



Online copy available at

www.patmsukjournal.net/currentissue

Assessment of Tourist Attractions in Okomu National Park and Oguta Lake Eco-destinations of Nigeria

Ijeomah, H.M., Nwanegbo, O.C. and Umokoro, O.

Department of Forestry and Wildlife Management, University of Port Harcourt, P.M.B 5323
Port Harcourt, Nigeria. henry.ijeomah@uniport.edu.ng; henryijeomah@yahoo.com

Abstract

Several efforts have been made by tourism institutions in Nigeria concerning development of new tourism destinations but the attractions in age old ecotourism destinations are unknown. The study was therefore conducted to identify tourism attractions in two selected destinations of international ecological importance. Data for the study were collected from Oguta lake destination and Okomu National Park through personal interviews, structured questionnaire, observation and administrative records. The first set of questionnaire was randomly administered to selected number of tourist respondents in each destination. The second set was administered to officials while the third set of questionnaire was administered to household representatives who have lived in the host community for a minimum period of 15 years. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, percentages and tables. Results showed that the sites were well endowed with fascinating but varied attractions such as unique lake; tree house; hanging bridge; endemic, endangered and rare species of wild animals; and feature activities like swimming; game viewing; trailing, golf playing, boat cruising, bird watching; sport fishing and cultural activities. The lake is the most cherished tourist attraction in Oguta lake destination (91.67%) and parts of the lake always visited are the confluence (80.00%), followed by Kalabari beach (36.67%). The main tourism activities in the lake identified by tourists are swimming (88.33%), boating (88.33%), fishing (85%), picnicking (76.67%), recreation (73.33%) and golf playing (63.33%). The ferrying facilities such as boats and pontoons are the most prominent (65.22%) means of transportation in Oguta lake destination. The tourist activities available in Okomu national park are game viewing, tree house climbing, picnicking, swimming, bathing in stream and botanical ramblings. The most visited parts of Okomu national park are the tree house (100%) and hanging bridge (100%) from where tourists have a panoramic view of the park. From the tree house tourists view elephants bathing in a lake in the park. Among the wildlife species of interests to tourists in Okomu national park were the white throated monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrogastrus*), African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) and hornbill (*Ceratogymna atrata*).

Keywords: Okomu national park, Ecotourism attractions, Game viewing, Oguta lake, Nigeria

Introduction

The world tourism organization defines tourism as 'the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes' (Nedelea *et al*, 2008; USAID, 2005; Ayodele, 2002). Simply put, it is 'the practice of traveling for recreation' (Merriam- Webster Online Dictionary, 2008; Center for Responsible Travel, CREST, 2005). Tourism is as old as the existence of man. Right from the time of creation man has travelled from one area to another for different purposes. Some other reasons for travelling could be cultural, religious, educational,

political, personal or administrative. Record showed that many great leaders travelled to view or experience unique virtues in other kingdoms and chiefdoms. These leaders used unique attractions in their domains, as a display of pride, to attract their counterparts. For instance the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon because of the fame of his kingdom that spread abroad (Holy Bible, 2004). It was on this basis that these leaders kept wild animals in mini zoos within their palaces to entertain attracted visitors and as a display of their greatness. Due to diversity of interests and development, man will always continue to embark on tourism. In fact man has started travelling outside the planet, earth to the space because of the quest to know, touch, see, feel and have new experience. These differences in interest have given rise to cultural, educational, religious, environmental, conference, sports, sex and romance tourism.

Ecotourism, an aspect of environmental tourism is a “Responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improve the well-being of local people” (The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), 2002). Ecotourism entails travelling to natural areas that are protectively unspoilt for the sake of vivid experience. It means travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with specific objectives of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as existing cultural manifestations (Ceballos - Lascrain, 1992a; Ceballos-Lascrain, 1992b; Ijeomah *et al.*, 2014). Ecotourism focuses on natural zones such as sacred forest, wilderness area, mountain tops, caves, hills, rocks, waterfalls, rivers, streams, lakes, beaches, game reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, oases, valleys, forests and other unique landscapes, which are protectively untouched by human activities. Remote areas particularly attract tourists (Kamuro, 1996) because of their unique culture, wildlife endowments and landscape values (Ayodele, 1991; Ayodele, 2002), which can hardly be experienced in developed cities. Ecotourism is the fastest growing aspect of tourism. Ecotourists travel to remote destinations in search of unique naturalism or new areas to know, observe, feel and experience or unusual things to touch, (Ijeomah and Aiyelaja, 2010; Ijeomah and Herbert, 2012; Ijeomah *et al.*, 2014). Movement of people on earth is seriously, therefore, influenced by attraction. However, some attractions are more unique than others. The uniqueness and “naturalness” of attractions are basic but major factors to be considered in the economics of tourism management and revenue generation at local, national and global levels.

The objective of this study is therefore to assess the tourist attractions, activities and facilities in two selected ecodestinations of global conservation concerns in southern, Nigeria.

