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## REALITY OF TOURISM MANAGEMENT: BUSINESS VIABILITY AND TOURISTS' BEHAVIOUR IN PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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### **ABSTRACT:**

Though ecotourism is popularly perceived as the fastest growing sector of tourism and a spinner of benefits the reality of its viability and growth is relative to site and yet to be ascertained in many areas. The purpose of this study is therefore to explore the reality of tourism managements in Plateau State, Nigeria with the aim of ascertaining the sponsors of ecodestinations; perceived viability of tourism activities; and tourists' behaviour towards gate fee increments in Assop falls, Naraguta Tourist Village, Jos National Museum and Zoo, Rayfield Resort, Pandam and Jos Wildlife Parks which are functional ecotourism destinations in Plateau State. Ten communities bordering these ecodestinations were selected based on ownership and impact on tourism site. Listing of households in selected communities was done and ten percent of households in each community were sampled. Information for the study were elicited using three sets of structured questionnaire. In all, 410 households were sampled. Fifty percent of staff of each ecodestination was also sampled while 40 tourists were sampled in each ecodestination. A total of 240 tourists and 335 staff respondents were interviewed. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics while Chi square was used to test for relationships. Results revealed that most destinations in Plateau State are sponsored by either federal or state governments, except Assop fall that is sponsored by an individual. The Naraguta tourist Village has many souvenir operators that operate on household basis who rely solely on the business. Provision of more facilities and increase in gate fee will improve the financial standing of the destinations and make them financially independent, however payment of ₦150.00k and ₦100.00k gate fees by adults and children respectively can only be realistic in Pandam Game Reserve, Rayfield Resort and Assopfall. Majority of the tourists are willing to pay increased fee of ₦100.00k (Adult) and ₦50.00k (children) but majority are not willing to pay ₦150.00k (Adult) and ₦100.00k (children) respectively. Chi square tests showed significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between age class, destination, and willingness to pay increased ₦150.00k and ₦100.00k gate fee for adult and children respectively. All tourist respondent and majority of both household (97.07%) and staff (89.85%) respondents perceived that tourism has contributed towards economic development in the Plateau State. This paper has given an insight of the reality of tourism business in Plateau State, Nigeria. It shows that it is not every tourism venture that is profitable as tourists have limits to the amount of gate fee which they are willing to pay.

### **KEYWORDS:**

Destination management. Tourism growth. Gate fee. Business. Benefits. Nigeria.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The world is endowed with diverse attractive resources. However, some attractive resources are of more national, regional and global attention than others. Marketing of both attractive and none attractive resources has been a major challenge world over. Tourism is the only social avenue or market that is large enough for efficient and effective marketing of global resources irrespective of where these virtues are located. Several studies on the geography of tourism growth show that ecotourism, the fastest growing aspect of tourism, is more successful in Asia, South America and some parts of Africa where there are pristine environments which so many people especially those from the developed world are craving to see, feel, interact with and be at least temporarily part of - Several people want to visit east Africa that inhabit the highest concentration of mammals (including wildebeest and gazelle) on earth (Quammen, undated as cited by Ijeomah and Aiyeloja, 2010) in their natural environment, to view the annual migration of about two million mammals in the Masaai land of east Africa and to site the highly endangered and rare species like the Rhinoceros grazing in their natural habitat. The uniqueness of these pristine environments is expected to be sustained in order not to lose value or popularity in the sight of tourists who are ever willing to pay for what they will experience.

The economics of tourism growth reveal that those living in pristine environments have marketable assets which can attract people (from different parts of the world), who will visit and spend their money therein. While host communities continue to pay the price of leaving permanently in a pristine or rural environment coupled with all the uncertainties of hosting unknown persons including terrorists as tourists, the visitors also pay in monetary terms for not leaving in a rural setting, which they desire to experience once in a while and would want its natural condition maintained at status quo. Thus price has to be paid to encourage people to live and maintain the kind of environment where others do not live in but will once in a while feel like visiting for vivid experience. Ecotourists travel to remote destinations in search of unique naturalism (that is, “the naturalness of the nature” and “the rurality of the rurals”), experiences that hardly exist in cities due to lack of rural communities and standard wildlife parks or unaltered natural environments ( Ijeomah and Aiyeloja, 2010)

