

INVESTIGATION OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN OGUTA LAKE TOURISM SITE IN IMO

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Abstract

This work investigates the involvement of the host community in Oguta Lake resort development. It attempts to identify the various attractions in the study area, examines the areas the host were involved in the management of the tourism destination, ascertains the level of involvement, determines the influence of host community involvement on their well-being and suggests possible ways of improving their involvement for the sustainability of both the host communities and the tourism destination. This study adopted a survey design with the use of structured questionnaire for data collection.. The sample consisted of four hundred (400) respondents from the host community of Oguta Lake. The analytical tools used were mean and standard deviation; analysis of variance (ANOVA) was derived from regression analysis. This was used in testing the hypothesis. The findings of the research showed that respondents perceived the host involvement in the management of the tourism destination as positive, given that the mean responses were greater than 3.0. However, such variables as planning, decision making and policy making received negative responses, as the mean responses were less than 3.0. From the findings it was recommended that tourism stakeholders should create awareness on the impacts of tourism especially the involvement of host community in tourism destinations.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism comprises the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment, for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes (Holden 2008). Tourism is based upon the economic, social processes and changes that are occurring in the environment of societies where tourists come from, its development in destinations focuses on the use of natural and cultural resources which generate impacts. The environment in which tourism occurs is a key component in tourism development (Holden,

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2008). The attributes of an environment can either be viewed as natural or cultural. Tourism development takes place where the natural and or cultural environments are attractive and desirable.

Tourism destination is defined as a “country, state, city or town which is marketed or markets itself as a place for tourist to visit (Holloway 2006). It is an area or resort with facilities and services that meet the needs of tourists. Tourist destinations consist of attraction, amenities and accessibility (Cooper, *et al* 2008). Destination depends on consumer demand and has life cycles in which they experience a period of growth, expansion and eventually decline (Cooper, *et al* 2008). It is important that tourist destinations avoid declining into decay if they want to remain viable.

The community a tourist visits is referred as host community. Host community is defined as cities and towns that welcome visitors and provide them with the desired service (Cook *et al* 2008). Tourism activities have many impacts as a re-creational pursuit which inevitably is accompanied by a growth in the number of local people affected by tourism (Cook *et al* 2008).

Smith (2001) also defined host community as people who live in vicinity of the tourist attraction and are directly or indirectly involved with and or affected by tourism activities. It refers to enhancement at the local level of the capability to anticipate in the tourism development process. Opportunities should be provided for local participation in tourism through investment in tourism business by local, employment or supporting activities such as agriculture and craft industries (Wall and Mathieson, 2008). The host community is an important element to consider in the concept of sustainability. Sustainability of tourism is dependent in part on its support from residents. Host satisfaction is related to both the involvement of local community members in tourism activities and the benefits and disadvantages of tourism to host communities.

Manwa (2012) has argued that tourism can only be sustainable if the community benefits directly from it. This will enable them to protect and conserve the resources upon which it is based. Community involvement in tourism development management is therefore very essential and should be encouraged because, it makes the planning process more effective, equitable and legitimate, as long as those who

participate are representatives of the whole community, and are capable of looking after collective interests as well as those of their own group (Buanes *et al* 2005). The call for community involvement is based on the assumption that participation lessens opposition to development, minimizes negative impacts and revitalizes economies (Hardy *et al*, 2002). Community involvement is seen as a useful tool for educating locals about their rights, laws, and political good sense, and therefore it is very important for public education (Tosun 2000). Wall and Mathieson (2006), argue that tourism can create positive impact if it motivates the local community to work more for the things they lack.

Typologies of community participation

Various scholars have attempted to develop useful model that conceptualize community involvement in the context of development studies in general, but not related particularly to any economic sector (Arnstein 1969 as cited in Tosun, 2004; Pretty, 1995; Tosun, 1999). Simply put, their studies focused mostly on participatory development approaches in development studies, though they offer a useful tool towards a more authentic and interactive community participation (Tosun 2006).

However, after reviewing these studies, and community involvement in the tourism industry three forms (typologies) of involvement which “contextualize community participation as a categorical term that allows involvement of people, citizens or a host, community in their affairs at different levels; local, regional or national (p. 494) come to the fore. These are spontaneous community participation, coercive community participation and induced community participation (Tosun 2006).

