

Users Satisfaction and Management Practices of Tourism Destinations in Ondo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

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Tourism comprises of activities of persons traveling for the purpose of visiting or staying in places outside their usual abode for recreation, leisure and other services. The study identified and analyzed spatial pattern of tourism destinations in Ondo State, Nigeria and examined the relationship between management practices and patronage patterns. Primary data were collected through the administration of questionnaires. The findings revealed Owo Museum as the most frequented site with 85.1 percent of patronage during week days, while 14.9 percent visited during weekends. The result of the spearman correlation ($r= 0.303$), ($r=0.326$), obtained showed significant but low level patronage, poor services and availability of facilities. The study established that the relationship between management practices and patronage of tourism destinations in the study area was low, hence the necessity for urgent improvement in the management of tourism resources in the State.

Keywords:

Tourism, destinations, recreation,
museum, pattern

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1. Introduction

Tourism is defined by the [1] as the act of traveling for the purpose of recreation and the provision of services. To a layman, tourism is the act of visiting other places for the purpose of sight-seeing and enjoyment but the activities of tourism are more than that. The [1] defines tourists as people who "travel to, and stay in, places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". Today, tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. [2] noted that tourism is a service-based industry, consisting of a number of tangible and intangible elements. The tangible elements include basic infrastructure such as transport, accommodation, tours, and souvenirs, while the intangible elements include education, culture, adventure or simply, to escape from boredom and relaxation.

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As observed by [3-4], tourism is one of the largest global industries with huge potentials for job creation opportunities to rapidly depressed regions. Travel and tourism are labour-intensive activities; hence, the majority of enterprises operating in the tourism industry are small, medium and micro enterprises. As asserted by [5], travel and tourism could be used as an activator for other related industries, due to the investments of capital and efforts in infrastructure, plants and capital equipment from suppliers.

On an international scale, tourism is a major economic sector, generating over \$420 billion in tourism receipts and accounting for almost four percent of global GDP and sustaining close to 70 million jobs [6-7]. The tourism sector is driven largely by affordances in international travel, especially by air, and other travel opportunities that have been opened up by new technologies in recent times. However, the global economic meltdown, terrorism, wars and the fear of attacks from such communicable diseases as the Severe Acquired Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), has had a great impact on the reduction of travel in the first half of 2003, when the industry experienced a dull patronage. Nonetheless, it appears that the industry has slowly recovered again. There is the hope therefore that tourism as a major 21st century recreational or educational activity, will continue to grow. Against this backdrop, governments have continued to give increasing attention and emphasis to tourism, through policies and programmes, for the purpose of enhancing regional development.

The tourism industry often helps in facilitating the flow of foreign currencies amongst countries. In the developing countries, tourism is mainly seen as a growth industry as the flow of tourists into these countries helps to distribute foreign currency [8]. During the June 1998 United Nations Committee on Tourism and Arts Development Summit (UNCTAD), tourism was cited as the only major sector, internationally, in which developing countries had consistently record surpluses, or positive balance in their trading accounts, having improved from six billion United States dollars in 1980, to sixty-two billion United States dollars in 1996. Collectively, the developing countries account for nearly 30 per cent of the world tourism receipts [8].

Tourism as an activity is however, not limited only to the tourism industry alone but tourism is undertaken, directly or indirectly, by other economic activities too. Tourism is also a spatial activity, that has an impact in urban development and the use of land. Tourist services are not limited to visitors but are also offered to local residents that live and work in the destinations. It is therefore, important to elicit the cooperation of the various stakeholders that are involved in tourism. Since the public and private sector, as well as residents have differing interests in tourism, it is very difficult to come to an agreement on how to develop the tourism industry. This is why, it is necessary to rally all the stakeholders towards the planning and development of the industry to ensure its sustainability.

Due to the higher returns from the oil industry, most governments in Nigeria have not paid attention to tourism as an alternative, source of finance for economic development. The tourism sites, if explored and effectively utilised, could constitute invaluable sources of revenue for the execution of programmes towards sustainable national development [9]. The exploitation of the potentials of tourism sites and effective management of some could also promote environmentally efficient urban centres, and culturally positive urban life-styles.

