

# Quality Learning At Tourist Destinations: The Nexus of Tourism and Adult Education

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## Abstract

Amongst the major threats to the preservation and sustenance of tourist destinations is attitude of tourists to these destinations. This has functioned from ignorance and poor orientation programmes; resulting to intolerance and conflicts amongst tourists and their hosts. No thanks to the varying behavioural backgrounds and desire to explore. This paper worked on the integration of adult education in tourism; using adult education to ameliorate rate of ignorance and intolerance at tourist destinations towards bridging the gap between tourists and tourist destinations through quality learning and orientation programmes. Various tools and techniques in adult education were employed. Also the paper functioned as a catalyst for interdisciplinary trend in the field of academics towards ensuring quality, progressive and diversified knowledge. The paper revealed the essence of adult education to tourism development.

**Keywords:** tourism, adult education, tourist destination, tourist.

## 1. Introduction

A clear understanding of tourism which has suffered abuse in the recent past would be necessary and in this argument of the multi-disciplinary with respect to adult education. Some past studies have argued on having a unique definition of tourism due to the ever changing nature of the concept. For instance, "...there is no specific definition that is generally accepted to the tourism activity, system and industry..." (Fadipe, 2007:30). Also Nwankwo (2007) noted that tourism can be defined from varying dimensions but with a convergence at a given point. With a view of having a unique definition of tourism, Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhil (2005) asserted that any complete definition of tourism should consider length of stay, purpose and distance. Page and Connel (2006) noted that a good definition of tourism should consider the nature, scope, impact and the overall involvement of tourism at the global scale, so as to give the concept a holistic understanding. For the purpose of this study, tourism can be seen as traveling away from home to spend not less than a night and not more than one year; devoid of engagement in any economic remuneration at the place visited, instead the money traveled with are spent at the tourist destination destruction. This definition has given a clear cut distinction between a tourist, excursionist or a visitor to a place.

However, "an adult is a person who is physically and psychologically mature... socially, economically and politically responsible" (Nzeneri, 2005:1). That is to say that adulthood does not only depict age and maturity but also mind, socio-economic and leadership responsibilities. Adulthood can also be seen as being responsible for implications culminating from decisions and actions. Education on the other hand is "...defined to embrace all experiences through which an individual acquire knowledge or ideas, develops his intellect and strengthens his will" (Okafor, 1987; in Nzeneri, 2005:5). Adult education can also be seen as "...any education given to adults based on their social, political, cultural, and economic needs or problems to enable them adjust fully to challenges in their lives and society" (Nzeneri, 2005:10).

This has shown much clue towards the inseparable nature of adult education and tourism. Among many other theories in tourism, behaviour theory is much concerned with the ethics and behavioural conducts in tourist destinations. The theory further suggests adequate information towards ensuring quality ethical standard and

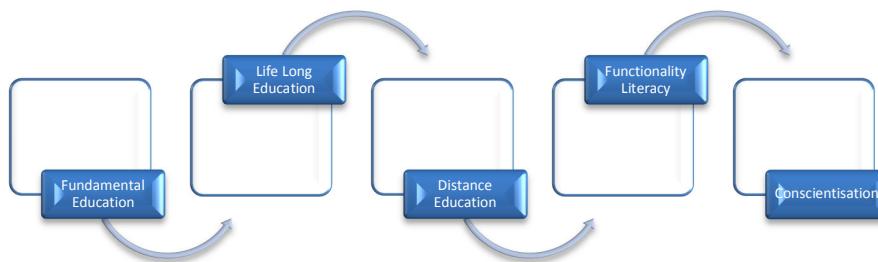
behavioural conducts in tourist destinations. This is because “it was argued that human beings possess the will to react in an environmental friendly manner if appropriate environmental information and know-how are available” (Miller and Flugel, 1999:53; in Igbo and Okpoko, 2006:28). To this regard responsive behavioural pattern and quality ethical conduct are among the major considerations towards ensuring sustainable tourism development through quality control and preservation of tourist destinations. Greater percentage of tourists is among the adulthood classification due to the demanding nature of tourism motivation. To this regard, adult education and tourism are inter-disciplinarily intermingled through quality orientation by creative and articulate learning on tourist attractions and tourist destinations. The study also x-rays various ways through which adequate learning and orientation can aid sustainable tourism development.

