

Ecotourism in Nigeria: The Okomu National Park Context

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Abstract

Nigeria is a country rich in biodiversity and natural landscapes hence making her an ideal destination for ecotourism especially in the national parks. There is a dearth of information with respect to ecotourism in Nigerian National Parks despite several studies having addressed ecotourism dynamics in national parks round the world. This study thus assessed the status and significance of ecotourism in Okomu National Park. Semi-structured questionnaire distributed using the simple random sampling technique were used: fifty (50) and one hundred and twenty (120) for visitors and residents respectively totaling one hundred and seventy (170) as well as in-depth interviews. Visitors' travel motive were mostly for the purpose of education/research (56%). Visitors' primary attractions to the park were Forest elephants *Loxodonta africana cyclotis*; white throated monkey *Cercopithecus aethiops* and the 140 feet high tree house. The ecotourism management strategies in the park include the use of code of conduct, conservation education, tour guides and eco-lodges. Tourist influx do not influence trade and businesses in any way as acclaimed by 47.1% of the community respondents. Ecotourism in Okomu National Park is still at an infant stage with respect to visitors' influx, attractions and socio-economic contribution.

Keywords: visitor experience, community-based tourism, management

Introduction

Ecotourism, or ecological tourism, has been a growing phenomenon since the 1950s and 1960s as the First World grew in its appreciation of nature and its vulnerability to human development and population growth (Roche and Wallington, 2014). It has become one of the fastest-growing sectors of the tourism industry, growing annually by 10–15% worldwide (Miller, 2001). Although no precise figures exist, it has been estimated that probably around 15 or 20% of all international tourism is ecotourism. The rate of growth of ecotourism and other nature-based tourism activities seems to be the highest of all tourism segments, maybe around 15% per year (Ceballos-Lascurain, 2001). For many countries, ecotourism is not simply a marginal activity to finance protection of the environment, but is a major industry of the national economy (TNC, 2015; Roche and Wallington, 2014). For example, in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nepal, Kenya, Madagascar and territories such as Antarctica, ecotourism represents a significant portion of the gross domestic product and economic activity. Ecotourism is that segment of sustainable tourism which is related to visitation of relatively undisturbed natural areas, including protected areas. It involves travelling to areas where environment is unspoiled, climate is pleasant, natural resources are sustained and cultural diversity is conserved (Subbiah and Kannan, 2012). The Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment; taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem; producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people”. It is intended to offer tourists insight into the impact of human beings on the environment, requires lowest possible consumption of natural resources, foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats and to respect local cultures of destinations visited.

Ecotourism is no doubt a tool for conservation of natural and cultural resources and an instrument for sustainable development, especially in rural areas. It can provide much-needed revenues for the protection of national parks and other natural areas – revenues that might not be available from other sources (Omonona and Kayode, 2011; Roche and Wallington, 2014) as well as a viable economic development alternative for local communities with few other income-generating options. It also promotes small and medium tourism enterprises; emphasises local participation, ownership, and business opportunities, particularly for rural people. In its ideal form, ecotourism curtail the deleterious impacts that are associated with mass tourism.

Nigeria is a country rich in biodiversity and diverse natural landscapes (Osunsina *et al.*, 2008). She is peculiarly blessed with diverse natural resources in all its thirty-six states with great potentials for recreation, relaxation and holiday which present an already established environment for ecotourism. These include national parks, game reserves, strict nature reserves, forest reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, nature parks, waterfalls, rock formations, hills and highlands, caves/tunnels, springs, etc. The most popular sites for ecotourism in Nigeria are the national parks. Nigeria has seven National Parks occupying a total land area of approximately 20,156km² (about 3% of Nigeria's total land area). The National Parks protect diverse ecosystems and many historic and cultural monuments across ecological zones of the country. The first National Park is Kainji Lake National Park established in 1979. (Table 1)

While numerous researches on ecotourism have been carried out on national parks in many nations of

the world; the status of Nigeria's National Parks has received relatively little attention. For example, Osunsna *et al* (2008) assessed the ecotourism potentials of Kamuku National Park, Birnin-Gwari, Kaduna; ()The few researches has focused on such as Kainji Lake National Parks e.g. Ecotourism activities and income generation in Kainji Lake National Park, An assessment of ecotourism potentials of Yankari National Park, An analysis of ecotourism activities in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria; there is a dearth of scientific data on Okomu National Park, the smallest National Park in Nigeria, thus, the rationale for the study.

