



Interests of Tourists and Impact on the Host Community of Elegushi Beach, Lagos State

by

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to highlight the socio-economic impact of Elegushi Beach to its host community. Primary sources of data for the study included interviews with elderly indigenes for historical eyewitness account, results from check-list, pieces of creative writing and the information received from questionnaire. Questionnaire was made up of a five-point Likert rating scale namely: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UN), Disagree (D), Strongly disagree (SD). Simple frequency percentages, tables, charts, graphs were used to analyse the data generated for the study. Using a descriptive method, this study identified the various attractions in the destination, evaluated the ways the destination has affected the social and economic lives of the host communities and determined how the impact have affected the sustainability of local social lives of the host communities. The study recommends policies and practices that ensure the sustainability of the destination and the social lives of the host communities should be developed at the early stage of tourism development to avert the negative social impacts at the maturation of the industry. Furthermore, host community participation which is a pre-requisite for sustainable tourism development, should be encouraged and facilitated in tourism development processes to give the host community a sense of ownership and control over the resources of the community.

Key words: tourism, host community, interrelations, socio-economic impact, Elegushi Beach

1) Introduction

In the past, tourism leaders have strongly denied the negative impacts that the industry can introduce into host communities. This denial has been based on the belief that if such an admission were to be made, tourism would lose the vital support it has from residents, employees and politicians. For tourism to thrive in an area, it needs the support of the area's residents. This realization has led to increasing attention being given over the past two decades to the perceived impacts of tourism. Fredline, 2014;

Gjerald, 2015; Jackson 2016 and Fulkner, 2017 presented a valuable synthesis of research findings current at the time relating to the perceived impacts of tourism within a conceptual framework designed to illuminate tourism as an amalgamation of phenomena and their interrelations. These authors grouped perceived impacts of tourism into the three traditional categories of economic, physical and social, but pointed out the artificiality of these categories, and their frequent overlap.

Economic impact studies have tended to emphasize the benefits that accrue to a destination area and to disregard the costs (Sharpley, 1994; Smith & Krannich, 1998 Fredline et al., 2002). There are two main reasons for this. First, many of the benefits, such as increased income and employment, are tangible and comparatively easy to measure, while many of the economic costs, such as noise, congestion, and pollution, are relatively intangible and difficult to measure in economic terms. Second, economic impact studies are frequently commissioned by tourism advocates to engender support for tourism. Houston (2017), Sharpley (2014) and Ofuani (2022) caution, however, that although many such studies are conducted with enthusiasm to make the economic case as strong as possible, they are methodologically flawed. Given their invariably positive results, economic impact studies tend to generate optimism regarding the potential of tourism among decision-makers and community residents.

Social exchange theory has been considered an appropriate framework for developing an understanding of residents' perceptions of tourism impacts (Ritchie, 2006). Social exchange theory suggests that individuals will engage in exchanges if (a) the resulting rewards are valued, (b) the exchange is likely to produce valued rewards, and (c) perceived costs do not exceed perceived rewards (Adefuye et al, 1987). These principles suggested that residents will be willing to enter into an exchange with the tourists if they reap some benefit without incurring unacceptable costs. Theoretically, residents who view the results of tourism as personally valuable and believe that the costs do not exceed the benefits will favour the exchange and support tourism development (Batir, 2009). Based on earlier research, it was found that the elements being offered by the host community include not only economic components but also social and environmental factors (Zamani et al, 2006; Gursoy, 2010; McMinn, et al, 2018 and Wag et al., 2018). Residents will be willing to enter into an exchange with tourists if they feel the transaction will result in a gain. Studies have shown that economic gain, along with social and environmental factors, affect resident perceptions of tourism and their support of or opposition to tourism (Wall, et al, 2016b; Brunt, et al., 2019;). These studies suggested that the value attributed to the elements of exchange affects the way tourism is perceived and the manner in which residents react to tourism.

