

Assessment of tourists' visitation motives and tourism facilities in Olumo rock, Abeokuta, Ogun state, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the tourist visitation motives and tourism facilities in Olumo Rock Tourism Complex. The study was carried out using 60 randomly selected tourists and six staff adjudged to be representative of the total population. Data for research were collected through personal interview and administration of questionnaires to the tourists/visitors and staff at Olumo Rock Tourist Centre over a period of 12 months and were subjected to statistical tools such as frequency tables analyzed by using simple percentages and Bar chart. Fifty percent and 45% of the respondents' visitation motives to the site were relaxation and recreation, respectively. The facilities offered included transportation facilities, internet services, hospitality units, and 85.0% of the respondents were satisfied with these facilities. All the visitors examined were willing to -visit again if opportunity arises. The study concludes that Olumo Rock Tourist's Centre attracts tourists whose travel motivational factors are relaxation and recreation. The site also has supporting facilities to enhance the satisfaction of her visitors. There is a need for increased publicity through various media to advertise the centre and sensitize people on the tourism resources and facilities of the Complex.

Keywords: Olumo rock, Tourist visitation motives, Tourism resources

INTRODUCTION

Tourism refers to the entire world industry of travels, hotels, transportation and all other components including promotion, which serve the needs and wants of travellers. World Tourism Organisation (WTO) in its proposed definition to the United Nations Conference on Travel and Tourism (1963) defined a tourist as a temporary visitor staying at least for twenty-four hours or over-night in a country visited whose journey is for the purpose of leisure (holidays, recreation, sports) or business (family, meeting, mission, health, study or religion). Tourism can also be termed as the science, art and business of attracting and transporting visitors, accommodating them and graciously catering for their needs and wants. This implies any activity that voluntarily and temporarily takes a person away from his/her usual place of residence in order to satisfy a need, either for pleasure, excitement, experience and or relaxation. According to Marguba (2001), the major types of tourism include historical tourism, ecological tourism or ecotourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism and traditional tourism.

Tourism started ages ago and precisely in the Roman Empire in 14th century A. D. It started as a social obligation for the hosts to make guests/travelers comfortable when they came calling. It would be recalled that the Roman Empire spread all over Europe at that time and it contained many sparse and

mineral springs whose water contained healing property. Up till today, visitors flock these sparse healing resorts to find solution to their health problems. The idea of earning a living from these guests became apparent so that the host might not have to bear all the brunt of giving minimum comfort to their guests (Aremu, 2001). Tourism gained international recognition in 1925 as international tourism started in the Netherlands by Mr. Deventer. It has now matured into a strong industry to restore hope in the economic status of most developed world, as well as inject sanity and beauty into the entire environment (Ayodele and Falade 1992; National Concord, 1993). International tourism has become an important economic and political tool in modern development, not only is the amount of money generated in the international tourism industry enormous, the flow of that money is somehow determined. International tourism involves the movement of people across nations and this has implications on the ability of their home government to protect their lives and properties (Folorunsho, 2001). Tourism, like other economic and social activities, does not occur evenly or randomly in space. Certain sites, locations or regions are more favourable for tourism development than others, influenced by factors like climate, physical conditions, attraction, facilities, accessibility, land tenure and use, constraints and incentives, and others such as labour costs, political stability and so on. This gives potential tourists the opportunity to choose

a destination that stimulates their interests and motivates them to travel (Jonsson and Devonish, 2008).

In Africa, tourism has given rise to development of conservation areas. Africa stands unique in some aspect of tourism such as cultural and safari (wildlife) or ecotourism. It also provides an extension of summer holidays for the Europeans with its almost all year round sunshine. Africa is very rich in resources such as beautiful climate, with good sunshine all year round, pleasant beachfronts, floral of cultural values and historic potentials; but for varied reasons, these potentials are neither fully exploited nor turned to good advantage (Ayodele, 2002). Most countries especially the African countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Egypt etc have developed their tourism industry such that they have become the mainstay of their economy. As a result, it has brought growth and development to these countries.

