

NATURE-BASED TOURISM ATTRACTIVENESS AND VISITORS' SATISFACTION IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the attributes that determine nature-based tourism attractiveness and effect on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria. Data were collected from six nature-based tourism outfits in four Local Government Areas; Obanlikwu, Etung, Akamkpa and Calabar Municipality in the Northern, Central and South Senatorial Districts respectively. The research design used was the survey method. Disproportionate stratified sample of 388 was used for the study. Six empirical referents of the independent variable (Physical environment, location accessibility, security, service quality, promotion media and friendliness of host communities) were examined and effect on visitors' satisfaction was established. The simple linear regression analysis was used to test the relationship between visitors' satisfaction and the attributes of nature-based tourism attractiveness with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. The findings revealed that the six dimension of the independent variable have weak positive significant effect on visitors' satisfaction with nature-based tourism. Hence, we recommend that state tourism marketers, managers and industry practitioners have the compelling need to project nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction in such a way

that would make visitors and prospects alike to see, feel and smell hospitality in Cross River State.

Keywords: Nature-based, Attractiveness, Visitors' satisfaction, Cross River State, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nature-based tourism now remains an immense global business through most important economical, environmental and social influence upon indigenous and international perspectives (Kafle, 2014). Nature-based tourism is relatively new as compared to other forms of tourism, such as cultural tourism and traditional tourism. This research intends to respond to the developments of the nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, which has potential nature-based tourism to grow. Related studies are assessments of visitors' satisfaction with nature-based tourism attractions Perunjodi, Munhurn & Seegoolam, 2011; Bui, (2012) and Kafle, (2014) which were concerned with the descriptive aspect of nature-based attributes, but did not attempt to establish relationship between attributes and visitor satisfaction. Perunjodi et al (2011) tested hypotheses measuring service quality dimensions only, which is just one part of destination attribute and visitor satisfaction. These attractions have different levels of development and enhancement. However, these attractions have not been fully exploited to contribute significantly to the gross domestic product (GDP)/ gross gaming revenue (GGR) of the state. This study, therefore, is concerned with investigating these attributes of the attractiveness that significantly affect the level of visitors' satisfaction. Such information about the attributes of attractiveness would determine visitors' satisfaction with nature-based tourism which is the critical concern of this research.

The main objective of this paper is therefore to evaluate the attributes of nature-based tourism attractiveness plus effects on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to: examine the effect of nature-based tourism physical environment, location accessibility, security, service quality promotion media and friendliness of host communities on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria.

The following null research hypotheses were postulated:

Ho1: Nature-based tourism physical environment of host communities has no significant effect on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Ho2: Nature-based tourism location accessibility of host communities has no

significant effect on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Ho3: Nature-based tourism security of host communities has no significant effect on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Ho4: Nature-based tourism service quality of host communities has no significant effect on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Ho5: Nature-based tourism promotion media of host communities has no significant effect on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Ho6: Nature-based tourism friendliness of host communities has no significant effect on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nature-based tourism

Nature-based tourism principles increase awareness about the region, avoid degradation and sustainably use the resources. Nature-based tourism is not just to travel in nature only, but knowing what nature is all about and preserving it adequately (Arnegger, Woltering & Job, 2010). Dorobantu (2012) also states that environment that is usually termed nature-based tourism or environmentally friendly comprises of variety of tourism familiarities such as ecotourism, adventure tourism and facets of rural and cultural tourism like farm stay. Liezel, Peet & Melville (2012) examined the environmental elements that have negative effects on tourists' experiences in South African National Parks, and whether visitors who visit park regularly are more alert of environmental influences than those who visit only irregularly. The study of (Montakan, Rian & Mark 2014) examined whether international visitors' pro-environment attitude is improved by the experiences of nature-based tourism destination ownership of property and attachment in Thailand. The satisfaction of visitor remains a supreme significant facet in the growth of nature-based tourism attractiveness. According to Lund (2013) in tourism segment nature is faster compare to culture, visitors lay emphasis on nature more compared to culture of a giving destination.

