



ASSESSMENT OF USERS' PERCEPTION ON CONSERVATION BENEFITS OF SUNTAN BEACH USING ECONOMIC INDICATORS

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has been tagged as one of the fastest growing economic activities in the world, of which beach tourism is rated the most interesting of them all, perhaps because of the special facilities they possess for greater amusement. Similarly, there have been growing concerns as to beach tourism in Nigeria, majority of which have not been adequately tested for sustainability, using economic indicators. This study therefore examines the economic impact of Suntan beach to both tourists and the host community, using some economic indicators in relation to conservation concept. Covering critical issues, random sampling technique was used to select 100 tourists and 100 residents giving a total of 200 respondents. Primary data were collected with the use of structured questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics with statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Selected indicators showed high percentage for both residents and tourists respectively; economic benefits (63% and 67%), use intensity (55% and 61%) and accessibility to key assets (68% and 69%). The study helps to understand that there is high level of users' perception on conservation benefits of the destination. However, to avoid congestion and overused, especially during the peak season, the key assets provided should be directly proportional to the used intensity. This will go a long way in ensuring sustainable economic returns.

Keywords: beach tourism, conservation, economic, indicators, sustainability.

Introduction

The need for sustainable development of tourism has currently been emphasized by various researchers. However, for tourism to be sustainable, the economics, socio-culture and the environment of the tourism destination must be positively influenced by applying the concept of conservation. For instance, wildlife conservation has been defined as the sustainable use of wildlife (Happold, 1971). Although, the definition for sustainable tourism had not been constant overtime and the tools to measure it had also

been controversial (Dimoska and Petrevska, 2012). Nevertheless, the need to wisely develop a sustainable tourism for a particular destination is generally accepted. Tourism development involves all task (including planning, administration, management and marketing) gearing towards tourist's satisfaction (Eruotor, 2014). Since tourism involves human satisfaction, the peaceful co-existence of both human and the environment is extremely important. By harnessing and harmonizing resources from different sectors of industries, tourism serves as an important



catalyst for infrastructural development (Adora, 2010).

Lagos, among other States, is known to be blessed with numerous coaster tourism potentials which are yet to be tapped (Eruotor, 2014). These destinations are internationally considered as good resort centers, but little attention had been paid to them (Ekundayo, 2014). In addition, the use of indicators (such as economic benefits, use intensity and accessibility to key assets) as a measure of economic values of a destination are not commonly adopted in most of the available literatures. To measure how sustainable a tourism destination is, some categories of indicators have been developed by World Tourism Organization (WTO). Indicators are basic guide used by policy makers to evaluate the functionality and sustainability of a current situation in order to elicit the consequent of the situation (UNWTO, 2004). The essence of using indicators as a measure of a destination is not to preserve or reject existing traditional values, but to conserve them (Tanguay et. al., 2011). This study is therefore aimed at assessing users' perception on the conservation benefits of Suntan beach using economic indicators

Methodology

Study area

There are several beaches along the Badagri-Seme expressway (Sakpo beach, Gem beach, Aivoji beach), but the newest and foremost, being Suntan beach is located a few kilometers from the city centre of Badagri. It is located between latitude $6^{\circ}23'N$ to $6^{\circ}24'N$ and longitude $2^{\circ}49'E$ to $2^{\circ}50'E$. It was established in 1999 and commissioned in 2000 by the then chairman of Badagri Local Government Area (now Badagri West Local Government Area). Being one of the highly utilized beaches in Nigeria, it attracts not less

than 2000 visitors, especially during the public holidays or a large event like Olokun Festival (Adewale, 2015).

Sampling procedure and sample size

Information gathered during reconnaissance survey revealed that the study area usually have about 1000-2000 visitors during low season and greater than 2000 in the peak seasons, especially in the festive period (pers. com.). The main criterion employed in the selection of respondents for inclusion was therefore based on the relative daily population of the users in the low season, since the period of the collection of the data fell in the fasting period of the Muslims, where low population is usually experienced. Data were collected within two months (April through May, 2015) by visiting the place, at least two times / month, making a total of four visitations, to gather information, relevant to the study objectives, from two selected categories of respondents (tourists and residents). At least 10% of low season daily population (equivalent to 100) was sampled by randomly selecting 100 respondents among the tourists and residents. Where a respondent declined, another respondent was turned to, until the target of 10% / population / category is completed. With the help of field assistants, questionnaires were administered to the residents, not far from the destination (early in the morning and late in the evening) and to the tourists, during the period of relaxation (especially at the reception) when the visitors had almost completed their visit and were about to check out.