**Table One: A Tabular representation of Complementality design of Adult Education and Tourism at Tourist Destinations.**

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Complimentality design</i>	<i>Areas of concentration and implications for tourist learning</i>
1	<i>Scope of Adult Education</i>	<i>Lifelong education, fundamental education, functionality education, distance education, conscientisation, etc</i>
2	<i>Theoretical perspectives</i>	<i>The mechanistic theory, the gestaltists theory of learning, the third-force theory, etc</i>
3	<i>Developing learning format</i>	<i>Resources, facilitator or tour guide, selection content, method, time schedule, sequence, social reinforcement, roles and relationship with others, clarity and design, venue, etc.</i>
4	<i>Principles of teaching</i>	<i>Know the learner, provision of conducive environment, learners experience, provision of variety of techniques, resourcefulness, participatory learning, etc.</i>
5	<i>Possible impediments</i>	<i>Decline in mental ability, physiological changes, negative beliefs, lack of concentration, etc.</i>

## **2. Effective Control at Tourist Destinations using Scope of Adult Education.**

Prosser (1967) noted that adult education is aimed at helping adults through effective information and learning. However the application of scope of adult education on tourist education can be seen as thus: **Life Long Education**- This entails that information and leaning should be a life long process towards ensuring an effective application of behavioural theories in tourist destinations. Bown *et al* noted “that education is from cradle to grave” (Bown and Tamori, 1979; in Ugwoegbu, 2003:40). This scope entails continuing in tourist education for a sustainable tourist management.



**Fig. 1: Scope of Adult Education as instruments for quality learning at tourist destinations.**

**Fundamental Education-** “This type of education concerns itself with the teachings of those fundamental techniques of modern living” (Ugwoegbu, 2003:43). It is passing across basic information to tourists towards ensuring safety at tourist destinations. Such basic knowledge would go a long way in improving the level of orientation at tourists’ disposal on a given tourist attraction or tourist destination. **Liberal Education-** This is the acquisition of extra knowledge towards improving the quality of ones mind. In must cases, it is more helpful to literate tourists who must have acquired one or more educational certificates from different fields of learning. This tends to improve more understanding and cordial relationship between tourists and tourist destinations. Hence “Liberal education has come to mean the type of education which strikes a balance of harmony between man and his environment. Its major idea is that man should be developed fully to live in harmony with his environment...” (Anyanwu, 1987; in Ugwoegbu, 2003:49). Such education will improve the safety of tourists and security of tourist attractions in tourist destinations. **Functionality Literacy-** This is mainly associated with illiterate tourists in many developing nations and forms part of development in such nations as noted by UNESCO. It is a comprehensive literacy programme that is aimed at improving the totality of relationship between man and his environment. It was “observed that functionality literacy is sometimes referred to as work-oriented, career-orientated or occupation-oriented literacy, it is sometimes also termed economic-oriented literacy” (Oyedeki *et al*, 1985; in Ugwoegbu, 2003:45). This programme is designed to improve literacy level of illiterates towards a sustainable tourist destination planning and development. **Distance Education-** This entails “covering the various forms of study at all levels, which are not under the continuous immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture room or on the same premises, but which nevertheless benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of tutorial organization” (Holemborg, 1974; in Ugwoegbu, 2003:55). The essence of this in tourism is to provide necessary information on a particular tourist destination to potential tourists while in their places of residence so as to reduce information gap prior to their actual visit to the said destination. This could be done through magazines, documentaries, internet, pamphlets, etc. **Conscientization-** Conscientization is “the process by which man, not as a recipient but as a knowing subject reaches a deeper awareness both of the socio-cultural reality on which his life is built and of his ability to transform that reality” (Fiere, 1970; in Ugwoegbu, 2003:59). Towards a sustainable tourist development, Agbonlahor and Uklurebor (2006) noted that the carrying capacity of the tourist destination and other tourist attractions should be managed through adequate preservation. This can be achieved through quality conscientization of tourists on these variables via provision of prior knowledge.

