



Original Article

PERCEPTION OF AVITOURISM AND SOCIO ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT AMONG TOURISTS OF UNIBADAN ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS AND AWBA DAM TOURISM CENTRE, IBADAN, NIGERIA.

ABSTRACT

Ojo, S. O.

*Department of Wildlife and
Ecotourism Management,
University of Ibadan,
Nigeria.*

Corresponding author

Email :

gbemiga_ojo@yahoo.co.uk

The inclusion of avitouristic activities in Awba Dam Tourism Centre [ADTC], Ibadan Nigeria necessitated relevant researches in tourist's influx and satisfaction. However, the perception of avitourism as well as socio economic perspective among tourists requires proper investigation. Therefore, the perception of avitourism and socio economic perspectives among tourists was assessed. Three sets of questionnaires totaling 300 were randomly administered to staff of the Unibadan Zoological Garden (UIZG) and ADTC using snowballing method. Some aspects of their socioeconomic characteristics were inferred. Enabling factors as well as those deterring them from recreation was assessed. Their general perspective of the newly developed ADTC was equally inferred. All data obtained were analyzed using percentages, mean and standard deviation. Total number of (208) respondents were aware of the benefits of tourist, while only 20.0% are currently aware of the current development of ADTC. About 60.0% of those aware were members of the university community. 75.0% of respondents were paid workers, who agreed that they've spent almost 15.0% of their income on recreation in the past six (6) months. 14.0%, 35.0%, 32.0% and 40.0% claimed to have borrowed money, lend out money, celebrated with their friends and families and paid for the less privileged to enjoy recreation respectively. Respondents from the UIZG have the highest perception level with 65.0%, while ADTC has 0.0%. The highest diversity of tourist's socio-economic status was found among the respondents that claimed to have at least high school certificate. Study also revealed the variation of groups of individuals interviewed. The groups included civil servants (32.8%), traders (16.2%), cab drivers (5.5%), motorcyclists (5.7%), business centre operators (18.7%), canteens and eateries operators (9.5%), etc. None of other business owner respondents within the study sites had any knowledge about ADTC. Socio-economic status greatly affected the intensity and frequency respondents' participation in avitouristic recreation, hence, the general public should be engaged with orientation programmes in boosting the perception level.

KEYWORDS: *Ibadan, Avitourism, Awareness, Perception*

INTRODUCTION

Local birding opportunities are highlighted by avitourism; an aspect of ecotourism that primarily focuses on avifauna tourism (Isaacs,

2000). This is currently at its preliminary stage especially in most developing economies. This type of tourism is one of the fastest growing

types of environmental tourism, or ecotourism (Randall, 1987). Many tourism agencies in Nigeria are yet to learn how profitable avitourism can be since it is a relatively new aspect of ecotourism (Ayodele, 2009). Although generally, ecotourism is a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas, intended as a low-impact and often small scale alternative to standard commercial (mass) tourism (Honey, 1999), the contribution the birding aspect can never be over emphasized due to the unique flight abilities of avifauna species (Kamauro, 1996). Establishing an avitourism spot within an existing recreation centre is quite new and require relevant researches so as to inquire its' "workability" in the setting among those that will want to recreate by bird-watching (Lindberg, 1996). Although the purpose may be to educate the traveler, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, there is even a strong need to foster respect for different cultures and for human rights (Isaacs, 2000). Since the start of the 2000s, avitourism has been considered a critical endeavour by environmentalists, so that future generations may experience birding destinations relatively eco-utilized by man to satisfy his recreational curiosity (Adams and Jeanrenaud, 2008). The main objective is to assess the level of perception of avitourism the perception of avitourism and socio economic perspectives among tourists in Ibadan metropolis and the contribution for ecotourism potentials.

Materials and Method

Description of Study Area

Ibadan is located in south-west Nigeria. It has a distance of 128 km inland northeast of

Lagos; which is Nigeria's main seaport and commercial centre, and 530 km southwest of Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). It is the largest indigenous city south of Sahara. The city has a population of 1,338,659 according to the 2006 census (NPC, 2006). Ibadan has been the hub of tourism activities from time immemorial. For instant, the University of Ibadan Zoological garden is a by far the most visited recreational hotspot within the city right from its inception. It is a conventional type of zoo where restraining and captivity of the animal to a specific area over a period of time is done i.e. incarceration. In doing these, 80% cages and 20% habitat simulation is practiced. Most of the cages are prototype of their habitat but still restrain their movement.

Methodology

Three sets of questionnaires totaling 300 were randomly administered to staff of the Unibadan Zoological Garden (UIZG) and ADTC using snowballing method. Some aspects of their socioeconomic characteristics were inferred. Enabling and deterrent factors were assessed. Their general perspective of the newly developed ADTC was equally inferred. In addition to that, assessment of three (3) other notable Tourism Centres (TC) namely; Agodi Garden and Parks (AGP), Trans Amusement Park TAP), and Bowers Tower (BT) all scattered around the metropolis were made using structured questionnaires. A total of 250 tourists selected from the TCs were interviewed with the questionnaires using Purposive Method. All data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Data collected in the course of this study were subjected to descriptive statistical analyses.

