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Tourism as a Catalyst for Hospitality Industry Development in Calabar, Nigeria

In recent times Calabar has become a tourism destination with great influence owing to its numerous tourism potentials. This paper seeks to highlight the catalytic role of tourism in hospitality industry development in Calabar with specific reference to the hotel industry as a sub-system in the hospitality industry. One hundred and twenty seven hotels were researched and seven hundred copies of questionnaires were administered to tourists in the various hotels. The results show a variation in the annual patronage of hotels in Calabar. The results also proved that tourism is one of the major vehicles for the growth of the hotel industry in Calabar.

Keywords: Catalyst, Hotel Industry, Tourism, Development, Tourism Potentials

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Introduction

Tourism is a socio-cultural phenomenon and it is a quiet revolution that has gradually swept through the world, in both developed and undeveloped nations. As an outward sign, mankind is beginning to reshape its attitude towards the conservation of the natural environment, complete with animals, plants, stonework, vines, mist, sound and even man himself, which are all active components of the earth (Fred, 2007). Globally, tourism has become an important policy tool for community and regional development in many developed and developing countries. Tourism also has significant potential to influence and change the use of natural and cultural resources in a number of regions. It provides new opportunities, employment and economic benefits to local communities and promotes the growth of the hospitality industry. Presently, many countries see tourism as a means to promote a good and relatively inexpensive strategy that can be used to attract foreign direct investment (Theobald, 2007). In this sense the rationale for tourism development has evolved towards the idea of tourism as a tool for regional and sustainable development and recently to a relatively new kind of idea of tourism as an instrument of social and economic empowerment and poverty reduction (Ayodele, 2002). According to Kim (2006), the tourism industry can not strive without the existence of auxiliary industries such as hotels, communication and commerce which provide the necessary facilities and services to ensure tourist comfort at a destination. He pointed out that hotels today have grown beyond domestic markets and are playing a key role in the development and continuity of the international tourism industry. Lucas (2006) stresses that luxury is the new standard, and hotels around the globe are feverishly elevating room stock to match the needs of the new breed of discriminating guests. Yu and Pin (1994) point out that most of the hotels in Turkey have as many as 5,005 rooms with a hotel manpower strength of about 2,000 men and women employed to ensure guests' comfort.



They went further to state that this industry also provides leisure to all categories of business tourists with quests to stay somewhere. According to them tourists, while at different grades of hotels, are offered different grades of facilities or services to ensure their comfort. Today, the establishment of hotels such as Metropolitan, Channel View, Doris 'O', Mirage among others in Calabar is no doubt an indicator of the growth of tourism (Larry, 2005). In view of this, Calabar is regarded as one of the cities in Nigeria with a high influx of tourists due to its numerous tourism attractions and other related enterprises such as hotels, which provide auxiliary services to tourists. It is however quite surprising that despite the enabling environment created by the government and the numerous tourism potentials the level of tourist influx in Calabar keeps declining. This has affected the level of patronage in the hotel industry and other existing tourism enterprises, hence leading to the rise and fall of most hotels and other tourism related outfits in the area. In this regard, it should be asked if tourism is the main catalyst for the growth of the hotel industry, what role the tourism industry plays in ensuring the sustainability of the hotel industry and the living condition of the people who solely depend on these laudable tourism potentials for sustenance. In the light of the above, a study was conducted that addresses tourism as a catalyst for hospitality (hotel) industry development with specific reference to the origin of tourists in the various hotels, annual patronage of tourists and major problems experienced by tourists in the hospitality (hotel) industry.

Study Area

The study area is Calabar metropolis which lies between latitude 50^{0} 32^{1} and 40^{0} 22^{1} North and longitude 70^{0} 50^{1} and 90^{0} 28^{1} East and is about 21, 481sqkm in size (Figure 1). It is situated within the tropics sharing a common boundary with the Republic of Cameroon in the East,