Normative typologies of community participation

<p>7. Self-mobilization.</p> <p>6. Interactive participation</p>	<p>←</p>	<p>8</p> <p>7</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Citizen control</p> <p>Delegated power</p> <p>Partnership</p>	<p>Degree of citizen power</p>	<p>→</p> <p><u>Spontaneous participation</u></p> <p>Bottom-up: active participation, direct participation, participation in decision making, authentic participation, self planning.</p>
<p>5. Funtional participation</p> <p>4. Participation for material incentives</p> <p>3. Participation by consultation</p>	<p>←</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Placation</p> <p>Consultation</p> <p>Informing</p>	<p>Degree of citizen tokenism</p>	<p>→</p> <p><u>Induced participation</u></p> <p>Top-down: passive, formal, mostly indirect: degree of tokenism, manipulation: pseudo-participation, participation in implementation and Sharma benefit: choice between proposed alternative and feedback.</p>
<p>2. Passive participation</p> <p>1. Manipulative participation</p>	<p>←</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Therapy</p> <p>Manipulation</p>	<p>Non-participation</p>	<p>→</p> <p><u>Coercive participation</u></p> <p>Top-down, passive: mostly indirect formal participation in implementation but not necessarily sharing benefit; choice between proposed limited alternatives or no choice: paternalism: non-participation, high degree of tokenism and manipulation.</p>
<p>PRETTY (1995) Typologies of community participation</p>	<p>ARNSTEIN (1971) Typologies of community participation</p>			<p>TOSUN'S (1999a) Typologies of community participation</p>	

Spontaneous community participation in Tosun's model, emphasizes the provision of full managerial responsibility and authority to the host community, which is similar to degrees of citizen power in Arnstein's model and self-mobilization and interactive participation in Pretty's model.

Induced community tourism in Tosun's model, gives the host community a voice regarding tourism development process through an opportunity to hear and to be heard. This is similar to the degree of citizen tokenism in Arnstein's model and functional participation where the host community is not fully involved in the decision-making process as it is in induced participation. However, some decisions are made specially "to meet basic needs of host communities so as to avoid potential socio-political risk for tourists and tourism development (Tosun, 2006).

The literature tends to suggest that community tourism has evolved from various models of community participation in development. Arguably, coercive community probably refers to what Kibicho (2003) found when examining the extent to which local community participate in Kenya's coastal tourism. His study, among other things identifies that there is a linkage between local community involvement in tourism activities and their support for its development.

It is probably important to insist from here that a key consideration in tourism development is sustainability, which cannot be achieved without community support. (Vincent and Thompson, 2002). Sustainability is a core objective of community participation (Vincent, *et al* 2002, Johannesen *et al* 2005). This means that community participation or involvement is inevitable and imperative to tourism development, because most tourism attraction lies within local communities or in their vicinities.

WTO (2009) showed that there has been tremendous growth of about 4% on the level of international tourist arrivals in Africa. Tourism has become significant and essential part of local community, its potentials to alleviate poverty is numerous and it has a unique potential to carry exchange and investment directly to the local level, and can as well make significant contribution to rural development, particularly in

agricultural transformation, community enrichment and social empowerment (Wall and Mathieson, 2008). It enhances their social standard both the environment and the lives of the members of that community.

Tourism is one of the major sectors in many countries. It is the world's largest employer and one among the major sources of substantial foreign exchange earnings (Richards, 2013, Mwandosya 2007). Consequently, many people believe that the industry is well placed as one of the major means through which development of local communities can be achieved (Scheyven 2002, Beeton, 2006). One approach to enhance this development using tourism, is to involve communities and ensure that their potential role is tapped and maintained through active participation in the industry (Beeton, 2006). It is imperative to note that involvement and participation of the communities, particularly as hosts and guides helps in the protection of the destination (Scheyvens, 2002). The problem, however, arises only when developers fail to allow the host community to be involved in the tourism decision-making process and employment opportunities accruable therefrom.

It is important to note that community involvement in decision-making is not only desirable, but necessary if we want to maximize the socio-economic benefits of tourism to the community. It is perhaps one of the most important elements of tourism management to enable communities who often serve as tourist destination, and for that matter suffer from the negative impacts of tourism, to get involved and eventually participate in planning decisions regarding tourism development. This is important in order to ensure a better handling of the negatives impact of tourism development (Li, 2004, Tosun, 2000).

