



ASSESSMENT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL BENEFITS OF TOURISM TO USERS OF SUNTAN BEACH



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Abstract: Assessment of socio-cultural tourism impact on the host community of Suntan beach has received less attention, probably because of its unpopularity. One effective way of doing so is with the use of indicators such as “users’ satisfaction of the site” and “tourism effect on the host community”. This study therefore assesses the sustainability of socio-cultural values of Suntan beach, using some selected indicators from a guidebook of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) Indicator’s of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations to prepare questionnaires. The questionnaires captured major aspect of the indicators relating to the behaviour and perception of life (cultural values) of the users. Two hundred copies of questionnaires were administered to two categories of respondents randomly selected from among the tourists (n=100) and the local residents (n=100) in the study area. Descriptive statistics was employed in analyzing the questionnaires using statistical package of social science (SPSS). The overall perceptions of the users based on the effect of the tourism on the socio cultural values of the community are average (50%). Therefore, adequate measures should be put in place to ensure sustainability of the cultural values of the area.

Keywords: Culture, conservation, indicators, Suntan beach, sustainability

Introduction

Tourism is an exercise that entails moving from one’s own natural place to stay in another place for a period not less than a day, for recreational or trade purpose, through whatever means of transportation (UNWTO, 2004; Ekundayo, 2014). There are several forms of tourisms, but beach tourism seems to be the most interesting of all and has been defined as a business of making coastal (usually sea) surroundings available for tourist satisfaction (Kirubashini and Ameen, 2019). Such coastal areas are naturally endowed with beautiful serenity and superb climatic atmosphere to satisfy the tourists (Prabprirree *et al.*, 2016). To ensure sustainable utilization of the available tourist products of such important areas, the conservation status as well as resiliency of socio-cultural values of the host community of the area must be determined from time to time. The sustainability and management of a destination cannot be done in isolation, all stakeholders, including the visitors, managers and the host community must be involved. Proper synergy of the three components will go a long way in ensuring the conservation of the cultural heritage of the host community (UNWTO, 2004).

Though, the host community may derive a lot of benefits from beach tourism, but not without some hiccups (Kombo, 2016; Zadel, 2016). The regular use of the place may cause loss of some cultural values (by modifying the characters and perception of the local residents), since both tourists and the community are expected to interact (Eja *et al.*, 2012). For instance, the lifestyle (beauty, fashion and moral standard) of the tourists can easily influence the youth (from among the host community) negatively when they exercise or show off their possession. This is why tourism is said to act as catalyst for all crimes (Mawby, 2017). However, according to Kombo (2016), the act of learning to tolerate other cultures, in a peacefully co-existent manner, is in itself an eco-tourism. That is to say, the existence of certain community and their cultural values in a particular destination is enough as a reason to attract tourists for eco-tourism. Culture represents the creation and learning of the way of life of a particular people, affecting their way of thinking and behaviour. On the other hand, a resource is said to be sustainable if it does not only take care of the needs of the present moment, but also the generation to come (UNWTO, 2004). The influence of tourism on cultural values cannot be overemphasized, since the interaction of

tourists with the host community can impact both negative and positive influence. Constant measurement may be needed to checkmate erosion of valuable cultures. The resilience of these cultural values to being eroded is a reflection of how sustainable such cultures will stand a test of time. Thus, the cultures of a destination must be sustainable (Zadel, 2016; Prabprirree *et al.*, 2016) at all time.

Lagos state is blessed with lots of beaches, of which Suntan beach is beginning to be popular. Research on cultural assessment of Suntan beach, for sustainability is limited, perhaps because of its newness in Lagos when compare to others. Many authors had concentrated on other forms of beach tourism. Besides, the government does not help the mater, as there is less concentration on the cultural tourism than other forms of tourism (Omotoso and Omotoba, 2016). Available studies are also devoid of appropriate methods for assessing the sustainability of cultural values. For instance, the use of indicators, which are measures employed for assessing the sustainability of a situation or an area, as suggested by UNWTO, is rarely used for such assessment in most of the available literatures on this topic. This study therefore, assesses the sustainability of socio-cultural values of Suntan beach using selected cultural indicators from a guidebook of the World Tourism Organization (WTO) Indicator’s of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations (UNWTO, 2004). The result will go a long way in making sustainable policies for the management of the destination.