The tourism industry could be used to kick-start new projects, particularly the establishment of new urban areas equipped with modern facilities. Such sites constitute vital source of revenue generation, cultural preservation and a means for planned urban physical expansion. They could also be symbols of urban identification and unification, amongst others [10]. A peculiar problem of tourism in Nigeria and other developing countries is that most of the opportunities in the tourism sites are left unexplored and are also not properly managed. In other nations of the world, tourism

is conceived within the frameworks of environmental conservation, and is therefore integrated into urban development plans and city renewal. In Nigeria today, the Cross-River State government has made tourism to become a well pronounced activity, to the extent that it now generates a lot of funds for the state. Busayo [11] opined tourism as an instrument of economic regeneration and stability, and noted that, if properly harnessed, it has the capacity for wealth creation, empowering the people and generate employment opportunities [12].

Figure 1 is the map of Nigeria depicting Ondo State in colour red. Ondo State is a state in south western part of Nigeria was created on 3rd February 1976 from the former western region with the capital city in Akure. According to the national population census of 2006, the state has inhabitants of 3.4 million and total land area of 15,500 km² (6,000 sq miles). Ondo State is located on Latitude 7° 10' 00" N and Longitude 5° 05' 00" E. The old Ondo State included the now Ekiti State, which was carved out in 1996.



Fig. 1. Map of Ondo within the context of Nigeria

The state consists of eighteen local government areas (LGAs), the major ones being Akoko, Akure, Okitipupa, Ondo, and Owo. The ethnic composition of Ondo State is largely from the Yoruba extractions of the Akoko, Akure, Okitipupa, Ilaje, Ondo and Owo peoples. Ijaw minority such as Apoi and Arogbo populations inhabit the coastal areas, while a sizable number of the Ondo State people who speak a variant of the Yoruba language similar to Ife dialect reside in Oke-Igbo. The majority of the state's citizens live in urban centres. The government universities in Ondo State are the Federal University of Technology Akure, Akure and the Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko. The points of the tourism destinations were gotten by using GPS to take the points, and much of the sites are represented differently. Fig 2 shows the tourism destinations in Ondo State, the different classes of the road network are also shown on the map by different features.

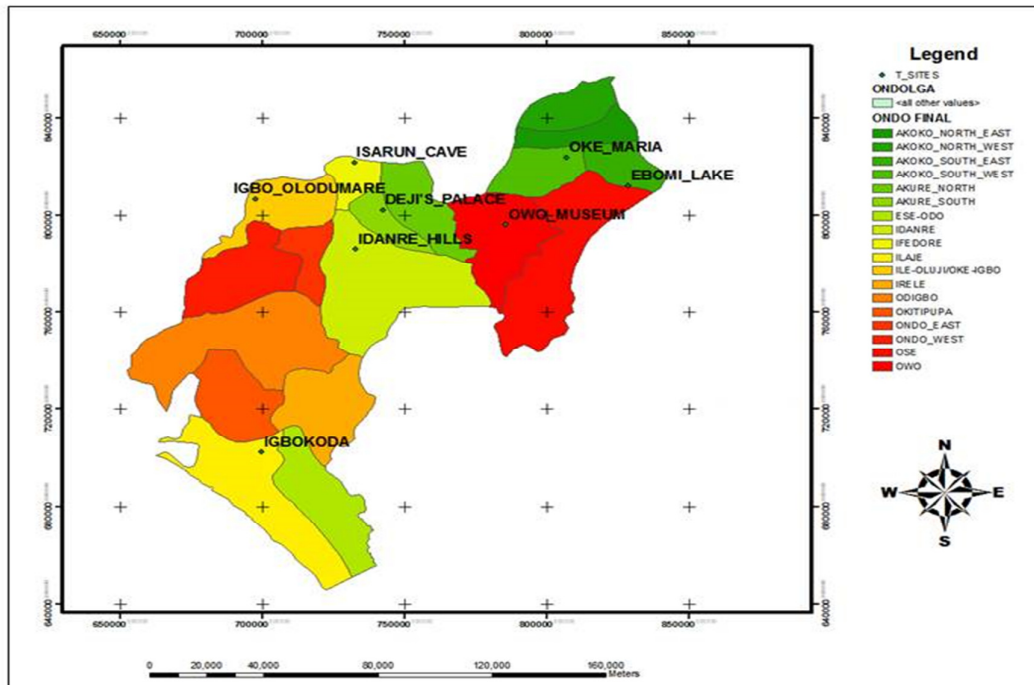


Fig. 2. Map of Ondo State showing the tourist destinations

A lot of research has been done in recent years on the various issues implied by new tourism concepts, many of which have implications for natural resource management. For instance [13] studied the physical implication of conservation of historical sites in Ile-Ife, by emphasising conservation and its effect on the sites. The study also looked into the challenges of conserving the sites and the rewards. However, the study focused on the physical implication only, without considering how the sites will be managed. In this study the spatial pattern of tourism destinations in Ondo State are identified. Also, the relationship between management practices and patronage pattern are reviewed and discussed. This accounts for the difference between the current study and the earlier attempts by other researchers.

