

Examining Motivation and Perception of Visitors at Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC) in Nigeria

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Abstract

People are driven to take up various actions due to motivation. The study examined the motivation and perception of visitors as well as examining the future behavioural intentions of the visitors at Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC), Lagos state, Nigeria. The study employed self-administered questionnaire to obtain information from the visitors. Random sampling method was used to select a total of 200 visitors involved in the survey. Data obtained were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21) and results were presented descriptively and inferentially. Results obtained indicated that attractions such as canopy walkway, games served as pull-attractions for the visitors to the site while adventure, sightseeing, relaxation and rest were highly ranked as push-motivations for the visitors to the site. The visitors also perceived the site experience as a satisfactory one while affirming they would revisit and recommend the site to other. Chi square analysis revealed a significant relationship between visitors' motivation and perception ($p=0.000$). The site posed minimal challenges for visitation and as such is a good place to visit as it affords visitors an entertaining and satisfactory experience. Motivation study is important for tourist sites to improve their competitiveness in the market as it facilitates improvement of visitors' satisfaction.

Keywords: Behavioural intention, Motivation, Perception

Introduction

Tourism is presently one of the most prominent and rapidly improving sectors all around the globe. For years, tourism has experienced increasing levels of growth and development making the industry one of the fastest growing economic segments around the world (UNWTO, 2013). The industry

has improved drastically over the years, with international tourist arrivals recorded as 1.4 billion for 2018, thereby making up for a total of 5% of global economic growth for that year (UNWTO, 2019). In addition, the tourism industry births new segments as the years pass by. A prominent segment is nature-based tourism; which is developing and growing more quickly (10-30% per annum) than tourism in general (Nyaupane *et al.*, 2004). Most people believe that the upward surge in nature-based tourism is due to the fact that contemporary tourists are more demanding and seeking new, enjoyable and unusual experiences (Machnik, 2013). Since there is a rise in tourists' interest in nature-based tourism, research on nature-based tourism is becoming more recognized (Line and Costen, 2011). Nature-based tourism is described as activities which depend on the natural environment (Mehmetoglu, 2007a); depicting that these activities would not be able to exist on their own if not for tourism's occurrence within natural environments with the main focus on nature and natural environments' protection (Newsome and Moore, 2002). Furthermore, Fredman and Tyrväinen (2010) described nature-based tourism as utilizing time in nature outside the confines of tourists' home.

Tourism activity depends upon and relates with a diverse range of tourist behaviors and both the internal and external factors that cause or stimulate these behaviours. This tourism industry is dynamic and involves travelling for leisure purposes, rest, family and friend visitation, pilgrimages and other activities (Yousaf *et al.*, 2018). Simkova and Holzner (2014) report that tourists' travel patterns are closely linked to psychological patterns and this can be used to investigate the factors motivating tourists to travel. People are driven to take up various actions due to a psychological force called motivation (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2003). In the tourism context, motivation involves a body of wants which drives or inspires people to tourist activities and tourism destinations eventually (Beerli and Martín, 2004). This motivation concept is referred to as travel motivation, which connotes the totality of biological and sociocultural forces that energizes, inspires and gives birth to tourists' behavior (Mohammad and Som, 2010; Pearce, 2014). Travel motivation studies has been an essential concept in tourism theoretical development (Mohammad & Som, 2010) and also tourism destination as well as market studies (Beerli and Martín, 2004).

Push and Pull motivation factors apply to all form of tourists including nature-based tourists (Chen and Mo, 2014). In diverse environmental settings, tourists exhibit different origins and impacts of motivations ((Mehmetoglu and Normann, 2013), thereby making tourism destination managers aware of destination site improvements and inspiring them on effective decision-making (Chan and Baum, 2007). Researchers all over the world have utilized travel motivation to investigate and determine visitors' satisfaction level (Lemmetynen *et al.*, 2016; Celik and Dedeoglu, 2019; Preko *et al.*, 2019),

predict levels of involvement in recreation (Yan and Halpenny, 2019), reveal travel patterns (Cavagnaro and Staffieri, 2015), comprehend circumstances surrounding tourists' decisions during travel and consumption behavior (Chang *et al.*, 2015) and also to develop more efficient strategies and policies to increase and improve demand for tourism (Papatheodorou, 2006). The complexity in the nature of this concept has encouraged many researchers to identify diverse travel motives. Push and pull motives have emerged as the central theme which travel motives depend upon. Push and pull factors have therefore been widely used to assess tourists' travel motivations (Michael *et al.*, 2017; Wijaya *et al.*, 2018). This study thus aimed to investigate motivation factors of visitors to Lekki Conservation centre, Lagos state, Nigeria.