Aim of the study

- To assess visitors socio-demographic profile and travel details
- To examine the rate of tourist influx into Okomu National Park (OKNP)
- To assess the ecotourism management strategies of OKNP
- To identify the key tourist attractions at the park
- To evaluate visitors appreciation and sensitivity to park resources and management
- Identify factors militating against tourists satisfaction and visitation
- To assess the level of awareness of the park as an ecotourism destination by support zone community residents as well as the influence of ecotourism trade and businesses

Study Area

Edo state is an inland state in the South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria and occupies 17,802 square kilometres. Its capital is Benin City. The study was carried out in Okomu National Park in Edo state. Okomu National Park formally Okomu Forest Reserve, occupies an area of land of 197sqkm, between longitude 5°E and 5°30'E and latitude 6°N and 6°N in the Ovia South-West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The park has quite a unique history with respect to its management body from inception till date. Okomu, a relatively undisturbed forest was legally constituted a Forest Reserve in 1912 and reconstituted a Native Administration Forest in 1950 under the Benin District Council. In 1970, the reserve came under the management of the State Government, to be managed on behalf of the local community (NNPS, 2015). The reserve was gazetted as Okomu Wildlife Sanctuary in 1988 by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation as the last hope for the protection of endemic and endangered species of wildlife in the face of high exploitation rate and human encroachment (Okungbowa, 2008). In 1999, it was declared a National Park (Decree 46 of 1999). The National Park is directly under the auspices of the Nigerian National Park Service (NNPS) via the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

Okomu National Park, in terms of size, is the smallest of the seven national parks in Nigeria. However, it has abundant flora and fauna resources within a very rich, unique and distinct ecosystem. The park consists of semi-deciduous, humid, lowland rainforest with freshwater swampforests along the rivers, mangrove and swamp forests, and Guinean Forest- Savanna Mosaic ecoregion. The park has diverse fauna and a home to rare and endangered species such as the Forest Elephant *Loxodonta Africana cyclotis* and the white throated monkey *Cercopithecus erythrogaster* (Greengrass, 2009).The climate is tropical, with well-marked rainy and dry reasons. The annual rainfall is between 1,524 and 2,540 mm per year (Ejidike and Okosodo, 2007) falling mainly between March and October with the highest rainfall occurring in June, July and September. The relative humidity is high, not less than 65 percent during the afternoons in any month of the year, with mean monthly temperature of 30.2°C (Ajayi, 1998).

Materials and Methods

The study population comprised of park employees, visitors and Support Zone Communities (SZC) around Okomu National Park (OKNP). The instrument of data collection was structured questionnaire (comprised of open and close ended questions). The questionnaires were of two types; Questionnaire A for visitors, and Questionnaire B for SZC residents – all eliciting information on ecotourism management, awareness and practices.

A total of one hundred and seventy (170) copies of questionnaire were used: fifty (50) and one hundred and twenty (120) for visitors and residents respectively. Questionnaires to the visitors and residents were distributed using the simple random sampling technique. Six villages namely Iguowan, Iyaye, Hassan Camp, Sunday Camp, AT&P and Anna Camp were purposely selected for this survey due to their nearness to the park. In-Depth Interviews were conducted with key informants at the site – Conservator of Park, Head of Ecotourism Department and Research Unit Head. Data analysis included the use of descriptive (frequency and percentage tables; pie charts) and inferential statistics (Chi Square analysis).

Results

Demographic characteristics of visitors and travel details

Results showed that 40% and 60% of the visitors investigated are male and female respectively. Singles and Christians have the highest representation of 94% and 88% respectively. Majority (74%) of the respondents fall within 20-29 age group (years). Most of the respondents have tertiary education (94%). The students' populace has the highest representation of 90% while only 8% and 2% of the respondents are lecturers and tour operators respectively.

