

Perceived socio-economic impacts of coastal tourism activities by women in Araromi community of Ondo State, Nigeria

Arowosafe, F.C., Tunde-Ajayi, O. and Joseph, J.

Department of Ecotourism and Wildlife Management, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author: fcarowosafe@futa.edu.ng

Abstract

This study assessed the perceived socio-economic impacts of river based tourism activities on Araromi community of Ondo State. Data collection was through oral interviews and administration of semi-structured questionnaires on 100 women selected based on their willingness to participate in the study. Data obtained were analysed descriptively and with Pearson's correlation. The study showed that 61.0% of the respondents agreed that tourist visitation had increased their income level. Furthermore, 46.0% agreed that coastal tourism contribution to social vices was low. Majority (93.0%) of the respondents supported further promotion of coastal tourism in the area. Pearson Correlation analysis showed that there was significant relationship ($p < 0.01$) between tourism activities and the respondents' perceived impacts of standard of living in the community. This study thus revealed that women in the study area perceived that coastal tourism activities had positive socio-economic impacts on their community.

Keywords: Coastal tourism, community, perceived, socio-economic impact, Ondo State.

Introduction

Tourism has emerged as one of the world major socio-economic sector and has had forty- five percent annual expanding rate in the latter half of the 20th century, hence, it has become one of the world fastest growing industry (Ofodile, 2004). River-based recreation is an integral part of every society. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE, 2001)) reported that approximately 97% of a nation's population participates in some form of outdoor recreation each year (Cordell, Betz & Green, 2002). Some of these outdoor recreations are River based and includes water adventure tourism, which comprises water-rafting, river-cruise, fishing, river-exploration, boating and kayaking. Recreational services like river rafting and camping have been classified as intangible but are nonetheless highly valued in terms of the satisfaction tourists derive from such activities (Hawkins, 2003). The presence of several attractions such as beaches, spectacular rock formations, wildlife and other rich festivals, architecture and crafts in Ondo state has necessitated the current tourism drive in the state (Adora, 2010).

The physical presence of tourists and the development of tourism industries contribute to changes in social structure, size and demographic characteristics, increased mobility of women and young adults, infrastructural development, increased supply of services and consequently improved quality of life for local residents and organization of host communities (Li, McCabe & Joldersman, 2010). The practice of recreational activities inevitably has either a positive or negative effect on rural communities. This however may vary from one area to another and can only be found out through responses from women and other stakeholders in the communities. Stynes and Propst (1992) asserts that as a very important and an integral portion of the society, communities therefore need to understand the relative importance of tourism to their region, especially its contribution to economic activity

in the area.

Informal studies of recreational impacts on the environment across the globe had been conducted occasionally since 1920's (Meinecke, 1928). It was not until the 1960's that more rigorous recreation- based ecological studies were conducted. By 1980's, research was accumulating on disturbance of animal species by recreational activities (MacArthur, Geist, & Johnston, 1982) but the socio-economic impacts of coastal tourism on coastal areas seems to have attracted low interest from researchers. This study assesses the socio-economic impacts of coastal tourism on the Araromi community of Ondo State. The study hypothesized that there was no significant relationship between the coastal tourism activities and the respondents' perceived impacts on the standard of living in their community.

Materials and Methods

The Study Area

The study was carried out in the coastal areas of Ondo State. It has an area of 1,318 km² and a population of 290,615 as at 2006 census (National population census 2006). The study area lies between longitude 02 24'E – 05 1'E of the Greenwich meridian and Latitude 5^o 51'N- 6 42'N of the equator (Ilaje, 2013). It consists of over five hundred and twenty (520) towns and villages, covering an area of 4,500sq/km. There is sand formation at the western part of the coastal areas extending from the Lekki peninsula in Lagos State to Araromi Sea-side and Zion pepe. It has a shoreline covering about 180km thereby making Ondo State, a state with the longest coastline in Nigeria (Ilaje, 2013). The vegetation of the area is predominantly mangrove swamp, with low grasses covering expanse of undulating lowland of mud and silt deposit in south and rainforest vegetation with abundant raffia palms in the north of the local government.

