

Impacts of Seasonality and Patronage of Lakes on the Economy of Host Communities (A Case of Nike Lake, Enugu-Nigeria)

Amalu¹, Titus Ejiofor; Oko Ugwu²; Idam Nnachi Sunday³ and Oko-Isu Philomena Eleje⁴

¹Department of Geography, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (titiagento@gmail.com)

²Department of Public Administration, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Afikpo Ebonyi State, Nigeria

³School of Post Graduate Studies, Alliance International University, Zambia

⁴Department of Public Administration, Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana, Afikpo Ebonyi State, Nigeria

***Corresponding Author:** Amalu Titus E, Department of Geography, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria Email: titiagento@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Lakes are one of the world's most visited tourists' attractions in recent times and the socio-economic advantages of lakes to host communities are numerous. This study examined the impacts of seasonal variations on patronage of Nike Lake in Enugu state Nigeria and its socio-economic implication on the adjoining and host communities. Primary and secondary sources of data collection were employed for the study. The primary source involved the use of questionnaire survey and interviews while the secondary sources involved the use of documented information in the registry of the Lake resort, the internet and textbooks. The study population involved visitors, manager and staffs of the Lake resort and household heads in the area. Data for the study were presented with the aid of tables, graphs and charts; and was analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, mean and averages. The study observed that a total of 205,990 visitors visited the lake resort between 2014 and 2018 and among the visitors, 30% visited to spend their holidays and to attend events, 13% visited to enjoy the accommodation facilities in the resort while 10% visited to catch fun and experience nature. The study also observed that 35% of the visitors came from within Nigeria, 22% from European countries, 15% from other African countries, 10% from Asia and United States while 8% were from South America. It was observed that 77% of the recorded visitors visited during the months of dry season while 23% visited within the months of wet season showing that more activities were observed during dry than in wet season. The study realized that the host communities enjoyed some benefits such as provision of employment, increase in business, family and individual income while some challenges such as increasing crime rates, promiscuity and abandonment of their tradition occupations. Finally, the study observed that only 30% of the indigenes were involved in tourism related activities. Based on the findings, the study recommends that more events be organized and hosted within the resort especially within the months of wet season and that more indigenes should be encouraged to participate in activities within the resort to help boost tourism in the area.

Keywords: Tourism; Seasonality; Patronage; Nigeria; Lake.

INTRODUCTION

Seasonality is a key and a working concept in social sciences such as geography, economy, geology, biology, sociology, psychology and many others. It represents cyclic or periodic variations in a pattern or activity in any of the above mentioned disciplines (Edim et al., 2014; Ajake and Amalu, 2012a,b,c). The concept of tourism seasonality can be defined as temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which can be expressed in the number of visitors, their expenditure and traffic on different forms of transportation, employment and admissions to

attractions (Bukola and Olaitan, 2018; Iwara and Amalu, 2017; Amalu et al., 2018; Enang et al., 2018). It therefore implies that the seasonality phenomena of tourism affects all aspects of supply-demand activities including pricing, occupancy, human resource, supplies volume, offered activities and available attractions. Two major types of seasonality (natural and institutionalized) are seen in variations in tourism demand (Ajake et al., 2016; Amalu et al., 2015; Okech, 2006).

Tourism provides a major economic development opportunity for many countries

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and a means of improving the livelihood of its residents. Both the public and private sectors involved in tourism depend on planning to achieve sustainable tourism development that respects the local community, creates appropriate employment, maintains the natural environment, and delivers a quality visitor's experience. Competitiveness is an important economic indicator of the sustainability and durability of the tourism sector (Ratz, 2003; Amalu et al., 2017a,b). Tourism is among the largest employers in most countries of the world and has rapidly influenced the workforce for the recruitment of young men and women. Tourism, a large, complex and fragmented industry which is still very difficult to define and measure, is a key component of the service economy. In recent times, seasonality in the business of tourism has been perceived as a major business challenge to destinations and to individual operators with tourists' decision to visit a destination solely dependent on factors such as; distance of the destination, time for leisure, purpose of visit, aspiration/quests, economy/financial strength of the tourist (Takou et al., 2013; Amalu and Ajake, 2014; Ogah et al., 2018; Takou and Amalu, 2013). Meanwhile, all these have culminated to inconsistencies in tourism behavior and outcomes which have led to most policy and managerial floors noticed or observed in the industry. The tourism industry without exception have in recent times been

observed to have seasonality as one of the major concerns as activities of the industry continue to be unpredictable since variations in its activities (arrivals and patronage) have remained a constant phenomenon (Amalu and Ajake, 2015; Amalu and Ajake, 2018).

