

Influence of Community Perception on Tourism Acceptability of Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove, Nigeria

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Abstract

The influence of community perception on tourism acceptability in Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove (OOSG) was investigated using questionnaire and in-depth interview. The population of the study consisted of the local communities around the grove from which 200 respondents were randomly selected. Data collected were analysed descriptively (frequency, percentages, means and standard deviation) while the hypotheses of the study were tested using Multinomial Logit Regression. The OOSG has various attractions amongst which festival (4.59) had the highest mean score followed by historical buildings and monuments (4.46) while sculpture had the least (3.75). Tourism activities in OOSG have created both positive and negative perceptions of tourism development among the local communities as measured through the economic and social perceptions of the impacts. The mean score ranking showed that employment opportunities (4.11), increase in income (3.97) and improved public security (3.93) were economic impacts while social impacts were increased entertainment (4.15), positive influence on cultural activities (4.08) and increased residents pride in indigenous culture (4.05). The negative influence on cultural activities and increase in prostitution were the negative perceptions of the host community that have significant effects on tourism acceptability ($p < 0.05$). The need to sensitise community stakeholders in tourism of its potential positive impacts is essential and effective measures should be developed to address the negative impacts in order to ensure sustainability of the destination.

Keywords: Tourism, community, impacts, attractions, acceptability, Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove

Introduction

Tourism has become the global leisure activity that relies mainly on the physical environment. Wall and Mathieson (2006) defined tourism as the study of people away from their usual environment, of the establishment which answers to the prerequisite of travellers and of the influences that they have on the economic, physical and social well-being of their host. Tourism is based on the economic and social processes and changes that are occurring in the environment of the societies where tourists come from and its development in the destinations focuses on the use of natural and cultural resources

which generate impacts. The environment in which tourism occurs is the key component in tourism development and the attributes of an environment can either be viewed as natural and/or cultural (Holden, 2008).

Tourism development takes place where the natural/cultural environments are attractive and desirable. Rocks, mountains, streams, beaches, flora and fauna are examples of the natural environment that attract large numbers of tourists. The cultural environment entails the part of the environment that is man-made and developed. The material

components of the cultural environment are purpose-built structures and sites, caves, historical buildings, architectural features and ancient monument. The non-material components of the cultural environment are the culture of the people which entails the folklores, dance and carnivals.

Smith (2001) defined host communities as people who live in the vicinity of the tourist attraction and are either directly or indirectly involved with, and/or affected by the tourism activities. Tourism involves some elements of interaction between the tourist and the destination environment. The consequences of these interactions can lead to positive and negative perceptions of the impact of tourism on the local communities which can be known through a personal encounter with the host communities, knowing their beliefs and perception about tourism in their locality. The impacts of tourism can be sorted into several categories, the most common ones

are: economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts (Cook *et al.*, 2006). Each of these categories includes positive and negative perceptions. Thus, community and tourism developers must balance the opportunities and concerns of all stakeholders by working against conditions where positive impacts benefit one part of the community (geographic or social) and the negative impacts hurt another (Kreag, 2001).

The uniqueness of Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove (OOSG) with its natural and cultural attractions is that it has gradually evolved from local significance to a regional and global dimension since its declaration as World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2005. The need to assess the host communities' acceptance of tourism activities in OOSG is of necessity in order to achieve sustainable tourism development at the site. The influence of negative perceptions on tourism acceptability was tested in the study

Materials and Methods

Study area

The study was carried out in Osun Oshogbo Sacred Grove in Osun State. Osun State is located between 6° 55' to 8° 15'N and 4° 10' to 5° 10'E and on a relatively flat plain of about 250m above sea level within the western Nigeria plains. The annual average temperature ranges between 21.4 and 31.1°C, and mean annual relative humidity is about 77.1% (based on 1980-2007 data from the

Data collection and analysis

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The instruments used for this study are questionnaire and oral interview which was guided by interview schedule. Osogbo and Olorunda Local Government Areas (LGA) are the closest to the grove. There are ten political wards close to the grove in the LGAs in which each is distinctively

Nigerian Meteorological Agency). Its vegetation is the tropical rainforest type such that the area favours the cultivation of cash crops and food crops. Although there are people from other parts of Nigeria, the major sub-ethnic groups in Osun State are Ife, Ilesha, Oyo, Ibolu and Igbomina. Yoruba and English are the official languages and the people practice Islam, Christianity and Traditional Religious worship.

distributed along seven streets. Residents 18 years and above in each of the streets were sampled. Two hundred (200) respondents (100 respondents each from Osogbo and Olorunda LGAs) were purposively sampled for the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants and staff of OOSG. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of

frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation while multinomial logit regression analysis was carried out to

identify the factors influencing tourism acceptability.