Oguta Lake is the largest natural lake in Imo State and it is of an immense value to the people of Oguta, Orsu, nkewsi, and Awo. In the colonial era, the Oguta Lake was a port for the evacuation of palm products and relics of the jetties used by the United African Company (UAC) still exist today. During the civil war the Oguta Lake was a marine base for the Biafran Navy. Visitors can take a cruise on the lake or play a round of golf on the whole course on the bank of the lake. This research investigates community involvement in Oguta

Lake, with a view to suggesting the way forward. It is guided by the following research questions: (1) In what ways are the host communities involved in management of the tourism destination? (2) What are the levels of their involvement in the management of the tourism destination? (3) What influences do such involvement have their well-being? (4) What are the possible ways of improving their involvement for the sustainability of both the host communities, and the tourism destination?

Research hypothesis

H0: There is no significant difference in tourism destinations where the host communities are involved in the management and where they are not involved.

Scope of study

The project was carried out at Oguta which comprises 13 villages, located in Oguta L.G.A of Imo State, Nigeria. The project focused mainly on the community involvement in Oguta Lake.

Methodology

Research design: The study used a survey research design, and the associated instrument of the questionnaire to obtain information from the host communities of the tourism destination. This was supported by oral interview, which was guided by an interview schedule.

Study Area

The study was carried out in Oguta Lake in Imo State. Imo State is one of the thirty-six states of the federal republic of Nigeria, located in the Eastern part of the country and has Oguta as one of the local governments. As of 2006 Oguta has a population of 22,000 (Twenty two thousand), according to the national population census. The city of Oguta is divided into two townships, Oguta 1 (one) and Oguta 2 (two), separated by its popular lake with the local government Headquarters located at Oguta 1 (one). Oguta Lake is the largest natural lake in Imo State of Nigeria, located within the equatorial rainforest region. It is of importance to the local population (the people of Oguta, Orsu, Nkwesi and Awo) as a source of water, fish, and tourism.

Population for study

The population for the study comprises 22,000 people that make up Oguta. Residents ranging from eighteen (18) years and above both

male and female were sampled. In order, however, to sample a fair representation of respondents across the selected villages, the projected population figure was subjected to the Taro Yameni (1967) formula. A sample size of 400 was used. Stratified and purposive random sampling techniques were used for the study.

Data collection techniques

The researchers personally administered 370 copies of questionnaire to respondents from the three villages and residents, 30 copies of questionnaire were administered on personalities in the tourism destination. Retrieval was done immediately. Upon retrieval, the researchers conducted interview with the different respondents for further clarification on the answer given.

Data analysis techniques

SPSS statistical package was used to analyze the data. A single case-study approach was applied combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to obtain and analyze information. The analytical tools used were mean and standard deviation. The average (mean) of these agreements was 3.0. Any response with mean of 3.0 and above was regarded agreed while any response below 3.0 was regarded as disagreed. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) derived from the regression analysis was used in testing the hypothesis.



Plate 1: Oguta Blue Lake

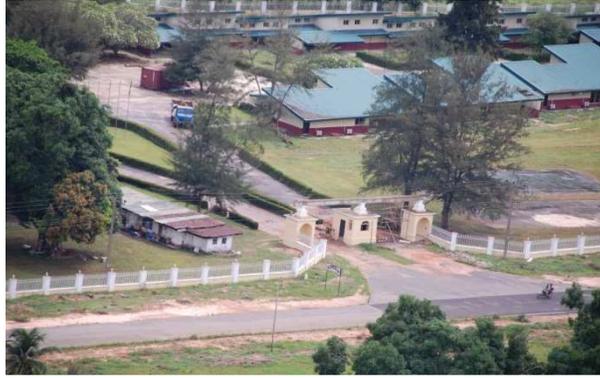


Plate 2: Oguta Lake Motel



Plate 3: Oguta Lake Motel Topview



Plate 4: Monkeys at Mgbidi tourist site

Results and discussion

Research Question I: In what ways are the host community involved in the management of the tourism destination?

Table 1: The ways hosts are involved in the management of the tourism destination

S/N	Way of involvement	Total score	Mean	Decision
1	Planning and decision making	680	2.2	Disagreed
2	Policy making	620	2.5	Disagreed
3	Private sector business	1722	4.1	Agreed
4	Employment opportunities	1675	3.6	Agreed
5	Benefit gainer of the sector	1566	3.2	Agreed
6	Gaining control over tourism business through ownership	1679	3.7	Agreed
	Total	7942	19.3	3.2

Source: Field Survey 2015.