2. Materials and Methods

Data for the study were obtained from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were collected from the management of tourism destinations through the administration of questionnaires. Today, the use of questionnaire has become very prominent as a means of eliciting information in social and business research [14]. The tourism destinations were located with the global positioning system (GPS). Afterwards, the different road networks that enter and leave the destinations are shown on the map. For the purpose of this study, nine tourism destinations were identified. The locations of the points were geo-referenced by affixing the coordinates of the tourism destinations. These were taken with the handheld Global Positioning System (GPS), which was used to analyse the spatial pattern of the tourism destinations in the study area. The secondary sources of data include books and journals. Ondo State is greatly endowed with tourist resources relative to other countries of the world. A list of tourism destinations was obtained from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in Akure, Ondo State. This was used to spatially locate the tourism destinations.

3. Results and Discussion

The tourism destinations in Ondo State share some common features related to tourism and its development. The issues include the impact of tourism on local residents, seasonality and variations in volume of visitors or tourists' flow, accessibility, transport and parking, long distance travel, and poor information services for tourists. Since the issues appear to be knotty or intertwined, only a holistic solution could restore the required sanity and ensure the sustenance of the tourism industry in the state.

The development of tourism products involves intense planning, market research, product development, and cooperation from many stakeholders. Table 1 shows the relationships between user-satisfaction and management of the tourism destinations. Lack of careful, balanced planning can result in the development of monoculture in the tourist product. Historic town centres can be transformed to one big restaurant, a shopping centre or a gigantic museum.

Table 1
 Relationship between user satisfactions with management of the tourism destinations

	Coming for second visit	Service rendered	Activities on site
Coming for second visit	1.000	.303**	.326**
Correlation Coefficient		.000	.000
Sig.(2-tailed) N		290	290
Service Rendered	-.303**	1.000	.556**
Correlation Coefficient	.000	.	.000
Sig.(2-tailed) N	290	290	290
Activities on site	-.326**	.556**	1.000
Correlation Coefficient	.000	.000	.
Sig.(2-tailed) N	290	290	290

The spearman correlation ($r = 0.303$) established a low, but significant association between user-satisfaction and management of the sites. Similarly, the correlation between service rendered and availability of facilities was also low but positive ($r = 0.326$). This confirmed that patrons were not fully satisfied with the services rendered at the sites. The study established that the relationship between management practices and patronage levels of tourism destinations in the study area is low, calling for improvement in the tourism destinations.

Table 2 shows the distribution of the organisation and management of the destinations. Most of the staff posted to the destinations from the Tourism Board were not in attendance at the site. The reason for such action could not be readily available but could not be far from the lackadaisical attitudes of workers and could also be due to poor remuneration to the workers. When workers are poorly motivated, there is tendency for such attitude to look for other means to complements their salaries in order to survive.

Table 3 shows the perception of respondents towards coming back for second visit. The study revealed that about 33.4 percent of total respondents indicated their interests of coming for a second visit, while 33.1 percent were not coming back, 20.3 percent were undecided. The decision or attraction of a tourist to visit a site varies from individual to individuals. These include; educational, cultural, historical, religious, and fun-seeking among others depending on the interest of the tourists.

Table 2
Organisation and management of the tourism sites

Tourist sites	Official posted	Available official on Site	Source of Finance	Importance
Idanre hills	6	3	State Government	Historical Site
Igbo Olodumare	2	1	State Government	Historical Site
Ebomi lake	2	0	State Government	Excursion
Igbokoda beach front	0	0 Boat Riders	State Government	Means of transportation/ Excursion
Oke Maria	0	3 priests	State Government /Catholic Church	Religious
Deji Akure's Palace	0	4 Chiefs	Community/State Government	Historical
Owo Museum	21	10	Federal Government	Monument
Isarun Cave of Ashes	0	0	State Government	Historical