Table 1: Distribution of structure questionnaires among respondent in the selected centres

Recreation centres	No of Questionnaires
University of Ibadan Zoological Gardens (UIZG)	70

Awba Dam Tourist Centre (ADTC)	35
Agodi Garden and Parks (AGP)	50
Trans Amusement Park TAP)	50
Bowers Tower (BT)	25
Total	220

RESULTS

Table 2: Retrieval of questionnaires

Respondents	No of Questionnaires	No Retrieved	% Retrieval
University of Ibadan Zoological Gardens (UIZG)	70	64	91.0
Awba Dam Tourist Centre (ADTC)	35	31	88.5
Agodi Garden and Parks (AGP)	50	45	90.0
Trans Amusement Park TAP)	50	46	90.5
Bowers Tower (BT)	25	22	88.0
Total	220	208	

Source: field survey, 2014

Table 3: Demographic characteristics of the total respondents

Demographic characteristics of respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age distribution		
11-20	22	10.2
21-30	59	20.3
31-40	24	40.7
41-50	37	23.7
51-60	35	5.1
61 and above	31	
Total	208	
Profession		
Academics	34	16.3
Traders	08	3.8

Students	84	40.4
Force and paramilitary	11	12.0
Civil servants	25	13.8
Food service	08	3.8
Transporters	06	2.8
Bankers	29	14.0
Agro-allied	03	1.4
	208	

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Table 2: Perception of avitourism among respondents

respondents	Perception	Percentage (%)
UIZG	high	48.3
	Low	53.7
ADTC	High	2.7
	Low	97.3
AGP	High	18.6
	Low	82.4
TAP	High	11.9
	Low	89.1
BT	High	7.1
	Low	92.9

Source: Field survey, 2014

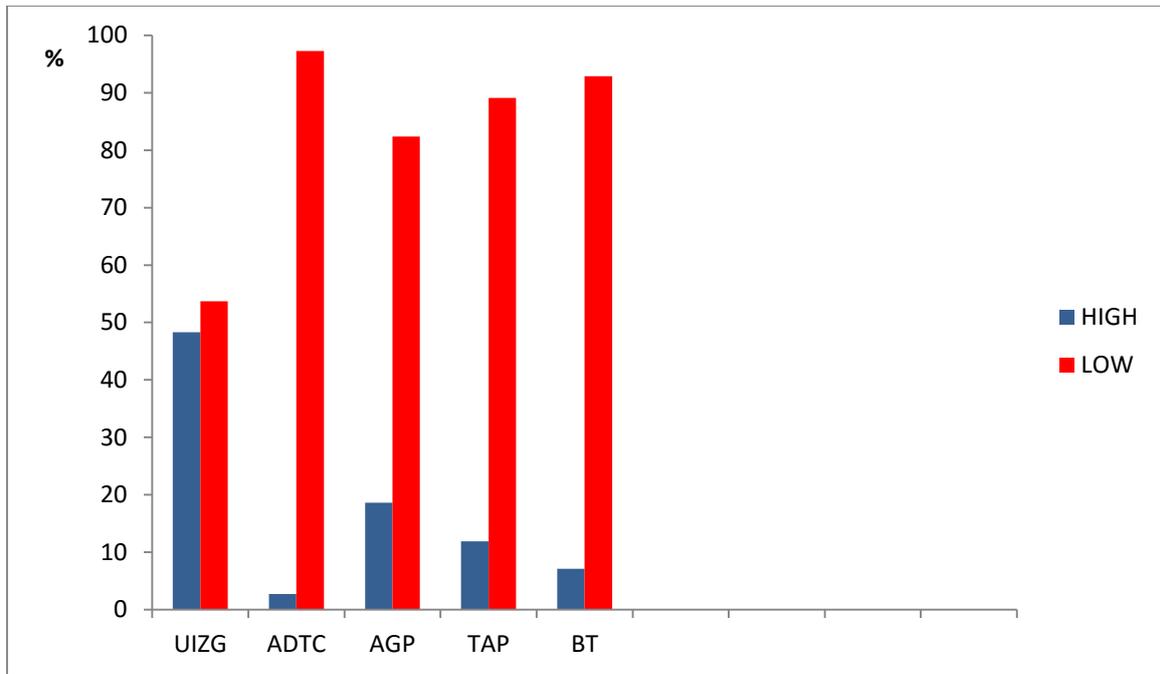


Figure 1: Perception of avitourism among respondents in the recreation centres
 Source: Field survey, 2015