Odukpani Local Government Area in the North and Akwa Ibom in the south. The peninsular of Calabar is moderately undulating with land descending rather abruptly to Calabar River at the Western boundary while the slope is gradually towards the Kwa River to the east. The climate of the study area is of the semi-equatorial (monsoonal) type with normal heavy downpours. The rainfall regime is divided into dry and wet season. Rainy season starts in March and ends in November, while the dry season sets in in December and ends in February. Annual rainfall ranges from 2500mm to 3000mm. The variations in the intensity and reliability of rainfall coupled with high temperature throughout the year affect the influx of tourists and visitors to the area. The vegetation of the study area is typical tropical rainforest, and it is characterized by three layer canopy with emergent trees. It is a closed canopy forest and made up of layers of broad leaf evergreen tree species (60-100 species per sq km) with 3-4 layers. The canopy height of this forest is between 25-50m tall with emergent trees up to 100m high. Thick-stemmed woody climbing plants (lianas) are common as well as epiphytes and other herbs. Due to the nature of the forest, there is a reasonable presence of wild animals and birds, these animals include reptiles such as crocodiles, alligators, snakes (pythons), and iguanas, bush fowls, birds such as parrots, hawks and kites. The tree species found in this region are achy, opene, cedar etc. The area also contains some forest snacks and fruits like bush mango, bitter kola and other medicinal trees and herbs which are usually attractive and patronaged by tourists (Offiong, 2004).





Figure 1. Study Area

Tourism Potentials and Attractions in the Area

Cross River State and the city of Calabar in particular are rich of beautiful landscapes and an agreeable climate which attracts tourists to Calabar. Tourism potentials and attractions in Calabar are both natural and man-made which are highlighted and discussed below:

• Tinapa Business Resort

In an effort to continue blazing the trail in the world of tourism and leisure, the Tinapa Business Resort in Calabar, Cross River State is being developed. This is conceived to be a world class retail complex. The project when completed will provide an international standard wholesale and integrated shopping complex and product distribution elements supported by business. Tinapa is structured to meet the requirements of a new Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) Project aimed at developing world class retail and tourist attractions to serve the domestic, regional and the international market.

• Calabar Free Trade Zone

It is situated close to Calabar. The CFTZ was officially commissioned by President Olusegun Obasanjo in the year 2001. It gives rise to an increase in business activities in the port. It has also attracted many tourists to the port for either business or recreation.



• Old residency museum

The old residency Calabar building was created in the 19th century. The building remains one of the finest examples of early colonial architectural places in Nigeria. Its walls and entire top floor are made of Scandinavian red pine wood, which was considered to have strong resistance to termite attacks. It is used to preserve antiquities, artifacts and relics of historal importance dating back thousands of years. Examples of such relics are the then legal tender, items used in the slave trade and by the rulers of that age.

• Mary Slessor residence and tombstone

Mary M. Slessor arrived Nigeria in 1878, under the auspices of the united free church of Scotland now the Presbyterian Church. She resided in Akap Okoyong, Odukpani Local Government Area where she vehemently fought for the abolition of the ancient custom of killing of twin children and their mothers. She built herself a two bedroom mud house with a veranda, a store and a palour. In 1889, a missionary carpenter, Mr. Owens, was made to put up a more permanent structure while the doors and windows where made of wood. The staircase leading to the first floor had 21 steps and was supported by two pillars and wooden railings. After her death, the building was used as a guest house for other missionaries and as a primary heath care centre. Today it is restored as a tourist site. Slessor's tombstone can be found in a nearby cemetery.

• The cultural centre of Calabar

The cultural centre of Calabar is located in the heart of the city between Mary Slessor Street and Barracks Road Calabar. The building is a monument that catches the sight of tourists with admiration. The cultural centre provides accommodation, conference facilities, cultural fairs, cultural displays, theatre performances etc. and is headed by a Director



General. It attracts both local and foreigh tourists annually. It is one of the best in Nigeria.

Kwafalls

This waterfalls is located at Aningeje from which the Palm Estate was named. It is near Oban Hills in the present Akamkpa Local Government Area, Cross River State. It is surrounded by a thick forest. Within the vicinity, there is a guest house with a few staff. The distance from Calabar is about 40km. Infrastructure within the falls is not well developed. If properly developed, it could be a source of power supply.

• Agbokim Waterfalls

Agbokim waterfalls is situated in the Etung Local Government Area, about 17km from Ikom. The falls are surrounded by green tropical trees, valleys and steep hills which are all enveloped by a rainbow-like aura of colours. Agbokim waterfalls, consisting of seven streams rolling down steep walls at different points, offer a unique natural scenery. Both Agbokim and Kwafalls could be harnessed to generate hydro-electric power. Like Kwafalls, Agbokim lacks facilities for modern and international tourism.