Methodology

Study Area

Out the numerous ecological destinations in Nigeria three sites were selected for the study. Okomu national park was selected to represent Wildlife Park, Oguta lake represents lakes while Farinruwa represents waterfalls.

Okomu National Park

Okomu National Park (ONP) is the smallest national park in Nigeria with a land area of 212km²(National Park Service, 2009). It was selected as a wildlife park in southern Nigeria with endemic species and more developed tourism facilities than Old Oyo and Cross River national parks, the two other national parks in the south. Okomu national park is located in Edo state, Nigeria. It lies between latitude 6° 21' N and longitude 5° 13' E (Inahoro, 1991). It has three ranges. The park is located in Ovia South-west local government, Edo State, Nigeria (Figure 2). The park has four ranges which are; Julius creek range, Iguowan range, Arakwan range and Babui creek range.

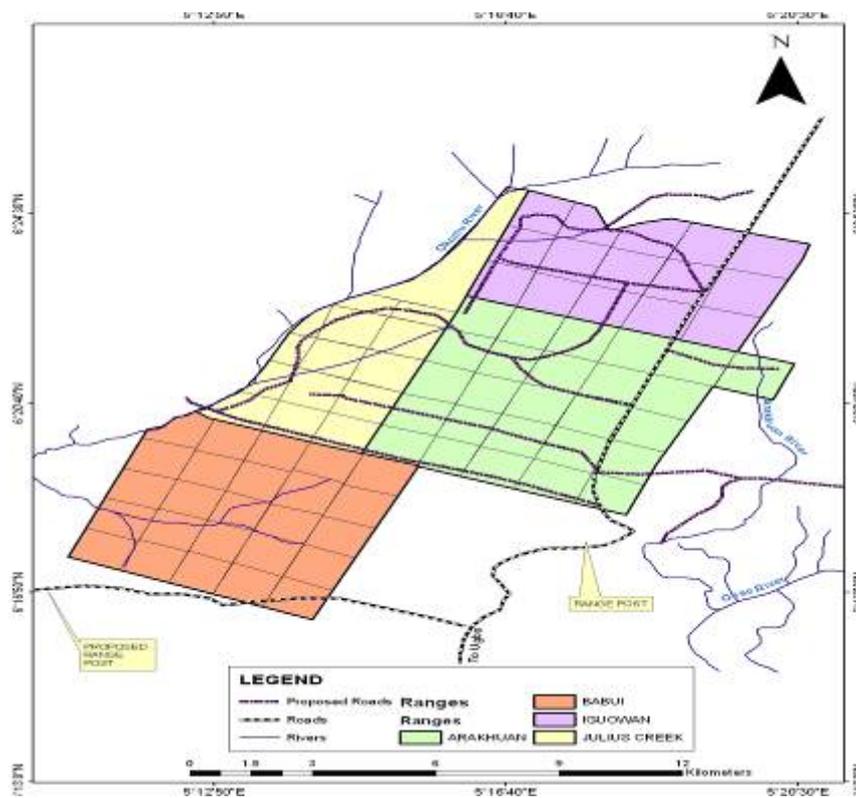


Figure 1: Map of Okomu National Park in Edo State, Nigeria showing the ranges
Source: Field Survey, 2015.

Oguta Lake

Oguta Lake (OL), one of the RAMSAR sites in Nigeria is located in Oguta local government area of Imo State. It lies between latitude $5^{\circ}41^1$ and $5^{\circ}44^1$ N and longitude $6^{\circ}56^1$ and $6^{\circ}45^1$ E of Greenwich (Ita *et al.*, 1985). It is a natural lake with surface area of 1.80km^2 at peak flood and maximum depth of 7.00m during raining season with mean depth of 5.50m. The lake is fed mainly by Njaba and Obana Rivers and empties itself into the River Niger drainage system through River Orashi. Oguta Lake has 39 species of fish (Ita *et al.*, 1985). Ogutalake is one of the largest lakes in the South Eastern Nigeria. It has a high diversity of Ichthyo fauna attributed to its intimate contact with three rivers including River Orashi which joins the River Niger – a water body with high aquatic diversity (Nwadiaro, 1989). Oguta Lake is in Oguta community in Oguta Local Government Area, Imo State as shown in Figure 2