Data collection and analysis

Primary data were collected through the use of structured questionnaire, interview and personal observation. The indicators selected were based on economic indicators outlined in the World Tourism Organization



Indicator's of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A guidebook (UNWTO, 2004). The questionnaires were administered to respondents randomly selected from among the tourists and local residents (living within few kilometers to the destination) out of which 100 questionnaires were returned for each category making a total of 200 questionnaires. The questionnaires covered critical issues like economic benefits, accessibility to key assets and use intensity of tourists and residents. The key informant for the interview was purposively selected from among the local government chairmen of the study area. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics with statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

Results and Discursion

Economic benefits from users (Residents)

Measuring economic impact of tourism may be challenging (Omolomo, 2014); however, a number of economic indicators were selected for the assessment of user's perception on conservation benefits of the study area. Table 1 shows that 63% of the residents attested to the fact that the community derived economic gain from the industry, but 37% rejected the claim, although 53% of the residents affirmed that few of them had profited from this, while 47% of them debunked the statement .The

table further revealed that 50% of the residents agreed that the benefits from the tourism widely spread in the community, while the rest had a contrary opinion. That there are economic leakages in the establishment was contested by 64% of the residents. It is possible that a large amount of money realized have been diverted and not made available to the management of the area. This substantial amount must have gone to the hands of corrupted officers as argued by Anatusi and Nnabuko (2012).

There may be need for adequate internal control system (ICS) and check and balancing. Apart from a number of them (57%) believing that the creation of the centre is driving the development of other related industries in the area, many of the tourists (68%) also believed that permanent job had been created for the youths of the community, even though some workers (69%) seemed not to be satisfied with the job, which is why a number of them (56%) opined that the situation has not in any way improved their standard of living. The overall perception of the residents in regards to the economic benefit was high by 63% and low by 37%. This implies that the residents enjoyed economic benefits that surpassed other disadvantages attributed to it (Bankole, 2002; Eruotor, 2014).

Table 1: Residents' economic benefits from Suntan beach

Statement	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1. Is the community as a whole making economic gains	Yes	63	63.0
	No	37	37.0
2. Are just few people profiting from the tourism in the community	Yes	53	53.0
	No	47	47.0
3. Are the benefits from the tourism widely spread in the community	Yes	50	50.0
	No	50	50.0
4. Is there economic leakages (i.e tourism revenue leaving the community)	Yes	64	64.0
	No	36	36.0



5. Do this resort centre create permanent jobs for local people	Yes	68	68.0
	No	32	32.0
6. Does the creation of this resort centre drive the development of other related industries	Yes	57	57.0
	No	43	43.0
7. With the creation of this resort centre , have you noticed a rise in the standard of living of the residents	Yes	44	44.0
	No	56	56.0
8. Do you think the residents involved in Suntan tourism business are satisfied with their work and rewards	Yes	31	31.0
	No	69	69.0

Economic benefits from users (Tourists)

Table 2 shows that 67% of the tourists had bought one item or the other from local residents. A number of them (62%) were conscious enough not to spend their money in the beach with show off , for this might attract theft or pickpocket, but some were of the opinion to show off their money, as they see nothing wrong in it. A larger number of tourists (69%) were also fascinated that they wish to have a job in tourism or do a

subsidiary work related to tourism. Just as the majority of the residents attested to the fact that the community made economic benefits, majority of the tourists (83%) also corroborated this. Most of the tourists (67% - 60%) believed that the creation of the centre had not only helped drive related industries, but also improved the standard of living of the local people. In overall, a high number of them (75%) were satisfied with the kind of tourism business the beach provided.

Table 2: Tourists' economic benefits from Suntan beach

Statement	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1. Do you buy any items from the residents	Yes	67	67.0
	No	33	33.0
2. Do you spend your money with show off so that the local resident can see	Yes	38	38.0
	No	62	62.0
3. Are you willing to have a job in tourism or do a subsidiary work related to tourism	Yes	31	31.0
	No	69	69.0
4. Do you think that the community as a whole is making economic gains	Yes	83	83.0
	No	17	17.0
5. Does the creation of this resort centre drive the development of other related industries	Yes	60	60.0
	No	40	40.0
6. Have you noticed a rise in the standard of living of the local people?	Yes	67	67.0
	No	33	33.0
7. Are you satisfied with the kind of tourism business Suntan beach provides?	Yes	75	75.0
	No	25	25.0

Controlling use intensity (Residents and Tourists)