All respondents are Nigerians (local ecotourists) from states outside Edo State, with highest representation from Ogun State (52%). Respondents visiting for the first time have the highest representation (98%). 51% and 49% of respondents are staying for less and more than 24 hours respectively. 66% of the respondents came about the knowledge of the site from their institution of learning; 14% from internet, family and friends (8%), radio/television (6%) and brochure (2%). 48% and 40% of the respondents were travelling as part of a tour group and study/research group respectively. Visitors travel motive were mostly for the purpose of education/research (56%), followed by 14% for serenity of environment and recreation (20%) (Table 2).

Twenty two visitors were received in 1999, the year of establishment of the park. The park recorded its highest visitation in 2011 with 2,081 visitors (2,021 local tourists and 60 international tourists). The year 2014 witnessed a sharp decline from 1322 visitors in 2013 to 222. The total number of visitors received from 1999 to 2014 is 11,714 (10339 and 1335 for local and international visitors respectively). The majority of visitors to the park are local tourists constituting 88.3% of the total visitors' population (Figure 1)

Ecotourism Management Strategies (In-Depth Interview)

All visitors are charged entrance fees (#200) into the site. The fee is however subsidized for educational tours. Students from secondary and primary schools within the support zone communities as well as students on industrial attachment from higher institutions and researchers are not charged for entry. There is no specified maximum number of visitors into the National Park. Conservation education is part and parcel of the status quo of the park as visitors are enlightened about the park and her resources, code of conduct during visit and safety tips. Tour guidance is provided for every visitor/group of visitor to the park. Eco-lodges are available to meet the accommodation needs of visitors staying for more than twenty four hours. Eco-friendly transportation is also provided. Wastes generated in the park are disposed by burning and natural disintegration. Recycling is not practiced.

Visitors' attractions

The main attractions to Okomu National Park according to the visitors are the Forest Elephants *Loxodonta Africana cyclotis* and the White throated monkey *Cercopithecus erythrogaster* (Focus Group Discussion). The tree house however came on top of the list of visitors' attraction when the much anticipated animal sighting failed due to the dense nature of the forest. Others include wilderness experience and research. The most impressive feature of the park according to 43.5% of the respondents is the flora, followed by others (in this case the tree house) with 28.3%, landscape (17.4%) and fauna (10.9%) (Figure 2).

Visitors' appreciation and sensitivity to park resources and management

Table 4a shows the respondents answers pertaining to their appreciation and sensitivity to park resources and management. All respondents (100%) ascertained the presence of tour guides. However, 48% and 44% rated the interpretative skills of the guide as good and very good respectively. 56% of respondents said educational materials were made available while 44% said otherwise. Half of respondents claimed a high level of satisfaction with provided information followed by 28.5% and 17.6% of medium and very high levels of satisfaction respectively. Respondents rated ecotourism facilities as very good (2%), good (20%), fair (38%), poor (32%) and very poor (6%).

Almost all the respondents indicated that they care about the environmental resources of the park (Table 4b). 96% asserted that the resources therein should be managed. An equal percentage of 48.9% indicated for more active tourism development and conservation oriented management.. The greatest percentage (68.8%) of the respondents claim they would be very sad if the environmental resources of the sites are damaged/destroyed, 27.1% indicated sad while 4.2% said they would not be affected in any way.

70.8% affirmed that their purposes of visit have been met; while 22.9% said otherwise, 6.3% was in between both options. 44% of respondents said they would like to revisit, 20% said otherwise while 36% was not sure. The greatest percentage of respondents (93.8%) asserted their readiness to recommend the sites to others.

Factors militating against tourists' satisfaction and visitation

The following were highlighted as factors militating against satisfaction.

- Difficulty in sighting animals

- Poor road condition
- Poor awareness level
- Distance/ cost of transportation

Majority of the respondents, despite the militating factors would love to revisit and highlighted the type of improvements they would want to see on next visit. This include better accommodation provision/facilities, improved electricity provision, good road network, technological tracking equipments and actual sighting of wild games, improved conservation education programme, each for onsite food and water provision and improved waste management.