Studies on tourism business and management growth show that even though much money is always being spent in tourism it is not spent at once or a spot, and the host communities are not necessarily the highest beneficiaries from tourism business transactions because they are sometimes bruised by tourism operations especially when mismanaged or not properly planned to accommodate rapid growth. However, host communities can derive much benefit when there is

minimal leakage of resources from the environment. Benefits derived from tourism depend on participation, investment and the understanding of tourism business strategies, principle of operation and policies. Tourists are not looking for where to spend money but search for vivid experience, which can hardly be attained without paying a price. The decline in popularity of a destination creates opportunity and market for another destination as tourists only visit where what they want could be found and only pay for what they value. Good understanding of tourism business strategies guides the managers on the kind of activities to create that apart from attracting tourists will also make them to spend more money in a destination (Ijeomah, inpress). In essence knowledge of what tourists want, and tourists' expenditure pattern is also important concerning profit determination in tourism. If spending more days will make tourists to spend more money in an ecodestination then activities that could engage tourists for many days need to be created. An Australian couple made three years savings to visit Nigeria to see the Wase rock of Plateau State, one of the only five permanent breeding sites of the rosy pelican bird in Africa (*Rosus pelicanus*) but spent only thirty minutes in the site and left, still satisfied and openly declared that their live dream has been fulfilled (Ijeomah and Aiyeloja, 2008). Though the tourists became satisfied but the destination was not really impacted directly because they did not pay any gate fee and did not spend any money in the environment. Even if they had paid it is only about one percent of tourism proceeds that gets to tourism management in form of gate fee Eltringham (1984).

The politics of tourism growth has shown that countries and managers sometimes resort to propaganda, rumours of crisis and tales of disaster or terrorism about other countries as instruments to discourage tourists from visiting other destinations and therefore change the attitude of tourists in favour of visiting their destinations, thus dominate the market. This is so because crisis whether real or imagined can cripple tourism (Eltringham, 1984). Tourists will always want to be assured of their safety as frequently as a newly married woman would want to receive text messages conveying love stories from the partner (Ijeomah and Adetoro, 2008).

Tourism has affected global value system. The world has become highly commoditised. Cultures are presently being marketed. Live animals, forests, rocks, water falls, beaches, existing shrines and sacred forests now have monetary values and estimated revenues to be generated on daily basis (Ijeomah and Alao, 2008). Tourism sites have become social markets and therefore attract the attention of all whether deliberately or not. Good road network for accessibility and provision of infrastructural facilities stimulated by tourism is enjoyed by many stakeholders. Those who are not interested in visiting ecodestinations may be interested in investing in booming ecodestinations or in the revenues that accrue on daily basis either from sales of food or gift items. The very few who would have been left out are much interested in sports as the king of all sport –

the round object called football has become a universal language which people understand and respond to its sound irrespective of age, race, profession, religious affiliation, where football matches are being played (destination) or the means it is being communicated to spectators (Ijeomah and Aiyeloja, 2010).

The study explores the reality of tourism managements in Plateau State, Nigeria with the aim of ascertaining sponsorships of ecodestinations, perceived viability of tourism operations, and tourists' behaviour towards gate fee increments.

## **2. THE CONCEPT OF GREEN MARKETING IN TOURISM**

The words green, organic, natural, sustainable, holistic and responsible have presently become watchwords of global concern and a movement. The words are in many cases interchangeably used notwithstanding that they are not exactly the same. However, they are related and refer to a common idea of "going green or natural".

Irrespective of the sector being considered, beauty care products, organic produce, green agriculture, a more responsible way of vacationing, a type of construction, or even auto production; many industries are recognizing that it actually pays to go green. Interestingly, this trend in green consumerism is not limited to any one industry or product type. In fact almost all industries have stakeholders who are stepping up their green initiatives. The market is rampant with businesses that have now become involved in the effort to find ways to produce and sell products or provide services that promote conscious and ethical consumption (Kreidler and Joseph-Mathews, 2009).

In the tourism sector discourses have become increasingly dominated, at least on paper and business proposals, by the ideas and ideals of sustainability since the mid 1990s. Also, "sustainable tourism" is becoming dominated – again at least rhetorically – by the issue of climate change (Weaver, 2011). Irrespective of arguments about the mitigation and adaptive strategies of climate change and the causes, the fact remains that most school of thoughts admitted that climate change is a truism. The effects of climate change are evident in most parts of the world. The direct negative impacts include, altering (Ijeomah, and Aiyeloja, 2009) and shortening of tourism-dependent seasons and rising sea levels that can cause flooding, while indirect impacts include changes in water availability, biodiversity loss and reduced landscape aesthetic (Wall, 1998; Agnew and Palutikof, 2001; Braun *et al*, 2007; UNWTO, 2008).

