

Analysis of tourists' flow (2009-2018) in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study was carried out to assess tourists' flow and revenue generation from 2009 to 2018 in Kainji Lake National Park (KLNK). Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data collection was carried out through the use of structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from the park's records and reports. A simple random sampling technique was used to select representative samples from the staff population. Data collected were subjected to descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS statistical Package version 20. The findings show that majority of the respondents were males (87.0%), and were in the age group 31-40 years (55.0%). The season of patronage revealed that the dry season recorded the highest with 79.0% while the wet season recorded 11.0%. The trend of tourists' patronage in the park shows a persistent decrease in their influx. The data for 2009-2018 revealed that year 2013 recorded the highest number of tourist with 7,730, followed by 2010 and 2011 with 6,103 each, while year 2014 recorded the least with 929. The total revenue generated was ₦23,019,455.32; year 2013 recorded the highest revenue with ₦4,294,061.87, followed by year 2015 with ₦3,481,967.52, while the least was year 2011 with ₦249,665.97. The study recommends that there is need to upgrade the facilities in the park to meet tourists' needs and desires in order to improve patronage and revenue generation.

Keywords: Analysis, tourists' flow, Kainji Lake National Park

INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism, or ecological tourism, has been a growing sensation 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 the tourism segments, may be around 15% per year, and for many countries, ecotourism is not simply a marginal activity to finance protection of the environment, but it is also a major industry of the national economy (Louzel, 2016; Roche and Wallington, 2014). For example, in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Nepal, Kenya, Madagascar and territories such as Antarctica,

ecotourism represents a significant proportion 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, 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; and 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; it requires the lowest possible consumption of natural resources, and fosters a greater appreciation of our natural habitats and respect for the

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local cultures of destinations visited. In its ideal form, ecotourism curtails the deleterious impacts that are associated with mass tourism. Nigeria is a country that is rich in biodiversity and diverse natural landscapes (Osunsina *et al.*, 2008). The tourism industry is one of the sectors that the Nigerian government is shifting its attention to in the face of the recent economic challenges facing the country. The rich potentials in Nigeria's game reserves and National parks remained one area that should be explored. The economic potentials of using the National Parks for ecotourism are enormous and deserve the attention and investment by government. National parks possess ample potentials for recreation and eco-tourism. It has been observed that National parks, and preserved tourism attractions such as wildlife, landscape, scenic sites, waterfalls and geomorphologic features provide the potential for a wide range of tourism activities which include game viewing, mountain climbing, nature appreciation of flora and landscape, warm spring bathing, sport fishing, boating, wilderness experience, birding, nature trail, nature refuge, hiking, excursion, and camping. The ecotourism potentials of parks are the attractions which motivate tourists to embark on tours to such destinations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

Kainji Lake National Park was established in 1979 by the amalgamation of two game reserves (Borgu and Zugurma) under decree 46 of 29th July 1997, thereby

making it the premier National Park in Nigeria (Ayeni, 2007). Kainji Lake National Park is located in the North-central part of the country between latitude 9°45'N and 10°23'N and longitude 3°40'E and 5°47'E. It is made up of two sectors (Borgu and Zugurma) situated in Borgu and Kaima/Baruten Local Government Areas of Niger and Kwara State respectively (Figure 1), and covers a total land area of 5,340.825km² (Ayeni, 2007). The major features of the climate of the park are the wet and dry seasons which vary from the year to year. The wet season extends from May to November while the dry season extends from December to April (Ezealor, 2002).

Method and Instrument of Data Collection, Sampling Technique and Data Analysis

Data were collected over a period of 6 months (i.e., from January to June 2019) using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data collection was carried out through the use of structured questionnaire and oral interviews. Secondary data were collected from the park's records and reports. The study population was made up of tourist and staff in the various departments of the park including: Ecotourism, Park Engineering, Management and Administrative, and also, Park Protection and Conservation. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw representative samples from the staff population in each of the above-mentioned departments. In all, a total of 100 respondents were sampled. The data obtained were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 20 computer statistical software package; the data were subjected to descriptive statistics which comprised frequency analysis, percentages and charts.