OPERATIONAL FRAME WORK

The operational model of this study is presented in figure 1.

Dimensions of Independent variable

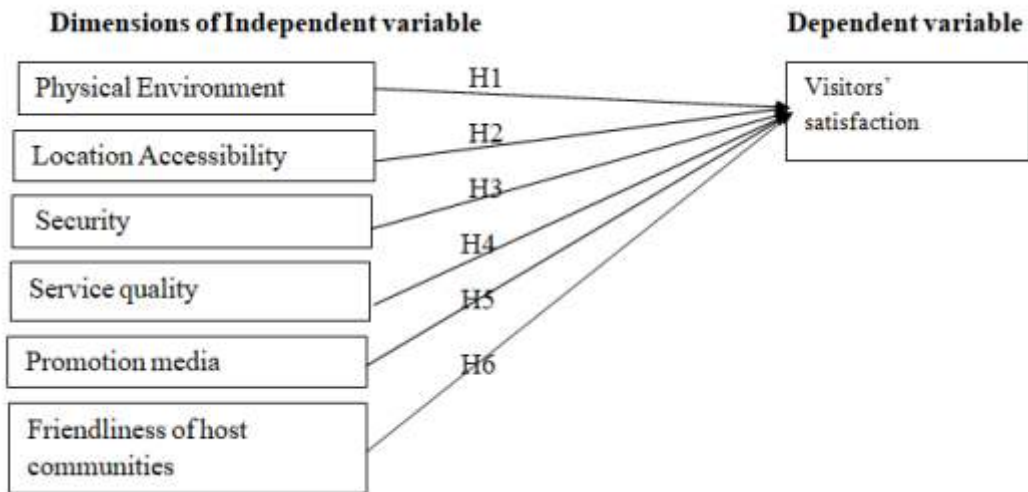


Figure 1: Model of nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction

Source: Researcher's conceptual model, 2016.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the survey research design and the research was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study area comprises Becheve Nature Reserve Canopy Walkway in Obanlikwu LGA, Degroto Mini Falls in Obanlikwu LGA, Agbokim Water Falls in Etung LGA, National Park in Akamkpa LGA, Kwa - Falls in Akamkpa LGA and Drill Ranch Pandrillus in Calabar Municipality. A sample size of 388 was generated through statistical estimation using Taro Yamane formula. Six visitors' ready attraction sites in Cross River State were used for the study. The probability sampling method (disproportionate stratified sampling technique) was used for the study. The population of the study consists of visitors that visited the nature-based tourism attractions sites in Cross River State during the survey reference period which are individuals within the ages of 18 to 70 years and above who visited the nature-based tourism attractions within the period of this survey.

The researcher gathered primary data only. This primary data were gathered from respondents through the use of self-administered survey method and the type of the self-administered survey method was drop-off survey. The copies of questionnaire were administered to the respondents through the desk officers at various nature-based tourism attractions then retrieved at the time when the respondents had completed the questionnaire. The instrument used for the research borrowed its contents in the work of Kim, Lee Howan, Crilley, & McGrath, (2008). The instrument was divided into two (2) parts: Sections 1 and 2. The conceptual model had two constructs, nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitor satisfaction. In all, modified nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction (NBTAVS) instrument comprising twenty eight (18) items were used for the study. Section 1 of the questionnaire measured nature-based tourism attractiveness attributes (physical environment, location accessibility, security, service quality, promotion media and friendliness of host communities). All the six nature-based tourism attractiveness attributes were measured using a five point likert scale where 1= strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. Section two of the questionnaire measured over-all visitors' satisfaction with one item Esu (2014) stated "that customer satisfaction can be estimated with a single item which measures customers' overall satisfaction". This construct was equally measured on a five point likert scale with 1= very dissatisfied to 5= very satisfied. This study adopted content validity. Cronbach's alpha test was adopted to check the instrument dependability for this study. Result shows Cronbach alpha test (a) coefficient was $a = 0.74$ for physical environment, $a = 0.72$ for location accessibility, $a = 0.70$ for security, $a = 0.87$ for service quality, $a = 0.76$ for promotion media, $a = 0.78$ for friendliness of host communities. Given that the instrument measure value was higher than 0.69, it was found that the instrument used was reliable and consistent.