Materials and Methods

Study area

Suntan beach, also known as coconut beach, is a beautiful beach in the coastal town of Badagri west of Lagos, located between latitude 6023’N to 6024’N and longitude 2049’E to 2050’E . It was established in 1999 and commissioned in the year 2000, under the chairmanship of Honourable Moses Owolabani. It comprises of beach shelters (chalets) for lodging, horse available for rent, as well as small shops to enjoy snacks or refreshments sold by local traders. A spacious garage for car park, standard stage for entertainment, superb restaurants and bar, laundry/dry cleaning services, suya spots and small shops for sales of many attractive items are all available (Adewale *et al.*, 2020; Adewale, 2015). All these qualify the beach as a good hub worthy of being researched (Fig. 1).

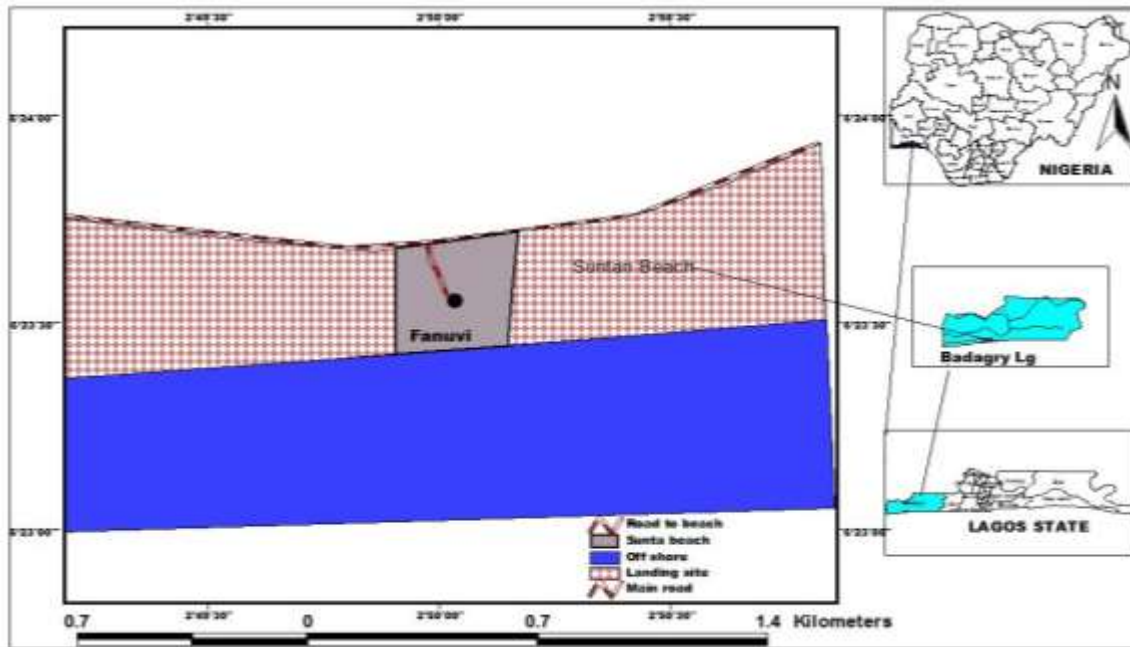


Fig. 1: Map of the Suntan beach

Data collection and analysis

Structured questionnaire and observational methods were adopted for the collection of this data. 200 questionnaires were administered to two categories of respondents randomly selected from among the tourists (n=100) and the local residents (n=100) of the host community (in 2015). Indicators used (users' perceptions on the tourist site and the effect of tourism on the users) were selected from the World Tourism Organization Indicator's of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destinations: A guidebook (UNWTO, 2004). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the questionnaires with the use of statistical package of social science (SPSS).