Study Area

The study was carried out in Lekki Conservation Center (LCC). Lekki Conservation Center is one of Nigerian Conservation Foundations' (NCF) foremost conservation projects. LCC is located in Lekki on the Lekki-Epe Expressway in Eti Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Lekki Conservation Center is a 78-hectare land area lying between Latitude 6⁰27'N and 3⁰23'E.

Materials and Method

The population of this study was visitors to Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC) between January and July, 2019. Two hundred (200) visitors that were willing to participate were chosen for the study. The data collection instrument for this study was a structured questionnaire targeted randomly at the visitors of the site. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. First section captured the demographic characteristics of the visitors; second section captured the travel characteristics of the visitors while the third section captured the visitors' motivation, perception and challenges in visiting the site which were measured using five point likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The copies of questionnaire were filled, returned and analysed using statistical package of social sciences (SPSS 21) and results were presented descriptively using tables (frequencies, percentages, means) and inferentially using chi square.

Results

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents at Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC). Highest percentage of the respondents were within the youthful and young age of 26-35 years (35.5%) as youths have more energy to participate in recreational activities than the aged. Highest percentage of the respondents were females (54.5%), single (55.5%), Nigerian (91%) and had attained tertiary level of education (83.5%) which shows they

were knowledgeable enough to participate in the survey effectively. The overwhelming number of respondents living within Lagos (78.5%) could be attributed to the tourists site being situated within Lagos. Also, majority of the respondents were Christians (82.5%), privately employed (29%) and earned high income of above ₦200,000 (34.5%).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Frequency (N=200)	Percentage (%)
Age		
11-25 years	60	30
26-35 years	70	35.5
36-45 years	47	23.5
46-55 years	16	8
56 years & Above	7	3.5
Gender		
Male	91	45.5
Female	109	54.5
Marital status		
Single	111	55.5
Married	84	42
Divorced	5	2.5
Educational level		
Primary Education	9	4.5
Secondary Education	24	12
Tertiary Education	167	83.5
Nationality		
Nigerian	182	91
Foreigner	18	9
Place of residence		
within Lagos	157	78.5
Others	43	21.5
Religion		
Christianity	165	82.5
Islam	31	15.5

Others	4	2
Income Per Month		
≤₹49,000	8	4
₹50,000-₹99,000	45	22.5
₹100,000-₹149,000	52	26
₹150,000-₹199,000	26	13
≥₹200,000	69	34.5
Occupation		
Civil Servant	34	17
Self-employed	57	28.5
Students	50	25.5
Private	58	29
Unemployed	1	0.5

Table 2 presents the travel characteristics of the visitors to reveal that majority were first time visitors (73%) and that majority of the visitors travelled with their family members (38.5%). Also, majority of the visitors spent around three hours (75%) at the tourist site while most of the visitors got to know about the site through their friends and relatives (58%).

Table 2: Travel characteristics of respondents

Variables	Frequency (N=200)	Percentage (%)
Number of Visits		
First time	146	73
Twice	36	18
Thrice	10	5
More than thrice	8	4
Visitation Group		
Alone	31	15.5
With Spouse	35	17.5
With Family	77	38.5
With Friends	44	22
With Tour Group	13	6.5
Length of Tourist Visit		
Less than 3 hours	5	2.5

3 hours	150	75
More than 3 hours	45	22.5
Source of awareness		
I already knew about it	49	24.5
Friends and relatives	116	58
Internet	27	13.5
Tv	2	1
Radio	4	2
Others	2	1

Table 3 reveals the attractive features present at Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC) and the rate at which it attracted the visitors to the site. Majority of the visitors were attracted to the site because of canopy walkway (40%) which is the longest canopy walkway in Africa. Also, a substantial number of the visitors were attracted because of the games (25%) available at the site, some were attracted because of animal viewing (13%), tree house (13%). Other attractive features include fish pond, nature station, jungle trek.

Table 3: Features that attracts tourist to visit LCC

Attractive Features	Frequency (N=200)	Percentage (%)
Playing Games	50	25
Animal viewing	26	13
Canopy walk	80	40
Fish Pond	10	5
Tree house	26	13
Nature Station	4	2
Jungle trek	3	1.5
All of the above	1	0.5

Table 4 presents the various factors that facilitate visit to Lekki Conservation Centre as opined by the visitors. Majority of the visitors visited for adventure (Mean=4.53), sightseeing (Mean= 4.51) and for relaxation and rest purpose (Mean= 4.42).