Data analysis techniques employed was the simple linear regression because it ascertains the causal association among nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 was used to compute analysis electronically. Items under each variable were summed, the mean computed and transformed into a latent variable. These variables were then used for the regression analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The following tables are showing the analysis and the interpretation of the result from the study are presented.

Table 1: Model Summary showing the relationship between physical

environment and visitors' satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.253 ^a	.064	.061	.97140

a. Predictors: (Constant), PE
Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 2: ANOVA^a showing the relationship between physical environment and visitors' satisfaction.

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	18.203	1	18.203	19.291	.000 ^b
Residual	267.046	283	.944		
Total	285.249	284			

a. Dependent Variable: OS
b. Predictors: (Constant), PE
Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 3: Coefficients^a showing the relationship physical environment and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	.051	.245		12.440	.000
PE	.263	.060	.253	4.392	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OS

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016.

Tables 1, 2, 3 show the simple linear regression analysis result carried out to test H_{01} . The result shows that physical environment (PE) of nature-based tourism significantly affected visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State Nigeria. ($F=19.291, P<0.05$). Tables 1 and 2 further reported that F statistic was significant showing the model prediction strength. ($R^2=0.64$ percent). Therefore, H_{01} was rejected. The result shows a weak positive significance influence of physical environments of nature-based tourism attractiveness on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State Nigeria. The R^2 of 6.4 percent implied that the change in the visitor satisfaction of nature-based tourism attraction in Cross River State is accounted for, or explained, by physical environment. We look closely at the Beta column (Table 3) for the independent variable with beta value. It was seen that PE had made a contribution in revealing the dependent variable ($B=0.253$) showing it contributes in determining that dependent variable was significant.

Table 4: Model Summary showing the relationship between location accessibility and visitors' satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.321 ^a	.103	.100	.95089

a. Predictors: (Constant), LA

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 5: ANOVA^a showing the relationship between location accessibility and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	29.365	1	29.365	32.477	000 ^b
1Residual	255.884	283	.904		
Total	285.249	284			

a. Dependents Variable: OS

b. Predictors: (Constant), LA

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 6: Coefficients^a showing the relationship between location accessibility and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	2.820	.231		12.196	.000
LA	.348	.061	.321	5.699	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OS

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016.

Tables 4, 5, 6 show the simple linear regression analysis result carried out to test H_{02} . The result shows that location accessibility (LA) of nature tourism attractiveness has significantly affected visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State Nigeria. ($F= 32.477$, $P< 0.05$). Table 4 and 5 further reported that F statistic was significant showing the model prediction strength ($R^2 = 10.3$ percent). Therefore, H_{02} was rejected. The result shows a positive significance influence of location accessibility of nature-based tourism attractiveness on visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State Nigeria. R^2 of 10.3 percent explain location accessibility. We look closely at the beta column (Table 6) for independent variable ($B= 0.321$) indicating that LA had contributed in ascertaining the dependent variable.

Table 7: Model Summary showing the relationship between security and visitors' satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.291 ^a	.085	.081	.96058

a. Predictors: (Constant), S

Source: Analysis by the author, 2016.