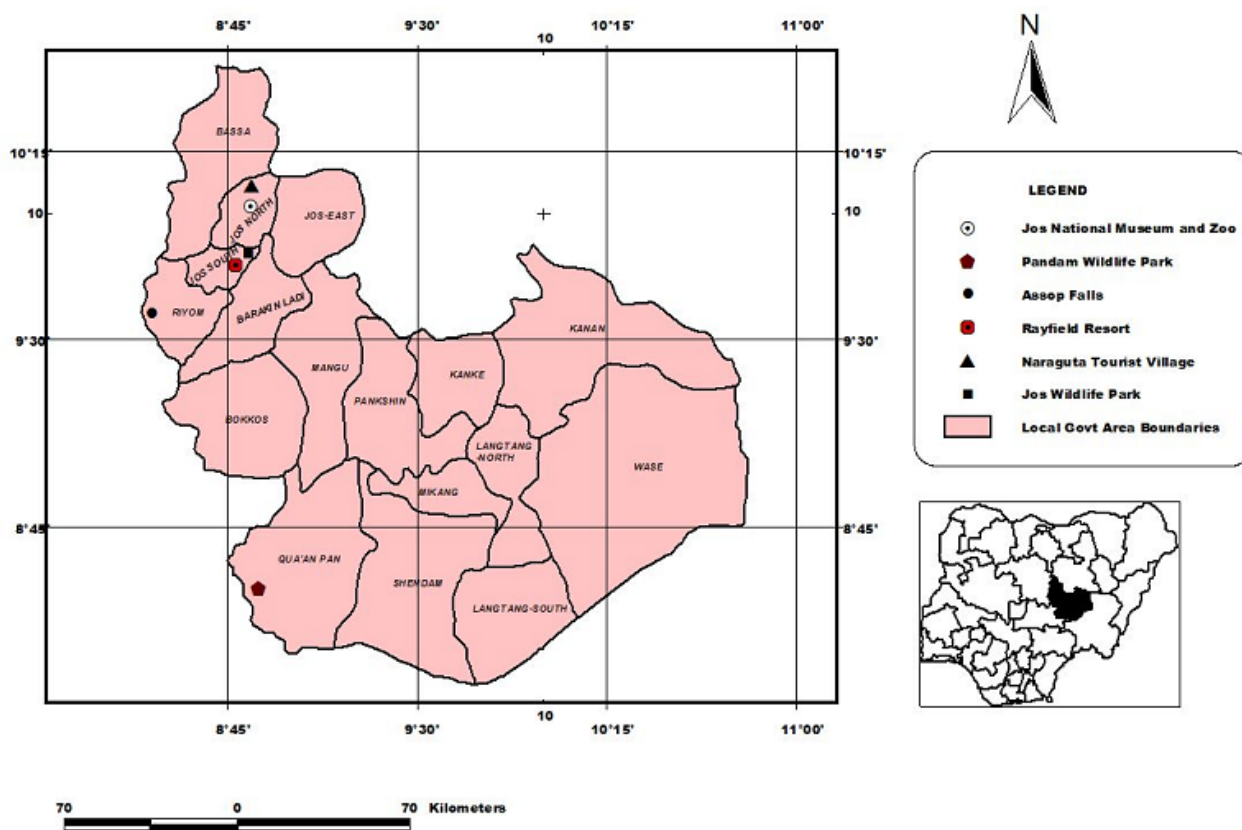
Climate change is among the various factors affecting tourism, especially, nature-based tourism. The climate-change-related factors affecting tourism include temperature, precipitation, clouds, fog, wind and humidity (Nyaupane and Chhetri, 2009 as cited by Mbaiwa and Mmopelwa, Undated)).

The management of most ecodestinations in Nigeria educate their visitors. But the culture of reduction in fuel consumption has not become part of the people. Electric bulbs and refrigerators are left on in hotels and even at homes when they are not needed, thus heating up the environment. The major means of transport in Nigeria is by vehicles. Many of these are “old and used” vehicles imported from Europe. The very old and poorly managed ones among these vehicles are very inefficient in fuel combustion and continuously introduce pollutants in the environment. Due to poor road maintenance many of these vehicles are always in bad condition and consistently emit green house gases. The fact that the owners of these vehicles do not make any payment in monetary terms to offset their carbon emissions makes them reluctant to look for alternative means of reducing their carbon emissions. The use of these type of old vehicles are common in Ibadan area of Oyo State especially along Ojoo - University of Ibadan, and University of Ibadan park to Dugbe where they are used for commercial transport. Attempts by the Oyo State Government to phase out such old vehicles from the roads in Ibadan and replace them with new buses were politicised, “termed sabotage to impoverish transporters” and resisted by the road transport unions. The use of motor bikes was a major strategy of overcoming traffic jam in most parts of Nigeria. However, the increase in number of bikes on most roads in Nigeria, apart from causing several road accidents also increased carbon emissions in the environments. Consequently, many states such as Rivers, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Imo etc. banned the use of motor bikes for commercial transportation in the cities. The Government of these States introduced the use of tricycles as alternative means of transport. However, motor bikes were used in rural areas to penetrate ecodestinations. The inconsistency in power supply in Nigeria has made the use of generators a necessity. Many of the generators especially “*I pass my neighbour*” (the type mostly used by students due to the relative portability and low cost) emits much pollutants. The federal government of Nigeria has banned importation of some of these generators and motor bikes that are not environmentally friendly. Most ecodestinations in Plateau State do not use generators. Pandam Wildlife Park, the major ecodestination in Plateau State with lodges uses generator occasionally (Ijeomah and Aiyeloja, 2009).