Table 4: Factors motivating to visitors to visit LCC

Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std Dev	Rank
Adventure	119	73	3	4	1	4.53	0.68	1

	(59.5)	(36.5)	(1.5)	(2.0)	(0.5)			
Sight seeing	114	77	6	3	0	4.51	0.63	2
	(57.0)	(38.5)	(3.0)	(1.5)	(0.0)			
Relaxation and rest	108	81	3	2	6	4.42	0.83	3
	(54.0)	(40.5)	(1.5)	(1.0)	(3.0)			
Change environment	107	71	8	10	4	4.34	0.92	4
	(53.5)	(35.5)	(4.0)	(5.0)	(2.0)			
Facilitation of social interaction	83	77	22	11	7	4.09	1.03	5
	(41.5)	(38.5)	(11.0)	(5.5)	(3.5)			
Education purpose (Learning and research)	82	49	18	26	25	3.69	1.43	6
	(41.0)	(24.5)	(9.0)	(13.0)	(12.5)			
Escape from work	25	33	19	61	62	2.49	1.40	7
	(12.5)	(16.5)	(9.5)	(30.5)	(31.0)			

Keys: SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Table 5 presents the visitors’ perception about the site. The visitors opined that they would definitely revisit the site (Mean=4.46), they would definitely recommend the site to others (Mean=4.36). They also opined that the visit experience was a satisfactory one (Mean=4.36).

Table 5: Visitors’ perception of LCC experience

Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std Dev	Rank
I will definitely re-visit this site	106	80	13	1	0	4.46	0.64	1
	(54.5)	(33.0)	(7.5)	(4.0)	(1.0)			
I will definitely recommend this center to others	109	66	15	8	2	4.36	0.86	2
	(53.0)	(40.0)	(6.5)	(0.5)	(0.0)			
The visit experience was a satisfactory one	94	88	15	2	1	4.36	0.71	3
	(47.0)	(44.0)	(7.5)	(1.0)	(0.5)			
The environment was well maintained and attractive	99	79	15	6	1	4.35	0.79	4
	(49.5)	(39.5)	(7.5)	(3.0)	(0.5)			
The visit was more entertaining than educational	94	80	15	9	2	4.28	0.86	5
	(47.0)	(40.0)	(7.5)	(4.5)	(1.0)			
The quality of service was satisfactory	85	90	16	7	2	4.25	0.82	6
	(42.5)	(45.0)	(8.0)	(3.5)	(1.0)			
Price for tickets was reasonable	84	66	23	18	9	3.99	1.14	7
	(42.0)	(33.0)	(11.5)	(9.0)	(4.5)			
The visit was more educational than entertaining	63	44	29	32	32	3.37	1.46	8
	(31.5)	(22.0)	(14.5)	(16.0)	(16.0)			

Keys: SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Table 6 presents the potential challenges of visitors to Lekki Conservation Centre. The relatively low mean value of the variables shows that the visitors

disagreed that they had challenges in visiting the site although high entrance fee had the highest mean value of 2.38.

Table 6: Challenges of visit to LCC

Factors	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std Dev	Rank
High Entrance fee	24 (12.0)	20 (10.0)	25 (12.5)	69 (34.5)	62 (31.0)	2.38	1.34	1
Location (too far from your residence)	11 (5.5)	27 (13.5)	16 (8.0)	71 (35.5)	75 (37.5)	2.14	1.22	2
Inadequate medical aid	7 (3.5)	11 (5.5)	31 (15.5)	74 (37.0)	77 (38.5)	1.99	1.04	3
Bad road	3 (1.5)	18 (9.0)	11 (5.5)	79 (39.5)	89 (44.5)	1.84	0.99	4
Unfavourable weather condition	5 (2.5)	13 (6.5)	13 (6.5)	86 (43.0)	83 (41.5)	1.86	0.97	5
Overcrowding	4 (2.0)	12 (6.0)	17 (8.5)	80 (40.0)	87 (43.5)	1.83	0.96	6
Quality of service (Unhelpful staff)	4 (2.0)	11 (5.5)	14 (7.0)	79 (39.5)	92 (46.0)	1.78	0.94	7
Too much pollution/ litter	8 (4.0)	9 (4.5)	10 (5.0)	71 (35.5)	102 (51.0)	1.75	1.02	8

Keys: SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U- Undecided, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree

Table 7 shows the chi square of relationship between visitors’ travel characteristics, perception and motivation. There is a significant relationship between visitors’ motivation and perception (p=0.000), visitors’ motivation and number of visit (p=0.000), visitors, motivation and source of awareness (p=0.003).