Results and Discussion

Perception (satisfaction) of residents on Suntan beach

Table 1 reveals that; almost all the residents (90%) agreed that the tourism is good for their community. A large proportion of the residents (72%) said that they have personally benefited from the industry. The statement "the industry creates job for the local resident" was agreed to by lots of the residents as well (71%). Majority of the residents (60%) also agreed that the industry employs local youth. The employment of local youth is an indication that the host community derives substantial benefits from tourism. Almost half of (48%) of residents believed that the prizes for goods and services were too high, but only 22% of them disagreed with this statement. Although, the police station is cited close to the area, a number of the residents (32%) were of the opinion that the beach still cause rise in crime rates as against 37% residents who disagreed. Increase in crime rate around beaches are very common, this has been reported by various authors (Kombo, 2016; Zadel, 2016). Some residents (41%) were of the perception that the destination harms moral standards of the community against 41% residents that disagreed with the view. The intermingling of both the tourists and the host community make some residents of the area wanting to copy tourist in their way of live. For instance, it is possible that the kind of cloth the tourists wear to engage in swimming may be so seductive and very uncommon to the residents (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Tourists having fun at Suntan beach

However, culturally, some residents (43%) were of the view that the beach did not disrupt local activities. It is sad to note that almost half of the residents (48%) said that they were not allowed free access to the beach. This percentage represented a number of the hawkers that will like to sell their product to the tourist without paying entrance fee to do so. Higher percentage (60%) perceived Suntan beach as a way of helping to stimulate local culture and crafts as against 24% of them who believed that their local culture has been disrupted, while 16% were indifferent to this. Close to half of the residents (49%) perceived that the beach uses natural resources needed by local residents as against 37% resident who were against it. This explains the reason while some residents were against the establishment of the destination in the first place as observed during my interaction with the residents. The statement 'the community has control over tourism' is in agreement with 51% residents. While 38% of the residents agreed that the money spent by the tourists remain in their community, 46% residents still disagreed (Table 1). The implication of this is that a large number of the workers are among the residents and reside around the place. This implies that the establishment of Suntan beach is not bad after all.

Table 1: Residents' perception (satisfaction) about Suntan beach

Indicators	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1. Tourism is good for my community	43	47	-	9	1
2. I personally benefit from tourism industry	33	39	18	9	1
3. Creates jobs for local residents	30	41	17	6	6
4. Employs local youth	23	37	24	13	3
5. Raises prices for goods	21	27	30	15	7
6. Helps the community obtain services	16	32	30	14	8
7. Causes rise in crime rates	10	22	31	18	19
8. Harms moral standards	17	24	18	25	16
9. Disrupts local activities	16	20	21	22	21
10. Harms the environment	13	32	18	16	21
11. Stops locals from beach access	20	28	23	16	13
12. Helps stimulate local culture and crafts	26	34	16	16	8
13. Uses natural resources needed by local residents	17	32	14	24	13
14. The community has control over tourism	23	28	14	12	23
15. The money spent by tourists remains in my community	18	20	16	24	22
16. Local residents have easy access to the areas which tourists use	20	37	15	20	8

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

Table 2: Tourists' perception (satisfaction) about Suntan beach

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
1. I enjoyed my experience in Suntan Beach	63	34	2	-	1
2. The beach provides a good variety of experiences	46	34	13	5	2
3. I had a good experience involving the local culture	38	27	25	6	4
4. Good souvenirs and crafts were available	30	44	11	12	3
5. I had good opportunities to enjoy local cuisine	31	29	17	16	7
6. The quality of food was good	32	33	21	7	7
7. The quality of accommodation was good	26	34	31	6	3
8. The level of service provided was high	32	34	21	9	4
9. The host communities are friendly and kind	34	32	23	6	5
10. Service staff were competent and helpful	33	38	22	3	4
11. Destination has an interesting and varied tourism products	40	30	18	11	1
12. I felt safe and secure during my visit	31	26	22	12	9
13. I feel I received good value for money	33	31	24	5	7
14. I would recommend Suntan beach to my friends	30	37	25	5	3
15. I would visit Suntan beach again	35	31	24	7	3
16. The tour operator is skillful and knowledgeable	32	32	27	6	3
17. Tourists were well protected in the destination	39	30	24	5	2
18. I received good information regarding safety and security at the destination	35	33	27	2	3
19. I was harassed by the locals during my stay	11	12	16	8	53