On the other hand, social exchange theory seeks to explain why benefit for tourism is dependent on resident perceptions of tourism impacts (Barrow, 2002). Theoretically, the relationship holds true because the perception of tourism impacts is a result of assessing rewards and costs (Jimoh, 2011). Consequently, residents who perceive the exchange with tourists as beneficial will support tourism, while those who perceive the exchange as deleterious will oppose tourism development (Dieke, 2008). The perception of tourism impacts is affected by the exchange the perceivers believe they are making. Therefore, expressed support for tourism development may be considered as a willingness to enter into an exchange with the tourists.

It is important to note that social exchange must be reciprocal. Reciprocity suggests that the resources exchanged should be roughly equivalent and, therefore, neither

party should feel they are being exploited (McMinn, 2018). When tourists feel that they are being exploited by being charged an excessively high price for souvenirs; or when hosts believe that they are being exploited by having tourists intrude on their privacy by taking photographs, then the exchange becomes unbalanced (Folaway, 2016; Dieke, 2018). In this situation, the host is more likely to adopt a more negative attitude towards encounters than tourists because what is 'business as usual' for local people is a 'one-off experience' for tourists (Fayikesi, 2018; Wag, et al, 2018). However, if the conditions of rationality, the achievement of benefits and reciprocity are fulfilled, then the exchange will be perceived as fair and equitable. If the host and the tourist both feel that they have achieved a fair and satisfactory outcome, then each will have a positive perception of the encounter (Okpoko, 2016; Fulkner 2017). The advantages of using social exchange theory, then, are that it is able to accommodate explanations of both positive and negative perceptions and to examine relationships at either the individual or the collective level. Social exchange theory demonstrates that residents' evaluation of the influence of tourism and residents' support for tourism are dependent on what residents' claim as value.

For Elegushi Beach to be a preferred destination, a number of connected elements are necessary. For instance, the behavioural process of the host community will determine if the tourists will repeat their visits or flee. Congestion and pollution can as well deter the movement of the tourists. Climate changes can reduce or increase the number of tourists in Elegushi community. This is because if there is incessant rainfall which could lead to flooding, it will drastically reduce the number of tourists' visiting the place because roads and even buildings/houses will be flooded.

On the one hand, host-guest scenario describes relationship of persons concerned with the process of transforming visitors, strangers to become friends. Fredline, (2014), submitted that the traditional notion of host- guest relation has three key features commonly known as the host-guest paradigm. The first is 'protection' given by the host to the guest. The second is 'reciprocity' which the host is expecting from the guest in future. The third is 'duty' from both sides which does not claim respect but also reciprocate well-being.

The nature of the host-guest relationship and community attitudes to tourism generally depend on: (i) Type of contact between host and guest. (ii) Importance of the tourism industry to the community (iii) Community tolerance threshold (Rickson, 1990).

Brunt and Connell (2019) reviewed that contact between host and guest may arise in three scenarios: (i) Tourist purchase of goods and services from local people (shops, hotels); (ii) Tourist and local resident's use of same facilities (beaches, shops, bars); (iii) Purposefully meeting to exchange ideas and information.

Williams (2017) commented that cultural similarity or dissimilarity is one of the major factors shaping socio-cultural impacts. Impacts tend to be greater where the host and guest relationship is both culturally and geographically distant. 'Where the tourist and the host are culturally similar, the socio-cultural impacts will be limited.

