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Zaria Archaeology Papers (ZAP)

Editorial Comment

Zaria Archeology Papers (ZAP), a journal of the Department of Archaeology and Heritage Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria-Nigeria, is a peer reviewed journal that publishes research of principally Archeology and Heritage studies. Also published are articles from related disciplines mostly from, but not limited to, the savannah region of Northern Nigeria. Occasionally, some of the articles touches on issues about the archeology and history of central and southern Nigeria. This is the 12th edition of the journal since its inception.

Contained in this volume are discussions on museum studies and administration, understanding Public Archaeology and illicit trafficking of the Nok terracotta figurines. Much of the articles in the volume are on field reports on several Archeological sites in the Northern and Central Nigerian area. There are also articles on study of pottery tradition, Sufi paintings from Kano and tourism and hospitality. The articles have been peer reviewed in line with the current trend in journal publication.

It is hoped that the volume will further provide more insight of the Archaeology, history and Heritage issues of particularly Northern Nigeria and Nigeria in general.

Prof. M.K. Aliyu, mni

Editor in Chief

Zaria Archaeology Papers (ZAP)

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Hospitality and Tourism Development in Cross River State, Nigeria: A Case of Obudu Mountain Resort

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Abstract

Over the past decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. Many new destinations have emerged, challenging the traditional ones in Europe and North America. The continuous growth of the international tourism market makes it significantly more competitive than ever and raises the need to prioritise the development of hospitality facilities to ensure tourists' comfortability at various tourism destinations. This article examines the hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort, Cross River State, Nigeria with a view to establishing the extent to which they contribute to tourists' comfortability and subsequently tourism development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. Findings were analysed using descriptive statistical tools of frequency counts, simple percentages and tables for quantitative data while qualitative data were analysed descriptively. The article established that hospitality facilities such as the canopy walk way, the cable car, the landscape, well-equipped mountain villas, coupled with the serene environment and unique climatic condition at the resort provide complete touristic experience for the tourists. Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that these facilities contribute the most to their decision to choose the resort for holiday. To ensure the sustainability of these facilities, the state government outsourced the maintenance of some of these facilities. This management strategy ensures sustainability of the resort and their continuous patronage by tourists. The article concludes that hospitality facilities when managed properly contribute to tourism development as exemplified in Obudu Mountain Resort. The resort also significantly contributes to tourism development in Cross River State and in Nigeria.

Key Words: Hospitality, Obudu, Sustainability, Tourism, and Resort

Introduction

Nigeria is richly endowed with both ecological and cultural tourism potentials, yet relatively insignificant on the world tourism map (Olugbamila, 2005). The country offers a wide variety of tourist

attractions such as extended and roomy rivers and ocean beaches that are ideal for swimming and other water sports. It also offers unique wildlife, vast tracts of unpolluted nature, ranging from tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls, some new rapidly growing cities and climatic

conditions in some parts, particularly conducive for holidaying. Many of these amazing and fascinating resources are yet to be maximally exploited due to the fact that Nigeria's national economy is essentially crude oil driven, with the result that the potentials of tourism in the nation's development has been undermined. Thus, oil production has been given much attention to the detriment of other sources of revenue such as tourism. Tourism industry, with potential for preserving traditional ways of life in local customs, rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful products illustrative of arts and lifestyle, and the authentic and friendly attitude of many in the Nigeria population increasingly need to be explored. Globally, tourism has contributed immensely to the overall global Gross Domestic Products (GDP) and exports in many developing countries

in the field of tourism have improved tremendously.

Obudu Mountain Resort is one of the most unique tourism destinations in Nigeria and the conducive climatic condition obtainable at the site has made Cross River State one of the tourism havens in West Africa. This article is a product of an ethnographic study carried out at the Obudu Mountain resort in 2016. The article examined the hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort, Cross River State in Nigeria, with a view to establishing the extent to which they contribute to tourists' comfort, and subsequently tourism development in Cross River State. It sought to identify and evaluate hospitality facilities at the site. It also sought to reveal the management strategies adopted to ensure sustainability of the resort for continuous patronage by tourists.