### 3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 3.1. Study Area

Plateau State of Nigeria is lies between latitude  $8^{\circ}30^1$  and  $10^{\circ}30^1$  North, longitude  $7^{\circ}30^1$  and  $8^{\circ}37^1$  East of Equator with a land mass covering 53, 585 square kilometers (Ijeomah, 2007; Ijeomah and Alarape, 2009, Ijeomah *et al.*, 2011). Six functional ecotourism centres that are registered with the Plateau State Tourism Corporation were selected for the study. They are Assop falls, Naraguta Tourist Village, Jos National Museum and Zoo, Rayfield Resort, Pandam and Jos Wildlife Parks. Ten communities bordering these ecodestinations were selected based on ownership and impact on tourism site. Listing of households was done in Sop, Namu, Pandam, Kayarda, Kwang, Kabon, Dong, Aningo, Gwut and Naraguta communities and ten percent of households in each selected community were sampled as was done by Omonona (2002) and Ijeomah (2007). In all, 410 households were sampled. Fifty percent of staff of each ecodestination was also sampled while 40 tourists were sampled in each ecodestination. In all 240 tourists and 335 staff respondents were interviewed.



**Figure 1: Map of Plateau State showing some ecotourism destinations**  
 Source: Adapted from Ijeomah (2007)

### **3.2. Data Collection**

Data were collected through a set of pre tested structured questionnaire administered to household heads, staff of tourism sites and tourists, and augmented with field observations and interviews conducted with people knowledgeable about tourism managements and businesses in destinations in Plateau State and the communities. Results obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of percentages and frequency of counts while Chi square was used to test for relationships.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Economic contributions of Tourism**

Table 1 presents the comparative assessment of economic contributions of tourism to development in Plateau State. All tourist respondents and majority of both households (97.07%) and staff respondents (89.85%) indicated that tourism has contributed towards economic development. This can be attributed to the fact that much awareness has been created concerning several monetary and non monetary benefits that could be derived from tourism. This awareness has affected the perception of households, tourism workers and tourists as they therefore perceive that the benefits and development from tourism in Plateau State should be equivalent to what obtains in Kenya, Tanzania, Botswana, South Africa and Uganda – leading tourism countries in Africa.

This is also the reason households from tourism host communities expect much from the Plateau State Tourism Corporation. Tourists expect all the eco destinations to be developed with good facilities believing that the resources invested in tourism will always be recovered after a short period because of their perceived viable nature of tourism sector. Among the three groups of respondents, 89.85% of tourism workers affirmed the positive contributions of tourism to development. Though their number is high but relatively they are the least among the three groups because as insiders, the workers have an insight of the real situation in terms of profitability, and level of impact tourism makes in the State.

Table 1: Comparative assessment of economic contributions of tourism to development in Plateau State

Parameters	Variable	Households (%)	Tourists (%)	Staff (%)
Contributes economically	Yes	398(97.07)	240 (100.00)	301 (89.85)
	No	12 (2.93)	0 (0.00)	38 (11.34)
	Total	410 (100.00)	240 (100.00)	335 (100.00)
Ways of contribution				
Employment		382 (93.17)	240 (100.00)	335 (100.00)
Revenue generation		395 (96.34)	240 (100.00)	335 (100.00)
Creation of market for business		314 (76.59)	79 (39.92)	92 (27.46)
Self employment		106 (25.85)	84 (35.00)	15 (4.47)
Promotion of craft business		218 (53.17)	88 (36.66)	272 (81.19)
Attraction of investors		18 (4.39)	3 (1.25)	8 (2.38)
Provision of basic infrastructure		311 (75.85)	225 (93.75)	87 (25.97)
Total		410	240	335

#### 4.2. Sponsorship of Tourism in Ecodestinations

Table 2 shows distribution of staff respondents based on expected sponsors of tourism centres when adequate facilities are provided with gate fees increased. All the respondents (100.00%) in Jos Wildlife Park indicated self-sponsorship unlike in Pandam Game Reserve where self sponsorship had values of only 35.00% as majority of the respondents (65.00%) indicated Plateau State Government. Out of 167 respondents of Jos National Museum, 94.6% indicated self while only 5.39% indicated Federal Government of Nigeria. This can be related to the trend of tourist visitation as all the revenues to be generated from a destination are expected to be from tourists. The tourist ecodestinations with relatively high tourist influx such as Jos National Museum and Zoo that has recorded about 300,000 tourists per annum(Ijeomah *et al*, 2011), and Jos Wildlife park (about 100,000 tourists per annum) were expected to generate more revenues from tourists in form of gate fees and other activities likely to be created by tourism management when more facilities are provided. This corroborates the findings of Ijeomah and Ayodele (2009). Improving existing facilities and provision of more attractions with consequential increase in revenue when there is no crises would enable these destinations to be financially independent. In Pandam Wildlife Park the case is different. Provision of improved facilities and increase in gate fees will hardly bring about financial independence of the destination. This can be ascribed to the relatively low tourist visitation trend experienced therein. This corroborates Ijeomah and Emelue (2009). Besides, the