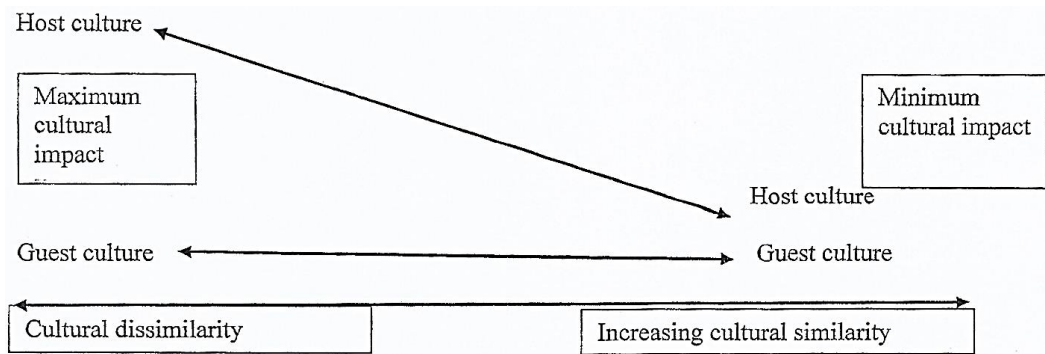


Fig. 1: Host-Guest Relationship

Source: Williams et al (2001).

This theory propounds that a quality relationship between the host and guest, which is characterized by high level of trust and commitment, is the major determinant of guest loyalty and host acceptance. Therefore, the relationship between host and guest establishes a sense of ambivalent hostility and friendship which gives room for spatial interactions in peace and harmony. This relationship should be mutual and symbiotic in the sense that they will work together to achieve their aim. This study therefore set out to investigate how social and economic life styles of the tourists and hosts have affected the tourism landscape.

2) Host Perception of Impacts

There have been various perceptions of the numerous impacts of tourism through complex and extensive researches. Most studies have concentrated on how relationships between the host and guest should be symbiotic. The major reason why tourists continue to return to a given destination is that they have established a relationship with the locals and friendship has developed. Increasingly, they become integrated with the local community even if for a short time (Okpoko, 2016). It might be said that they are part of but not from the host community. For instance, when the middle class tourist frequents a restaurant and is drawn into conversation with a local who is a cab driver, upon returning home, the tourist will talk of the conversation and the insights that it gave him or her in the host society.

Scholars (Gjerald, 2015; Okpoko, 2016; Smith, 2018) suggest that although the socio-economic impacts of tourism have been extensively studied, there's need for additional research on the subject across geographical locations so as to further the development of theory in this field. Ritchie & Var, 2016; Lee, 2017 and Smith & Krannich, 2018; contended that these perceived impacts on host communities or destination areas may be classified into two categories. The first relates to the characteristics of the destination area, which includes the perceived social impacts of the resident-visitor encounter; examples are cultural gap effects, crime, prostitution, and the demonstration effect (i.e. changes in values, attitudes, or behaviour of the host population that can result from observing tourists). The second category concerns social impacts on infrastructural development and their perceived effects on the local resources. For example, pressure on local resources and facilities, local versus imported labour, local language and cultural effects, and lifestyle changes.

3) Objectives of Study

The specific objectives were to:

- i. Identify the various tourist attractions in Elegushi beach.
- ii. Examine the influence of tourism and its impacts on development and sustainability of the social lives of the Elegushi community.

4) Study Area

Lagos State in its rich multifaceted history, socio-economic, socio-cultural differentials houses the Ikate kingdom. The Ikate kingdom houses Elegushi beach and is sandwiched between the middle part of the Lagos lagoon and the shore of the Atlantic Ocean, Ikate kingdom formed a rectangular of about ten square kilometers of the sand-pit land formation interspersed with mangrove swamps which characterized the area. This geographic situation made land communication very difficult in the area until a long stretch of road was constructed to enhance vehicular traffic across the five-cowrie creek bridge through to Epe. Hence, footpaths and cycle tracks were the only means of communication until 1983 when the Maroko-Eti Osa-Epe express way was constructed.