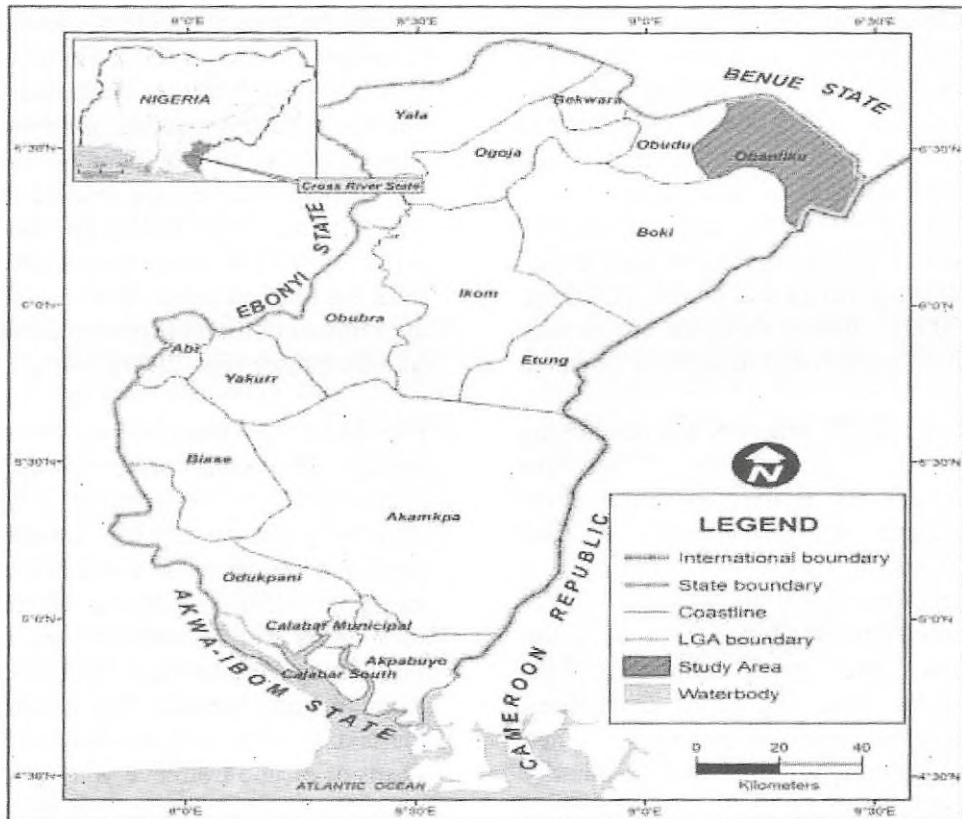


Figure 1: Map of Cross River State Showing Obanliku LGA where Obudu Mountain Resort is Located; Inset, Map of Nigeria Showing Cross River State

Conceptualizing ‘Hospitality’ and ‘Resort’

The word Hospitality is derived from the Latin word *hospitalis* meaning ‘hospitable’, and from *hospes* ‘guest’, or ‘host’. Hospitality involves showing respect for one’s guests, providing for their needs, and treating them as equals. Cultures and subcultures vary in the extent to

which one is expected to show hospitality to strangers, as opposed to personal friends or members of one’s in group (Meyer, 2006). Clifford (2009) affirms that in Ancient Greece, hospitality was a right, with the host being expected to make sure the needs of his guests were met. Judaism prioritises hospitality to strangers and guests based, largely, on the examples of Abraham and Lot in the Book of

Genesis in the Holy Bible. In Hebrew, the practice is called *hachnasat orchim*, or "welcoming guests". Besides, hosts were expected to provide nourishment, comfort, and entertainment to their guests, and at the end of the visit, hosts customarily escort their guests out of their home, wishing them a safe journey (Clifford, 2009). Resort facilities are usually both tourism and hospitality oriented.