• Cross River National Park

It has two sections; the Oban and Okwangwo divisions. The park is home to a great deal of plants and animal species such as chimpanzee, elephant, pangolin, baboon, buffallo etc. The Okwangwo division is located in the northern part of Cross River State while the Oban division is located in the southern part. The gross project area, including support zones, covers approximately, 4,424km, lying between Ikom in the North, Aningeje in the South, the Ikom highway in the West and the Cameroon border in the East. There are two surfaced roads in the park and support zones. It is 40km from Calabar to the headquarter,



which has different species of animals within the office complex for tourists to view. The park is one of the best parks in the country.

Monoliths

Of the many historical monuments in the state, the stone carvings at Alok and Nkarasi are the most oustanding. Monoliths are widely scattered over the region and are reminiscent of the ancient Nnam people who lived in the area and were noted and identified by their tattoos and marks. Of the 27 stone circles, only Alok and Nkarasi have been developed as tourist sites. The stone carvings which have survived for over two thousand years still tell the story, not only of the origin of the people and the significance of their facial tattoo marks, but also of the belief system of their time especially as these involved procreation (fertility). The phallic shape of the carvings expresses it all.

Festivals

Celebrations and dances are an integral part of native customs and traditions, and now-where else in Nigeria will one find such rich diversity. Dances vary according to local government areas, but there are similarities in rhythm, dress and purpose. These dances are part of the communal life of the people and need no special occasion for display. Popular dances include the Ekeledi, Obin Moni Nkim, Giz-Aninakwol and Ekombi. Traditional institutions like the Ekpe exist not only for entertainment, but as part of the administrative and religious framework of the various communities. Dance groups like mono-nkim, Giz-aminiakwol, Ikpatimana, abakpa and Abang are always a delight to watch. Traditional festivals are celebrated in most parts, notably Ogoja, Obubra, Ikom, Boki, Ugep etc. The new yam festival is an age old tradition with yam growing communities in Cross River State, notably the North and central Senetorial District (Yala, Ya-



kurr, Obubra, Ikom, Ogoja, Obudu, Obanliku and Boki Local Government Areas. These serve as annual celebrations of bountiful harvest, and also reinforce the traditional ties between man and nature.

Literature

The phenomenon associated with tourism is wide spread and it incorporates many fields of geography. The Macmillan family Encyclopedia (1980) explains that tourism differs from travels, as leisure differs from labour. People travel for any number of reasons, from business to war or religious trips. Tourism therefore, is travel undertaken for pleasure. It involves rest and relaxation, sports, cultural exchange, educational and aesthetic experience or eating and shopping, depending on individual taste. Copper (2006) opines that, the tourism sector plays an important role in the national economy, particularly in terms of generation of employment and foreign exchange earnings. Tourism should be viewed as an internationally traded service industry with tremendous growth opportunities for the Nigerian economy. It is a multi-dimensional economic force which involves the business of transportation by land, sea and air, communication, food, hotel, hospitality services that money can buy for the comfort and happiness of the fun seeker – such tourist activities generate a lot of money to the private sector of the host country, thereby enriching the government through the various forms of taxation (Osso, 2003). Ofulue (2001) asserted that if tourism is properly handled in Cross River State, the industry could generate as much as 5 billion US dollars per annum and also sustain the economy of Cross River State. The state is blessed with great tourism potentials which, if fully exploited, could go a long way to solving the problem of unemployment while promoting peace and cross-cultural understanding. According to Aniah (2005) in his analyses of the importance of tourism, tourism in any giv-