Result and Discussion

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and tourism awareness

The findings show that there were more male respondents (55%) than the females which is consistent with the 2006 Census (NPC, 2006) and estimates by CIA (2014) that put the sex ratio of the country's total population at 1.06:1.00 male/female. Most of the respondents (66.5%) were 20-49 years old which agrees with Nigeria's age distribution in 2008 that indicated the dominant age group at 15-64 years (NMEC, 2008). Thus, the participation of both the young and relatively-aged in this study would give the results a balanced view and thereby complement the earlier work by Olatunji and Ezenagu (2016) which gave a similar report for tourism promotion in Osun State. The religious inclinations of respondents show that 44.0 and 43.5% practiced Christianity and Islam respectively. Oladokun *et al.* (2014) had reported 37.0% as Christians in Osogbo metropolis which is lower than the result in this study. A higher percentage (59%) of the respondents was married which indicates that majority of the residents were emotionally stable with household size of mainly 1 to 5. The educational attainment of the respondents shows 31% without formal education while 16, 23.5, 26 and 3.5 had primary, secondary, tertiary and adult/vocational education respectively. The literacy level at 69.0% is higher than the national estimated literacy rate of 61.3% (CIA, 2014) but the literacy distribution pattern indicates that the study area is not really an urban setting and it is still developing. The sample population had most as indigenes (58.5%) and 41.5%

as immigrants. Also, most of the respondents were traders (27.5%) followed by civil servants (17%), artisans (16.5%) and farmers (9.5%). This shows that the communities are dominated by traders whose businesses are sustained by the presence of the grove and the high patronage from visitors. All the respondents were aware of tourism development at the grove because the Osun Osogbo Festival is a yearly activity which is the most celebrated compared to other religious festivals around the grove. It pulls a considerable number of tourists adding directly and/or indirectly to the social and economic life of the people.

Attractions in Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove as identified and ranked by residents

Tourist attractions in the destination were identified as sanctuaries and shrines, the festivals, forests and grove, traditional war fence, traditional arts and craft which fall under cultural and natural environment (Table 2). This distribution of tourist attractions complements Aremu, (2001) that the development and projection of Nigeria's natural and cultural resources would remain the centerpiece of tourism awareness in Nigeria. Festival (4.59) had the highest mean score and was seen as the major attraction by the respondents followed by Historical Buildings and Monuments (4.46), Sanctuaries and Shrines (4.37) while Sculpture had the least (3.75). This agrees with Fakiyesi (2008) that Nigeria possesses natural and cultural resources which are capable of attracting tourists.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents at Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove

Variables	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	110	55.0
Female	90	45.0
Age		
0-19	2	1.0
20-29	54	27.0
30-39	33	16.5
40-49	46	23.0
50-59	41	20.5
60andabove	24	12.0
Marital Status		
Single	50	25
Married	119	59.5
Divorced	12	4.0
Widowed	8	6.0
Separated	1	5.5
Household Size		
1-5	118	59
6-10	71	35.5
11-15	11	5.5
Level of Education		
Non-formal	62	31.0
Primary	32	16.0
Secondary	47	23.5
Tertiary	52	26.0
Adult/Vocational	7	3.5
Occupation		
Artisan	33	16.5
Farmer	19	9.5
Trading	55	27.5
Civil Servant	34	17.0
Retiree	9	4.5
Others	50	25.0
Religion		
Christianity	88	44.0
Islam	87	43.5
Traditional Worshipper	24	12.0
No Religion	1	0.5
Ethnic Origin		
Indigene	117	58.5
Immigrant	83	41.5
Awareness of Tourism Development in OOSG	20	100

Table 2: Summary of various tourist attractions in Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove identified by the respondents

VARIABLES	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	ST.DEV.	Rank
Sanctuary and Shrine	123	55	7	9	6	4.37	0.97	3rd
Sculpture	36	100	48	13	3	3.75	0.87	8th
Traditional Arts and Craft	97	67	22	8	6	4.18	0.99	5th
Forests/grove	105	73	11	7	4	4.32	0.89	4th
Theatres	49	82	53	13	3	3.79	0.93	7th
Historic Buildings and Monuments	110	81	2	6	1	4.46	0.72	2nd
Festivals	135	58	3	1	3	4.59	0.69	1st
Traditional War Fence	57	94	34	11	4	3.93	0.93	6th