Data Collection and Analysis

One hundred (100) female above eighteen years who

Perceived Socio-Economic Impacts of Coastal Tourism by Women

were willing to participate in the study were selected. Semi-structured questionnaire covering socio-economic characteristics and the Likert Scale type statements on perceived impacts of tourism on the study area was administered on the respondents. The perceived impacts were measured as strongly agreed=4, agree=3, undecided=2, disagree=1. The data obtained were subjected to descriptive analysis while relationships between coastal tourism activities and the perceived standard of living of the community residents were tested with Pearson's Correlation.

Results

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents are shown in Table 1. It shows that 43.0% of the respondents were within the age category of 30-39. In addition, 69.0% were married, while 51.0% had a family size of 1-4 individuals. Seventy two percent (72.0%) of the respondents were involved in fishing, trading of fish and artworks such as fishing net, brooms and baskets which is attributed to the presence of the river in their community. Fishing was the occupation of 40.0% of the respondents. Also, 56.0% of the women had a monthly income of ° 10,000- ° 20,000.

Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents (n=100)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age (Year)		
18-29	30	30.0
30-39	43	43.0
40-49	18	18.0
50-59	7	7.0
60 and above	2	2.0
Marital status		
Single	25	25.0
Married	69	69.0
Divorced	1	1.0
Widowed	5	5.0
Level of education		
Primary	43	43.0
Secondary	33	33.0
Tertiary	9	9.0
Others	2	2.0
No formal education	13	13.0
Occupation		
Fishing	40	40.0
Farming	19	19.0
Trading	32	32.0
Boat making	1	1.0
Others	8	8.0
Family size		
1-4	51	51.0
5-10	48	48.0
Above 10	1	1.0
Monthly income		
Below ° 5,000	10	10.0
° 5,000-° 10,000	17	17.0
° 10,000-° 20,000	56	56.0
° 20,000-° 30,000	15	15.0
Above ° 30,000	2	2.0

The perceived socio-economic impacts of coastal tourism on the respondent's community is presented in Table 2. It indicates that 61.0% of the respondents agreed that coastal tourism had brought about an increase in their income level. The women reported to record higher sales in food and drinks, souvenirs and also generate direct income through activities such as boat cruising by tourists on the beach. However, majority (75.0%) disagreed that river-based tourism

had brought infrastructural development to their community. Coastal tourism, according to the women leader had brought some increase in their economic activities, although it was believed that Government intervention could improve their economic status. The extent of women's support for further promotion of river based recreation in their area is presented in Figure 1. This response reflects that they see the potentials of recreation improving their economic status. Large

percentage of the respondents (46.0%) of the respondents disagreed that river-based recreation had increased the rate of social vices in their community.

Also, 36.0% agreed that river-based recreation had brought about civilisation and exposure to their community.

Table 2: Perceived Socio-Economic impacts of river based recreation by women

Perceived impacts	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Increase in income level		
Agree	61	61.0
Strongly agree	8	8.0
Undecided	22	22.0
Disagree	9	9.0
Strongly disagree	0	0.0
Infrastructural development		
Agree	6	6.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0
Undecided	14	14.0
Disagree	75	75.0
Strongly disagree	5	5.0
Increase in Social vices		
Agree	17	17.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0
Undecided	37	37.0
Disagree	46	46.0
Increased Exposure/civilization		
Agree	36	36.0
Strongly agree	1	1.0
Undecided	44	44.0
Disagree	19	19.0