en destination when properly tapped and utilized can transform the entire area and even create job opportunities and income. He went further to stress that the laudable tourism potential in Cross River State in general and Calabar in particular when harnessed and tapped can transform most of the enclave communities were these sites are located into commercial centres which are capable of generating growth. Accordingly, these potentials also have the capacity when tapped to diversify the local economy of the local people whose livelihood depends on these great potentials. In his contribution, Shurmann (2001) said the most common argument in favour of promoting tourism is the anticipated foreign exchange profits especially where a country lacks an efficient export oriented agricultural sector of any significance. Robinson (2006) noted the economic significance of tourism, dividing these into the direct effect relating to the income accruing from the actual expenditure involved in tourism and the direct effects which arise from the fact that trades directly involved also depend on the products of other industries in meeting the demands of tourists. Pearce (2007) states that, "tourism is essentially about people and places, the places one group of people leave, visit and pass through, the other group who make their trip possible and those they encounter along the way". These groups of people need some essential amenities such as the hotel industry which provides facilities and services such as accommodation, communication, laundry, meals, etc. in other to prolong their stay at the destination visited. Today, the development of the hotel industry has been rapid and wide spread in the last half century due to the increased number of travelers and tourists. This industry is making heavy investments in new facilities for already existing hotels, including more parking areas, swimming pools, and new buildings with larger guest rooms being constructed to accommodate tourists (Gray and Liquor, 2004). The World Tourism Organization WTO (1998) estimates that the world hotel room inventory grows by about 2.5 percent per annum. In 1999, the WTO (1998)



estimated that there were about 12.2 million rooms worldwide. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO) occupancy rates vary, but they average about 65 percent overall. Such places as London, Beijing, New York, San Francisco, Hawaii, the Caribbean area, and the city of Las Vegas are noted for higher occupancy rates. In United State between 1986 and 1992 the hotel industry lost about \$14 billion as a result of over-building caused by tax laws that encouraged construction as a tax shelter. The law was changed in 1986, ending the tax shelter, but construction could not be ended in midstream (Angelo 2003).

According to Gel (2005), Statler Hotel in Buffalo, N. Y. (1908), was another landmark that catered to the growth class of business travelers. He went further to state that the growth of suburban centers and the increase of travel by automobile made most transient hotels to become popular. Accordingly, he affirmed that in 1990s, the "extended stay hotel" was developed to accommodate guests who needed to rest for at least five nights and also for business travelers who preferred more apartment like accommodation for longer stays. According to John (2003) hotels offer satisfaction to guests and tourists through the provision of high quality amenities such as television, flat-panel plasma, displays and DVD players. Evans (2000) states that hotels play a major role in assessing the activities and behaviours of a tourist towards his spending attitude. Uysal (2007) stresses that hotels play a vital role to different segments of people such as the commercial travelers, tourists and vocational travelers, groups and convention attendees and the government officials. Yuksel (2003) in analyzing the role of hotels in tourism development, opines that the hotel industry has contributed substantially to resort development and location. According to him hotels provide the most common type of accommodation used by leisure and business tourists particularly those traveling internationally.



Methodology

The research focused on tourism as a catalyst for hospitality industry development in Calabar, Cross River State. The study is limited to the hotel industry which provides certain facilities and services to tourists during their stay in Calabar. The locale consists of two local government areas, namely Calabar South and Calabar Municipality. One hundred and twenty seven hotels were sampled in these two local government areas using a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using interviews and questionnaires. Three hundred and forty (340) copies of questionnaires were administered to fifty four (54) hotels in the Calabar South local government area while three hundred and sixty (360) copies of questionnaires were administered to seventy three (73) hotels in Calabar Municipality using a random sampling technique. The respondents used in the interviews and for administration of questionnaires included the hotel operators and staff. Questions asked included the major attractions in the area, setback in the hotel industry, origin of different tourists, among others. The catagorization of the hotels was done on the bases of available facilities and services in each of the hotels and hotels were assigned to groups ranging from "No star" to "Five star" hotels.

Research findings

Origin of tourists and number of arrivals

Table 1 shows that tourists come from various parts of the world such as Cuba, South Africa, India, U.S.A among others. It was observed that one hundred and thirty three (133) came from Cuba and lodged in the hotel industry between 2007 to 2009 which shows a high value compared to tourists from other parts of the world that lodged in the hotel industry in Calabar. The tourism sector in all locations has a close relationship with the labour market, and society



and consequently depends on its workforce for the delivery of service and product, standards to meet existing and anticipated demand. According to Osso (2003) such locations usually have socio-cultural affiliation as a case of Calabar, Cuba and India dominate the entire region and recording a population of 75% during Christmas carnival. It was also observed in Table 1 that tourists from Germany represent a small proportion of tourists staying in the hotel industry with a total number of five (5) tourists between 2007 to 2009. Furthermore, Table 1 recorded a high number of tourists in the hotel industry with a total number of three hundred and seventy eight tourists in 2007 as compared to other years under investigation.