Support Zone Community awareness of the site as an ecotourism destination, involvement and impacts on economic, socio-cultural and environmental aspects

Residents' awareness of site existence

This is presented on Table 5. Most (56.7%) of the respondents at communities surrounding the park do not know whether or not the park is an ecotourism destination; and followed by respondents who said categorically that the site is not an ecotourism destination. Majority of the respondents also have not visited the park (88.9%) while 11.1% has. 80% of the respondents that have visited the site were there for other reasons that include meetings (especially the Chiefs). Most respondents at do not know if entrance fees are charged to community residents, 19% said no while 4.8% indicated yes.

55.6% of the respondents' acknowledged that visitors do come to the site. However, 41% was not sure. Visitors' number according to respondents is appreciable in number (46.6%), few (24.1%), many (13.8%), too few (12.1%) and 3.4% as very many. A greater percentage of the respondents said that tourist influx do not influence trade and businesses in any way. This is followed by the 'very poor' rating of 21.8%, 5.5% for poor influence; 14.5% for fair influence; and 9.1% for good influence. None of the respondents rated the influence as very good. Almost no establishment has been established by locals as a result of visitors' influx.

Discussion

Okomu National Park; the smallest of the seven National Parks in Nigeria in terms of size (197sqkm) but definitely not in environmental resources – with her rich flora and peculiar fauna resources attracts visitors mostly for education/research purpose from far and near; majority of whom are students (90%), single (94%), first timers (98%) and stayed for more than 24hours. The visitors are mostly dedicated ecotourists - travelling as part of a study/research group and tour group. This is in line with Oladeji *et al* (2012) who observed the visits of students and researchers during the study period representing (41%) of the total number of tourists in Old Oyo National Park. It has also been reported that visits by ecotourists from higher education was reported in Europe (TIES, 2006). Most of the visitors fall within the 20-29 age group (74% and 61.6%) that is youths and are Nigerians. The fact that majority of respondents were single agrees with the assertion of Arowosafe and Adebayo (2014) that single individuals have greater freedom and less financial outlay on travelling for tourism; so they are likely higher in number than the married tourists.

Majority of OKNP visitors came about the knowledge of the site from their institute of learning – which can be explained with respect to the fact that majority of the visitors were from institutions. Likewise, there was a significant relationship between the age of visitors and the medium of awareness about the site at $P < 0.05$. The various characteristics of the visitors to OKNP is in line with the assertion of FAO (2008) that ecotourists may differ greatly in several aspects including: distance travelled; length of stay; desired level of physical effort and comfort; importance of nature in trip motivation; level of learning desired; amount of spending; desired activities; and personal demographics.

From the inception of the park (1999) to the end of year 2014 (a span of fifteen years), the park recorded a total number of 11714 visitors (10339 and 1335 for local and international visitors respectively). Similarly, in Kainji Lake National Park, a total of 39198 visitors were received between years 1999 and 2009 (Adejumo *et al.*, 2014). It therefore depicts that visitors influx in Nigeria's is a far outcry from what is obtainable in countries such as South Africa (e.g. Kruger National Park with about 1.5million visitors in a year –SANParks, 2016) and United Kingdom (e.g. Broad National Park the smallest UK National park which received 8million tourists in a year -STEAM, 2009). Majority (88.3%) of visitors to the park are domestic tourists. This has also been the case in Old Oyo National Park (Oladeji *et al.*, 2012) and Kainji lake National Park (Adejumo *et al.*, 2014). This trend of domestic tourism has also been recorded internationally. For example, the Australian National and International Visitor Surveys revealed that majority of nature tourism market for New South Wales (84%) comes within the Australian Market; likewise the STEAM report for United Kingdom.

The various ecotourism management strategies include the charging of entrance fee to visitors from two years and above. The revenue generated are channeled to the operations of the site; which is in line with Omonona and Kayode (2011) and Roche and Wallington (2014) in that much-needed revenues can be provided for the protection of national parks and other natural areas – revenues that might not be available from other

sources. Others include provision of tour guidance, ecolodges (accommodation facilities for overnight visitors) and eco-transportation. Tour guidance serves a two-in one function in that; on one hand, regions which are ecologically sensitive can be protected as efficiently as possible; and on the other, visitors and tourists can be guided to certain attractions of the park which are especially representative (Obeneau, 2005).