Table 8: ANOVA^a showing the relationship between security and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	24.122	1	24.122	26.143	.000 ^b
1Residual	261.127	283	923		
Total	285.249	284			

a. Dependents Variable: OS

b. Predictors: (Constant), S

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 9: Coefficients^a showing the relationship between security and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1(Constant)	3.057	.211		14.458	.000
SS	.281	.055	.291	5.113	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OS

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Tables 7, 8, 9 show the simple linear regression analysis result carried out to test H_{03} . The result shows a positive significance relationship between security(S) of nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State Nigeria. ($F= 26.143$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, H_{03} rejected. Table 4.13A and 4.13.B further reported that F statistic was significant, showing the strength of the model's prediction (R^2 8.5 percent, $P < 0.05$) ($B= 0.291$, $P < 0.05$). The R^2 0.85 percent implies that for every unit change in visitors' satisfaction on nature-based tourism attractiveness in Cross River, 8.5 percent of such variation was attributed to explaining security. We look at Beta column (Table 9) for independent variable with beta value. It was seen that security had made a contribution in explaining the dependent variable (Beta 0.291) indicating that it had contributed in ascertaining the dependent variable.

Table 10: Model Summary showing the relationship between service quality and visitors' satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.473 ^a	.224	.221	.88429

a. Predictors: (Constant), SQ
Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016.

Table 11: ANOVA^a showing the relationship between service quality and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	63.951	1	63.951	81.782	.000 ^b
Residual	221.298	283	.782		
Total	285.249	284			

a. dependent Variable: OS
b. Predictors: (Constant), SQ
Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016.

Table 12: Coefficients^a showing the relationship between service quality and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.660	.275		6.044	.000
SQ	.602	.067	.473	9.043	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OS
Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Tables 10, 11, 12 present the simple linear regression analysis carried out to test H_{04} . This result shows a positive significance relationship between service quality (SQ) of nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction in Cross

River State Nigeria. ($F = 81.782$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, H_{04} was rejected. Table 10 and 11 further reported that F statistic was significant, indicating the strength of model's prediction. (R^2 22.4 percent). The R^2 22.4 percent implies that for every unit change in visitors' satisfaction on nature-based tourism attractiveness in Cross River, 22.4 percent of such variation was attributed to explaining service quality. We also look at Beta column (Table 12) for independent variable with beta value. It was seen that service quality had made a contribution in explaining the dependent variable (Beta 0.473 P) indicating that it had contributed in ascertaining the dependent variable.

Table 13: Model Summary showing the relationship between promotion media and visitors' satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.351 ^a	.123	.120	.94019

a. Predictors: (Constant), PM
Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 14: ANOVA^a showing the relationship between promotion media and visitors' satisfaction.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	35.089	1	35.089	39.695	0.000 ^b
Residual	250.160	283	.884		
Total	285.249	284			

a. Dependents Variable: OS
b. Predictors: (Constant), PM
Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016.

Table 15: Coefficients^a showing the relationship between promotion media and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
1(Constant)	2.772	.218		12.734	.000
PM	.351	.056	.351	6.300	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OS

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Tables 13, 14, 15 reported the simple linear regression analysis carried out to test H_{05} . The result shows that promotion media (PM) of nature-based tourism attractiveness significantly affected visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State Nigeria. ($F = 39.695$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, H_{05} was rejected. Table 13 and 14 further reported that F statistic was significant, indicating the strength of model's prediction (R^2 12.3 percent). The R^2 12.3 percent implies that for every unit change in visitors' satisfaction on nature-based tourism attractiveness in Cross River, 12.3 percent of such variation was attributed to explaining promotion media. We also look at Beta column (Table 15) for independent variable with beta value. It was observed that promotion media have made a contribution in elucidating the dependent variable (Beta 0.351 P) indicating that it had contributed in ascertaining the dependent variable.