Nike Lake is one of the very popular tourists' attractions in Nigeria. Nike Lake located within Nike lake resort of Enugu State, Nigeria is about three kilometres long and is a household name when it comes to recreational activities and attractions within the region as it has helped in the location branding, contributing in promoting and sustaining tourism in the State. Nike Lake is one of the Lakes in the city of Enugu in Enugu State of Nigeria.

It is located in south eastern Nigeria with coordinates of 6°30' N and 7°30' E. The lake like every other major lakes across the world is the most popular tourists' attraction within the region with its unique adjoining features including; accommodation facilities, swimming pool, bush bar, restaurant, relaxation space, gymnastic facilities, tennis court, event hall and table and lawn tennis courts is a major tourism asset of the state (Amalu and Ajake, 2018). Considering that with the socio-economic potentiality of the lake that little or no study has been carried out to examine the pattern of arrivals and patronage of the lake.

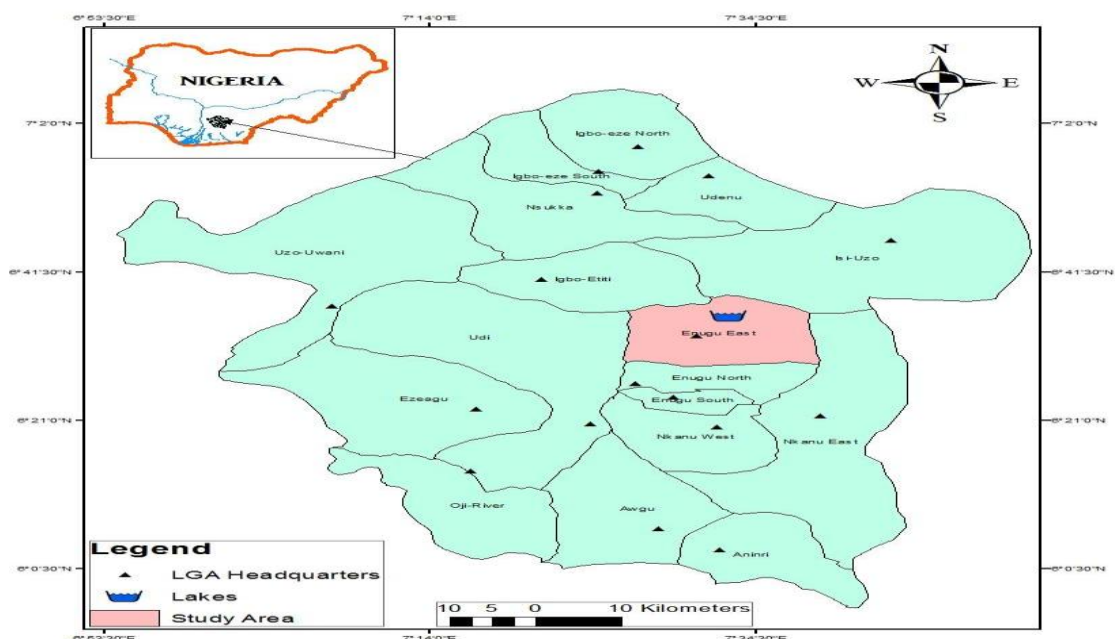


Figure 1. Map of Enugu state showing the study area and the location of Nike lake (2019)

It is in this regards that this study seek to examine the pattern of patronage and the socio-

economic potentials of the lake to its host and adjoining communities.

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Study Area

Enugu State is one of the States in the South Eastern part of Nigeria, the State shares borders with Abia State and Imo State to the south, Ebonyi State to the east, Benue State to the north-east, Kogi State to the north-west and Anambra State to the west. It has a total area of 7,161km (2,765sq.mi) and a density of 780/km² (2,000 sq.mi) (Figure 1).