park as a wilderness area (224 square metres) and ‘the lung of Quan Paan Local Government Area’ requires more staff for effective and efficient protection of resources from poaching. Sustaining many rangers in such a remotely located ecodestination that has low tourist visitation will require more money than is generated from the park. In Assop falls all (100.00%) respondents indicated self sponsorship. Assopfall destination is located along the major road to Jos, the environment is not under any form of human threat and due to the relatively small area it can be effectively and efficiently managed by less number of staff unlike the case of Pandam Wildlife Park.

Table 2: Percentage distribution of selected staff respondents based on expected sponsor of tourism centre on improvement of facilities with payment of increased gate fees

Tourism site	Present sponsor	Expected sponsor with improved facility and increases gate fee	Frequency	Percentage
Jos Wildlife Park	Plateau State Government	Self	43	100.00
		Plateau State Government	0	0.00
		Total	43	100.00
Pandam GameReserve	Plateau State Government	Self	7	35.00
		Plateau State Government	13	65.00
		Total	20	100.00
Jos National Museum	Nigerian Federal Government	Self	158	94.61
		Federal Government of Nigeria	9	5.39
		Total	167	100.00
Assop Falls	Individual	Self	4	100.00
		Others	0	0.00
		Total	4	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2007

#### 4.3. Viability of Tourism Business in Nigerian Ecodestinations

Nigeria has diversity of culture and different kinds of tourism resources comparable with many leading tourism countries in the world. All the ecotourism destinations in Plateau State are hardly economically viable. The case of Naraguta Tourist Village where individual operators sell souvenirs is more of rural tourism, though all forms of tourism are related in one way or another. A

lot of money is being generated through tourism activities in Plateau State but none of the destination is economically independent. Is either they are managed and financed by the federal government or state government (Table 2). The very few that are owned by private companies are less popular, which implies that people venture into ecotourism business because of the popular perception that it is a spinner of benefits. It is a reality that tourism generates a lot of benefits (Table 1). Nevertheless, these benefits spread to different areas at different magnitudes. Even though many areas still make a lot of profit because from the afore mentioned, profitability could be in the area of social networking or political projections. Tourism could just be used to create a scene where other profitable activities can take place.

Ecologically viable business naturally draws the attention of people to participate. At kilometer 10 Idiroko Road, Ogun State, a church 'Winners Chapel' organizes an annual religious festival in the month of December, which attracts an average of 200,000 people on daily basis throughout the period of the festival. Many business operators register with the management of the church to carry out their business activities within the premises, which indeed, do yield a lot of profits. But in the informal sector: the nearby communities and even most of the communities along Idiroko road have benefited through sales of sachet water, snacks, bottled drinks and other consumables which they hawk along the road in traffic jams that must be experienced everyday for hours. The hoteliers, transport firms, mechanics, sellers of gift items and motor parts etc. in Ogun State have already benefited because of many visitors from outside the state and the country that patronize them. It was also observed that similar business activities boom every Sunday because of an average of thirty thousand persons that visit the church, "Canaanland" for worship. Consequently, the communities in these areas are fast developing due to the trickling effect. About four banks and a conventional university have been established inside the church with schools springing up in the nearby communities. A private university, Bells has been established about four kilometres away from the church. Many guest houses have been built to accommodate visitors, mechanical workshops are multiplying and transportation business is booming. The communities have been opened up. Conflict that once occurred between these communities and the church resulted in the church management instructing her members to desist from patronizing businesses owned by members of these communities. Within the one week that the ban lasted the economies of members of these communities were seriously affected, which implies that tourism has been the pillar holding their economies.

Many business operators want to invest in the oil industry because of its high commercial viability. Despite strict requirements by the federal government, petrol stations are still being established every now and then in almost every part of Nigeria. In many cases, gigantic buildings

meant for other business are being demolished to set up a petrol station, as it is an essential product.