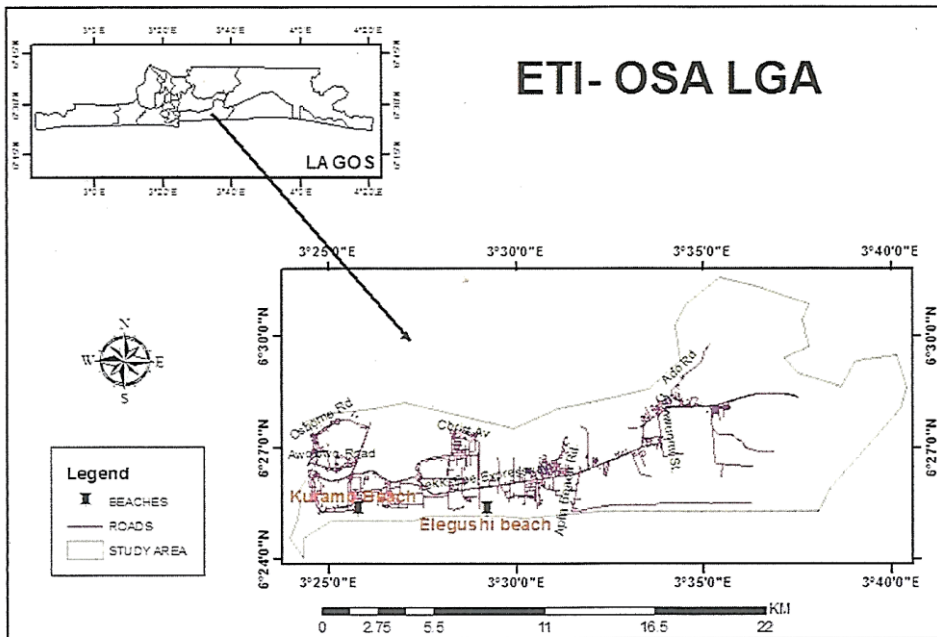


Fig. 1.0: Map of Study Area

The villages there are Badore, Lamgbasa, Ado, Ajah, Ikota, Ajiran, Ikate and Moba. The physical difficulties and inaccessibility of the area apparently drove many of the indigenes to settle on Lagos Island. The people of Ikate area of Lagos originally were involved in fishing, palm oil processing, and also engaged in a little farming; producing cassava, palm kernels/oil and garri, which were sold at daily markets in Lagos. It is situated on the Western coast to Eti-Osa proper, along Maroko-Epe express way, about 4km from Mobil Oil headquarters. It extends from 6.25° to 6.26° of longitude and 3.28° East to 3.31 East of the equator. It presently covers approximately 10sq km, but in the

past, before 1941, it extended beyond Okun Alajapa. The beach with the sparkling Lagos Atlantic coastline stretches over 180 kilometres and has a boundary with the Lekki beach. Identified beaches along that Lekki axis include: Bar beach, Kuramo beach, Oniru beach, Elegushi beach, Maiyegun otherwise known as Lekki beach, Alpha, Magbo Alade beach, Eleko beach, Orimedu, Eko Tourist Beach Resort, Hermitage, La Campaigne Tropicana Resort and so on (William, 2001).

5) Materials and Methods

Using qualitative methods, this paper examined the socio-economic interrelation experiences of tourism development in Elegushi Beach. Primary sources of data for the study included interviews with elderly indigenes for historical eyewitness account, results from check-list, pieces of creative writing and the information received from questionnaire. Questionnaire was made up of a five-point Likert rating scale namely: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UN), Disagree (D), Strongly disagree (SD). This gave room for the raw data to be systematically scrutinized for validity and reliability in order to eliminate or at least minimize errors, omissions, as well as other discrepancies that may be capable of compromising sound judgment. The basic rationale for choosing residents of Elegushi is that it is one of those communities that have different social norms and economic values accompanied with regular visitations by tourists and fun seekers. The residents are in a position to determine the social impacts of tourists' exploration, and interactions in their everyday life.

A random sampling procedure was adopted to select individuals in order to ensure high reliability of data, high degree of representation and generalization of research findings. A sample size of 250 was drawn from a population of 1366 in the study area. Copies of the questionnaire were self-administered to all the residents met at their respective households in Elegushi Beach community. Also, some respondents were interviewed at their various work places and shops within the study area for ten days. A total of 250 copies of the questionnaire were distributed but 223 (89.2%) were completed and retrieved from the respondents for analysis. This was done in order to ensure even and adequate distribution of sample size as well as representation of all groups of tourists within the study area.