Table 1: Origin of international tourists and arrivals in Calabar (2007-2009)

S/N	Tourists origin	No. of Tourists Arrivals (2007)	No of Tourists Arrivals (2008)	No. of Tour- ists Arrivals (2009)	Total
1	Cuba	59	55	19	133
2	South Africa	31	21	7	59
3	Brazil	38	35	0	73
4	Cameroon	50	46	7	103
5	Ghana	40	31	8	79
6	India	55	34	17	106
7	China	35	25	23	83
8	U.S.A	27	19	9	55
9	Kenya	12	7	0	19
10	Canada	12	9	0	21
11	Irish	8	0	0	8
12	Germany	0	0	5	5
13	Togo	11	0	5	16
	Total	378	282	100	760

Source: Field Survey (2009)

Annual patronage of tourists in the hotel industry (1999-2008)

It was noticed in Table 2 that "One star" hotels had a high number of patronage between 1999 to 2008 as compared to other categories of hotels in the area. While "No star" hotels re-



corded the least patronage with a value of seven thousand one hundred and three (7103) tourists. This confirms that less than 50% of tourists have access to "No and "Three star" hotels during off peak periods which is usually characterised with the absence of events (Okon,2006). However, Table 2 shows that 2005 recorded the highest tourist influx in the hotel industry as it recorded a total of 22,223 tourists compard to other years under investigation. The results of an ANOVA analysis show that the annual patronage of various categories of hotels varies significantly from one another in Calabar (Table 3).

Table 2: Annual patronage of the various categories of hotels in Calabar

		Level of both international and domestic patronage in the various categories of hotels										
S/N	Hotel	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
1	One star	1905	2108	1101	613	1202	3201	4671	2965	3011	3577	24354
2	Two star	2127	3256	1214	1121	2210	5321	5621	4713	2290	3803	31676
3	Three star	1202	1850	2205	1351	1801	2956	6951	4841	2895	3945	29997
4	Four star	1141	1745	1806	1061	1300	2841	3091	3712	1805	2851	21353
5	Five star	1004	1006	306	526	365	1000	969	2131	995	1630	9932
6	No star	301	955	260	285	110	665	920	895	311	2401	7103
	Total	7180	10920	6892	4957	6988	15984	22223	19257	11307	18227	124435

Source: Field Survey (2009)

Table 3: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the annual patronage of various categories of hotels in Calabar

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F-value
Between group	33218211	5	6643642.11	
Within group	2060000000	54	3820023.72	1.74
Total	2390000000	59		
10141	237000000	37		

Source: Field Survey (2009)



Tourist problems in the hotel industry.

Figure 2 shows that problems experienced by tourists in the hotel industry ranged from poor attitude of staff, lack of efficient facilities, unskilled staff among others. Figure 2 revealed that unskilled staff and poor attitude were the major problems of tourists in the hotel industry with values of 44% and 18.86% respectively. However, low patronage, poor service delivery and inadequate manpower were the least problems of tourists in the hotel industry with values of 5.29%, 5.71% and 4% respectively. The poor attitude of hotel staff and poor service delivery in the hotel industry in most developing countries discourage fun seekers and tourists to stay longer periods in the place of visit (Raymond, 2004). This situation is not left out as Osso (2003) pointed out in his emperical study on the patronage of Eko hotel in Lagos state, suggesting that if the hotel industry and tourism want to strive in Nigeria, the industry must train its manpower and provide necessary facilities and services to ensure tourist comfort.