The study area covers Enugu East local government of the state where Nike Lake resort is located. Meanwhile, Enugu State is endowed with a lot of tourist resources, facilities and attractions. These attractions include features such as lakes, caves, hills, falls and springs, as well as man-made features like; cultural festivals, hotels, telecommunications and transport facilities, galleries and monumental or archaeological sites. Some of the existing cultural attractions in Enugu include the Mmanwu festival, traditional dance troupes, chieftaincy coronation ceremonies, Ozo title ceremonies, traditional marriage ceremonies and new yam festival (Iri-ji).

Methodology

Primary and secondary sources of data collection were employed to elicit data for the study. The primary sources involved the use of interviews with focal groups such as; traditional rulers, market women, youth leaders, managers and staffs of the Nike Lake resort and the exercise was guided by a participatory research method.

The interview sessions helped the researcher understand the people's perception on the subject matter. The study also involved household heads within the host community. The secondary sources of data collection involved the use of recorded information in the resort's registry where details on visitors' arrivals and purpose of visit and origin of the tourists' were derived. Other secondary sources of data include; documented literature in textbooks, journals and year books.

A total of 150 household heads were employed for the study. Data was presented with the aid of tables and charts while descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, mean, averages and standard deviation were employed to analysis the derived data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Patronage of Nike Lake

In a bid to understand the level of patronage the lake resort enjoyed, the study examined the number of visitors that visited the lake resort between 2014 and 2018. Information on table 1 shows that between 2014 and 2018 a total of two hundred and five thousand, nine hundred and ninety (205,990) visitors visited the Lake resort.

The study realised that there was a gradual decrease in the number of visitors' to the lake resort across the years under investigation. Further investigation revealed that the issues of bad economy, insecurity and decaying facilities repelled some visitors from visiting the lake resort

Table1. Arrivals of visitors to the Lake resort (2014-2018)

Month/year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
January	6210	6613	7310	5013	3340	28486
February	5100	4301	5821	4331	3082	22635
March	4222	3809	4007	3972	2113	18123
April	2510	2203	2613	2821	2014	12161
May	1809	1634	1334	1813	1116	7706
June	1934	1743	1643	1514	1013	7847
July	993	970	1084	931	834	4812
August	893	931	1005	1068	931	4828
September	2110	2006	1931	2611	920	9578
October	3301	3881	3911	3201	2811	17105
November	6009	5910	6647	6811	5809	31186
December	9117	8890	9142	7702	6672	41523
Total	46222	44906	48464	43805	32673	205990

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

The study went ahead to examine the real reason why visitors visited the Lake resort. Information on figure 1 shows that 30% of the visitors to the Lake resort visited to spend their holiday and

attend events respectively, 13% of the visitors visited for the accommodation facility while 5% visited for educational purposes. This clearly

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shows that events had a vital role in promoting patronage.

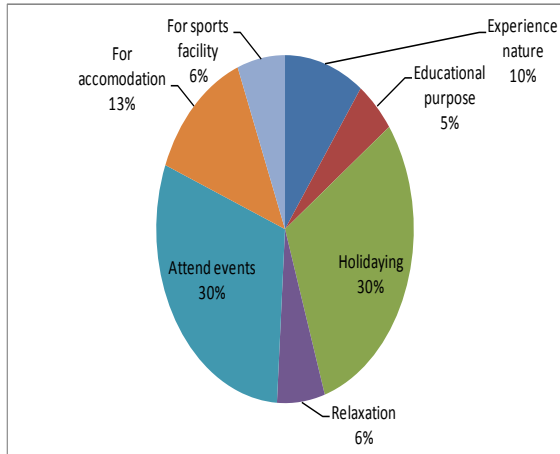


Figure1. Reasons for visiting the Lake resort by visitors

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

The study also examined the origin of visitors. Information on figure 2 revealed that 35% of the visitors were from Nigeria, 22% from Europe, 15% from other African countries while 10% were from Asian countries and the USA respectively. This is to show that the lake resort had good publicity channels and strategies.