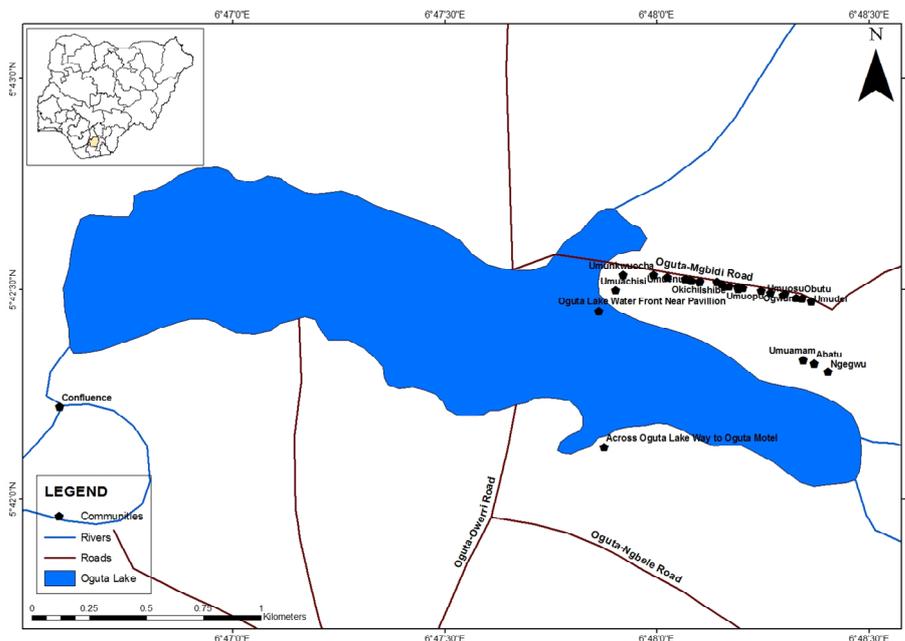


Figure 2: Map of Oguta Lake showing the locations of Oguta villages around the lake in a ‘C’ shape

Method of Data Collection

Information for this study were collected through personal observation, review of administrative records and administration of three sets of questionnaires

Sampling Design

The first set of questionnaire was randomly administered to selected number of tourist respondents in each destination based on the sample size (Table 2).The second set of questionnaires was also administered to officials of destinations (who

have spent a minimum of three years with the tourism institution) based on the sample size (Table 2). The third set of questionnaire was administered (in accordance with the sample size assigned to destinations) to household representatives who have lived in the community for a minimum period of 15 years (Table 2).

The Oguta community has 27 villages, which live around the lake forming a ‘C’ shaped curve (Ijeomah et al in press). Based on their location as guided by the “C” shape, the villages were divided into three groups of 9 villages each as listed in the table below:

Table 1: Division of villages in Oguta community into three groups

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Ngegwu village	Ogwuma village	Umunarukwu village
Abatu village	Umuopu village	Okichi village
Umuama village	Umuigbovillage	Umunku village
Umudei village	Umunsohia village	Umukwukumoshi village
Obutuville	Umuayata village	Umuenu village
Umuosu village	Umuorima village	Amaozoa village
Umutoguma village	Umuenemaya village	Umuduruowugu village
Obuagwa village	Ishibe village	Umunkwucha village
Umuajuoma village	Amaozoa village	Umuachishi village

Source: Field survey, 2015

Two groups (1 and 2) were randomly selected and the questionnaire was randomly administered to respondents from 1 and 2. Personal interviews were also conducted with experienced individuals who have lived in Oguta for more than 15 years; and managers and owners of hotels and restaurants that have lasted for more than 15 years; the traditional ruler of Oguta community and members of the royal cabinet. Based on 5km closeness to Okomu National Park, 5 communities were selected. These communities are: Igwanfole, African Timber and Plywood (AT&P), Iyayi, Iguowan, and Udo. Information on visitation trend was collected from administrative records of the park. In-depth interview was conducted with experienced staff members; including the Head of Department of ecotourism, tour guide, research officers, and knowledgeable household representatives and tourist respondents to complement information obtained through questionnaire and administrative records.

Sample size

To determine the sample size for known population as in the case of officials, the Bowley’s Formula, otherwise known as the Yaro Yamani Formula (Mac’ Odo 2002) for sample size determination was used. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2} \dots\dots\dots \text{eqn (1)}$$

Where n = sample size

N = population

e = level of significance

To determine the sample size for infinite or unknown population (probabilistic situation) such as households and tourists, Owen and Jones formula cited by Yamani (1961) was used as shown below.

$$n = Z^2(Pq)/e^2$$

Where n = sample size

Z= Z- value = 1.96

P =probability of success

q = probability of failure

E = error term or Tolerance error

Determination of sample size for tourists: Out of 18 questionnaire administered to tourists during pre – texting, 17 were positive while only 1 was negative. Applying Owen and Jones formula for sample size determination for an unknown population as cited by Yamani (1961):

$$\text{Sample size} = Z^2(Pq)/e \dots\dots\dots \text{eqn (1)}$$

Where n = sample size

Z= Z- value = 1.96

P =probability of success q = probability of failure e = error term

P = 94% q = 6% And e =5% or 0.05

$$n = (1.96)^2 \times 0.94 \times 0.06 / (0.05)^2 = 86.6 = 87$$

However, Anyanwu (2000) emphasized that the greater the sample size the better the precision of the research. Instead of 87 the sample size for tourists was increased to 120 (Table 1a).