### 3. Theoretical Perspectives: The Integration

In this aspect of the study, we are going to consider the understanding and application of basic adult education theories in tourism studies. **The Mechanistic theory-** This is a family of theories (Thondike’s connectionism, Watson’s conditioning with reinforcement, etc) that are of the view that a given variable will be more understandable when broken or split into parts. These theorists maintained that parts understanding ensure greater efficiency in understanding and at the same time reducing rate of puzzling when studying the entire hole. For

instance, the word 'head' can first be understood by the alphabets before being put together to form the whole 'head' (Nzeneri,2005). Considering the facts that we maintained earlier that the nexus of adult education and tourism is learning/enlightenment which is aimed at making a complete man, preserving tourist attractions and protecting tourist destinations, application of mechanistic theory in tourism is covering the area of understanding of tourist destinations by tourist through effective learning and orientation. However, it entails studying various make-ups of a given tourist destination i.e. attractions, carrying capacity, problems traditional values, mapping, transportation, hospitality sector, etc, of a given tourist destination. **The Gestaltists theory of learning-** the word 'gestalt' is of German which means 'from' or 'meaningfulness of the whole'. The major concentration of the theory which is in contrary to the mechanistic theory is that leaning should start from the whole to the parts. Major advocates of this theory include John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Wertheimer, Tolman, Bruner, Gordon Alport, Morris Bigge, etc (Nzeneri, 2005). These theorists held the view that effective learning for effective understanding should start from the whole to the parts unlike the mechanistic theorists who held the view that learning should start from the parts to the whole. The application of this theory to tourist studies entails studying a whole variable prior to making decisions. For instance, learning about a given tourist destination before its component parts i.e. various sectors in the tourist destination, aids motivation to the destination. In this case, knowledge about the whole motivates and arouses knowledge about the parts. Tourist would not like to visit risk prone areas (Nwankwo, 2011). It is only when a given tourist destination has minimal risk factor that future understanding on the various sectors of the destination could be studied afterwards. **The Third-Force Psychology-** this is another learning theory as proposed by J. S. Bruner. His interest was on effective learning and individual. He advocated that intrinsic motives are more effective in learning than the extrinsic motives (environmental factors). This is because the carnality of extrinsic motives can hamper their durability. Bruner further stated that an individual can learn either through enactive (learning through actions), iconic (learning through vision) or symbolic (learning through representation) (Nzeneri, 2005). The application of this theory to tourism entails working on the psych and mentality of potential tourists to have an intrinsic motivation in making various tourism choices and demands. The implication is that when a tourist is intrinsically motivated, the force of his choice in tourism patronage could be decisive.