Similar situation has been noticed in Lagos State concerning the building of churches. Tenants are being paid to park out of their place of residence as the choicest areas are being destroyed with churches erected. Also, several thousands of people venture into communication business, particularly the global satellite communication (GSM) because of its high patronage. The government of Sri Lanka requested in Ashley (2005) that nations should discontinue the assistance rendered to Sri Lanka after the Tsunami disaster but should ask the tourists to come back to sustain the lodges, restaurants, the informal sector, the transportation firms, industry and a lot of fields that were dependent on tourism boom. Viable businesses naturally create market and therefore draw investors. Nevertheless, the only industry moving in Plateau State since the crisis of the year 2004 is hospitality – building of hotels etc. (Edet and Ijeomah, 2006)

Similar trend of hospitality development is common in Owerri, Imo State, however without developed destinations. With the city being one of the cleanest cities in Nigeria, and the relatively low hotel charges when compared with hotels in Abuja, many Abuja residents prefer to spend their weekends in Owerri. After making money in Aba, a neighbouring city known for business, people like enjoying their money in Owerri as it is also more relatively peaceful. Consequent upon this, many people are continuously investing in hotel business in Owerri. Development of ecodestinations would have benefitted the people more in terms of spread of proceeds. Nekede zoo, the closest ecodestination to Owerri urban area is only busy with visitors mainly during weekends. Oguta wonder lake, a site that if well developed could attract many visitors is operating at marginal level due to poor development, though many activities take place there during festive periods. The Urashi waterfall ecodestination of Dikenafai is less known due to lack of awareness. The recent trend of hospitality in Owerri tends to encourage prostitution and sexual exploitation of students as rich and influential citizens from Abuja and Aba visit the city *en masse* during weekends for relaxation and to entice female undergraduates with substantial amounts of money.

It is really difficult to ascertain the viability of tourist destinations in Nigeria especially in ecotourism unless for sites like the Farin Ruwa waterfall in Nasarawa State that has minimal number of staff and is managed as a wilderness area (Ijeomah and Alao, 2008) or Assop fall that has only 8 workers (Table 2). The difficulty in ascertaining this viability is attributed to paucity of records. The Port Harcourt zoo, Maiduguri zoo and Benin museum do not keep record of visitors. But the fact that Port Harcourt zoo that is in need of a lion refused to accept the one donated to it by the National Park Service is a clear indication that it is not viable. The refusal of the lion, a major potential attraction in the area (Ijeomah and Esaen, 2011) is because of fear of the high cost of feeding a lion. The total number of visitors recorded in the seven national parks in Nigeria between

2001 and 2005 is lower than the number of tourists that visits either Jos Wildlife Park or Jos National Museum and Zoo in a day during festive periods (Ijeomah, 2007). This is an indication that much work needs to be done to make ecotourism a viable tourism package in Nigeria. The Lagos bar beach, Badagry beach and Lekki of Lagos are visited mostly during festive periods; however, they serve as avenue for many social events.

#### **4.4. Some tourism Endowments in Nigeria**

Nigerians are tourism “peoples” being migratory in nature, whether seasonally or annually (Ijeomah *et al.*, 2011). This migratory nature of the citizenry is significant enough to anchor domestic tourism. The multi ethnic nature and varieties of micro climatic conditions create multiplicity of attractive cultures and sites unique for ecodestinations. The Argungun international fishing festival and the Osun Oshogbo cultural festivals are well recognised by UNESCO and therefore attract tourists from most nations of the globe. The seven national parks in Nigeria create avenue for ecotourism with Gashaka Gumti and Kainji Lake being the largest of all and the most active in terms of ecotourism. The Yankari Wilderness and safari in Bauchi State, a former national park is also an ecotourism hotspot. Cross River, the state endowed with biodiversity of significant international ecological importance (including Drill (*Mandrillus leucophaeus*), Cross River gorilla (*Gorilla gorilla diehli*) and Nigeria Chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*)) is a tourism haven - The Oban division of Cross River National Park is exceptionally rich and compares favourably with Korup National Park of South Western Cameroon. Within the south-south and southeastern Nigeria, Oban Division stands out, with 56 species (Eniang, 2004) excluding three recently discovered snakes yet to be identified. The recent development of Obudu ranch in Cross River State and the high level of tourism consciousness among residents in the State have made it one of the most popular states known for ecotourism. The large population of Nigeria, multiplicity of culture and religion helps in attracting different kinds of people together. Abuja, the federal capital territory of Nigeria has become one of the major centres for conference tourism and urban tourism. Nigeria serves as international headquarters for many religious bodies and the annual religious gatherings held at these headquarters confirms that at least some aspects of tourism are viable in Nigeria. Diverse opportunities are created for the participation of the informal sector.

In most of the tourism developed areas of the world, the informal sector has always impacted the rural people in terms of resources and labour than waged employment. Dash and Mishra (2003) has observed that issues like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, regional imbalances in rural areas remain unresolved in developing countries (Nigeria, inclusive) and many planners have implicated non participation of the rural populace in lucrative economic activities for these

conditions. Their suggestive opinion that systematic tourism development through public participation can contribute towards the socio-economic development of those areas is factual. The role of tourism in poverty alleviation is to create activities, which will attract much people. Consequent upon this, both private and public organization will unstoppably start participating because of financial interest.