Getz (2007) observes that developing travel destinations involves proprietors trying to entice event tourists through various tourism offerings, such as quality of accommodation, leisure and nightlife entertainment, lower cost of travel and lower event admission fees, exotic food, and other destination-specific tourism products. When considering tourism and hospitality facilities as the centre of attraction, many discouraging factors set in as a result of how tourism industry at large is being handled, especially in developing countries such as Nigeria. Many attractions in Nigeria remain untapped and even at their rudimentary stage. Yet, a document by World Tourism Organisation shows that there has been massive growth of about 4% in the level of international tourist arrival in Africa, in spite of the global economic meltdown that has affected tourist

arrivals to many countries. Further records show that about 2.5% of the GDP in West Africa is attributed to tourism industry that has generated about 5.5% of all employment, with the Gambia and Senegal leading the way (Karren, 2008). In Nigeria, about 8.1% of the GDP has been generated from the tourism sector as a result of the numerous tourism potentials the country houses (Eja, 2007).

The level of tourists' arrival to Nigeria in recent years is quite commendable, considering the security situation of the country, especially the issue of Boko Haram insurgency and kidnapping in the north-eastern and southern parts of the country respectively. Nigeria is geographically blessed. The country boasts of many resorts, which provide means of escape from everyday work in the city to people. Increase in travel has brought about an equivalent increase in lodging demand. People on the move require food, beverage and accommodation (Walker, 2007), which are provided by hospitality industry. Transportation changed the nature of the hotel industry. First, it was rail travel that prompted hotels to develop as popular resorts and frontiers opened. Hotels may be classified according to location, price, and type of services offered. This allows guests to make a selection on

these as well as personal criteria. Hotels, which provides lodging with food and beverages are usually located around city centres, airports and sub urban areas.

A resort, primarily, is a place used for relaxation, vacation or as a daytime getaway. While this can be a single building such as a hotel, it also can be an entire island or a ship at sea. One of the most desirable aspects of a resort is that visitors are freed from most daily responsibilities, which are usually taken care of by the facility's staff. Several activities are normally offered at resorts, including massage, meals, cosmetic treatments, and live entertainment (Switzer, 2007). There are many types of resorts. Some cater for certain audience, such as families or single adults, while others attempt to have a broader appeal, including children. Depending on the philosophy behind the resort, the staff might strive to meet every need the guests have, allowing them to relax. On the other hand, some resorts might provide vigorous guided physical activities such as mountain climbing or hiking. Some operate like a luxury hotel and give their clients a day or two of complete relaxation. Other resorts function like miniature cities, even providing long-term housing for those who want an extended stay. Larger locations can sometimes have entire shopping malls within their

boundaries, complete with a selection of restaurants and other stores. A resort can also be built around a single theme. Resorts that are built around a specific theme usually offer activities and events that are somehow associated with it, such as horse-riding lessons in a Western-themed ranch. The actual location of the buildings also can be used to define some resorts. A beach or ski resort is an example of this. Even though there might be many natural or manmade attractions in the immediate area, the resort itself is defined as the destination (Agarwall, 2014). Agarwall (2014) further observes that there are different types of resorts, some categorized based on location, type of service they offer and time of operation.

A resort with modern sporting facilities that can cater for close to ten different sporting activities can be referred to as a sport resort. Many tourists also engage in sports and seek adventure resort to satisfy their desire. There are also Nature resort, Eco resort, agro resort and health resort, which usually offer spa and wellness. It is important to note that some of these categories can be embedded in one resort at the same time. Other notable classes of resort include, Island resort, Seaside Resorts, Ski resorts, Spa resorts, Golf resorts, Destination resorts, among

others. In Nigeria for instance, we have seaside resorts (La Campagne Tropicana Beach Resort at Ikegun, Lagos). Destination resorts as Tinapa Business Resort in Calabar, Nigeria; and golf resorts such as MicCom Golf Resort, Ada, Osun State in Nigeria. Holiday village in Nigeria is Rojenny Tourist Village, Oba in Anambra State; Le Meridien Ibom Hotel and Golf Resort, Akwa-Ibom State in Nigeria. Also there is Akodo Beach Resort (Eko Tourists Beach Resort), Lagos.