Table 16: Model Summary showing the relationship between friendliness of host community and visitors' satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.372 ^a	.138	.135	.93198

a. Predictors: (Constant), FCH

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 17: ANOVA^a showing the relationship between friendliness of host community and visitors' satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	39.439	1	39.439	45.406	.000 ^b
Residual	245.810	283	.869		
Total	285.249	284			

a. Dependents Variable: OS

b. Predictors: (Constant), FCH

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Table 18: Coefficient^a showing the relationship between friendliness of host community of nature and visitors' satisfaction.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1(Constant)	2.583	.232		11.152	.000
FCH	.399	.059	.372	6.738	.000

a. Dependent Variable: OS

Source: Analysis by the researcher, 2016

Tables 16, 17, 18 report the simple linear regression analysis carried out to test H_{06} . The result shows that friendliness of host communities (FCH) of nature-based tourism attractiveness significantly affected visitors' satisfaction in Cross River State Nigeria ($F = 45.406$, $P < 0.05$). Therefore, H_{06} was rejected. Table 16 and 17 further reported that F statistic was significant, indicating the strength of model's prediction. (R^2 13.8 percent). The R^2 13.8 percent implies that for every unit change in visitors' satisfaction on nature-based tourism attractiveness in Cross River State, 13.8 percent of such variation was attributed to friendliness of host communities. We also examined Beta column (Table 18) for independent variable with beta value. It was seen that friendliness of host communities had made a contribution in elucidating the dependent variable (Beta 0.372) revealing that it contributes in explaining that dependent variable was significant.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Physical environment of nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction.

Physical environment of nature-based tourism simply implies physical environment atmosphere appealing, physical facilities functional and operational. The coefficient of determination (R^2 value of 6.4 percent) implied that for any change in the visitors' satisfaction, such variation was attributed to physical environment of nature-based tourism attractiveness. Physical environment applied weak positive significant effect on visitors' satisfaction. This research finding supports the work of Montakan, Rian & Mark (2014).

Location accessibility of nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction.

Location accessibility is visual signage and easy accessibility by everyone in nature-based tourism attractiveness. The R^2 value of 10.3 percent implied that, for any change in visitor satisfaction of nature-based tourism, such variation is explained by location accessibility. This showed that location accessibility has a weak positive significant influenced on visitors' satisfaction. This research finding agreed with the work of Suthathip (2014) on factors affecting accessibility, hospitability and cost of staying on tourist satisfaction in Northern Province in Chiang Mai, Thailand, due to abundance of many natural attractions.

Security of nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction

Security entails (safety in the area and crime free in the area), in nature-based tourism. The R^2 value of 8.5 percent implied that for any change in visitors' satisfaction, such variation was attributed to security of nature-based tourism. It revealed security of nature-based tourism has a weak positive significant effect on visitors' satisfaction.

Service quality of nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction

The R^2 value of 22.4 percent implied that for any change in visitors' satisfaction of service quality, such variation is attributed to nature-based tourism attractiveness. This study revealed weak positive significant relationship between service quality and nature-based tourism attractiveness on visitors' satisfaction. This research finding supports the work of Ivyanno & Nila 2012

and Mukhles (2013). Tang, Lai & Cheng, (2012), also confirm quality of service to remain key precursor to customer fulfilment that ensures visitors' contentment.

Promotion media of nature- based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction

Promotion media implies that, the site marketing materials is eye- catching and the site publicity is unique in nature-based tourism. The R^2 value of 12.3 percent implied that, for any change in visitor satisfaction of nature-based tourism, such variation is explained by promotion media. This showed that promotion media has a weak positive significant effect on visitors' satisfaction.

Friendliness of host communities of nature- based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction

Friendliness of host communities of nature- based tourism entails (the locals are friendly and the local support the nature-based tourism) in nature-based tourism. The R^2 value of 13.8 percent implied that, for any change in visitor satisfaction of nature-based tourism, such variation is explained by friendliness of host communities. This showed that friendliness of host communities significantly influenced visitors' satisfaction. The implication of this study is to develop the socioeconomic impact for host communities where nature-based attraction sites are found.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study is an attempt to explore the most important characteristics and attributes of the nature-based attractiveness in Cross River State with visitors' satisfaction. It was recommended that state tourism marketers, managers and industry practitioners have the convincing need to project nature-based tourism attractiveness and visitors' satisfaction in such a way that would make visitors and prospects to see, feel and smell hospitality in Cross River State.

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