#### **4. Developing Learning Format for Quality Tourist learning in Tourist Destinations**

Various factors have been identified as being expedient if effective and result-oriented teaching orientation is to be ensured. This is because among the essence of teaching is the understanding and practicing of what was taught and not restricted to the mere practice of teaching and learning. To this regard, the following factors or learning formats have been identified as necessary for adequate orientation and education of tourists concerning a given tourist destination; **Resources-** Ugwoegbu (2003) asserted that these include all factors that are needed towards achieving effectiveness of learning objectives. These are needed for the smooth flow of the orientation programme. Learning resources include; books, resource persons or tourist education officers, projectors, venues, and any other material that is expected to aid the orientation programme to a greater extent. **Leader or tour guide-** these are trained personalities who are meant to lead the orientation process in tourist destinations or through any other means by which tourist can be given appropriate orientation on a tourist destination, its attractions and tourists' activities. **Selection Content-** Ugwoegbu (2003) noted that "all educational programmes are known to involve content. The content may include the inculcation of different values to the recipients. These values may include areas covering awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills and participation" (Ugwoegbu, 2003:120). Awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills and participation are various factors that could be benefited during the learning programme. Prior selection of these factors aids and directs the movement of the learning process. **Method-** having selected the content, what are the methods to be used towards achieving the main objectives of the orientation programme? Relevant and result-oriented methods should be adopted i.e. use of projectors, safari trips, pamphlets as tour guides, class room orientation, interactive communication, etc. A good method should be convenient to the target tourists or learners and facilitate the learning programme. **Time Schedule-** "Time schedule refers to the time table that will be used in a learning programme. Time table can be categorized as being simple, complex, rigid or flexible" (Ugwoegbu, 2003: 124). The next is scheduling the time for the orientation programme that should be convenient to target tourists. To ensure effective and more convenient time scheduling for tourists, necessary factors like sex, age, religion, revenue,

culture, distance occupation, and socio-economic implications of tourists should be well considered. This is because the above listed factors can limit the total objectives and expectations of the orientation programme if not adequately and carefully considered by the leader or tour guide/tourism promoter. **Sequence-** This is the step-by-step process of the orientation programme. That is programme programming. It is the responsibility of the tour guide or the tourism promoter who is the leader of the enlightenment/orientation programme to determine and select the sequencing of the programme in order of understanding and importance towards achieving an effective learning process. If the programme is not properly sequenced, it may result to disorder, confusion, omission of vitalities, lost of interest, neglect and abuse of the entire learning process. **Social Reinforcement-** this is deciding a more conducive medium for the learning orientation programme that will be very convenient to tourists towards ensuring an effective participation. This is pertinent because choosing a less convenient environment for the orientation programme will not only discourage potential learners/tourists but also limit the expectations of the programme. These could be safari vehicles, halls, fields or internets for distant tourists. **The Individual Learner-** “Every educational; programme is centered on the learner. Besides, the success of a programme can be determined through the impact the programme has on the behaviour of the learner” (Ugwoegbu, 2003: 129). It is imperative that every tourism enlightenment programme should be centered or focused on the target category and class of tourists the programme is designed for. This is because “adult education programmes are usually made up of heterogeneous group of people. This can be noticed from their age, sex, family background, health, socio-economic and political background. **Roles and Relationship with others-** A good role definition facilitates quality relationship in a system, hence clashes of all sorts would be drastically reduced or possibly eliminated. Same is applicable in learning situation where quality role definition is paramount for the success of the learning process. During tourists’ enlightenment programmes, good role definitions between tour guides, facilitators or resource persons and tourists, would facilitate good relationship among variables in the learning process. **Clarity and Design-** “In adult education, the adults are expected to participate in all aspects of the programme. As a result, it is very necessary that they should understand very closely the objectives and the format of the learning programme” (Ugwoegbu, 2003:130). This is necessary considering the maturity level of tourists and their level of commitments. The objectives and format of the programme should be clearly stated at the beginning and followed tenaciously through the end of the programme. Any possible amendment should be adequately communicated to encourage quality reasoning and understanding. **Venue-** this has to do with the meeting point between the facilitator and learner. It is a definite environment for the programme. In tourism, the environment may be a physical one i.e. halls, safari vehicles, offices, etc, or a distant environment i.e. internets, pamphlets, magazines, tourist guides, etc. The learning environment should be well considered by the tourism promoter to suit both the managed and anticipated category of tourists. The overall success of the programme is equally dependent on this factor since a wrong choice by the facilitator will make a caricature of the entire system and open doors for failures.