Determination of sample size for officials:

Yaro Yamani Formula (Mac’ odo, 2002) for sample size determination for a finite population was used. The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \dots\dots\dots \text{eqn (2)}$$

Where n = sample size

N = population

e = level of significance

For Okomu national park:

$$45/1+45 (0.0025) = 45/1.1125 = 40.4 =40$$

For Oguta Lake destination:

$$467/1+467 (0.0025) = 467/2.1675 =215.45 =215$$

$$\text{Sample size for management} = 40+ 215 = 255$$

Sample size for households:

During pre – texting a total of 30 copies of questionnaire were distributed to households’ representatives in the host communities of the destinations. A total of 28 showed positive or success while 2 were negative. Using Yamani (1961) formula the sample size was calculated:

$$\begin{aligned}
 &P = 93.0\%, q = 0.7\% \text{ and } e = 5\% \\
 &\text{This translates to:} \\
 &(1.96)^2 \times 0.93 \times 0.07 / 0.0025 \\
 &= 0.25008816 / 0.0025 = 100,035 = 100
 \end{aligned}$$

Table 1a: Proportional allocation of questionnaire to respondents in destinations

Sets of questionnaire	Destination	Number of Questionnaire administered	Number of Questionnaire retrieved	Total used
1. Tourists	Oguta lake	60	57	57
	Okomu national park	60	54	54
Total		120	111	111
2. Officials	Oguta lake	215	210	210
	Okomu national park	40	32	32
Total		255	242	242
3. Households	Oguta lake	50	32	32
	Okomu national park	50	31	31
Total		100	63	63

Method of Data Analysis

Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, percentages, pie chart, bar chart and tables with line graph (trend analysis).

Results

Tourist attractions

Results on tourist attractions in the destinations are presented in table 1, plates 1 to 5, table 2, plates 5 to 8 and tables 3 to 4.5c. According to table 4.1 allrespondents (100%) indicated the lake as the major attraction in Oguta lake destination. Game viewing, tree house and the hanging bridge were indicated by all respondents (100%) as the major attraction in Okomu national park. Oguta lake, the tree house, a

walk way to the tree house, hanging bridge, Okomu national park fence and gate are shown inPlates 1; 2; 3; 4; 5a and 5b respectively.

Table1: Tourist attraction in selected destination

Destination	Tourist attraction	Frequency	Percentage
Oguta lake	Lake	299	100
	Recreation	182	60.86
	Fishing	106	35.45
	Cultural festivals	98	32.77
	Royal palace of Oguta ancient kingdom	76	25.41
Okomu national park	Game viewing	117	100
	Tree house	117	100
	Hanging bridge	117	100
	Swimming pool	87	74.35
	Okomu national parks gate	79	67.52

Source: Field survey, 2015



Plate 1:Oguta lake
Source: Field survey, 2015



Plate 2a: The tree house, a major attraction in Okomu national park
Source: Field survey, 2015



Plate 2b: A tourist climbing the tree house
Source: Field survey, 2015



Plate 3: A walkway to the tree house in Okomu national park



Plate 4: Tourists climbing the hanging bridge in Okomu national park



Plate 5a: Okomu Park fence showing natural vegetation with multi storeyed canopy



Plate 5b: Okomu Park gate showing natural vegetation with multi storeyed canopy

The most visited parts of these destinations are the confluence (100%) and Kalabari beach (100%) in Ogutalake; the and the tree house and hanging bridge (100%) in Okomu national park (Table 2). Many respondents (46.82%)also visit the golf course in Ogutalake. The confluence and Kalabari beach are presented in plates 6 and 7 respectively. Plate 8 shows a tourist climbing the hanging bridge in Okomu national park.

Table2: Section of destinations visited by tourists

Destination	Section visited	Frequency	Percentage
Oguta lake	Confluence	299	100
	Kalabaribeach	299	100
	Golf course	140	46.82
	Gun boat	67	22.40
	Shrine	0	0
Okomu national park	Tree house	117	100
	Hanging bridge	117	100

Source: Field survey, 2015



Plate 6: Confluence of Oguta lake - where two rivers meet



Plate 7: The Kalabari beach in Oguta lake destination

Table3: Tourist activities in ecodestinations

Destination	Tourist activities	Frequency	Percentage
Oguta lake	Fishing	299	100
	Boating	299	100
	Picnicking	299	100
	Swimming	299	100
	Golf playing	299	100
	Cultural activities	299	100
Okomu national park	Game viewing	117	100
	Tree house climbing	117	100
	Picnicking	117	100
	Wilderness experience/nature trail	85	72.64
	Bathing in stream	84	69.42
	Swimming in pool	72	59.50
	Botanical rambling	50	41.32

Source: Field survey, 2015

Ogutalake has ferrying facilities,hotel and golf course, lake pavilion and Ogutamotel as the facilities therein while tree house, hanging brigde, swimming pool, lodges and bush hurt are in Okomu national park (table 4).