6) Results and Findings

Elegushi Beach was a major attraction (19.3%) for the tourists. Other points of interest were restaurants, outdoor games, hairdressing, furniture, swimming and craft making which recorded low percentages because the respondents claimed that these activities could be alternatively derived outside the beach (Table 1).

Elegushi beach has a wide range of recreational and outdoor services such as volleyball, football, horse-riding, running, building castles with sand, picnics to mention but a few.

Table 1: Points of Interest for Tourists at Elegushi Beach

Tourists' Interest	Frequency	Percentage.
Beach	43	19.3
Fish markets	11	4.9
Restaurants	8	3.6
Recreational activities	10	4.5
Outdoor games	8	3.6
Hotels/Guest Houses	15	6.7
Palace	9	4.0
Hair Dressing	6	2.7
Furniture	8	3.6
Barbing Saloon	8	3.6
Fashion Houses	9	4.0
Craft Making	4	1.8
Shopping	15	6.7
Swimming	6	2.7
Reading	10	4.5
Entertainment	11	4.9
Trading	10	4.5
Nature watch	9	4.0
Research	7	3.1
Hide out	8	3.6
Tourists' Visitor	8	3.6
Total	223	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2022



Fig 2: A Fun Ride at Elegushi Beach

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

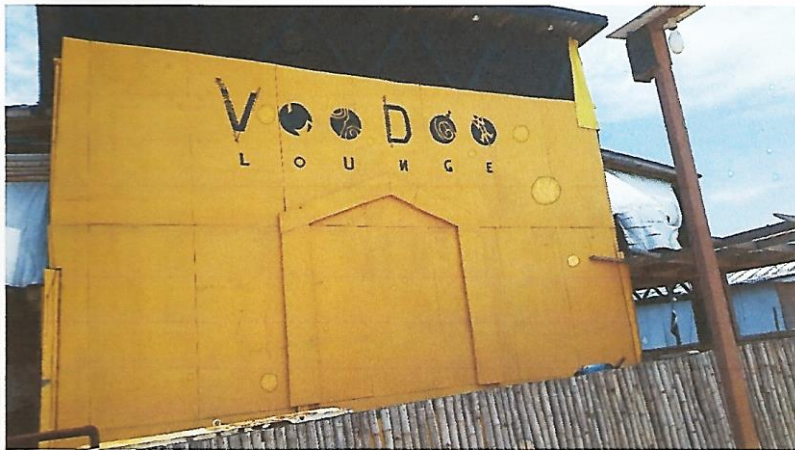


Fig.3: Voodoo Lounge at Elegushi Beach
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

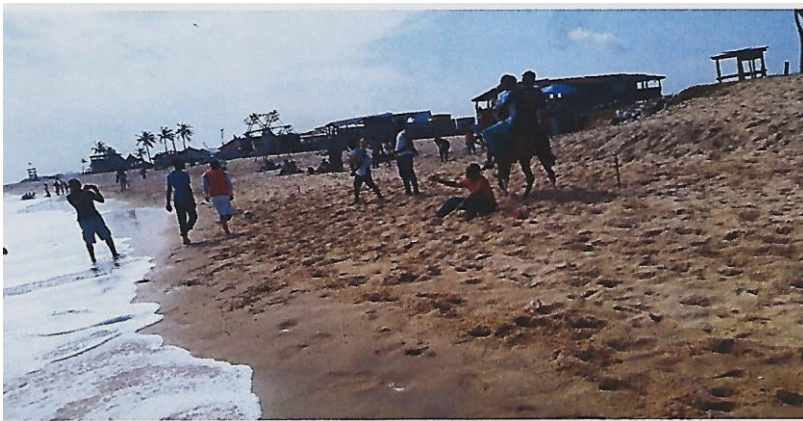


Fig. 4: Outdoor Activities at Elegushi Beach
Source: Fieldwork, 2022



Fig. 5: De Ark Restaurant and Bar at Elegushi Beach
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