In Nigeria, tourism is becoming an increasingly vital part of the Nigerian economy with the rapid expansion and growth of the hospitality industry even though most of the population is urban with the rural gradually coming up and still works in Agriculture. Tourists are attracted by Nigeria's cultural diversity, scenery and festivals. Each region of Nigeria offer something for foreign visitors, from Obudu Cattle Ranch, OsunOsogbo Groove, Agbokim Water Falls in Calabar and a number of beaches and coastal as seen in Lagos. Not only are foreign tourists traveling to Nigeria after the serious awareness created by the Nigeria Tourism Development Commission (NTDC), Nigerian themselves have also started taking more domestic vacations and developing interest in recreation as well (Ajala 1988; Dieke, 2003).

Ogun state is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious state that is rich both in natural resources and cultural identity (David, 2001). Tourism is a relatively young but growing industry in Ogun State. Its slow pace of development may be multi-causal in reasons such as previous administrations' interest, huge and intensive capital needed for its take off and so on. Mother Nature has so blessed the state with beautiful climate, soil, vegetation, historical sites and monuments, land and especially rock formations in which Olumo Rock is prominent. In the face of dwindling federal allocations to the state and the snail-crawling increase in the Internally Generated Revenue (IGR), there is need to develop natural endowments in terms of tourism so to meet the economic needs of the state and for people to enjoy the scenic pleasures they stand to offer. This study therefore was carried out to

examine tourists' visitation motives and tourism facilities in Olumo Rock. This will enable tourism destination managers to understand what drives a tourist to visit their site as well as the usage of facilities offered and the satisfaction derived from them. Hitherto, tourism destinations can be effectively managed with prospects of increased tourists' influx which is tantamount to improved economic benefits

METHODOLOGY

Study Area

Ogun state is located within South-Western Nigeria. It lies within the tropics and covers a land area of approximately 16,762 square kilometers. It is bounded in the West by Benin Republic, in the south by Lagos state and the Atlantic oceans, in the East by Ondo state and in the North by Oyo state. Abeokuta is located amidst a group of granite rocks of natural formation and has an average height of about 280 meters above sea level. It has two distinct climatic seasons which are wet and dry seasons. The wet season starts in April and ends in October while the dry season begins in November and ends in March. An average rainfall of 104cm is often within Abeokuta. Its soil is clayey in nature, firm and fertile with rock basement complex.

Olumo rock is a massive outcrop of granite rock of primitive formation from which Abeokuta, the capital of Ogun state derives its name. It is located in the traditional core of Abeokuta town and lies between Ikija and Ikereku neighborhoods and also visible from all parts of the city. The highest point on the Olumo rock is about 137 meters above sea level and the Ogun River which takes the name of the state flows west of Olumo. The rock whose name "Olumo" means "God built it", is surrounded by a number of caves in which the Egbas took refuge and fortress in the time of Yoruba wars of the 19th century. One of such caves, which is about 6m by 7m wide, has slab-like stones that must have served as seats for ancient dwellers around the cave.

Data Collection and Sampling technique

Reconnaissance survey was carried out at the study area prior to the actual collection of data. The research was carried out by randomly selecting sixty tourists/visitors and six staff that were available during the period of study as respondents. Data for research were collected through personal interviews and the administration of questionnaires to the respondents at Olumo Rock Tourist Centre for a period of twelve months (April 2008-March, 2009).

The reason for this was to collect data during both festive (Easter, Ramadan, Christmas, New Year etc) and non-festive periods.

Data Analysis

Data from the study were subjected to statistical tools such as frequency tables and analyzed using simple percentages and Bar and Pie charts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tourists' motives for visiting

Data on tourists' motives for visiting Olumo Rock Tourist Complex is represented on Figure 1. Fifty percent of the respondents visited the centre for the purpose of relaxation, 45.0% for fun and 5% for wilderness experience. Moreover, 20.0% of the respondents visited Olumo Rock tourist centre occasionally; 65% rarely and 15.0% regularly (Fig 2). This is an indication that many people are yet to appreciate the importance and benefits of visiting the tourist centre.