Agarwell (2014) highlighted the following as common features of resorts:

- i. Some resorts will have ways a person can pamper herself, perhaps with a bubble bath;
- ii. Most resorts will give visitors the chance to have a massage;
- iii. People might spend time catching up on reading while at a resort;
- iv. Luxury resort hotels offer many opportunities for relaxation;
- v. Many resorts have pools that guests can relax in;
- vi. Winter resorts include ski slopes for guests to enjoy;
- vii. Resorts may host events such as a wine tasting; and

- viii. Some luxurious resorts include golf as a guest amenity.

The implication therefore is that there are certain parameters that constitute the benchmark for a good resort. Among these are the availability of facilities such as conference hall, dining facilities, accommodation, night life/life bands, relaxation facilities such as spas facilities, pools, and innovative gaming and sight-seeing facilities, both for adults and children in a cosy atmosphere, communication facilities and alluring landscape. Resort facilities are expected to provide all-inclusive tourism experience for guests and visitors. With increased global competition, not only from other resorts but also from cruise lines, resorts are challenged to both attract guests and to turn those guests and tourists into repeat business, which traditionally has been the foundation of the resorts viability (Walker, 2009). Resorts then compete with events and convention centres in the areas of hosting business meetings, sales meetings, incentives groups, sporting events, additional sporting and recreational facilities, spas, adventure tourism and ecotourism. There are numerous and notable resorts in Nigeria and many of them are available online for both local international bookings through online

travel agents (OTA), and most of them lie along coastal lines of the country. Resort guests are usually cocooned, and are expected to be pampered. This requires an attentive, well-trained staff.

Facilities Management in a Resort

Facilities management is a crucial component of a resort. One of the commonly used definitions of facilities management is “an integrated approach to operating, maintaining, improving and adapting the buildings and infrastructure of an organization in order to create an environment that strongly supports the primary objectives of that organization” (Mudrak *et al*, 2004: 24). In any discussion of facilities management, it is, however, necessary to stress the importance of integrative and interdependent disciplines whose overall purpose is to support an organization in the pursuit of its (business) objectives. The proper application of facilities management techniques enables organizations to provide the right environment for conducting their core business on a cost-effective and best value basis (Mudrak *et al*, 2004). Mudrak *et al* further affirm that resort facilities managers (FMs) operate across business functions. The number one priority of a facility manager is keeping people alive and

safe. They note that facility managers have to operate at two levels:

- i. Strategically-tactically: helping guests, visitors and tourists at the resort understand the potential impact of their decisions on the provision of space, services, cost and business risk; and
- ii. Operationally: ensuring corporate and regulatory compliance and the proper operation of all aspects of the resort to create an optimal, safe and cost effective environment for the tourists to enjoy (Mudrak *et al*, 2004: 24).

Facilities manager also caters for health and safety, fire safety, security, maintenance, testing and inspections, among others (Mudrak *et al*, 2004). Some issues require more than just periodic maintenance, such as those that can stop or hamper tourists' activities at the resort or that have safety implications. Many of these are handled at the facilities management "Help Desk". To ensure resort sustainability, it is essential for the resort management to start with a review of how they are operating to find out what they are not doing well and what needs to change. Inefficient appliances are replaced or worked on the existing equipment to improve

efficiency and output. Sustainability messages are also incorporated into guest inductions and guided tours, and discreet reminders are to be placed around the resort.

Despite the significance of hospitality facilities as a node on the tourism network, hospitality facilities have not received adequate attention in scholarly literature on tourism in Nigeria. Furthermore, the extent to which hospitality facilities at resorts contribute to tourism development in the country has not been established. This has necessitated this study which attempts to establish the nexus between hospitality facilities at a resort and tourism development in the country. This article therefore examines the hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort, Cross River State in Nigeria with a view to establishing the extent to which they contribute to tourism development in Cross River State. Specific questions the paper addresses include: What are the facilities available at Obudu Mountain Resort? To what extent do the available facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort meet the needs of the tourists? What are the various strategies adopted in the management of the facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort? Finally, to what extent do the hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort meet the benchmark

of a resort and subsequently contribute to the development of tourism in Cross River State?