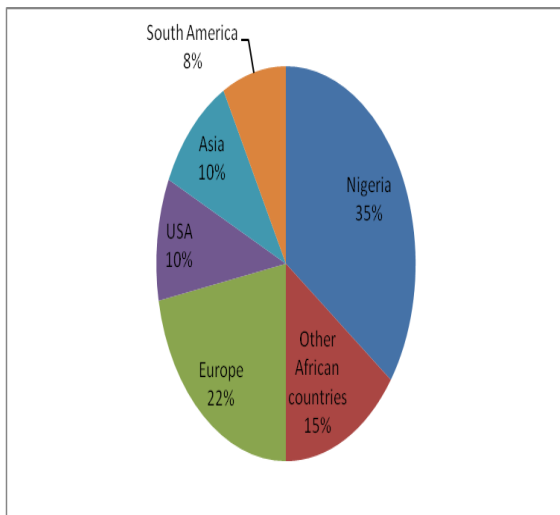


Figure2. Origin of visitors to the lake resort between 2014 and 2018

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

The study also examined the visitors' means of awareness of the Lake resort. Information on figure 3 reveals that 50% of the visitors were

Informed of the resort through family and friends, 35% got to know about the Lake resort through the social media while 2% got to know

about the resort through the advertisement on print media.

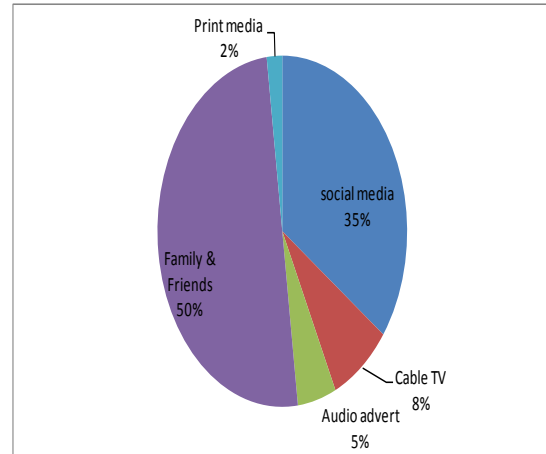


Figure3. Medium of awareness by visitors to the Lake resort

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

Seasonal Characteristics of Visitors' Patronage to the Lake Resort

In a bid to examine the seasonal pattern of the patronage of the visitors to the lake resort, the patronage detail were divided into the two existing main seasons (Dry and wet season). Information on table 2 shows that out of the 205,990 visitors that visited the Lake resort between 2014 and 2018, 159,058 representing 77% of the entire population visited during the wet season while 46,932 representing 23% of the entire visitors visited during the dry season as clearly shown on figure 4.

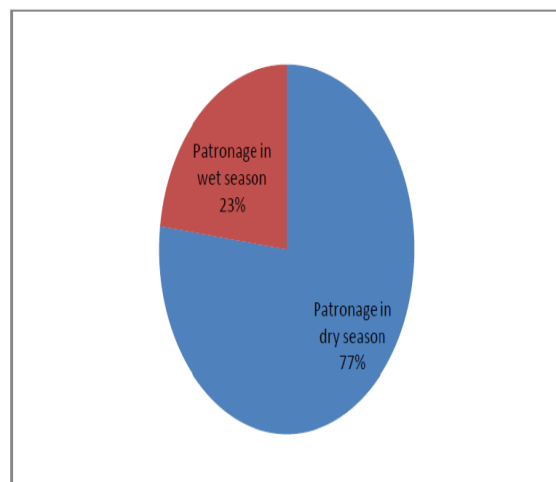


Figure4. Patronage pattern across the seasons

The wide disparity between visitors that visited between the dry and wet season indicates that there is a significant seasonal difference in the level of patronage of the Lake resort across the

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months and seasons. This means that patronage of the Lake resort suffers seasonal variation.

Table2. Seasonal pattern of arrivals between the seasons (2014 and 2018)

Dry Season	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Jan (+)	6210	6613	7310	5013	3340	28486
Feb (+)	5100	4301	5821	4331	3082	22635
Mar(+)	4222	3809	4007	3972	2113	18123
Oct(+)	3301	3881	3911	3201	2811	17105
Nov(+)	6009	5910	6647	6811	5809	31186
Dec(+)	9117	8890	9142	7702	6672	41523
Total	33959	33404	36838	31030	23827	159058
(%)	(77)	(78)	(79)	(74)	(78)	(77)
Wet Season						
Apr(-)	2510	2203	2613	2821	2014	12161
May(-)	1809	1634	1334	1813	1116	7706
Jun(-)	1934	1743	1643	1514	1013	7847
Jul(-)	993	970	1084	931	834	4812
Aug(-)	893	931	1005	1068	931	4828
Sept(-)	2110	2006	1931	2611	920	9578
Total	10249	9487	9610	10758	6828	46932
(%)	(23)	(22)	(21)	(26)	(22)	(23)
G. Total	44208	42891	46448	41788	30655	205990

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

Facilities in the Lake Resort

The paper examined the nature and type of facilities and services present in the lake resort. Information on table 3 shows that the lake resort had 150 rooms, 2 (500 sitters) halls, parking lot which had 500 cars capacity. The message behind this is that the resort is a large scale tourists' attraction and has the ability to host large numbers of people.