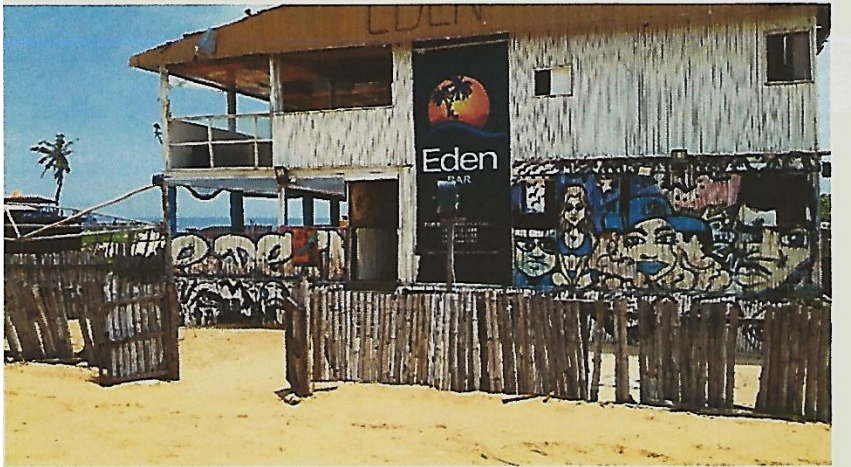


Fig 6: Eden Bar at Elegushi Beach
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

As shown in Fig. 5, the Royal Palace (Kabiyesi's Palace) is the administrative part of the beach resort. Decisions concerning the sustainability and maintenance of the beach or establishment of tourist attractions especially for private companies as well as remittances of funds generated from the tourists are made in the palace. It's properly guarded to prevent inconsequential visits from tourists.



Fig. 7: Royal Palace of Oba Elegushi.
Source: Fieldwork, 2022

7) **Results and Discussion**

In line with the first objectives of the study, the beach was revealed to be the major point of interest for the tourists with the highest percentage of 19.3%; while Hotels/Guests houses, fish market, outdoor recreational activities recorded 6.7%, 4.9% and 4.5% respectively as shown on Table 1 above. Being a tourist destination remotely located from the metropolitan area of Lagos, there were various other points of attractions within the community which were evidently shown in Figs. 2 to 7.

The second objective of the study, which had to do with the influence of tourism and its impacts on development and sustainability of the social lives of the Elegushi community, showed the interrelationships, and mutual understanding of the tourists and host residents. Tourists paid for every activity they participated within the community. The fund generated was used in renovating old buildings, construction of new shops and purchasing of some items such as clothing, hand bags, and shoes brought into the community by the tourists. The hosts' experiences on tourism development and their socio-economic and cultural conditions, population sizes, as well as consumption of natural resources, were issues of concern in Elegushi Beach, Lagos, Nigeria. Host Community participation in tourism developments, including the expansion of facilities such as the guests houses, play grounds and restaurant space were the main aspects of sustainable development undertaken by the community. Members of the community voluntarily embarked on environmental sanitation of the beach on irregular basis though.

8) Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper summarizes the innovative attempt of a communal approach for Elegushi's socio-economic and cultural tourism developments. It argues that this approach ensures local communities involvement in sharing economic benefits from tourism. Tourism development and operations, which derives from this communal approach, may greatly contribute to the formation of the interrelations among the tourists, community, governments; and directly influence the degree of community's participation in the whole process of tourism development.

Policies and practices that ensure the sustainability of the destination and the social lives of the host communities should be developed at the early stage of tourism development to avert the negative social impacts at the maturation of the industry.

Host community participation which is a pre-requisite for sustainable tourism development should be encouraged and facilitated in tourism development processes to give the host community a sense of ownership and control over the resources of the community.

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