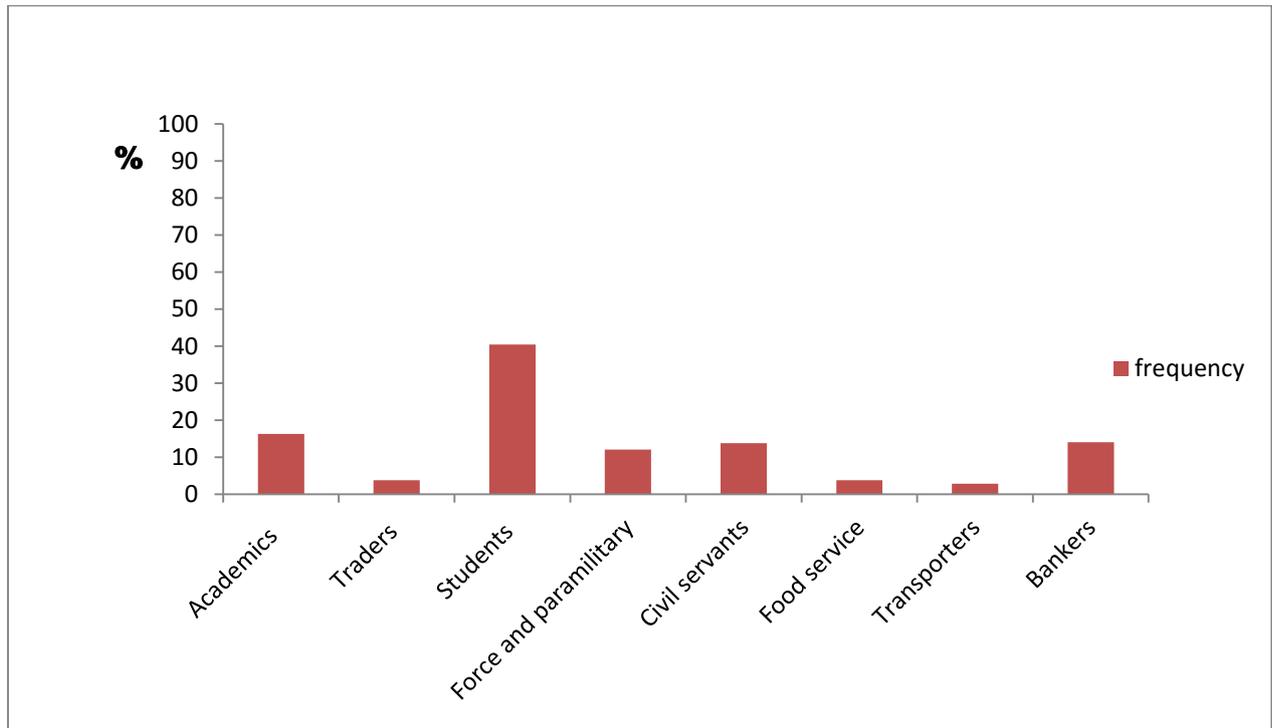


Figure 4: perception level of respondents
 Source: Field survey, 2014

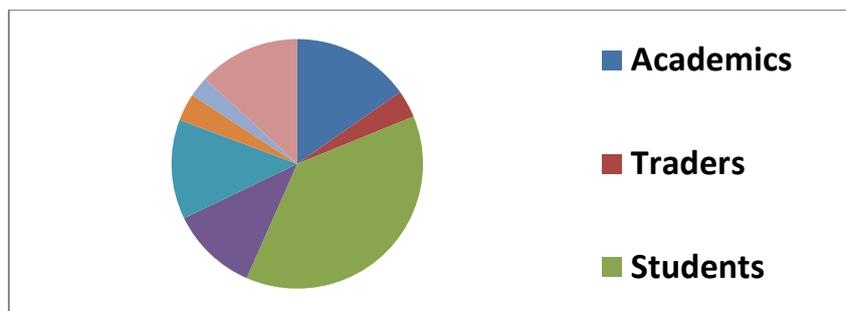


Figure 5: perception level of other respondents of the university

Source: Field survey, 2014

Discussion

Perception of avitourism in selected recreation centres was generally low corroborating Eadington and Smith, (2014) when they postulated that avitourism is not well understood in developing world. Total number of (208) respondents were aware of the benefits of tourist, while only 20% are currently aware of avitourism. About 60% of those aware of avitourism were those with minimum of a university degree buttressing Acote and trobe (1998). Awareness and Perception of avitourism in selected recreation centres was generally low. Respondents from the UIZG have the highest perception level with 65%, while ADTC has 0%. The highest diversity of tourist's socio-economic status was found among the respondents in TAP while respondents in BT have the lowest socio-economic status diversity. Study also revealed the variation of groups of individuals interviewed. The groups included civil servants (32.8%), traders (16.2%), transporters (5.5%), motorcyclists (5.7%), business centre operators (18.7%), canteens and eateries

operators (9.5%), etc. None of other business owner respondents within the study sites had any knowledge about avitourism.

Conclusions and recommendations

Sequel to the discussion, it is pertinent to justify the benefit of improving the public awareness of avitourism which can be addressed with appropriate reforms in close collaborations among facilitating entities. This is where the integration of multi-media strategy becomes imperative for the purpose of publicity. The management should employ a regular and effective awareness campaign through the Television, Radio and dailies. This is to bring the consciousness of recreation and awareness of the avitourism potential of the city to the public. This postulation undoubtedly justifies the need for close collaboration in form of public-private partnerships to achieve the long awaited development of avitourism through the boosting of its public awareness and perception.

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