Plate 8: Tourists boating in Oguta Lake
Source: Field survey, 2015

Table 4: Tourism facilities in destinations as identified by staff and tourists

Destination	Tourism facilities	Frequency	Percentage
Oguta lake	Ferrying facilities	267	100
	Hotel and golf course	267	100
	Lake pavilion	267	100
	Oguta motel	267	100
Okomu national park	Tree house	86	100
	Hanging bridge	86	100
	Swimming pool	86	100
	Lodges	86	100
	Bush hurt	86	100



Plate 9: Swimming pool in Arhakwan range
Source: Field survey, 2015



Plate 10: Bush hurt in Okomu National Park

Source : Field Survey, 2015.

Table 5a shows that 63.29% and 36.79% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that lake viewing, cultural activities and boating are significant tourist attractions in Oguta lake. In all the table indicated that these activities are significant attractions in the destination. Similarly, table 5b shows that waterfall and wilderness experiences are tourist attractions in Farinruwawaterfall while majority of the respondents indicated in table 4.5c that game viewing is a significant attraction in Okomu national park.

Table5a : Determining whether lake viewing, cultural activities and boating are significant tourist attractions in Oguta lake

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agreed	189	63.21
Agreed	110	36.79
Disagreed	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	299	100

Table 5c : Determining whether game viewing is a significant attraction in Okomu national park

Options	No. of respondents	Percentage
Strongly agreed	61	52.14
Agreed	56	47.86
Disagreed	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	117	100

Source: Field survey, 2015

Discussion

The major tourist attraction in Okomu national park is game viewing (table 1). Many visitors crave to watch animals in their natural environment especially the African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) and African Buffalo (*Syncerus cafer*). However it is difficult to exactly predict when to site these animals in their natural environment due to changes in weather condition which can affect behaviours of animals. More so, thickness of the rainforest hinders visibility, especially during rainy season. Accessibility to different sections of the park especially swampy areas is also difficult during rainy season, whereas tourists will always want to site the African elephant, African buffalo, crocodiles and the Nigerian monkey, White throated monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrogaster*) that is endemic to the area. The management of Okomu national park therefore created some facilities (the tree house and hanging bridge) to aid viewing of games and other resources in the park. The tree house is about 43m high with 73 steps and it is built on a silk cotton tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) in Arhakwan range (plate 2a). From the peak of the tree tourists can have a clear view of the lake where elephants bath. Okomu national park is the only destination among the three national parks in southern Nigeria with such facility at present. The hanging bridge (plate 4) is about 150m long and located across Arhakuran stream of Arhakwan range. It enables tourists to cross the stream even during rainy season when the stream overflows its bank. Similar facility, the Kakum canopy walkway in Kakum national park of Ghana is about 40m high, passes over 7 bridges and runs through a length of 330 meters, thus enables tourists walk along many tree canopies for a panoramic view at all times (Anonymous, n.d.). Walking on the hanging bridge of Okomu national park (plate 4) gives tourists an excitement. Many tourists also cherish swimming in the pool (close to tourist lodges) (plate 9), and observing the unique gate of Okomu national park (plate 5b). The entrance of national park reveals different species of plant that forms a multi storeyed typical of rainforests in the tropics.

The main attraction of Oguta lake destination is the lake (Plate 1), where people visit for sport fishing, boating, recreation and swimming. Some visitors visit to view the arable farmland which is located across the confluence point with diverse kinds of plants and timber species such as; *Dioscorea spp*, *Elaies guinensis*,

Milicia excelsa, *Treculia africana* and many others. The attractions in Oguta Lake are different from that of Okomu national park and Yankari game reserve where the major attraction is viewing of wild animals in their natural habitat. However, the Wikki warm spring which is also a water based environment like the Oguta lake is one of the major attractions to many tourists in the Yankari game reserve (Ijeomah and Odunlami, 2013). The major attraction in Oguta lake is similar to the major attraction in Pandam lake, another RAMSAR site in Nigeria (Ijeomah and Emelue, 2009).

The part of the lake mostly visited is the confluence (plate 6) which is the point the Ohammiri river meets with the Urashi river. That is, where two coloured water, the blue greenish fresh water meets with the brown water. Other parts of the lake also visited are the Kalabari beach (plate 7) which is one of the picnicking spots, where Imo State government built a conference hall. The Kalabari beach links the golf course and the Ojukwu bunker. The fact that it is called Kalabari beach when it is not in Kalabari community is historical. During the era when the Europeans did businesses in Oguta, the Kalabari people of the Niger delta and many other tribes frequently visited the lake to trade at that spot. The gun boat is another spot in the lake where people go to view the sunken Nigerian boat. 'The gun boat' was used by the Nigerian soldiers to enter Oguta during the civil war but was bombed and destroyed by the Biafran soldiers. Some parts of the boat remained inside the lake since that time as a land mark. The shrines in the lake include the *Okomeakpandimuo*, " meaning where the spirit hangs bags". This shrine was believed to be mystic as bags are always observed hanging in the shrine without seeing who hung the bags. The Ogbuide shrine is hardly visited except for those who worship the goddess of the lake. It is not popular because of diminishing interest of the people in idolatry due to the Christianity and civilization.