**4.5. Willingness to pay increased gate fee ( Gate fee determination in tourist centers)**

Having known the destinations that could be financially independent with improved facilities and increased gate fee, it is also important to know tourists’ behaviour, in terms of their willingness to pay increased gate fees. Figures 1 and 2 present the willingness of tourist respondents to pay increased fees. Results reveal that in Figure 1, all (100.00%) the tourist respondents of Pandam Game Reserve and Assop Falls are willing to pay ₦100 and ₦ 50 per Adult and children respectively. Majority of the respondents from Rayfield Resort (97.50%), Jos Wildlife Park (80.00%) and Jos National Museum (85.00%) were willing to pay.

Figure 2 shows that most respondents from only Pandam Wildlife Park (85.00%), Assop falls (80.00%) and Rayfield Resort (70.00%) were willing to pay increased fees of ₦150.00k(1 USD) (Adult) and ₦100.00K (0.66USD)(Children) respectively. Visitors to these destinations are dedicated because of their location and kinds of activities therein.

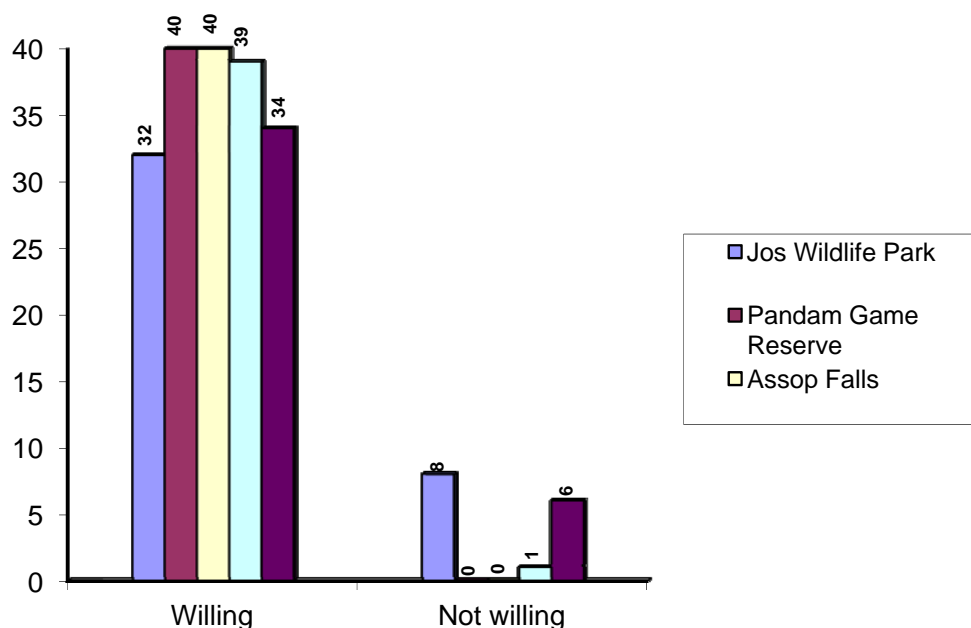


Figure 1: Tourists willingness to pay respectively increased gate fees of ₦100.00k(0.66USD) and ₦50.00k(0.33USD)

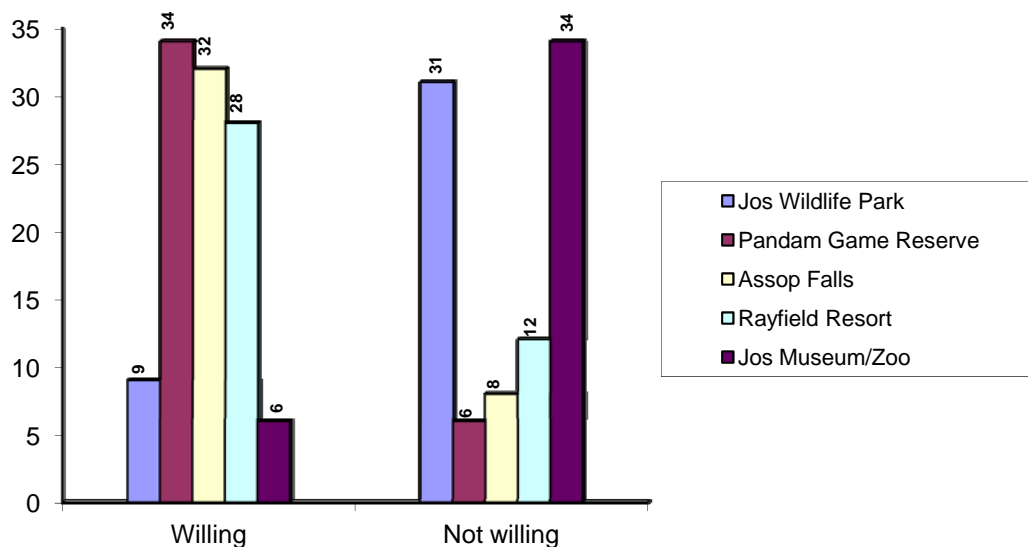


Figure 2: Tourists willingness to pay respectively increased gate fees of ₦150.00k(1USD) and ₦100.00k(0.66USD)

Table 3 to Table 5 shows the result of tourists’ willingness to pay increased gate fee of ₦150.00K (adult) and ₦100.00K (children). Chi square test showed no significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) relationship between gender and willingness to pay increased gate fee (Table 3).