##### **5. Principles of Teaching as Qualities of a Tourist Guide: Towards Effective Learning at Tourist Destinations.**

Tourists’ education has been discovered as among the paramount factors in tourist destinations towards entertaining the interest of visited tourists. In most tourist destinations, tourist education can be held either at the tourist site, transit to tourist sites or at a designated venue. The essence is to familiarize various tourist attractions in the destination and socio-cultural aspects of the people with the potential tourists. During this enlightenment programmes, trained tour guides and education officers are saddled with the responsibility of impacting this knowledge in tourists to the tourist destination. In this aspect, the study will consider various principles that should be upheld by a good tour guide or education officer towards ensuring maximum use of education programme in tourist destinations. To this regard, Nzeneri (2005) listed various principles of teaching in adult education which are equally applicable in tourist destinations, as follows; **Know the learner-** the trainer must know the learner; his social, political, cultural, educational, economic and religious background. Such understanding will motivate or influence the nature of the technique or strategy to adopt towards effective learning. **Provide conducive environment-** Nzeneri (2005:94) asserted that “favourable teaching and learning environment energizes and motivates interest of the

learners; the contrary is the case with unfavourable environment which causes learners to drop out of the system because of frustration". The tour guide or the tourist education facilitator should ensure that environment suitable for a particular learning activity is carefully selected so as to enhance understanding and cooperation from tourists in a given tourist destination. **Learners experience-** The understanding level in any educational programme is greatly enhanced when moving from the known to the unknown or using examples from learners experience to make explicit some basic facts. Coming from learners experience does not only arouse his interest but also motivates and propels him to the unknown. **Provide variety of Techniques-** "...providing various techniques promotes effective teaching and learning. Adult learners differ in many respects and hence application of variety of methods and techniques will appeal to their various senses and thus enable them learn more..." (Nzeneri, 2005:95). The essence of tourist education in tourist destinations is to intimate the tourists with the underpinning facts concerning the destination and its attractions. This aim will be better achieved when the facilitator or the tour guide has the ability to adopt variety of techniques so as to sustain interests of tourists during the education activities in tourist destinations. **Resourcefulness-** To enhance learning during education activities at tourist destinations and considering the fact that in most cases tourists to tourist destinations are mostly adults, there is need for the tour guide or facilitator to be resourceful by way of providing learning resources (both material and non-material) to tourists. Such will aid in relaxing the interest and minds of tourists to these learning activities. Nzeneri (2005:95) observed that "there is need here to provide the adult learner with memory aids like instructional materials- books, posters, pictorials, diagrams, audio and visual aids, etc". **Participatory learning-** this is ensuring full participation of the learner to the learning activities. Hence participation is said to be the key to the effective teaching and learning (Nzeneri, 2005). The tourist education facilitator or the tour guide should ensure the participation of tourists to the learning activities in tourist destinations to improve their learning capacity, and also motivate orderliness and quality cooperation.

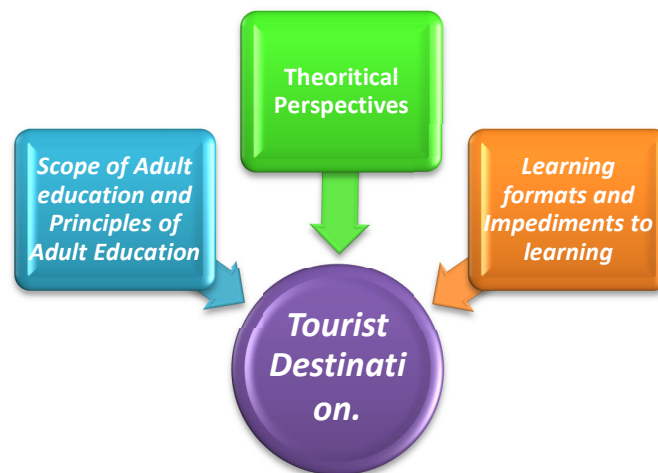
#### **6. Possible Impediments to Tourists' Learning at Tourist Destinations.**