Conservation education is a crucial aspect of visitor's management in the park in which visitors prior entering into the park are educated about the environmental resources of the site. This is further proved by the significant association between the purpose of visit and the provision of educational materials to the visitors. Obeneau (2005) inferred that the biggest benefit from tourism in protected areas is the educational aspect and experience, which make the visitors understand and appreciate the values of ecotourism. The development of park's carrying capacity for visitors of the park has never been a subject for discussion since the park receives relatively few visitors (In-Depth Interview). Likewise, waste bins are placed at strategic positions in Arakhuan Base Camp. The wastes generated are disposed by burning and natural disintegration. Recycling of waste is not practised. Park zoning is also employed in that the concentration of ecotourism activities is at Arakhuan Base Camp where all facilities for visitors (conference room, chalets and student hostel) are located. The uses of signages were also employed for dissipation of key information to visitors.

Visitors' initial attractions to Okomu National Park are Forest elephants *Loxodonta Africana cyclotis* and the white throated monkey *Cercopithecus erythrogaster*. However, this changed especially for the day visitors who could not sight any big games or any game whatsoever due to the dense nature of the forest to the tree house (140 feet high) located at Compartment 52 with 73 steps and a carrying capacity of five at a time. Others include wilderness experience and research. Moreso, visitors displayed a strong sense of appreciation and sensitivity to park resources and management with respect to the quality of tour guidance, educational materials, park facilities and resources management. The visitors care about the environmental resources of the site and feel they should be managed. An equal representation goes to those that want more active tourism development in OKNP and conservation oriented management (48.6%). The Chi-Square test of relationships show a significant association between the purpose of visit of OKNP visitors and the direction of management of the site at $P < 0.05$. This might be due to the fact that majority of OKNP ecotourists visit for education/research and are therefore inclined towards conservation.

The following were highlighted as factors militating against visitors experience and satisfaction; difficulty in sighting animals; Poor access road; Poor awareness level and Distance/ cost of transportation. Majority of the respondents were satisfied with their visit and would like to revisit as well as recommend the site to others. This depicts a high level of satisfaction and park loyalty and reveals the fact that the visitors are aware of the prevailing situation of the site and wants for a better output. They demonstrated this by highlighting the type of improvements they would want to see on next visit which include better accommodation provision/facilities, improved electricity provision, good road network, technological tracking equipments and actual sighting of wild games, improved conservation education programme, onsite food and water provision and improved waste management. Worthy of note is the fact that a significant association ($P < 0.05$) exists between visitors' length of stay and the improvement they would like to see on next visit. It can be inferred that as visitors' length of stay in a destination increases, their involvement in the activities increases and therefore are more sensitive to the resources and management of such destination.

Majority of respondents in support zone communities around the park do not know whether or not the park is an ecotourism destination and this group is followed by respondents that categorically claim that the site is not an ecotourism destination. This may be due to the fact most residents see the park mainly as a land protected from people's invasion. Another argument is that residents hardly see recreation as an option; they are all about getting their daily bread. The influx of visitors was ascertained by the majority; tourist number is seen as few and tending towards average. The influence on trade and businesses is very poor and to a large extent, the people claimed that there was no influence whatsoever. Almost no establishment has been set up by locals courtesy of visitors' influx. Most visitors bring along what they would need for their duration of stay. An interview with a canteen owner at Iguowan community (the only community directly enroute to Arakhuan Base Camp) revealed that the establishment of the canteen is mostly due to the rangers as well as the workers of the Palm oil and Rubber Company surrounding the park and only coincidental for the once in a while visitors.