Context and Methods

Obudu Mountain Resort is located in Obudu community in Obanliku Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria in 2016 (see Fig.1 for map of Cross River State and the location of Obanliku). Obanliku is bounded in the North by Kwanda Local Government Area of Benue State; in the East by the Republic of Cameroon; in the West by Obudu Local Government Area and in the South by Boki Local Government Area. Obanliku Local Government Area was created from Obudu Local Government Area on August 27, 1991 by the Military regime of Gen Ibrahim Babangida, with its headquarters at Sankwala. The population of the local government area is 110,324 at the 2006 population census. The chairman of the local government area at the time of the fieldwork for this article was Dr. Godwin Amanke. Obanliku has four basic language groups, which are Bendi, Obanliku, Utanga and Becheeve. For administrative convenience, the above groups are further divided into (10) council wards as follows: Bendi, Bisie,

Bishiri South, Bishiri North, Basang,
Busi, Bebi, Utanga and Becheve.⁷

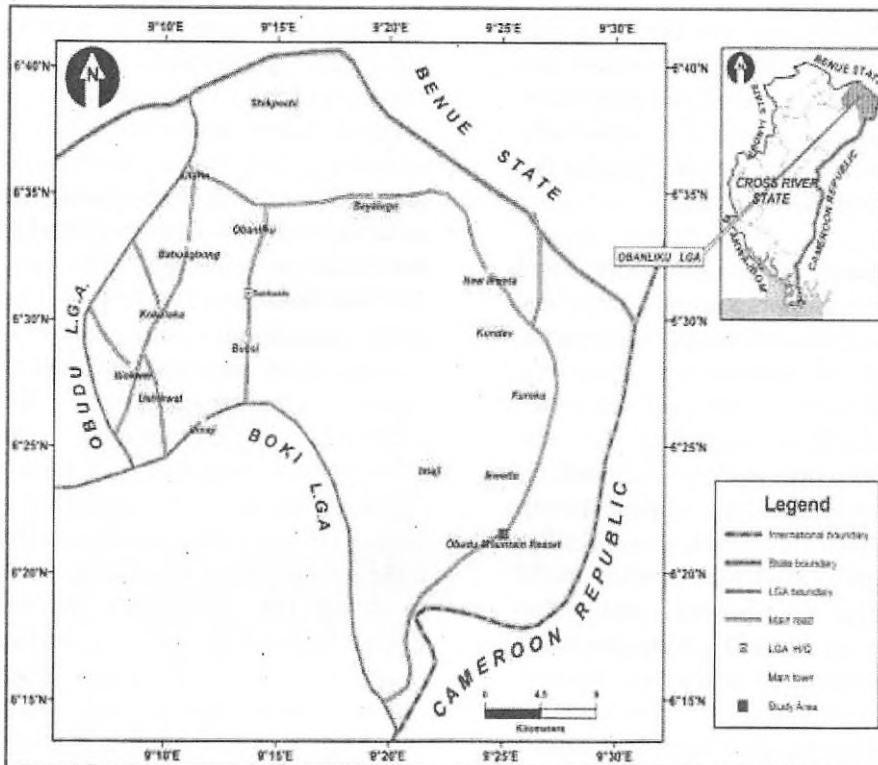


Figure 2: Map of Obanliku LGA of Cross River State Showing the Location of Obudu Mountain

Obanliku Local Government Area has a rich cultural heritage. Each village has a unique cultural dancing troupe. The songs are composed in the local languages and constitute the predominant music in the rural communities. Other cultural heritage

in the communities include annual festivals, Sankwala Market, forest reserves, pottery works, numerous Water falls, rocks, game facilities, and hotels. The Obanliku community also hosts the annual international race held at the resort premises which is

⁷ Information on Obaliku was generated from www.crossrivertourism.org. accessed 13 May, 2016.

known as Obudu Ranch International Mountain Race. The resort was formerly known as Obudu Cattle Ranch. It is a tourist attraction that provides both tourism and hospitality facilities in a serene and welcoming environment in a coastal state in the southern part of Nigeria.