Table 1 above showed that the respondents agreed that they were involved in private sector business, employment opportunities, as benefit gainer of the sector, and control over tourism business through ownership of the tourism destination with 4.1, 3.6, 3.2 and 3.7 means respectively, but disagreed that they participated in planning and decision making and policy making with 2.2 and 2.5 means, respectively. Considering the clustered mean of 3.2 (which is above the decision rule of 3.0), the result showed that the host community perceived their involvement in the tourism destination as positive rather than negative.

Research Question II: What are the levels of community involvement in the management of the tourism destination?

Table 2: Level of involvement in the management of the tourism destination

S/N	Level of involvement	Total score	Mean	Decision
1	Planning and decision making	686	2.5	Disagreed
2	Organizing/coordinating activities and resources	1664	3.8	Agreed
3	Managing and motivating people	1582	3.2	Agreed
4	Controlling/monitoring and evaluating activities	1674	3.7	Agreed
5	Involvement in policy formulation	658	2.2	Disagreed
6	Job opportunities for host in tourism at all levels	1756	4.2	Agreed
	Total	8020	19.6	3.3

Source: Field Survey 2015.

Table 2 above showed that the respondents agreed that the host community were involved in organizing and/or coordinating activities and resources, managing and motivating people, controlling/monitoring and evaluating activities and job opportunities for hosts at all levels with 3.8, 3.2, 3.7 and 4.2 means, respectively. However, respondents disagreed that they were involved in planning and decision making and policy formulation with 2.5 and 2.2 means, respectively. The above indicated that the host community perceived their level of involvement in these spheres as positive rather than negative considering the clustered mean of 3.3.

Research Question III: In which of the following ways do tourism influence the wellbeing of the host community?

Table 3: The ways community involvement in tourism influence the wellbeing of the host community

S/N	Way of tourism influence	Total score	Mean	Decision
1	Tourism has improved the quality of life of the people in the community.	1659	3.7	
2	Tourism has improved the housing condition of the community	1721	4.0	
3	Prostitution has greatly reduced due to the influence of tourism in the community	1648	3.6	
4	Tourism has encourage you to appropriate your language more	1579	3.1	
5	Tourism has improved public security.	1589	3.2	
	Total	8196	17.6	3.5

Source: Field Survey 2015.

As shown in Table 3 above, the respondents agreed that tourism influences quality of life of the people in the community. It improved the housing condition of the community, greatly reduced prostitution in the community, encouraged people to appropriate their language more and improved public security with 3.7, 4.0, 3.6, 3.1 and 3.2, means respectively. The clustered mean of 3.5 attest to this view.

Research Question IV: What are the possible ways of improving their involvement to ensure sustainability of both host community and tourism development?

Table 4: The ways of improving their involvement for sustainability.

S/n	Ways of improvement	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Create entrepreneurial opportunities for locals	180 (45.00)	168 (42.00)	20 (5.00)	17 (4.25)	15 (3.75)
2	Discourage undemocratic decision making	170 (42.5)	181 (45.25)	28 (7.00)	11 (2.75)	10 (2.50)
3	Ensure equal distribution of benefits	200 (50.00)	165 (41.25)	20 (5.00)	10 (2.50)	5 (1.25)
4	Ensure successful implementation of tourism plans and activities	199 (49.75)	135 (33.75)	35 (8.75)	18 (4.50)	13 (3.25)
5	Increased control of local community over tourism assets	183 (45.75)	106 (26.50)	65 (16.25)	31 (7.75)	15 (3.75)
Grand Mean Total		186.4 (46.60)	151 (37.75)	33.6 (8.40)	17.4 (4.35)	11.6 (2.90)

Note: Parenthesis = percentage

The table 4 above shows the likely ways of improving their involvement to ensure sustainability of both host community and tourism development. Whereas 186.47 (46.60%) and 151 (37.75%) of the respondent strongly agreed and agreed respectively, on the above ways of improvement, 17.4 (4.35%) and 11.6 (2.90%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively. About 33.6 (8.40%) of the respondents were undecided. Impliedly, most of the respondents agreed that the above ways are the likely to improve their involvement and ensure sustainability of both host community and tourism development.