Fig 1: The Motive of Visitors to the Olumo Rock Tourist Centre, Ogun state

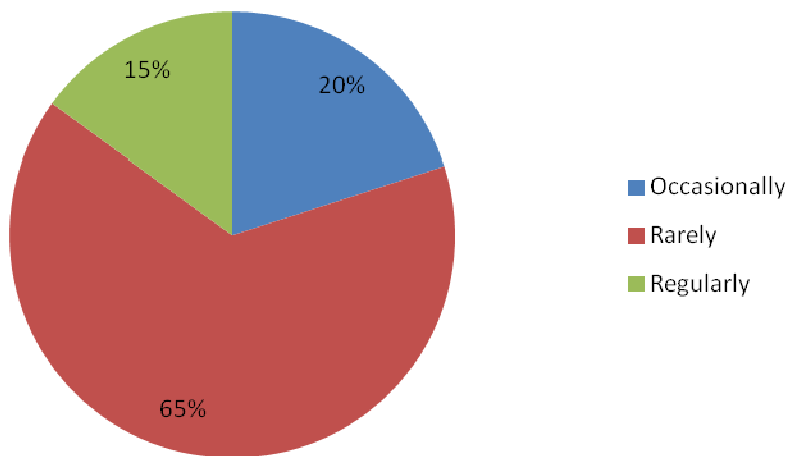


Fig 2: Frequency of visitation to Olumo Rock Tourist Centre in Ogun State

Facilities and their usage in Olumo Rock Tourist Complex

Table 1 shows that 66.7% of the tourists confirmed the usage of cars and buses as part of tourism-

supporting facilities, while 33.3% did not;66.7% also made use of hotels and other accommodation facilities, while 33.3% did not.Table 1 also revealsthat 50.0% of the tourists attested to the usage of internet facilities, while 50.0% did not. Similarly, all the respondents confirmed the presence and usage of GSM operation facility; 66.7% agreed on the usage of restaurant and fast food centre while 33.3% did not agree. Furthermore, 33.3% of the tourist interviewed agreed on availability and usage of casino and other games while 66.7% did not make use of the casino and other games. 16.7% made use of the cinema hall while 83.3% did not.

Table 1: Facilities and their usage by tourists

| Facilities | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|----------------------------|---------|--------|
| Cars and Buses | 66.7 | 33.3 |
| Hotel and other facilities | 66.7 | 33.3 |
| Internet Facilities | 50.0 | 50.0 |
| GSM Operation | 100.0 | 0.0 |
| Restaurant and Fast Food | 66.7 | 33.3 |
| Casino / Game | 33.3 | 66.7 |
| Cinema Hall | 16.7 | 83.3 |

Source: Field survey, 2009

Opinion of staff on site facilities and tourists characteristics

Table 2 indicates that anequal percentage of the staff (50.0%) each agreed and disagreed that the centre had stable electricity, while 50% of the staff were of the opinion thatawareness of the centre was through television / radio, posters and bills (33.3%), while 16.67% was of the opinion that there was no awareness to the tourist’s centre. All the staff agreed that foreigners visit the tourist centre regularly and that an increase in number of visitors had been recorded.

Table 2: Opinion of staff on site facilities and tourists characteristics

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Stability of Electricity | | |
| Yes | 3 | 50.0 |
| No | 3 | 50.0 |
| Medium of awareness | | |
| TV/Radio | 3 | 50.0 |
| Posters and Bills | 2 | 33.3 |
| No Awareness | 1 | 16.7 |
| Influx of Foreigners | | |
| Yes | 6 | 100.0 |
| No | 0 | 0.0 |
| Increasing Rate of Visitation | | |
| Yes | 6 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field survey, 2009

Tourists’ satisfaction with facilities at Olumo Rock Tourists Centre

Higher proportion (85.0%) of respondents at Olumo Rock Tourists Centre, Abeokuta was satisfied with the facilities at the centre while 15% were not satisfied (Fig 3). This shows that the facilities there were of appreciable standard that are capable of attracting tourists after the first visit.Figure 4 shows that all the visitors interviewed were willing to re-visit Olumo Rock Tourists Centre Abeokuta if they had further opportunity. This shows a great potential of visitors’ patronage of the centre.