This study adopts qualitative and quantitative approaches. Sampling procedure are random sampling in the selection of tourists on whom the questionnaires were administered, and purposive sampling for the selection of Key Informant Interviews and in Focus Group Discussion participants. For quantitative approach, a total of 55 questionnaires divided into three sections, A, B and C, were prepared, and administered to tourists. Section A contained demographic information on the respondents while Parts B and C aim at revealing the state of the facilities available at the resort, the extent to which these facilities meet the needs of the

Facilities at Obudu Mountain Resorts and Touristic Experience

Obudu Mountain Resort, formerly known as Obudu Cattle Ranch, is a tourist attraction centre. The resort was formerly managed by Protea Hotels, and later African Sun Limited, which renamed the ranch

tourists and the tourists' experience of Obudu Mountain Resort. Fifty-one of the questionnaires were returned. Journals, textbooks, magazines, encyclopaedias, newspapers, and Internet were also consulted for secondary data. Valid data from the quantitative were computed and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0 for Windows. The analysed data were presented using frequency counts, mean, percentage, charts and tables. Qualitative data were analysed, interpreted and descriptively presented in a form of 'thick description' as suggested by Geertz (1973), which recommended a close interpretation of culture in order to reveal the underlying meanings behind human behaviour. The authors sought to unveil the reasons behind tourists' patronage of the Obudu Mountain Resort and the extent to which the hospitality facilities meet their expectations. The names of research participants in this article are pseudonyms to protect their identity.

Obudu Mountain Resort. Surrounded by seven villages, Kejukwu, Ukwamu, Okpayanga, Abayiule, Anape, Kigol and Keyi, the inhabitants of these seven villages have lived at the mountain for over 400 years. Obudu Mountain Resort attracts many local and international

visitors/tourists yearly, especially during the Christmas period or Obudu Ranch International Mountain Race, an annual 11.25 km mountain running competition, which takes place in late November. Obudu Cattle Ranch has been described variously by visitors as “heaven on earth”, “the best place for your honeymoon” or “a place to experience nature at its best”. Foods and Beverages Manager of the resort, Mr. Dandi, recounted the history of the resort thus:

Obudu Mountain Resort was established in 1954. ... The whites just came as a kind of tourists. They came and discovered it was a good area for them to rear animal. It was good as a ranch, where they kept animals. After some time, they discovered that people come in to this place and see the area ..., which is unique. They now said okay, as it is now we need to build lodges, where people can come and lodge and go round to see whatever is here, naturally, as at that time. That was when the idea ... a hotel now came in. After a long time, they built chalets, after 6 chalets to 12, 12 to 24, after 24 (personal communication, August, 2016).

He note that during the tenure of Donald Duke as the governor of Cross River State (1999-2007), more facilities such as Cable Car, Water Park, the wooden chalets, Canopy Walk Way “where people go and walk on top of the trees and then they introduced” the Tree House, which people now go there and stay on top of the tree and watch birds and watch nature”. Findings indicate that Belekede people, who were originally herdsmen, were the first natives the white men encountered at the ranch upon their arrival. The development of Obudu Mountain into a world class tourism site took the visionary leadership of individuals who were able to locate the tourism potentials of the site, and subsequently transformed it into what it has become.

Obudu Mountain Resort is about 30 minutes’ drive from Obudu Town, and 332 kilometres drive from Calabar. A charter air service is available to the Bēbi Airport, which lies between Obudu town and the Resort. On arrival at the resort, guests are welcomed in the beautifully decorated reception (with a massive Cow head hanging on the wall) where information is dispensed. Besides other facilities, recreational activities available at the resort include:

- i. Sight-seeing – for tourists that love watching birds and nature;
- ii. Hiking – for mountain climbers, firm boots that are strong enough to pull through the journey are usually recommended;
- iii. Swimming – with two large river-sized looking pools, tourists can enjoy a bath and afterwards lay in the outdoor pool bed to enjoy the ray of the sun;
- iv. Sports – a golf course is available for golf lovers; and
- v. Working out – the fitness Centre is equipped with modern facilities that help tourists stay in shape.