Source: Authors field survey, 2017

Table 3
Distribution of tourists coming for second visit

Tourist Sites	Yes	No	Undecided	No Response	Total (%)
Deji' Palace	1.7	12.8	8.6	1.0	24.1
Owo Museum	9.7	5.7	2.4	6.9	24.1
Idanre hills	16.7	2.1	5.2	0.7	24.1
Igbokoda beach front	0	0	10.3	0	10.3
Oke Maria	2.8	1.7	1.7	4.1	10.3
Igbo Olodumare	3.1	1.0	2.4	0.3	10.3
Total	33.4	33.1	20.3	13.1	100

Source: Authors field survey, 2017

Tourism is one of the industries with the strongest effect on the economy, because it helps in developing other sectors. Tourism is a composite of activity consisting of facilities, services and industries that deliver memorable travel experience through, transportation, accommodation, eating and drinking, entertainment, recreation as well as historical and cultural experiences [15]-[16].

Tourism is one of the major items of international trade. Technologically, the introduction and application of new information and communication equipment into the tourism industry dramatically broadened people's access to information and travel opportunities. Figure 3 shows the daily tourist patronage to the identified sites. It was discovered that 37.5 percent of the tourism destinations were: Owo Museum, Idanre Hills and Deji's Palace attracted higher patronage over the others. On a general note 85.1 percent of patrons visited these sites during week days while the rest (14.9 percent) visited during weekends as shown in Figure 4. An improvement to the facilities and amenities provisions to the available tourist sites can be a strategy to stem down the mass rural-urban migration. This in essence will reduce the problem of housing the urban populace especially the less privileged in the society. Housing deficit in the urban areas is one of the

fundamental challenges facing most of the developing countries especially in the global south in this contemporary time [17].

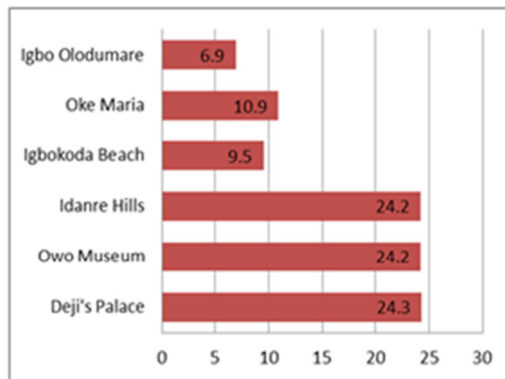


Fig. 3. Daily patronage of tourism

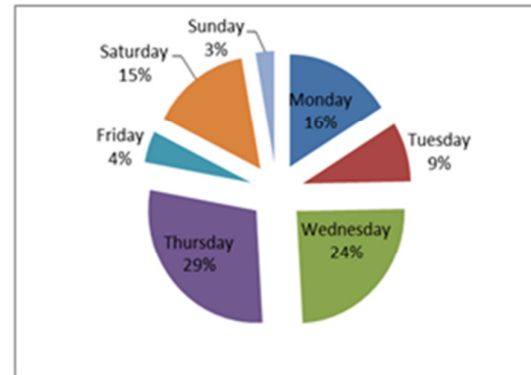


Fig. 4. Patronage by days of the week

4. Recommendations and Conclusion

4.1 Recommendations

Development of marketing and sensitisation policy (enriched with diverse strategies and through various media) to attract both local and foreign tourists would help to improve both local and national economy. There is a need for specific management strategies at peak patronage periods such as festive periods and the provision of souvenirs in the process of advertisement. There would be the need to improve on security measures to continually prevent social vices and specifically the possibility of terrorist attack on the site. On the amenities, there would be need to reconstruct the road. There is urgent need to provide indoor sports halls to accommodate associated games within the area in order to complement existing amenities

4.2 Conclusion

The seemingly higher returns from oils has made governments in Nigeria and many developing countries to pay lip service to tourism development, without realising that the tourism industry could generate the finance needed for economic development. The effective utilisation of tourism sites would be an immense source of income for the rehabilitation and renewal programmes for sustainable national development. Tourists' satisfaction with the destination will not only affect their willingness to revisit but also the reputation of the destinations. Enhancing tourist satisfaction should be one of the primary functions of any tourism site. Tourism satisfaction is seen as a post-consumption evaluation of a chosen alternative cause of action to determine if it meets or exceeds expectations. The study established that poor management of tourism services may be required for the tourist destinations. This confirmed that patrons were not fully satisfied with the patronage sites. An improvement of the tourism destinations may be desirable in order to boost the economic development of the government, as well as the standard of living of the locality where these tourist attractions are situated.

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