Ecotourism is popularly characterised by providing benefits to local people in terms of employment generation; development of small and medium sized enterprises; improved quality of life; improved facilities; etc (TNC, 2015; Roche and Wallington, 2014; Adejumo *et al.*, 2014). For example, residents surrounding Mole National Park, South Africa indicated that the park has a positive economic and social impact concerning job creation, with results showing that 871 people are dependent on the park and its activities (Saayman *et al.*, 2013). This is however not the case of tourism in Okomu National Park as it contradicts the foremost positive impact of tourism (economic benefit) as little or no employment has been created and local community needs such as road maintenance, education, training and health care are not met due to poor ecotourism development.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Visitors to Okomu National Park are mostly single, youths, first timers, overnight visitors (tourists) and Nigerians. They are mostly students from tertiary institutions and their main purpose for visiting is for education and research. The park recorded a total number of 11714 visitors from 1999 – 2014 (15 years) in which 10339 and 1335 for local and international visitors respectively. Thus, domestic tourism holds a greater percentage of the tourism of the park. Ecotourism management strategies put in place include charging of entrance fees, tour guidance, conservation education, park zoning, waste management plan, ecolodges, ecotransportation and signages.

The initial tourist attractions to the site are the Forest Elephants *Lozodonta Africana cyclotis* and the White-Throated Monkey *Cercopithecus erythrogaster*. However, due to the inability of visitors to site the animals with respect to the dense nature of the forest, the tree house came on top of the list of the visitors. Okomu National Park visitors appreciate and are sensitive towards the parks resources, facilities and management and indicated a high level of satisfaction with experience. They have the intention to revisit as well as recommend the site to others (park loyalty). Factors militating against visitors experience and satisfaction include difficulty in sighting animals; poor access road; poor awareness level and distance/ cost of transportation.

Majority of residents in the support zone community do not see Okomu National Park as an ecotourism destination and therefore do not visit. There is little or no influence on the socio-economic lives of the people as contribution to trade and businesses is very poor and the associating developments in local communities adjacent to ecotourism attractions such as good road network, health care facilities, hospitality centres are not available.

It is recommended that the government of Nigeria, the National Park service (NPS) as well as Okomu National Park management should promote through improved advertisement/marketing and sensitization of citizens and foreigners. The Nigerian Park Service can follow the initiatives of South African National Parks in which visitors to National Park days are boosted by holding an annual SANParks week in which a day out of the week is set aside for free entrance to the national parks by South Africans. The objective of the week is to give all South Africans a chance to enjoy and experience the beauty and majesty of the national parks thereby creating a culture of pride in all citizens in their relationship with the country's natural, cultural and historic heritage. This kind of initiative has a conservative role in that the importance of conservation and appreciation of natural resources is passed across. It will also aid ecotourism development in and around the parks. The park management should also develop websites that can portray the park in limelight.

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Table 1: National Parks in Nigeria

National Park	Year of establishment	Size (km ²)	State	Ecological zones
Kainji Lake	1979	5382	Niger, Kwara	Guinea savanna
Chad Basin	1991	2258	Borno, Yobe	Sahel savanna
Gashaka Gumti	1991	6731	Taraba, Adamawa	Guinea savanna/ Montane
Cross River	1991	4000	Cross River	Rain forest
Old Oyo	1991	2512	Oyo, Kwara	Forest/Guinea savanna
*Yankari	1991	2244	Bauchi	Guinea savanna
Kamuku	1999	1121	Kaduna	Guinea savanna
Okomu	1999	181	Edo	Rain forest

**Yankari National Park now Yankari Game Reserve since 2006*

Source: Ejidike and Ajayi, 2012; NNPS, 2015

Table 2: Demographic profile of visitors

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	20	40.0
Female	30	60.0
Marital status		
Single	47	94.0
Married	3	6.0
Widowed	0	0.0
Age (years)		
Below 20	9	18.0
20-29	39	78.0
30-39	1	2.0
40-49	1	2.0
≥50	0	0.0
Religion		
Christianity	44	88.0
Islam	5	10.0
Traditional	1	2.0
Education		
None	0	0.0
Primary	0	0.0
Secondary	3	6.0
Tertiary	47	94.0
Occupation		
Student	45	90.0
Lecturer	4	8.0
Tour Operator	1	2.0

Source: Field survey (2015)