Based on ecodestination, most of the respondents from Pandam Game Reserve (34), Assop Falls (32) and Rayfield Resort (28)) are willing to pay new gate charge as shown in Table 4. This is in contrast with the result obtained in Jos Wildlife Park(6) and Jos National Museum(9). A Chi square test of showed significant ( $P < 0.01$ ) relationship between willingness to pay increased gate fee and tourism sites. Most respondents from two destinations, Jos National Museum and Zoo and Jos Wildlife Park, located at the centre of Jos city are unwilling to pay N150.00k and ₦100.00k for adult and children respectively. This could be attributed to the fact that there are many facilities of urban attractions in the city. As a result they have choices to make.

Table 5 compares respondents’ willingness to pay increased gate fee based on age of respondents. Age range of 30-39 recorded the modal value followed by age levels of 40-49; 50-59; 10-19; 60 and above, and less than 10 years with values of 32; 30; 17; 12; 9; 5; and 2 respectively. A Chi square test showed significant relationship between respondents’ willingness to pay and age of respondents. Tourists that are between 30 and 49 years are in their active age and are willing to pay for leisure and recreation irrespective of the cost since they work very hard and earn incomes. Tourists that are within the age range of between 10 and 29 years are still mostly in school and are therefore very careful of the way they expend money. Those that are above 50 years of age are

mostly saddled with much family responsibility and either getting closer to their retirement age or are retired already at the age of 60 and therefore tend to spend less on leisure.

Table 3: The willingness to pay increased gate fees of ₦100.00k (children) and ₦150.00k (adult) in tourist centers based on gender

Willingness to pay	Gender	
	Male	Female
Willing	72	37
Not willing	42	49

Source: Field Survey, 2005

Chi-square test of independence showed no significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) relationship

N/B: Total number of tourists is 200 instead of 240 because gate fee is not paid to enter the Naraguta Tourist Village.

Table 4: The willingness to pay increased gate fees of ₦100.00k (children) and ₦150.00k (adult) in tourist centers based on ecodestination

	Jos National Museum	Jos Wildlife Park	Pandam Game Reserve	Rayfield Resort	Assop Falls
Willing	6	9	34	28	32
Not willing	34	31	6	12	8

Source: Field Survey, 2005

Chi-square test of independence showed significant ( $P < 0.01$ ) relationship

Table 5: The willingness to pay increased gate fees of ₦100.00k (children) and ₦150.00k (adult) in tourist centers based on age

	< 10 years	10 – 19 years	20 – 29 years	30 – 39 years	40 – 49 years	50 – 59 years	60 years and above
Willing	2	9	17	32	30	12	5
Not willing	0	28	31	11	14	8	1

Source: Field Survey, 2005

Chi-square test of independence showed significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) relationship.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Ecotourism is yet to be economically viable in Plateau State and Nigeria in general. However, it creates avenues for profitable social and political interactions. Tourism is still run as a social service in Plateau State and Nigeria at large, and that is the reason different levels of government are the major sponsors of eco-destinations. When ecotourism becomes economically viable therein many private operators will start embarking on private destination development and management, and number of tour operators will increase tremendously to penetrate unique ecodestinations such as Farin Ruwa and Urashi waterfalls that are far from cities.

Hotel business (hospitality) is the aspect that is really booming in Nigeria. It is the lucrative nature of this business that prompts building of many hotels in the same streets as in Owerri yet all will still remain in the business. Religious tourism is one of the most popular aspects of tourism in Nigeria. The number of visitors that attends a popular religious programme in Nigeria can outnumber the annual total number of tourists that visit most eco destinations in Nigeria. Visitations to religious destinations are not frequent but the fact that Ogun State, Nigeria host international headquarters of many churches that hold their annual events at different times of the year makes it a very popular state with many religious destinations. These annual sets of visitations are regular irrespective of economic and political pressures because religious visitations are the least aspect of tourism affected by crisis as people are always persistent in religious issues. Cultural festivals also attract many visitors but very few of such are managed purposely for business purposes and stimulation of state and local economies. Others are organised for cultural promotion and attract more domestic tourists, though cultural artifacts are sold in the process. Such ceremonies are communally sponsored and managed. Tourism is contributing to economic development in Nigeria; however these contributions will have more effect when the participation of the private sector increases.

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