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U= Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Perception of Economic Impacts by Respondents

Table 3 presents the respondents' perceived opinions of the economic impacts of tourism activities in OOSG on the host communities. The mean score ranking shows that the higher scores were for the perceived economic impacts which include: employment opportunities (4.11), increase in income (3.97), better public security (3.93) and attraction of small-scale industry (3.89). The lower scores are for the economic impacts that the respondents disagreed with and these are: deterioration of quality of life (2.07), increase in cost of land (2.11), increase in prices of goods (2.14) and increased transportation cost (2.19). Onyebinama *et al.* (2008) had noted that tourism development tends to attract residents away from their traditional economic activities such as farming, fishing. This is

because it generates employment (direct, indirect and induced). Overall, the respondents agreed that tourism has the tendency to increase the quality of life, attract small scale industries and provide job opportunities. This is because some of the respondents are involved in tourism activities as small retail shop owners, transportation providers and artisans which bring direct economic benefit to them. This has informed the support towards tourism development in the grove (Fig. 1). According to Gursoy and Rutherford (2004), residents tend to view tourism as a tool that creates job opportunities and generates additional revenue for local community and government. Generally, the residents perceived that tourism increases their quality of life (Besculides *et al.*, 2002).

Table 3: Perception of Economic Impact of Tourism Development on Host Communities

Variables	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	ST.DEV.
Employment Opportunities	77	97	7	9	10	4.11	1.02
Increased Income	56	111	11	15	7	3.97	0.98
Improved Infrastructures	17	38	19	84	42	2.52	1.25
Standard of Living Quality of Life	16	55	24	67	38	2.72	2.49
Creation of Variety of Jobs	24	152	5	14	5	3.88	0.79
Electricity Supply	18	32	9	73	68	2.30	1.33
Water Supply	13	26	7	87	67	2.16	1.21
Transportation Cost	8	30	18	80	64	2.19	1.16
Increased in Cost of Land	5	26	22	79	68	2.11	1.09
Deterioration of Quality of Life	7	24	12	89	68	2.07	1.09
Increase in Price of Good	12	20	15	89	64	2.14	1.15
Road Condition	2	39	10	82	67	2.14	1.11
Increased Tourism help community grow	30	140	9	14	7	3.86	0.87
Health and Safety are more Secured	41	117	24	14	4	3.89	0.88
Attraction of Small Scale Industry	31	132	23	11	3	3.89	0.78
Better Public Security	49	112	23	8	8	3.93	0.94
Overcrowding	61	80	29	18	12	3.80	1.14

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U= Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Perception of Social Impacts by Respondents

Most of the respondents agreed that tourism was the major reason for increased entertainment in their community, had positive influence on cultural activities, increased residents' pride in local culture and provision of more recreational opportunities with mean scores of (4.15, 4.08, 4.05 and 4.03 respectively). Majority of the respondents disagreed to difficulty in getting tickets during the tourist peak season (2.23) since the festive celebration is opened to everybody. This corroborates the findings of Besculides *et al.* (2002) on the residents' perceptions of the cultural benefits of

tourism. A higher percentage of the respondents agreed to the negative social impacts of tourism development which include: increased traffic congestion (3.96), increased prostitution (3.96) and increase in crime rate (3.94), especially during the peak tourist season (Table 4). Drawing from the social exchange theory which stated that individuals will engage in exchange if the resulting rewards are valued and the perceived cost does not exceed the perceived rewards (Brunt and Courtney 1999). The respondents viewed the rewards higher than the cost which informed the positive impact.