Table 3: Visitors' characteristics

Factors	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Nationality	Nigerian	50	100.0
	Non Nigerian	0	0.0
State visiting from	Ondo State	6	12.0
	Ogun State	26	52.0
	Oyo State	9	18.0
	Osun state	9	18.0
Status of visit	First	49	98.0
	Repeat	1	2.0
Length of stay	Less than 24 hours	25	51.0
	Over 24 hours	24	49.0
Travelling group	Alone	1	2.0
	With spouse/partner	1	2.0
	With family	3	6.0
	Tour group	24	48.0
	Study/Research group	20	40.0
	School Excursion	1	2.0
Purpose of visit	Education/Research	28	56.0
	Recreation	10	20.0
	Serenity of environment	7	14.0
Medium of awareness about site	Brochure	1	2.0
	Family and friends	4	8.0
	Radio/Television	3	6.0
	Internet	7	14.0
	School	33	66.0
	Others	2	4.0

Source: Field survey (2015)

Table 4a: Visitors' appreciation and sensitivity to park resources and management

Factors	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Presence of ecotour guides	Yes	50	100.0
	No	0	0.0
Interpretative skill of ecotour guide	Very good	22	44.0
	Good	24	48.0
	Fair	4	8.0
	Poor	0	0.0
	Very poor	0	0.0
Availability of educational materials	Yes	28	56.0
	No	22	44.0
Level of satisfaction with provided information	Very high	5	17.6
	High	14	50.0
	Medium	8	28.5
	Low	2	7.1
	Very low	0	0.0
Rating of site's ecotourism facilities	Very good	2	4.0
	Good	10	20.0
	Fair	19	38.0
	Poor	16	32.0
	Very poor	3	6.0

Source: Field survey (2015)

Table 4b: Visitors appreciation and sensitivity to park resources and management

Statement	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do you care about site environmental resources?	Yes	46	97.9
	No	1	2.0
Do you think the site resources should be managed?	Yes	48	96.0
	No	0	0.0
	Not sure	2	4.0
In which direction should this be managed?	More active tourism development	22	48.9
	Keep current status		
	Conservation oriented	1	2.2
	management	22	48.9
Feeling if site is degraded	Very sad	34	68.8
	Sad	14	27.1
	Neutral	2	4.2
	Happy	0	0.0
	Very happy	0	0.0
Has your purpose of visit being met?	Yes	36	70.8
	No	11	22.9
	Not really	2	6.3
Would you re- visit?	Yes	22	44
	No	10	20
	Not sure	18	36
Recommendation of site to others	Yes	48	93.8
	No	2	6.3

Source: Field survey (2015)

Table 5: Residents awareness of site existence, charging of entrance fees and impact on trade and businesses

Statement	Variables	Frequency	Percentage%
Is Okomu National Park an ecotourism destination?	Yes	10	8.3
	No	42	35.0
	I don't know	68	56.7
Do you visit the site?	Yes	13	11.1
	No	104	88.9
Purpose of visit	Serenity of environment	0	0.0
	Recreation	1	10.0
	Education/Research	1	10.0
	Others	8	80.0
Charging of entrance fees to community residents	Yes	1	4.8
	No	4	19.0
	Don't know	16	76.2
Do tourists visit the site?	Yes	65	55.6
	No	4	3.4
	Not sure	48	41.0
Visitors number	Too few	7	12.1
	Few	14	24.1
	Appreciable	27	46.6
	Many	8	13.8
	Very many	2	3.4
Influence on trade and businesses	Not at all	27	49.1
	Very poor	12	21.8
	Poor	3	5.5
	Fair	8	14.5
	Good	5	9.1
	Very good	0	0.0
Locals establishment due to ecotourist influx	Tour guide operations	0	0.0
	Restaurants/canteens	2	16.7
	Trading stores	1	0.8
	Souvenirs/ craft shops	0	0.0
	Hotel/Motel/Guest House	0	0.0
	Others	0	0.0

Source: Field Survey (2015)

Table 6: Summary of results on Chi Square tests of relationship (OKNP)

S/N	Parameters	P Value	Significance	Inference
1.	Age vs medium through which site was known	0.046	P<0.05	****
2.	Occupation vs medium through which site was known	0.064	P>0.05	**
3.	Number of visit vs purpose of visit being met	0.329	P>0.05	**
4.	Educational materials vs purpose of visit being met	0.019	P<0.05	****
5.	Purpose of visit vs direction site should be managed	0.017	P<0.05	****
6.	Length of stay vs improvement on next visit	0.005	P<0.05	****
7.	Recommendation of site to others vs purpose of visit being met	0.542	P>0.05	**