Hypothesis one:

H0: There is no significant difference in tourism destinations where the host communities are involved in the management and where they are not involved.

H1: There is significant difference in tourism destinations where the host communities are involved in the management and where they are not involved.

Table 5: The regression analysis between involvement of host communities and non-host community.

	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-cal	F-tab
Regression	3.126	8	0.391	9.093**	1.94
Residual	16.784	390	0.043		
Total	19.91				

Note: ** is significant at 5%

Decision rule: If F-calculated is greater than F-tabulated, then reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis.

The table 5 above showed that the F-calculated was 9.093 while the F-tabulated was 1.94. Since F calculated is greater than F-tabulated, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted indicating that there is significant difference in the tourism destination where the host communities are involved in the management and where they are not involved.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the research revealed that the study villages were involved in tourism development as well as in the protection of tourists and tourism facilities. The villages that make up Oguta Lake communities include: Orsu Obodo, Nnnebukwu, Mgbele, Nkweshi,

Abaizie, Awo, Umuachisi, Umunkwocha, Umuene Mmanya, Umutogwumma, Egbuoma, Mgbidi, Egwe.

As shown in Table 1, the respondents perceived the ways host communities were involved in tourism activities as desirable (positive) following the clustered mean of the overall responses of 3.2, which was higher than the decision rule of 3.0. This is in line with the argument by Wall and Mathieson (2006) that tourism can create positive impact if it motivates the local communities to work more for the things they lack. It goes without saying that tourists bring new products and ideas into the host communities and these create opportunities for them to modify their behaviour and help them to introduce new styles, products and economic activities. It is also revealed as reflected in Table 2 that the levels of host involvement in management of the tourism destination were perceived by the respondents as desirable (positive), given that the clustered mean of the overall responses of 3.3 was higher than the decision rule. This also in line with Wall and Mathieson (2006).

Furthermore, given that the clustered mean of the overall responses was 3.5 and above decision rule of 3.0 as presented in Table 3, it is averred that the respondents also perceived the influence of tourism as desirable (positive) This corroborates the assertion by Hunke, (2004), that the actual and perceived impact of tourism will influence the attitude of the host community and ultimately have an effect on sustainability.

Table 4 outlined the likely ways of improving host communities involvement for the sustainability of both host community and tourism development. These included creating entrepreneurial opportunities for locals, discouraging undemocratic decision making, ensuring equal distribution of benefits, ensuring successful implementation of tourism plans and activities and increasing the control of local community over tourism assets. It revealed that most of the respondents see them as the most likely ways to improve their involvement and ensure sustainability of both host community and tourism development.

The table 5 showed the regression analysis between involvement of host communities and the non-host community. The F-calculated was 9.093 while the F-tabulated was 1.94. Since F calculated is greater than F-tabulated, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative

hypothesis was accepted indicating that there is a significant difference between the tourism destination where the host communities are involved in the management and where they are not involved. As Smite (2001) rightly puts it, host communities are 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.

CONCLUSION

This work has attempted to evaluate community involvement in Oguta Lake of Imo State. Based on the research findings, it is concluded that tourism is a valuable contributor to the community development and therefore, government should assist the tourism industry through partnership with host communities for more intensive community involvement.

The findings revealed that the involvement of the host community in the tourism destination resulted in increased job opportunities for the locals at all levels, improved the quality of life of the people in the communities, encouraged them to appreciate their language more, and improved public security. Furthermore, the findings showed that the possible ways of improving their involvement for the sustainability of both the host community and tourism destination is to create entrepreneurial opportunities for the locals, equitable distribution of benefits, successful implementation of tourism plans and activities, and increased control by local communities of tourism assets.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings of the research work.

1. Tourism stakeholders should allow local communities to participate actively in tourism development to ensure successful implementation of tourism plans and activities.
2. Lack of education was identified as a bar to efforts by local people in accessing tourism employment opportunities. In order to increase the contribution of tourism to poverty alleviation, there is need to institute training programmes at the community level that will ultimately provide opportunities for the local people to be employed in various businesses.

3. Host community participation which is a pre-requisite for sustainable tourism development should be encouraged and facilitated in tourism development processes to give the host community a sense of ownership and control over their resources.
4. Policies and practices that ensure the sustainability of the destination should be developed at the early stage of tourism development to avert the negative influences that may result at the maturation of the industry

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