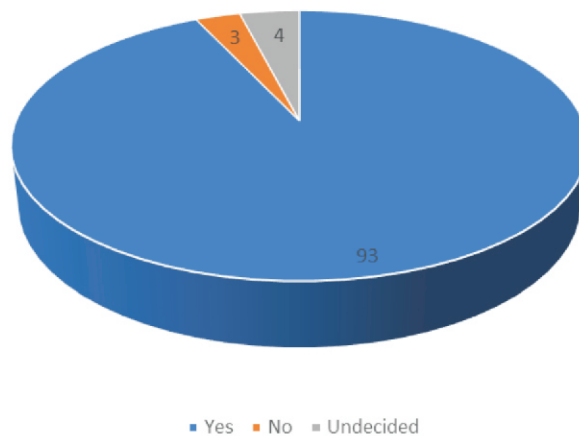


Figure 1: Respondents' support for the promotion of river based recreation (%).

Relationship between Coastal Tourism Activities and the Respondents' Perceived Impacts on Standard of Living in their Community

The result of the test of hypothesis indicating the relationship between the coastal tourism activities and the respondents' perceived impacts on the standard of

living in their community is shown in Table 3. The result shows that only boat cruising ($p < 0.01$) had statistically significant relationship with the respondents' perceived impacts of coastal tourism activities on the standard of living in their community.

Table 3: Relationship between coastal tourism activities and the perceived living standard in the study area

Variable	Correlation value	Decision
Fishing	0.12	NS
Swimming	0.16	NS
Boat cruising	0.28**	S
Birding watching	0.03	NS
Surfing	0.15	NS
Beach	0.02	NS
Festival	0.05	NS

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Discussion

Based on the results obtained in this study, more than average percentage of women with large family size signifies that the women have greater responsibilities to feed their family and would rely on the economic benefits available in their immediate environment. The dependence on fishing activities ranging from fish trading to production of fishing equipment as a source of income is largely due to the presence of the river in their community. This is in line with the studies of Béné (2007) that river based related activities provide a substantial contribution to households' livelihood and are the primary income generating activity of most families. Also, the low income accruing to the women from their monthly economic activities is far from being sufficient judging from the fact that majority of the women are married and have large households to cater for.

Considering the perceived socio-economic impacts of coastal tourism on the respondents' community revealed that the respondents perceived an increase in their income level due to the river based tourism activities. This is also in agreement with Béné (2007) who opined that river based activities are the primary income generating activities of most families living near large rivers contributing about 74.0% of their revenue. The conventional wisdom among researchers in recent years has been that recreation and tourism have both positive and negative economic impacts. On the positive side, recreation development helps to diversify the local economy, and it generates economic growth. It achieves this partly by acting as a kind of export industry, attracting money from the outside to spend on goods and services produced locally (Gibson, 2008). The fact that a high majority of the respondents perceived that the river based tourism activities has not brought any significant infrastructural development gives cause for concern, since infrastructural development of an area aids in tourism development. Infrastructure, such as airports and highways and water systems, often must be upgraded to meet the needs of tourists, and such improvements can help foster the growth of no recreation industries in the area by attracting entrepreneurs and labour and by providing direct inputs to these industries (Gibson, 2008).

The result of the study indicate that majority of the respondents supported the promotion of the river based

tourism. This response could indicate that they see the opportunities and potentials for economic improvement which the development of the river based tourism could bring to the community. Furthermore, high percentage of the respondents did not believe that the river based recreation activities has increased the rate of social vices in the community. This finding is explained by Ogaboh Agba, Ikoh, Basse and Ushie, (2010) who stated that the main social impacts of any tourist destination occur as a result of tourist- host relationship.

The result of the test of relationship between coastal tourism activities and the respondents' perceived impacts on standard of living indicated that only boat cruising has significant relationship with the standard of living. This may be due to the fact that there is higher demand for boating activities and hence more income is generated from boating activities by the women and other residents in Araromi.

Conclusion

The study has shown that women in Araromi community perceived that coastal tourism activities impacted positively on their community, judging from income level and the civilisation and exposure of their community. The respondents equally perceived that tourism had not impacted their community positively in terms of infrastructural development, however, they supported the promotion of river based recreation activities in the area.

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