Note : VS= Versus; ** = significant association; **= no significant association**

Source: Field Survey, 2015

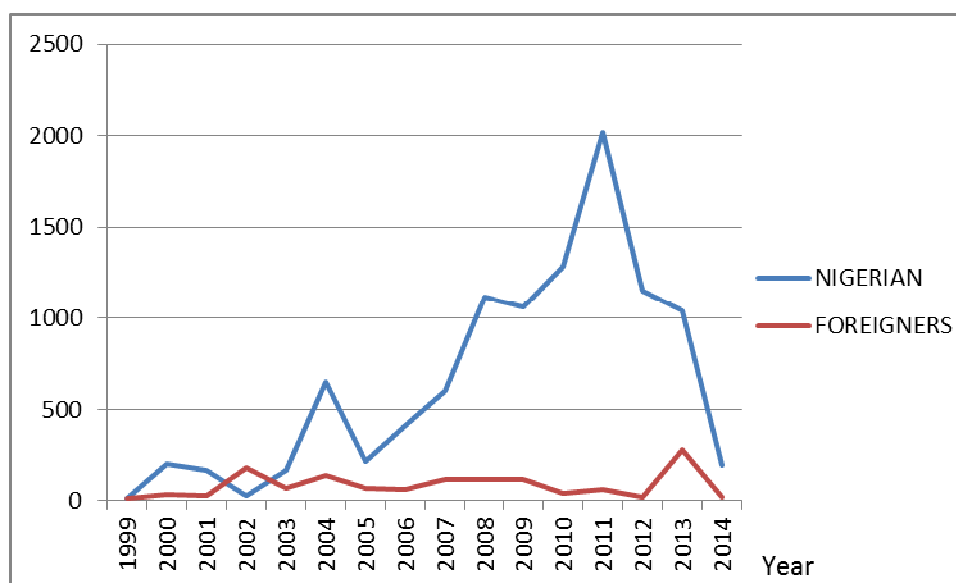


Figure 1: Trend analysis of visitors' influx in OKNP

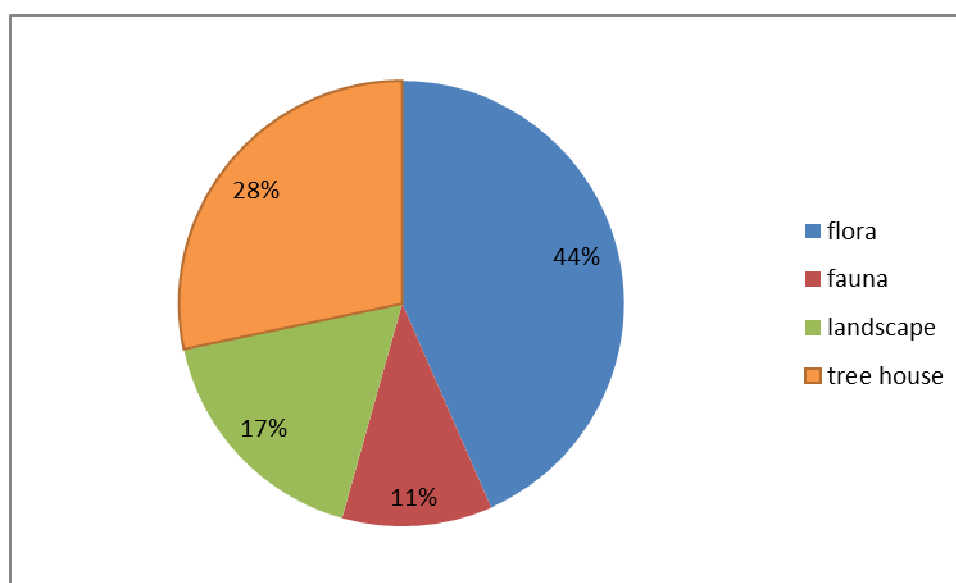


Figure 2: Most impressive feature of the site