Perception (satisfaction) of tourists on Suntan beach

Table 2 depicts that majority of the respondents (97%) agreed that they enjoyed their experience in the beach as higher percentage (80%) of them agreed that the beach provides a good variety of experiences. The statement 'I had a good experience involving the local culture' was agreed to by 65% tourist. Many of the tourists (60 – 65%) agreed to the fact that the quality of food was not only good enough, but also that the accommodation was also conducive. To a large extent (66%), tourists agreed that the level of services provided was high. This is highly commendable and explains while the tourist site witnessed larger population during the peak period. Just as larger percentage of the tourists (66%) attested to the fact that majority of the residents were friendly and kind, 71% tourists also believed that members of staff were equally competent. Even though, insecurity has been a major setback in the tourism industries in Nigeria (Omotoso and Omotoba, 2016), it is still surprising to find a number of the tourists (57%) feeling safe and secured in the area. This seems to be connected to the fact that there is a police station established close by for security purpose. Though, some tourists (23%) claimed to be harassed by some residents during their visit. Harassment in this contest is referred to some residents (who appear to be hoodlums) begging for money from the visitors. This is not good enough for a growing tourist site like Suntan

beach, as it may encourage act of theft. Still a larger percentage of the tourists (66%) agreed to visit Suntan beach again. Again, this must be the reason why 67% tourists agreed to recommend Suntan beach to their friends. In support of the above statements, it is evident that a number of the tourists (64%) had received good value for their money. In overall, 52% tourists considered the whole perception favourable, while 48% of the tourists perceived it unfavourable.

Effect of tourism on the community

It is a well know fact that the cultural values (behaviour) of members of the host community may be shaped either negatively or positively by the advent of tourism in the area. This impact is known as "demonstration effect" (Moore and Berno, 1995) and may in the long run have criminal effect that greatly influence both the tourists influx and the security of the host community (Mawby, 2017). Table 3 showed that 40% of the residents opined that, though the rate of organized crime may have decreased, due to the presence of police post, but their concern for material gain had increased since the inception of the place. The notion that all tourists are wealthy (Mawby, 2017) may have induced the love of material gain, as individual begins to have high aspiration for wealth creation. The same reason may be responsible for making relatively larger residents (33 – 53%) to agree that individual crime, prostitution, gambling, alcoholism and drug abuse have

also decreased to some extent, while some few residents (16 – 42%) agreed to their increment.

Table 3: Residents perception based on the effect of tourism on the community

Statement	1(%)	2(%)	3(%)	4(%)	5(%)
1. Residents' concern for material gain	20	17	23	21	19
2. Organized crime	22	19	37	13	9
3. Prostitution	37	16	31	12	4
4. Gambling	30	24	26	12	8
5. Drug abuse	29	24	23	16	8
6. Alcoholism	25	16	26	16	17
7. Honesty	5	28	25	18	24
8. Mutual confidence among people	12	28	20	17	23
9. Unemployment	15	30	30	14	11
10. Politeness and good manners	18	17	26	24	15
11. Vandalism	17	27	25	18	13
12. Congestion	18	19	29	21	13
13. Individual crime	22	28	22	17	11

1 = significantly decrease, 2 = decrease somewhat, 3 = Not make any difference 4 = Increase somewhat, 5 = significantly increase

Efforts still need to be intensified on the security aspect, to curtail the tourist from showing off their unruly behaviour, in order to prevent local residents from emulating them, since tourism is known as an agent of crime (Kombo, 2016; Mawby, 2017). Also, few residents (31%) had perceived vandalism increased, while 34% residents perceiving the place to be congested. This may call for more expansion of the site or regulation of the tourist's influx, especially during the peak period. It is however surprising to find some residents (39–45%) to agree that their honesty, mutual confidence and politeness rate among the community had increased. However, since the overall perception of the residents based on the effect of the tourism on the community was rated to be 50% high and 50% low, it is understandable that crime rate in the destination has not eaten deep, but still, intensification on the security of the place, as well as enlightenment of the local residents on the socio-cultural consequences of tourism is greatly needed.

Conclusion

Among the tourist destinations in Lagos state, Suntan beach may be at developing stage, but its competitiveness with others, in terms of attraction of visitors, especially during the peak period gives it a promising future. This increase in attraction of tourists and their demonstration effect on the socio-cultural values of the host community is mild at present. Consequently, the conservation of the socio-cultural values of Suntan beach is a must to avoid further erosion.

Conflict of Interest

Authors have declared that there is no conflict of interest reported in this work.

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