Figure 1: Map of Kainji Lake National Park
(Source: Ayeni, 2001)

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, with majority (87.0%) being males. Majority of respondents (87.0%) were in the 31-40 years age group, while only about a fifth of them (21.0%) were aged ≥ 40 years. Majority of respondents (82.0%) were married, had tertiary education (57.0%), and about a third (36.0%) have spent 6-10 years in service. The periodicity and season of patronage to Kainji Lake National Park (as reported by the park's staff) are shown in Table 2, it was found that everyday recorded the highest (51.0%) followed by every week with 23.0%, while the least was every two weeks with 7.0%. The season of patronage revealed that the dry season recorded the highest with 79.0%, followed by the wet season with 11.0%, while both seasons recorded the least with 10.0%.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency (%) n = 100
Age group (years)	
< 30	24 (24.0)
31-40	55 (55.0)
≥ 41	21 (21.0)
Sex	
Male	87 (87.0)
Female	13 (13.0)
Marital status	
Single	18 (18.0)
Married	82 (82.0)
Education level	
Primary	2 (2.0)
Secondary	41 (41.0)
Tertiary	57 (57.0)
Years in service	
1-5	16 (16.0)
6-10	36 (36.0)
11-15	14 (14.0)
16-20	16 (16.0)
21-25	19 (19.0)
≥ 26	8 (8.0)

Table 2: Tourists' preferred periodicity and season of patronage in Kainji Lake National Park

Variables	Frequency (%) n = 100
Periodicity of patronage	
Every day	51 (51.0)
Every week	23 (23.0)
Every two weeks	7 (7.0)
Once in a month	19 (19.0)
Season of patronage	
Wet season	11 (11.0)
Dry season	79 (79.0)
Both seasons	10 (10.0)

Table 3 shows the trend in tourists' patronage and their perception of the services rendered in the park. A larger proportion of respondents (37.0%) believed that the patronage of tourists in the park has been decreasing over the years. A larger proportion of respondents (49.0%) rated the tourists' perception of the services rendered in the park as good. The tourists' influx in the park from 2009-2018 is shown in Table 4. Of a total of 40,991 tourists that visited the park, year 2013 recorded the highest number of tourists with 7,730, followed by 2010 and 2011 with 6,103 each, while year 2014 recorded the least with 929. Also, year 2013 recorded the highest number of domestic tourists with 7,725, while year 2014 recorded the least with 929. Year 2010 recorded the highest number of foreign tourists with 49 individuals, followed by year 2009 with 25 individuals, while no foreign tourist visited the park in year 2014. Table 5 shows the revenue generated in the park from 2009-2018. The total revenue generated was ₦23,019,455.32; of these, year 2013 recorded the highest revenue with ₦4,294,061.87, followed by year 2015 with ₦3,481,967.52, while the least was recorded in year 2011 with ₦249,665.97.

Table 3: Trend in tourists' influx and their perception of the services provided in the park

Variables	Frequency (%) n = 100
Trend in tourists' influx	
Increasing	31 (31.0)
Decreasing	37 (37.0)
Fluctuating	28 (28.0)
I don't know	4 (4.0)
Perception of services	
Very good	25 (25.0)
Good	49 (49.0)
Fair	17 (17.0)
Poor	8 (8.0)
Very poor	1 (1.0)

Table 4: Tourists' influx for the period 2009-2018

Year	Domestic tourist	Foreign tourist	Total
2009	4,852	25	4,877
2010	6,054	49	6,103
2011	6,087	16	6,103
2012	3,422	07	3,429
2013	7,725	05	7,730
2014	929	-	929
2015	3,065	11	3,076
2016	2,993	5	2,998
2017	2,753	21	2,774
2018	2,969	3	2,972
Total	40,849	142	40,991

Table 5: Revenue generation from tourism in Kainji Lake National Park from 2009-2018

Year	Revenue Generated (N)
2009	457,842.48
2010	2,758,710.10
2011	249,665.97
2012	2,184,471.85
2013	4,294,061.87
2014	3,312,589.52
2015	3,481,967.52
2016	2,577,673.60
2017	3,149,507.41
2018	552,965.00
Total	23,019,455.32

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the respondents were mostly males, and majority of them were in the 31-40 years age group. These indicate that the respondents are still very active in service. The information obtained from the respondents indicates that tourists visit the park every day, and it also showed that the park enjoys high tourists' flow especially during the dry season. The finding also revealed that a significant number of the respondents reported that the tourists who visited the park in the past expressed satisfaction with the services rendered to them. Majority of respondents reported that the tourists' flow at the park over the years is decreasing; this finding is not in concordance with the finding in a study by Adejumo *et al.*, (2014) which reported an increase in tourists' patronage. Fluctuation in trend was noticeable, with the highest number of tourists (7,730) being recorded in 2013, while the lowest (929) was in 2014.