Visitors are also attracted to the destination by cultural festivals especially carnival, OgeneNkirika 1 ad 2, and Omenge festival. Visitors to the royal palace of Oguta ancient Kingdom are always entertained and satisfied with tales of Oguta history especially the forced migration of the original occupants of the land to Awa during the immigration of Oguta community, and the killing of Ezeawa (king of Awa) on the throne for refusing to quit the throne (for Oguta people) and emigrate with his people to Awa.

This killing of Ezeawa on the throne because of the defence of the throne and culture is synonymous with the report of Achebe (1958) on the killing of Ahamefule by Okonkwo, his foster father for the defence of culture. It is also slightly similar to the cultural royal suicide committed by traditional rulers in the Yoruba kingdom (Obas) in defence of throne and to avoid being humiliated -It is culturally preferred among the Yoruba Obas to die on the throne than to be alive and addressed as a former Oba. An Oba that dies on the throne secures the throne for his lineage and will be buried as a king unlike a deposed one. Every Yoruba Oba therefore has a 'secret calabash' or 'poison' (in the inner chamber) which is opened or used only

when he wants to commit suicide. According to Akinyele as cited by Adam (2010) 'Royal suicide' is the last escape route for any Yoruba Oba that is at the verge of being dethroned or humiliated. The killing of Ezeawain the case of Oguta history, and royal suicides culturally committed by Yoruba Obas synonymously show that traditional rulers in Africa are custodians of culture and make concerted efforts to defend cultures of the land. It is based on this fact that leaders are celebrated and remembered or 'immortalised'. In the case of Ezeawa, the immigrating community killed him for refusing to quit or relinquish the throne while on the contrary Yoruba Obas initiate and commit the royal suicide. Both are celebrated for accepting to die in attempts to defend the throne and culture unlike Brigadier Babafemi Ogundipe, who is hardly remembered nor celebrated in Nigerian political history because of the expected role the soldier avoided to play- Brigadier Babafemi Ogundipe was the next in seniority to the then president of Nigeria, General Aguiyi Ironsi but refused to accept responsibility (by escaping to London when the president of Nigeria was murdered) in order to avoid being killed on the throne but finally died outside Nigeria in 1971 (Wikipedia, 2015). Babafemi Ogundipe's motive for escaping may have been to maintain peace in the military and Nigeria, but the soldier's inaction has been historically frowned at. Relics of Ezeawa's throne and palace are barricaded as tourism artifacts, viewed by tourists to Oguta community. No traditional ruler of Oguta community visits the ancestral throne of Ezeawa as it is generally perceived that anyone who attempts to do so is culturally contending for the kingdom of Oguta before the seated king, Ezeawa, whose spirit and other ancestral spirits (of the ancient kingdom) are believed to be intact and active to defend the throne, and will therefore kill the contender at the destination.

Fishing is one of the activities that take place in Oguta lake (Table 3). It has been a part of the household's source of living. This involves the use of kayak, fishing hook and net for fishing. Fishing is one of the major sources of animal protein for households in Oguta. Sport fishing is also practiced on the Lake by some people who visit to fish for fun. Some visitors enjoy watching fishing activities being carried out on the lake. Water skiing and snorkelling were practised by Europeans on the lake. Although some persons still practice snorkelling recently but because of frequent dredging of sand from the Lake (to generate income for the community leaving some sharp and very deep spots), tourists especially those who cannot swim, are not advised to practise it. Among the main tourism activities tourists participate in are swimming and boating (Table 3.) This is because they make people feel relaxed and at home. Swimming is often practiced along with water picnicking as tourists embark on sightseeing and take photographs. Boating (plate 8) is one of the major activities on the lake because Oguta is a riverine environment and boats are therefore used in almost every aspect of households' activities (in Oguta) such as fishing. Pontoon is used as a major way of ferrying vehicles and passengers across the lake; speed boats are for ferrying passengers and

majorly for boat cruising round the Lake; to view and admire the scenery of the lake environment and enjoy the fresh air that is associated with it. The boats are also used in boat competition, especially the bigger kayaks. However, boat competition is no longer being practiced as many people who passionately used to practice that have died, others are now old and not strong enough to carry out the activity. The present young generations of households in Oguta are not interested in such activities. Similarly, Hoet *al.* (2009) reported on the White Cliff of Diver in England, where the major tourism activities are water sports such as fishing, sailing, sun bathing, swimming, scuba diving, snorkelling, water skiing, wind surfing, animal and whale watching and some other place like Lake Louise in Canada where they do boating, fishing and rafting, cruises and sightseeing with adequate tourism facilities and high level of enlightenment. The recreational activities which include relaxation, sightseeing, get-together, playing of football, golf and other entertainment are always practiced with swimming and picnicking. Golf is a frequently played tourism activity in Oguta. It was also one of the recreational activities practised at the Oguta motel golf course which previously attracted high calibre of tourists from different parts of Nigeria and abroad.