Table3. Facilities in the lake resort

Facilities	Frequency
Accommodation	150 rooms
Swimming pool	2
Outside bar	1
Lake side bar	2
Lawn tennis court	2
Restaurant	2
Bookshop	1
Laundry	2
Hall	2 (500 sitters)
Parking lot	500 cars

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

Benefits of the Lake Resort to Residents of the Study Area

The study examined the benefits accruing from the operations of Nike lake resort in order to understand the potentiality of the resort to the people's socio-economic status. Information on figure 5 revealed that the lake provided employment and more business opportunities with 34% and 20% respectively.

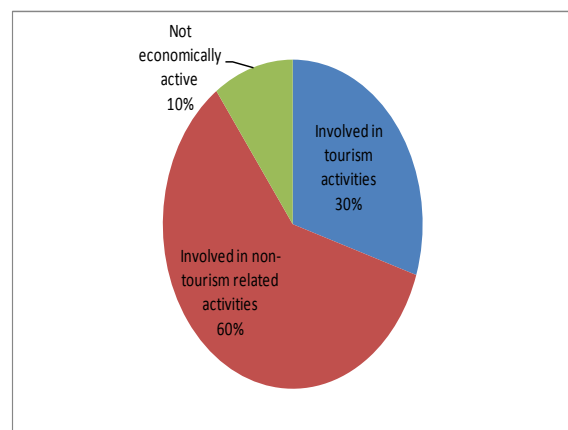


Figure7. Level of involvement of the indigenes in tourism and non-tourism related activities.

Source: Author's field survey, 2019

It was also revealed that other accruing benefits were increase in individual income with 21% response, increase in family income with 15% response and infrastructural development and provision of basic amenities with 5% response each. This implies that the lake resort opened up an opportunity for the people to make more money and made their economy better. This means that the lake resort has socio-economic significance on the economy of the residents in the host and adjoining communities to the lake resort.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the impact of seasonal variation on patronage and its economic

implication on the host community people. It was observed that a total of 205,990 visitors patronized the lake resort between 2014 and 2018. Among those who patronized the lake resort were mostly people were on there to attend events and those who were on holiday break with 30% of the total recorded visitors each. Others were those who visited to enjoy the accommodation facility of the resort with 13% and 10% of the visitors being those who went to have an experience with nature. It was also observed that 35% of the visitors were from within Nigeria, 22% from European countries, 15% from other African countries and 10% each from Asian countries and the United States of America while 8% of the visitors were from South American countries. Also, 50% of the visitors confirmed that they know about the lake from their friends and family members, 35% from the social media and 2% from the print media. The study also realized that 77% of the visitors visited the lake resort during the dry season months while 23% visited during the wet season months. This implied that more activities took place within the lake during the dry season than in the wet season. The study went further to observe that the lake attracted some benefits to the host community with 34% of the respondents confirming that the resort provided employment opportunity to the people, 21% and 20% of the respondents with the opinion that the resort improved individual income and business opportunities in the area respectively while 15% of respondents confirmed that the resort increased family income of the households in the area. Irrespective of the accruing benefits, the study also observed some challenges from the operations of the Lake resort such as; crime rate had alleged to be in the increase by 34% of the respondents, 24% of the respondents were of the opinion that there was increase in the level of promiscuity in the area, 20% of the respondents confirmed that the people's traditional occupation had been gradually abandoned for tourism related jobs.

Finally, the study observed that in all of these, 30% of the indigenes were involved in tourism related activities, 60% of the indigenes were involved in non-tourism related economic activities while 10% of the people were not economically active. Based on these findings, the study recommend that more events be organized and hosted within the lake resort especially during wet seasons so that visitors will be made to visit and patronize the resort all

through the year. Also, it was recommended that more indigenes be involved in activities within the resort so as to boost the development of tourism in the area.

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