The result in Table 3 shows that 55% of the residents and 39% tourists accorded 'bad' to the ratio of number of users available per accommodation or bed space, 11% resident

and 20% accorded it 'very good', while 34% resident and 41% tourist regarded it as 'moderate' respectively. Although, there are public toilets around the car park, apart from the ones attached to each chalet, however some of the residents (44%) and tourists (50%) were of the opinion that the ratio of the



number of users per toilet was bad. 28% resident and 18% tourist viewed it as good, while 28% resident and 33% tourist called it moderate. A number of the residents (36%) and 28% tourist believed that the ratio of the users per available beach space was moderate, 22% resident and 19% tourist accepted it to be bad, while the remaining 42% residents and 53% tourist said it was good respectively. As for the ratio of number of vehicle per parking space, 37% residents and 39% tourist accorded it moderate, 30% resident and 13% tourist said it was bad, while 33% resident and 48% tourist believed it to be good. 43% resident and 39% tourist viewed the ratio of the number of horses per users as being good, 23% resident and 15% tourist viewed it to be bad, while 34% resident and 46% tourist called it moderate. 33% of the residents and 36% tourist believed that the crowdedness of the beach was good, 41% resident and 41%

tourist believed it to be moderate, while 26% resident and 23% tourist were of the opinion that it was bad. The ratio of the number of hut available per user was said to be good by 44% residents and 34% tourist, bad by 24% residents and 21% tourist, while regarded as being moderate by 32% residents and 45% tourist.

Summarily, the respondents' opinion on the use intensity of Suntan beach depicts that the general perception of the residents and tourists in regards to use intensity of suntan beach was high by 55% and 61% and low by 45% and 39% respectively. This implies that the destination may need to provide more infrastructural materials to help reduce the intensity rate or to avoid abuse of the destination. If this is not checked on time, it may also lead to reduction in the tourism satisfaction or influx (Omolomo, 2014).

Table 3: Residents (R) and Tourists (T) perception based on use intensity of Suntan beach

Statement	Very bad (%)		Bad (%)		Moderate (%)		Good (%)		Very good (%)	
	R	T	R	T	R	T	R	T	R	T
1. Ratio of number of users available per accommodation	20	30	35	9	34	41	6	7	5	13
2. Ratio of number of users per toilet	18	17	26	32	28	33	16	6	12	12
3. Ratio of number of users per available beach space	3	8	19	11	36	28	14	31	28	22
4. Ratio of number of vehicles per parking space	5	4	25	9	37	39	17	30	16	18
5. Ratio of numbers of horses per users	2	6	21	9	34	46	26	24	17	15
6. Crowdedness	8	9	18	14	41	41	20	17	13	19
7. Ratio of number of hut available per users	6	3	18	18	32	45	24	18	20	16



Respondents' accessibility to key assets in Suntan beach (Residents)

As shown in Table 4, apart from a few number of the residents not having access to good road (46%), credit facility (37%) and the centre during the peak period (42%), a large population of the residents (51%-73%) above

average have access to most of the other fertilities in the centre. In all, the accessibility of the residents to assets in the Suntan beach was high by 68%, but low by 32%. This is commending, even though the residents still crave for more access in the future.

Table 4: Resident's perception based on access to the key asset

Statement	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1. The fees charged per day use in Suntan beach is too costly and unaffordable	Yes	73	73.0
	No	27	27.0
2. In spite of the current tourism growth in Suntan beach, I still have access to key sites	Yes	63	63.0
	No	37	37.0
3. The cost of access to certain tourist product is too high	Yes	61	61.0
	No	39	39.0
4. Is there any site in Suntan beach that is freely accessible to public	Yes	61	61.0
	No	39	39.0
5. Have you access to credit facilities in the revenue generated from the Suntan beach	Yes	37	37.0
	No	63	63.0
6. I have no access to Suntan beach at the holiday period	Yes	42	42.0
	No	58	58.0
7. There is no market assess to sell my local product in the beach	Yes	51	51.0
	No	49	49.0
8. The road/accessible route to Suntan beach is very bad	Yes	46	46.0
	No	54	54.0

Respondents' accessibility to key assets in Suntan beach

The result in Table 5 shows that majority of tourists (52 - 74%) believed that the cost of having access to certain tourist products is too

costly, no preferential treatment in accessing tourist product, no market access to local products, and the road leading to Suntan beach is very bad. Generally, the accessibility of the tourist to key assets in the beach was high by 69% and low by 31%.

Table 5: Tourists perception based on access to key asset

Statement	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1. The fees charged per day use in Suntan beach is too costly and unaffordable	Yes	57	57.0
	No	43	43.0
2. The cost of access to certain tourist product is too high	Yes	74	74.0
	No	26	26.0
3. Is there any site in Suntan beach that is strictly accessible to tourist alone	Yes	35	35.0
	No	65	65.0
4. There is no market access to buy local product from the local residents in the beach	Yes	47	47.0
	No	52	52.0
5. The road/accessible route to Suntan beach is very bad	Yes	72	72.0



Conclusion

A greater number of users were satisfied with the economic values of the area. The high percentage of users' perceptions, as revealed by some selected indicators (economic benefits, use intensity and accessibility to key assets) is an indication that the destination is not only functional but also has tendency for greater improvement for sustainable development in the future. However, to avoid congestion and overused, especially during the peak season, the key assets provided should be directly proportional to the used intensity. This will go a long way in ensuring sustainable economic returns. There is a strong hope that Suntan beach could provide a promising future in as much as the enabling environments continue to improve.

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