Some factors may hinder effective learning during education activities involving tourist and resource persons mostly at tourist destinations. An awareness and consideration of these possible factors by tour guides or facilitators will go a long way in arresting such precarious situations at their insurgence towards effective learning. Some of these factors as noted by Ugwoegbu (2003) include; **Decline in mental ability-** as noted earlier most tourists who visit tourist destinations are adults, and their mental abilities cannot be measurable to that of youths who are still at their teens. Due to age, their mental ability witnesses much decline in learning and understanding speed. The mental ability is much reduced coupled with loss of learning speed. The knowledge of this factor will enable the tour guide in planning a systematic learning for these ones and involve the use of repetitions and greater emphasis during enlightenment programmes. **Physiological changes-** this is another difficult aspect that hinders effective learning in the adult learning process. This includes difficulties arising from deficiencies in sight, walking, and hearing. Hence this problem is inevitable; it is the responsibility of tour guides or tourism facilitators to give it maximum concentration so as to maintain effective learning. This can be done by the use of relevant teaching techniques or methods that will carry them along and sustain their interest throughout the learning period. **Negative beliefs-** this is the instinct or intrinsic demoralization of an adult learner. Many adults have failed in their capacity to control their difficulty in learning which is mostly caused by their belief of their being old, have less to offer to the society and being very close to their grave yards. This factor sometimes makes an adult learner to behave lackadaisical during learning with less emphasis to the benefit of education. To this regard, the tour guide or the tourism facilitator should not relent in motivating them and improving their self confidence during the learning programme. When their self-confidence is restored and improved they will start seeing their relevance to the society. Another negative belief is the fear of failure which mostly occurs when they are learning together with their children or other younger ones. **Lack of concentration-** the concentration level of an adult learner cannot be the same with that of younger youths during learning programmes. This is caused by various factors ranging from physiological changes, socio-cultural aspects, economic aspects, political considerations, religious aspects and other responsibilities they are entangled with. These compound their woes during learning programme with less concentration.



### Conclusion.

Tourism has proven its interdisciplinary nature, cutting across various facets of human fields of study, adult education inclusive. This is because the position of tourism to socio-economic development of an area can never be undermined (Eze-Uzomaka, 2006; Okpoko and Okonkwo, 2006; Okpoko, 2006). This has made tourism to find relevance in many fields of learning. The research focused on tourism and its correlation with adult education. In this case, the interest is on learning activities that bring together tourists and tour guides or tourist facilitators through both distant and closed learning at tourist destinations. Hence “these clients can therefore identify themselves as adult learners for they have been to schools” (Townsend, 1978; in Nzeneri, 2005:8) and therefore demand a specialized orientation programmes while as tourists in tourist destinations or prospective tourists from various nook and cranny of the globe. To this regard, this paper also discussed the effective orientation and tourists’ education in tourist destinations. This was considered pertinent because tourists are often enlightened by tour guides or tourists’ facilitators at tourist destinations. To this end, the study proffered the use of the scope of adult education in effective control of tourists at tourist destinations and developed various learning formats for quality tourist behaviour in destinations.



**Fig Two: Adult Education functioning as tool for sustainable tourism growth for better economic impact at tourism generating regions.**

The study also emphasized various qualities of a tour guide in tourist destinations towards ensuring an effective learning by tourists at their various tourist destinations. For effective studies at tourist destinations, various flanking theories in the field of adult education were made to aid symbioticism of both disciplines under study. The study finally established that the major nexus of the field of adult education and tourism boils down to learning activities involving tourists and their various tour guides or facilitators. This has made the two disciplines find relevance amongst them and also contribute to the growth and sustenance of another. Learning is very essential in tourist destinations for visiting tourists and considering the fact that most tourists are categorized as adults. Adult education as a discipline has provided solution towards an effective learning between tourists and their tour guides or tourist facilitators at various tourist destinations.

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