Tourists' visit to national parks for game viewing has been interpreted by Reynolds and Braithwaite (2001) to be the result of a general interest in nature and nature-based experiences, as reflected in an increasing demand to experience these, and increasing value being placed on animals in the wild, as opposed to those in captive or semi-captive situations. The high influx of tourists during the dry season obtained in this study may be attributed to the excellent visibility for game viewing during the period. In contrast, the period May to August offers limited visibility for game viewing, and this can disappoint visitors. Nevertheless, the tourists' flow in this study differs from the findings in studies conducted in some African countries, especially those of the east and southern parts of the continent. For instance, tourism in the Masai Mara reserve has been extremely successful in economic terms. Masai Mara receives the highest number of visitors not only in Kenya but in East

Africa; and it was reported that the average annual tourists entry in the park was about 200,000 (Bhandari, 1999).

It is important to identify the factors influencing tourists' flow in national parks. Increasing urbanization and the rise in sedentary and indoor pastimes (such as television, the internet, and video games) have been linked to a reduction in informal and outdoor recreation including wildlife tourism (Balmford *et al.*, 2009). Balmford *et al.*, (2009) also reported a negative link between growth in visits to protected areas and the wealth of a nation. It was further suggested that visitation to many formal protected areas in richer countries are becoming increasingly crowded and thus less attractive to nature enthusiasts. Overcrowding and the perception of overcrowding have been noted as a concern of visitors to many larger US national parks for over a decade. One other factor is the shift in preference away from domestic destinations as nature focused tourists become wealthier and alternative wildlife attractions in less costly developing countries become more accessible (Fretwell and Podolsky, 2003). There is need for empirical works on the factors that motivate visitors to visit the respective national parks.

Data on the revenue generation from 2009 to 2018 showed that a total of ₦23,019,455.32 was generated. The highest revenue generation from tourist (₦4,294,061.87) was in the year 2013, while the lowest (₦249,665.97) was in year 2011. The major sources of revenue for the park include park entry, accommodation and catering service fees, and also, proceeds from sales of souvenirs. Invariably, the tourists' flow for a given year may not necessarily determine the level of revenue generated from ecotourism. However, tourists' expenditure and spending in the park will go a long way in influencing the scale of revenue generation. Clearly, the proceeds from wildlife tourism to conservation activities have contributed immensely to the management of the National Parks in Nigeria, especially in times of inadequate funding from the Federal Government (Meduna *et al.*, 2005). This highlights the potential of wildlife tourism in generating substantial resources for both conservation and economic development. This is also significant given that protected areas are under increasing pressure to provide economic justification for their existence (Balmford *et al.*, 2009).

Although there were no data for comparison of budgetary allocation and revenue generation from ecotourism in this study, typically the income from tourism is well below the park's budget, and constitutes

only a small proportion of the money used in managing the park. Considering the fact that the current trend globally is that of governments requiring parks to recover substantial proportions of their budgets from tourists' expenditures (Eagles, 2001), authorities of KLNP would have to explore the full range of income generation opportunities in ecotourism.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the findings of this study that Kainji Lake National Park had a constant influx of tourists over the years, with the most preferred periodicity and season being every day and the dry season respectively. Although, the services rendered in the park was majorly rated as good by tourists, patronage has decreased consistently over the years; and flow of foreign tourist has been very poor, and also declining in recent years. These have serious implications on the revenue generation from park tourism (which is needed for biodiversity conservation). The study recommends that there is need to upgrade the facilities in the park to meet the tourists' needs and desires in order to improve patronage and revenue generation. Also, awareness on the benefits of visits and recreational activities in the park should be created among both local and foreign residents.

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Conflict of interest

None declared.

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