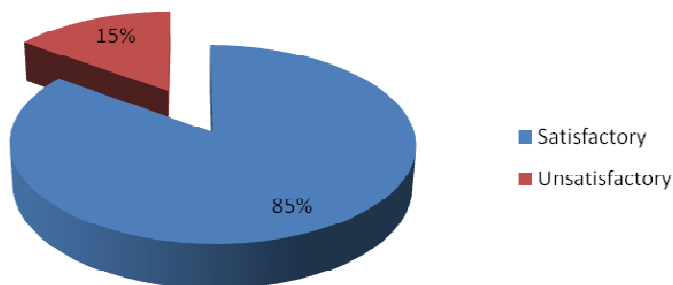


Fig 3: Tourists satisfaction with Facilities at Olumo Rock Tourists Centre

Source: Field Survey, 2008

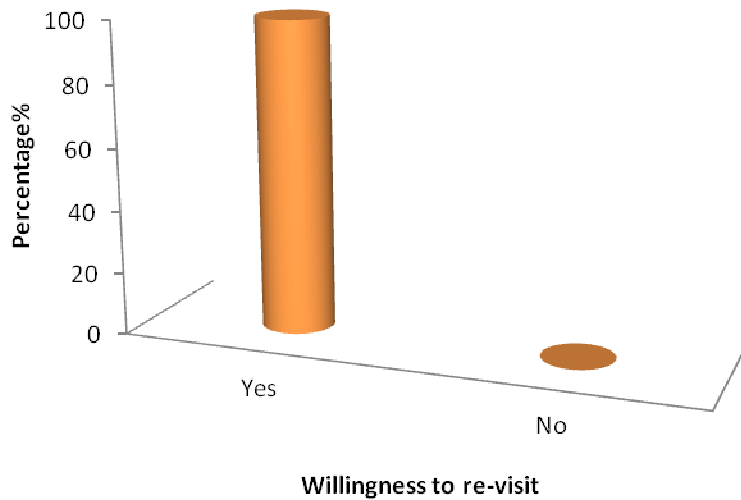


Fig 4: Tourists willingness to re-visit

The study revealed that the main reasons why tourists visit the destination included the need to find relaxation (50%) and the need to seek pleasure and enjoyment (45%). This is in agreement with the findings of Jonsson and Devonish (2008). The desire to relax and have fun is a dominant motivating factor and site selection criteria by tourists. The study also revealed that majority (65%) of the tourists rarely visited Olumo Rock Tourist Centre. This may be attributed to lack of interest or dearth of publicity or awareness about the centre. This is one of the reasons why awareness should be taken proper care of so as to stimulate interest. This is in consonance with Whiteman (1996), who reported that the stated purposes of tourism are to raise the public’s awareness of the environment, to sensitize travelers to nature and its processes. On the opinion of staff on medium of awareness to the tourist centre, 50% of the staff was of the opinion that awareness to the centre was through television / radio; 33.33% through posters and bills while 16.67% was with the opinion that there is no awareness to the tourist’s centre.

The facilities offered in Olumo Rock Tourism Complex include transportation facilities (cars and buses), hotels, internet facilities, GSM operation, restaurant or fast food outlets and majority of the tourists made good use of them appreciably. Furthermore, on the opinion of the tourists about the facilities at Olumo Rock Tourists Centre, 85% of respondents were satisfied with the facilities at the centre while 15% were not satisfied. This showed that the facilities there were of appreciable standard that are capable of attracting tourists after the first visit. These findings agree with the assertion of Jonsson and Devonish (2008) that ‘the central

element of the tourism system is the destination with its features and resources’.

The study also shows that, the visitors are satisfied with the facilities provided at the centre, which led to all the tourists interviewed (100%) willing to re-visit the centre. On one side, this stresses the importance of infrastructures in tourism development as reported by Brohman (1996). On the other side, it depicts a high level of destination loyalty by tourists. Destination loyalty is viewed as an intention to revisit the destination and as tourist’s perception of a recommendable place (Kuusik *et al*, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Olumo Rock’s Tourist’s Centre, Abeokuta, attracts tourists whose main visitation motives are relaxation and recreation. The facilities offered by the site include transportation facilities, hospitality units, internet services, stable electricity, and so on. Majority of the respondents made use of these facilities. Moreso, tourists’ satisfaction with the facilities offered by the Complex is high. The fact that all the tourists examined were willing to re-visit Olumo Rock tourist Centre if opportunity warranted coupled with the high standard facilities there that are capable of attracting tourists after the first visit is a great potentiality of the centre. There was however no medical facility at the centre; that is not good enough in case of any eventuality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. Advertisement jingles should be placed on radio and television to arouse the interest of people to the centre. Also, billboards on the centre should

be placed at strategic locations. Handbills, posters etc should be used to advertise the centre. Publicity helps to sensitize people not only on the location of the centre but also to make them understand / know the benefit available in their culture, history and ecological value of their environment.

- II. Interpreters should be employed at the centre to assist visitors who cannot communicate in English Language or in the indigenous language (Egba and/or Yoruba) to learn about the centre and its environment.

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