Obudu Mountain Resorts offers visitors and tourist from within and outside Nigeria a memorable experience. Not only in its temperate climate but also, it's exciting and different location at the top of the mountain. There seems to be some discrepancies on the exact height of the resorts above sea level. Information from a worker at the site claim that the resort is 1, 576 metres above sea level. Other sources, however, put height of the resort to be between 1, 580 and 1, 600 metres above sea level.⁸ One can therefore

conclude that Obudu Mountain Resort is situated on a plateau of about 1,600 metres above sea level on the Oshie Ridge of the Sankwala Mountains. The temperate climate offers a total contrast and welcoming respite in the midst of Africa's tropical heat. Idyllic tranquility and beautiful scenery make the resort an ideal place for a lone tourist, families on reunion, young couple on honey moon, holiday group and other fun seekers.

Obudu Mountain Resort provides accommodation in the form of 'African round huts' and chalets on stilts, maximizing the natural views at the site. The resort also offers suites varying in size from the 2-bedroomed 'Governor's Lodge' with its own lounge/dining room and kitchenette to the 20 'Mountain Villas', each with three bedrooms, lounge, dining room, kitchenette and balcony. Foods and beverages offered are found in the Terrace Restaurant and Bar with a cosy and relaxing atmosphere with blazing log fire located within the vicinity. Local and international cuisines to suit all tastes and the healthy appetite from a day's nature walk or round of golf are also available. The resort also provides a fully equipped gym, two floodlight tennis courts, a squash court and a

natural swimming pool. Keen golfers can show their prowess on the hotel's 9-hole golf course.

All the 240 rooms offer comforts like 'Select Comfort' beds and premium bedding, plus free WiFi and balconies. Other amenities available to guests include 24-hour room service, satellite TV, and coffee makers. Obudu Mountain Resort features a water park, 2 outdoor swimming pools, a waterslide, and a fitness centre. Dining is available at one of the hotel's 4 restaurants. A poolside bar is on site where guests can unwind with a drink. Four restaurants, 2 outdoor pools, and a water park are available at this resort. Additionally, a fitness centre, a poolside bar, meeting rooms and a 24-hour business centre are on site. This

resort also offers a children's pool, a seasonal outdoor pool, and an arcade/game room making it friendly for families on tour.

Restaurant Facilities

On site restaurants with open bars include

- i. The Anape Restaurant;
- ii. Steak House Restaurant;
- iii. The Water Park Restaurant;
and
- iv. The Terrace Restaurant.

Swimming Facilities

Outdoor swimming pools are on site along with a children's pool. In addition to a seasonal outdoor pool, other recreational amenities include a water park and a fitness centre.



Plate 1: Mountain Villas at Obudu Mountain Resort

Other Tourist Attractions

Findings from Key Informant Interviews of the resort management staff indicate that tours to view the magnificent scenery and birdlife receive high patronage by tourists and visitors to Obudu Mountain Resort. These tours can be taken on foot or on

bicycle. The Canopy Walkway, which is located in between trees, allows visitors to be thrilled close to birds in their natural habitats high above the ground. Informant concluded that the Cable Car ride is a major talking point for guests, and was described as “Africa’s longest cable car system”.



Plate 2: The Canopy Walks Way at Obudu Mountain Resort

At 4 kilometres, Obudu Mountain Resorts Cable Car gently transfers guests (and their bags) from the tropical climate at the base of the mountain right to the hotel's reception area on the mountain side, which is often in the clouds and is

accompanied by an invigorating drop in temperature. Although Obudu welcomes visitors all year round, the best time to visit is October to February when the flowers are blooming, the sky is clear, and the air is cool.



Plate 3: Landscape with a Windy Road Network

This is ideal weather for trekking over the high grounds and enjoying the extensive views that stretch out across the plateau. Although the resort is in tropical Nigeria, it portrays the climatic attributes of a mountain top.