The tourist activities available in Okomu national park are game viewing, tree house climbing, picnicking, swimming, bathing in lakes and botanical ramblings. The most visited part of Okomu national park is the tree house and hanging bridge. Different areas of the park resources can be viewed at different level (step) of the tree house irrespective of the season. The tree house has a sit-out at the base and at the peak of the tree to ensure comfort of the tourists while viewing games. Climbing the tree house gives a lot of excitement. Many tourists hardly get to the last step of the tree house. It can be compared with mountaineering and the report of Ijeomah *et al.* (2007) on Urashi waterfall eco-destination where tourists climb 57 steps down the valley to bath and fetch water. While on the tree house tourists can have a panoramic view of the park resources. Similarly, the Kakum canopy walk way provides a panoramic view of the Kakum forests in Ghana. The VongNfei hill of Jos Wildlife Park which is the highest point in the east of Jos also gives a panoramic view of Jos (Ijeomah *et al.*, 2007). While on the Tree house game viewing can be carried out. Game viewing is the major attraction that draws tourists to ONP. The park is known to be rich in white throated monkey (*Cercopithecus erythrogastrus*), African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*) and hornbill (*Ceratogymna atrata*). This corroborates the work of Ogunjinmi and Ijeomah (2010) that game viewing is the major attraction in Kainji Lake national park, an ecodestination in savannah zone of Nigeria. Trekking inside the site to have a wilderness experience, is also enjoyed by some tourists in Okomu national park. Many tourists also enjoy surveying the floral resources in the site. This agrees with the reports of Ogunjimi and Ijeomah (2010) and Ijeomah and Emelue (2009) in Kainji lake national park and Pandam Wildlife Park respectively.

Conclusion

Oguta Lake and Okomu national park are old tourism destinations with unique attractions. The attractions are many but varied. The major attraction in Oguta Lake was identified as the lake, which tourists from far and near visit for sightseeing, swimming, boating, sport fishing and picnicking. Tourists also visit the destination for playing of golf and cultural festivals. In the case of Okomu national park game viewing, the tree house and hanging bridge are the major attractions. The confluence, Kalabari beach and golf course are the major sections visited in Oguta Lake destination while the tree house, hanging bridge are for Okomu national park. Game viewing in Okomu national park especially sighting of herds of elephant and buffalo from the tree house is a fascinating experience for many tourists. Tourists in Oguta Lake enjoy boat cruising and swimming especially in the afternoon because of the cool breeze associated with. More awareness should be created by the management of the destinations concerning the attractions, facilities and tourism activities therein for increased revenue generation and positive impacts.

References

- Achebe, C. (1958). *Things fall Apart*. United Kingdom: William Heinemann Limited 224 pp.
- Adam, J. (2010, June, 13). Deposed Deji of Akure should commit suicide. *Sunday Sun* Retrieved from <http://www.nairaland.com/462341/deposed-deji-akure-should-commit>.
- Anonymous (2011). "Nigeria's Neatest State – Politics (1) Naira land". www.nairaland.com/707228/nigeria
- Anonymous (n.d.). Kakum national park canopy walkway. <http://gotravelghana.com/kakum-national-park-canopy-walk/>
- Aremu, O. T., Emelue, G. U., Osayimwen, F. E. and Obasogie, F.O. (2012). Estimate of habitat quality of White throated monkey in Okomu National Park, Nigeria. *Nigeria Journal of Agriculture, food and environment*, 8(1), 20-21.
- Anyanwu, A. (2000). *Research Methodology in Business and Social Sciences*. Owerri: Canun Publishers. 259pp.
- Ashley, C. and Hussein, K. (2000). *Assessment Experience of the African Wildlife Foundation in East Africa*. London: Overseas Development Institute. Retrieved May 10, 2004 from www.oneworld.org/odi/rpeg/srls.html
- Atlas of Nigeria (2002). "Atlases of Nigeria less Edition", J. A. 57 Bis, rue d' Avtevil – 75016 Paris- France, Pp. 52- 111
- Ayodele, A.I (1991). Tourism Potentials in Nigerian Parks. *The Conservators Magazine*. p.13
- Ayodele, A. (2002). *Essentials of Tourism Management*. Ibadan: Elshaddai Global Ventures Ltd. 99pp.