Table 7: Relationship between travel characteristics, visitors’ perception and visitors’ motivation

Hypotheses	Chi Square (χ^2) value	Sig.	Decision
Motivation*Perception	536.336	0.000	*
Motivation*Number of visit	160.494	0.000	*
Motivation*Visitation group	91.050	0.115	NS
Motivation*Source of awareness	137.923	0.003	*

P<0.05, *-significant, NS- Not significant

Discussion

Highest percentage of the visitors were within youthful age of 26-35 years which shows they are within their active age for recreational activities as Age is reported to have positive influence on individual’s desire for relaxation and nature exploration (Ma *et al.*, 2018). Richards (2015) also confirmed that there is an increase in the number of youth tourists and that young people in many countries around the world have recently acquired more

purchasing power. Also, majority of the visitors were females which is contradictory to the assertion that men are more likely to participate in adventure activities (Xie *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, highest percentage of the visitors were Nigerians and singles living within the destination's city which shows they did not have to travel far to get in order to visit the tourist destination as supported by Biernat and Lubowiecki-Vikuk (2012) that singles prefer shorter but frequent trips. Most of the visitors were also employed and earning high income which is a clear indication they could afford recreational activities' cost.

The visitors were mostly first time visitors who had travelled with their family and friends to spend few hours at the site. This is consistent with Chan *et al.* (2018) who found out in his study that companions during visits were family and friends. The major source of awareness of this tourist site was through friends and relatives meaning a positive word of mouth from friends and relatives has an effect on a potential visit to a destination as supported by Veiga *et al.* (2017) that travellers depend on their peers' appreciation when forming their own opinions and making travel decisions, often using reviews as a crucial complement to decision-making.

Lekki Conservation centre possesses a lot of great attractions capable of entertaining visitors which includes canopy walkway, nature station, fish pond, animal viewing, games, tree house, jungle trek. These attractions contribute to the good destination image of the site attracting both local and foreign visitors. Canopy walkway which is an attraction at the site was responsible for the visit of most of the visitors during this study. These attractions pull visitors to the site and are classified as pull motivations as defined by Pansiri (2014) that pull motivation refers to the supply of the attraction and the characteristics of the destination. Karanth and DeFries (2010) also stated that protected areas and parks are the main visitor attractions of nature-based tourist attractions across countries. Adventure, sightseeing, relaxation and rest were highly ranked as factors motivating the visitors to visit the site as this site offers facilities that encourage such activities. Williams and Baláž (2015) support this assertion by stating that some young adventure tourists look for risk and adventure to reinforce their identity or simply because of sensation seeking. Todorovic and Jovicic (2016) also argued that the main reason for embarking on holidays is that visitors look for a break from their usual schedule and settings that allow them to relax and lessen mental fatigue.

The visitors finally claimed their experience was a satisfactory one and that they would revisit and recommend the site to others and this is in line with Said and Maryono (2018) that factors which influence visitors to visit a destination are the attitude towards the destination, the opinion from relatives and friends, experience from previous travelling. Lai *et al.* (2010) also stated

that the level of satisfaction causes the intention to come back to the destination. The relatively low mean values of the challenges to visitation at the site shows the site has good destination image and the management of the site are working effectively to satisfy their visitors by limiting encounter of problems in visiting the site. This is in line with Voase (2012) who stated that in order to achieve the desired results, the building of a coherent brand image and the way the tourist site is perceived by actual and potential visitors are considered as the principal factors upon which the site's success depends.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the motivation factors and perception of visitors at Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC), Lagos state, Nigeria and concludes that the site has enough attractions to motivate visitors to visit especially the Canopy walkway which is the longest canopy walkway in Africa among other attractions like tree house, animal viewing, games. Some major factors that also push visitors to the site are adventure, sightseeing and relaxation and rest. The visitors further perceived the site as providing satisfactory experience. They also opined they would recommend the site to others while showing revisit intention as the site poses minimal challenges to the visitors.

Limitation and Suggestions for Future Research

This study was limited to Lekki Conservation Centre alone which is a nature-based tourist site and as such gathered information from nature-based visitors. This study can further be replicated in other forms of tourist sites other than nature-based area so as to obtain more motivation factors for tourists.

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