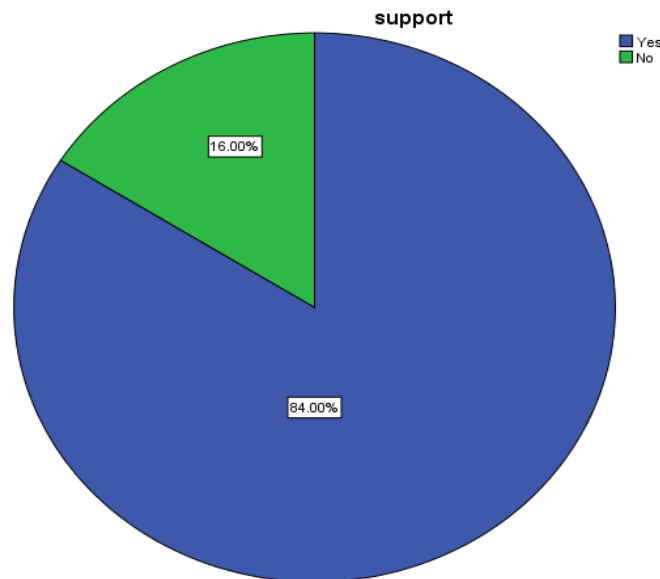


Fig. 1: Respondent Support for tourism activities in Osun Osogbo Grove

Table 4: Perception of Socio Impact of Tourism Development on Host Communities

Variables	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	ST.DEV.
Increased Entertainment	69	106	11	7	7	4.15	0.92
Difficulty in getting ticket	8	28	8	57	99	2.23	1.21
Recreational Opportunity	28	155	7	7	3	4.03	0.67
Increased Residents Pride	41	139	10	4	6	4.05	0.77
Negative Influence on Cultural Activities	32	101	15	16	36	3.47	1.34
Positive Influence on Cultural Activities	41	139	13	4	3	4.08	0.69
Meeting Tourists is a life Enriching Experience	33	129	17	15	6	3.92	0.89
Cultural Exchange is Valuable	38	126	19	11	6	3.95	0.88
Increase in Prostitution	50	109	11	21	9	3.96	1.05
Crime Problem	50	103	15	24	8	3.94	1.06
Traffic Congestion Problem	50	106	14	23	7	3.96	1.03
Increased Gambling	44	104	24	20	8	3.88	1.02
Increased Noise Level	54	98	22	19	7	3.96	1.03

SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U= Undecided, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Influence of negative perception of the respondents on tourism acceptability in Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove

The multinomial logit regression used to assess the perception of the host community on tourism acceptability (Table 5) involved the negative perception items as the independent variable and their support for tourism as the dependent variable which carries the multiple option of “yes or no” as shown in Fig. 1. The Likelihood Ratio Statistics of the regression model presented reveals that

increase in transportation cost, increase in cost of land, increase in cost of goods and services, deterioration in the quality of life, deterioration of road condition, negative influence on cultural activities, increase in prostitution, increase in crime, increase in traffic, increase in gambling and increase in noise level are the 11 negative perception items included in the model. The items negative influence on cultural

activities and increase in prostitution were significant ($p < 0.05$). This implies that increase in prostitution and the negative influence of tourism on cultural activities were the only significant variable influencing tourism acceptability and can also influence the acceptability of tourists

and tourism development in the area. This agrees with Jurowski and Uysal (2002) that negative economic, together with social and environmental factors, will influence resident perceptions of tourism and their support for tourism development

Table 5: Effects of negative perceptions of the Multinomial Logit Regression on tourism acceptability

Effect	Model Fitting criteria	Likelihood Ratio Tests		
	-2 Log Likelihood of Reduced Model	Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Intercept	81.619 ^a	0.000	0	.
Increased transportation	84.177	2.558	4	.634
Increased cost of land	85.968	4.349	4	.361
Increased price of goods	85.584	3.965	4	.411
Deterioration of quality of life	83.913	2.295	4	.682
Deterioration of road	84.302	2.683	4	.612
Negative influence on cultural activity	95.808	14.189	4	.007
Increased prostitution	95.488	13.869	4	.008
High crime	87.704	6.085	4	.193
Traffic problem	89.818	8.199	4	.085
Increased gambling	89.403	7.784	4	.100
Increased noise	86.941	5.322	4	.256

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Conclusion

This paper has examined the influence of communities' perception on tourism acceptability in Osun Oshogbo Sacred Grove. Both natural and cultural resources were identified as major attractions in the grove capable of attracting a large number of tourists and as such creating impacts on the host communities. Tourism at the grove has been perceived to have both positive and negative impacts on the host communities in terms of economic and social changes. Moreover, the respondents viewed the

rewards higher than the cost which was responsible for the positive impact and support towards tourism development in the grove. The negative influence on cultural activities and increase in prostitution were the two negative perceptions that had significant effects on tourism acceptability in the grove. These negative perceptions are capable of threatening the survival of tourism destinations if measures and policies are not developed to address the negative issues.

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