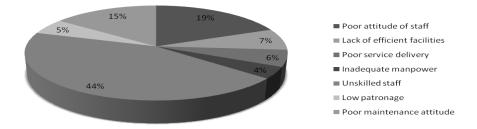


Figure 2. Problems experienced by tourists

Hotel categorization and Ownership in Calabar

Table 4 shows the different categories and ownership of hotels in Calabar. It was observed that out of 127 hotels used for this research, 97 were owned by Nigerians, 19 by locals and only 11 hotels were owned by foreigners. The efficiency of the hotel industry according to Okunbawa



(2004) is characterized by destination image which he terms to be a function of peace, attitude of the residents, political stability and market orientation. The uncertainty in these attributes in any given destination might pose a great threat for foreign investors to invest their resources in this laudable industry. Table 4 indicates that the locals were also involved in the establishment of "no star" and "one star" hotels as both had values of 7.87% and 3.14%. This result shows that the locals were building low standard hotels which were not attractive to tourists. It was noticed that the major category of hotels such as "two", "three" and "four star" hotels in Calabar were built by Nigerians who are either residents in Nigeria or are outside the country as these groups of hotels had values 18.11%, 22.83% and 14.17%. This is also reflected in the total percentage of hotel ownership among the three groups of investors, Nigerian investors had a value of 76.06% compared to other investors with values 14.94% and 31.67% respectively. However, this result shows that foreign investors were not highly involved in the hotel industry development despite that Cross River State in general and Calabar in particular are regarded an international tourism destination. This situation was reflected in the empericial work of (Okunbawa, 2003) in hotel development within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria which according to him is also characterized by low foreign investors.

Table 4: Hotel categorization and ownership in Calabar

Categorization	No. of Lo-	%	No. of Ni-	%	No. of for-	%
	cal inves-		gerian in-		eign inves-	
	tors		vestor		tors	
No star	10	7.87	9	7.08	0	0
One star	4	3.14	11	8.66	3	25.36
Two star	3	2.36	33	18.11	1	0.80
Three star	2	1.57	29	22.83	4	3.14
Four star	0	0	18	14.17	2	1.57
Five star	0	0	7	5.21	1	0.80
Grand total: 127	19	14.94	97	76.06	11	31.67

RTR Review of Tourism Research

Source: Field Survey (2009)

Recommendations

Having gathered and analyzed data representing issues which reflect the various objec-

tives of study and other research findings, it has become necessary to provide solutions that can

bring about the amelioration of the problems in the study area. It is the belief of this study that if

the issues addressed in the recommendations are given due consideration and implementation,

then positive development can result within the tourism and hotel industry. Therefore, the fol-

lowing recommendations are put forward:

1. The Cross River State Tourism bureau should organize a programme of activities that

will make Cross River State a tourist destination all year round. This however, will help

sustain the hotel industry with respect to tourist influx.

2. The Cross River State Tourism Bureau should advice the Nigeria Tourism Development

Corporation to ensure proportionality in charges for goods and services in accordance

with the standard of hotel.

3. Hotel workers in the state require update in modern hospitality services to handle the in-

flux of tourists in the state. Hotel operators should consider education and training of

their workforce. They could take the opportunity provided by the Nigeria Institute of Ho-

tel and Tour (NIHOTOUR) which has plans for training all categories of hospitality

manpower required. Alternatively they can go for new, qualified competent personnel in

the labour market.

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- 4. The Cross River State Tourism Bureau should advice hoteliers to reduce hotel charges during off season periods. This would act as an incentive and encourage tourists to visit Calabar during off peak season especially during weekends.
- 5. The Cross River State Tourism Bureau and the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) should organize quarterly inspections of all the tourist attractions and hotel establishment in the state. This will help maintain the hygiene and create a conducive environment for tourists and other visitors.

Conclusion

In recent times the hotel industry has strived, especially in countries with great tourism potentials. These countries with great tourism potentials have been challenged to implement realistic approaches for the effective utilization of their tourism potentials, particularly where the potentials served as a source of revenue generation and source of livelihood for the rural communities. Today, the laudable tourism potentials and the agreeable climate condition in Calabar have yielded great dividend to the state government, operators of the hotel industry and other auxillary tourism enterprises in Calabar. However, this dividend occurred only in the short-term due to lack of tourism related activities all year round. In recognition of this fact, the hotel industry in Calabar suffered from seasonality in terms of patronage and revenue generation. This affects employment as most hotel workers are usually laid off during off peak periods. As long as these issues persist and are not addressed, the tourism and hotel industries will struggle. This situation calls for collective effort towards the development of the hotel industry so that tourism can strive.



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