- Ceballos - Lascurain, H. (1992a). *Park: the International Magazine dedicated to Protected Area of the World*, 2(3), 31-35
- Ceballos - Lascurain, H. (1992b). Tourists for Conservation, *Journal of People and Planet*, 1 (3), 28-30
- Center for Responsible Travel (2005). *Responsible Travel: Global Trends & Statistics*. Stanford University & Washington, DC:CREST. Retrieved from www.responsibletravel.org
- Ho, P and Ap .J. (2009). "Tourism and Hospitality Studies: *Theme Parks and Attractions*", Hong Kong.
- Holy Bible (2004). *The Holy Bible, New Living Translation*. Gift and Award Edition. Tyndale Publishers.Inc. 810pp.
- Ijeomah, H. M (2007). *Impact of Tourism on Perceived Poverty Alleviation in Plateau State, Nigeria, PhD thesis*. Department of Wildlife Management and Fisheries, University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. 301pp.
- Ijeomah, H.M., Alarape, A.A. and Ogogo, A.U. (2007). *Management Ethics and Strategies towards Sustainable Tourism Development in Jos Wildlife Park. Journal of Environmental Extension(Nigeria)*, 6: 100 – 106 <http://www.ajol.info>.
- Ijeomah, H.M. and Emelue, G. U. 2009. *Tourism Management and Sustainable Resource Utilization in Pandam Wildlife Park of Plateau State, Nigeria. Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 11(2):206-222, <http://www.jsd-africa.com/>
- Ijeomah, H.M., Aiyeloja, A.A., Adetoro, A.O. and Alarape, A. A. 2009. *Urashi Waterfall Ecotourism Development and Cultural Challenges in Dikenafai, Ideato South Local Government Area, Nigeria. African Research Review*, 3(4):261-274
- Ijeomah, H. M. and Aiyeloja, A.A. (2010). *Ecotourism: An instrument for combating Renewable natural resources Degradation* pp.441 - 470 In: H.M. Ijeomah and A.A. Aiyeloja (Eds.) (2010). *Practical Issues in Forest and Wildlife Resources Management*. Port Harcourt, Rivers State: Green Canopy Consultants, 625pp.
- Ijeomah, H. M. and Herbert, B. C. (2012). *Reality of Tourism Management Business Viability and Tourists' Behaviour in Plateau State, Nigeria. Revista de cultura e Turismo*, 6(3), 18 -35. Retrieved from [www.uesc.br/revistas/cultura e turismo](http://www.uesc.br/revistas/cultura_e_turismo).
- Ijeomah, H.M. and Odunlami, S.S. 2013. *The Politics of Wild Resources Management in Yankari Wildlife Park: Implications on Biodiversity Conservation and Ecotourism management. International Journal of Safety and Security in Tourism and Hospitality* 4:36 -50.
- Ijeomah, H. M., Okoli, C. I. C and Iyah, E. I. (2014). *Ecotourism Resources of University of Uyo, Nigeria: The Arboretum and Ravine Destination in Perspective. Ethiopian Journal of environmental Studies and Management*, 7(3), 327-338. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ejesm.v7i3.13>.

- Ita, E. O; Sado, J.K; Pandogari, A and Ibitoye, B. (1985). Inventory Survey of Nigerian in Land Water and their Fishery Resources.A Preliminary Checklist of Inland Water bodies in Nigeria with Special Reference to Ponds, Lakes, Reservoirs and more Rivers.Kainji Lake Research Institutes Technical Report Series, No. 14, KLRI, New Bussa, pp. 55.
- Kamuaro, O. (1998). Ecotourism: Suicide or Development. In: United Nations NGO's Service, Pelaides Nations, Chapter 11-12, Geneva, Switzerland's, pp. 59-65.
- Mac, Odo, D.S (2002).*Statistics for Decision Making*. Port Harcourt: Pearl Publishers Ltd
- Merriam- Webster Online Dictionary (2008). "tourism." Merriam-Webster Online. Retrieved from <http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/tourism>
- National Park Service (2009).National Parks in Nigeria. Abuja: National Park Service
- Nedelea, A. Elemazi, I., Babu, G.P. and Banabakowa, V.K. (2008).*Concepts of tourism Marketing*.Tewksbury Massachusetts, U.S.A. :Derc publishing House, 347pp.
- Nwadiaro, C. S. (1985).Ichthyfauna of Lake Oguta, a shallow lake in South- eastern Nigeria.*Archive Hydrobiology*, 113: 463475.
- Ogunjinmi, A.A. and Ijeomah, H.M. 2010. Analysis of Ecotourism Activities in Kainji Lake National Park of Nigeria.*Global Approaches to Extension Practice*, 6(1),86 -94.
- The International Ecotourism Society (TIES), (2000).Retrieved from <http://www.ecotourism.org/>. Accessed 19th January 2014
- USAID (2005).*USAID and Sustainable Tourism, meeting Development Objectives*, Washington D.C. : USAID.102pp. Accessed fromwww.usaid.gov
- Wikipedia (2015).BabafemiOgundipe.Wikipedia Accessed from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Babafemi_Ogundipe
- Yamani, Y. (1961).*Sampling technique: An Introduction*. India: Prentice and Hall, Pvt Ltd.