sponsorship	252	252	252	252

Table 12.

Model Summary showing the relationship between the dependent and independent variables^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.973 ^a	.947	.947	.27771	1.742

a. Predictors: (Constant), Facility visits and sponsorship, Awards and ceremonies, Documentaries and films

b. Dependent Variable: Tourism Development

Table 13.

ANOVA table of the independent variables^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	343.858	3	114.619	1486.220	.000 ^b
	Residual	19.126	248	.077		
	Total	362.984	251			

a. Dependent Variable: Tourism Development

b. Predictors: (Constant), Facility visits and sponsorship, Awards and ceremonies, Documentaries and films

Table 14.

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.376	.068		-5.537	.000
	Documentaries and films	.150	.101	.138	1.497	.136
	Awards and ceremonies	.896	.068	.821	13.124	.000
	Facility visits and sponsorship	.020	.118	.019	.172	.864

a. Dependent Variable: Tourism Development

Table 15.

Residuals Statistics^a					
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	.6909	4.9580	3.9365	1.17045	252
Std. Predicted Value	-2.773	.873	.000	1.000	252
Standard Error of Predicted Value	.018	.101	.030	.018	252
Adjusted Predicted Value	.6794	4.9650	3.9368	1.17067	252
Residual	-.95803	.30908	.00000	.27604	252
Std. Residual	-3.450	1.113	.000	.994	252
Stud. Residual	-3.462	1.133	-.001	1.001	252
Deleted Residual	-.96501	.32058	-.00030	.27999	252
Stud. Deleted Residual	-3.542	1.134	-.006	1.016	252
Mahal. Distance	.101	31.964	2.988	6.221	252

Cook's Distance	.000	.122	.004	.011	252
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.127	.012	.025	252

a. Dependent Variable: Tourism Development

Source: SPSS Version 20 output of multiple regression

Interpretation: The R^2 value (0.947) shows a significant positive relationship between tourism development and public relations strategies. Also, the F value (148) and p value (0.000) which are greater than f critical value at 0.05 level of significance (6.39) and less than alpha (0.05) respectively are positive signs of relationship. However, the coefficients table shows that documentaries and film shows ($t=1.494$; $p=0.136$) is Not a significant predictor of tourism development. Also, facilities visits and sponsorship ($t=0.172$; $p= 0.864$) in Not a significant predictor of tourism development. This is because their p-values are greater than alpha (0.05) and their t-values less than table value of t. However, the table shows that awards and ceremonies ($t=13.124$; $p=0.000$) is a significant predictor of tourism development since the p-value is less than alpha and the t-value greater than t-critical.

Decision: Given the above outcomes, we therefore reject the alternate hypotheses one and three and accept their nulls, which implies that documentaries and film shows, facility visits and sponsorship do not significantly predict tourism development in Nigeria. On the other hand, the null hypothesis two is rejected while the alternate is accepted, thus, awards and ceremonies significantly predict tourism development in Nigeria.

6. Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed from the analysis of data obtained and test of hypotheses formulated in the study included that; documentaries and film shows have significant effect on tourism development in Nigeria. The implication of this finding is that documentaries and film shows are dashboard that direct the wind of development campaign of the industry in the country. This is in consonance with the findings of Nnabuko (2007), Etuk, (2003) who observed that public relations strategies and tactics define direction for organization operations in order to cope with the sophisticated and changing taste of customers in a constantly changing business environment as to attain the stated desired goals.

Data that were collected and analyzed revealed the finding that awards and ceremonies have significant effect on the development of tourism in Nigeria. The finding implies that awards and ceremonies can enhance the building and marketing of destination brand image appropriately to the target markets. This is supportive of the finding by Chukwu (2016) with the submission that public relations techniques assist in the projection and promotion of corporate brands in both domestic and international markets.

Analyses of data also revealed the finding that facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups not only promotes tourism development but as well add value to the industry at large. This is in supportive with the findings of Trojan (2005), that public relations strategies are useful in tracking brand or destination image and handling of activities at peak levels.

7. Conclusion

The study on public relations strategies on the development of tourism in Nigeria is strategic and crucial to repositioning of destinations' image, good will and reputation. Public relations strategies are viable techniques and lubricants that are very essential to the revitalization of the industry in Nigeria. This will incite new tourists and retain loyal ones. Therefore, destination management organizations must view public relations strategies as the veins and arteries that carry blood from the "heart" of tourism and supply blood fluids of communication to the entire system in a give and take mechanism based on mutual understanding to harmonize destinations and tourists' interest and close credibility gap.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study. That:

1. The governments at all levels should plan or develop a tourism philosophy that will lay the foundation of Nigeria tourism products as this will guide the nation on the type of tourism that will be consistent with our national values, aspirations and ideologies.
2. Governments at all levels and her relevant tourism agencies should involve relevant stakeholders especially public relations and marketing professionals with their skills, experience, knowledge in brand image building and contact with the destination and environment in formulation of objectives and strategies for the industry.

3. Destination management organizations should improve and intensify efforts on effective and efficient use of documentaries and film shows, awards and ceremonies as well as facility visits and sponsorship of discussion groups to accurately position the sector as a veritable economic catalyst that can be use to stimulate investment for economic growth and development in Nigeria.

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