Weather and Climate

Positioned barely north of the equator, most parts of Nigeria experience a tropical climate. Technically, Obudu's climate falls into the tropical monsoon category. This climate type includes year-round warm temperature with relatively little seasonal variation and a high total annual rainfall. Also, such

climates experience a pronounced wet season in the summer and a dry season in the winter. Obudu Mountain Resort has a temperature of between 26°C – 32°C between November and January while the lowest temperature range of 4°C – 10°C is recorded between June and September. Ninety-point two percent of our respondents strongly agreed that the weather condition of the resort is cool, while 9.8% agreed that the weather is cool. Rainy season in Obudu begins around June and extends through the month of September. During this time of the year, moist air drifts northward from the Atlantic Ocean's Gulf of Guinea,

bringing heavy downpours. The monsoon rains are steadiest in August with temperature dropping as low as 8°C, but July and September are quite

wet. The clouds and rain keep temperature from becoming uncomfortably hot.

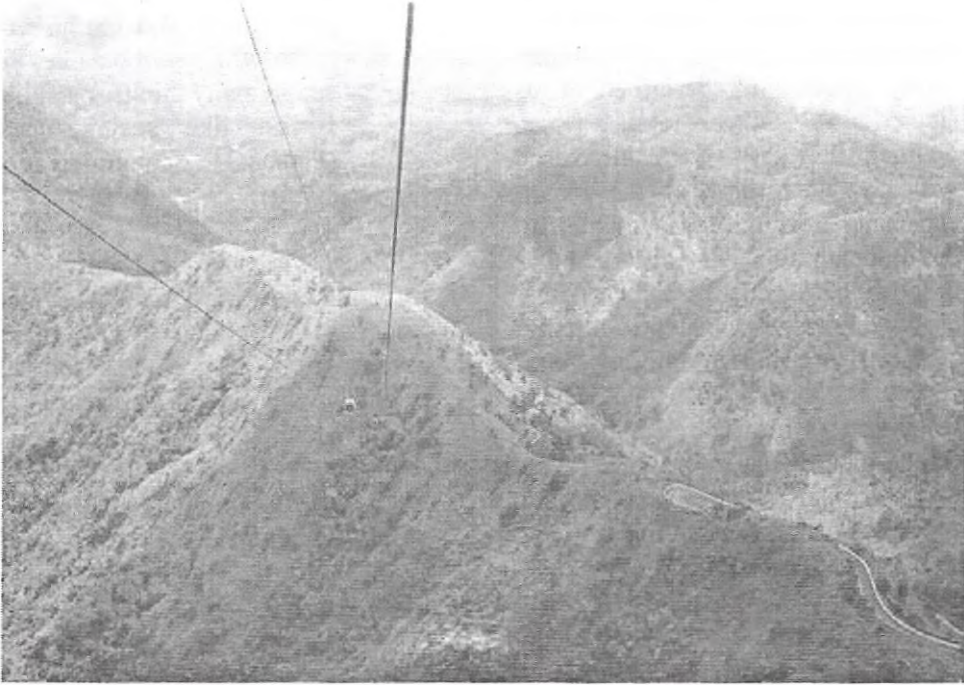


Plate 4: The Aerial View of the Cable Car and the Road Leading to the Mountain Top

Some informants noted that the facilities and the weather were major determinants for their choosing the resort. According to an informant, Mr. Gabriel “the climate and the environment of this place attracted me here” (Personal communication, August, 2016). For Mr. Joseph, the weather was a major attraction. He note, “You will see the beauty of God; you will see how the Creator, how

God created the world because sometimes you will see how the weather will just change” (Personal communication, August, 2016).

Landscape

The landscaping of the resort is remarkable, with aesthetic buildings

and structures. Majority of the respondents (62.7%) affirmed that the landscape is impressive. Some of the sight-seeing features include mountains, hills and lakes, river, ponds and streams. A tourist, Ms Ese, narrating her experience of a facility, 'Holy Mountain', described it as 'incredible'. Other tourists also claimed that they were impressed with the area view of the resort, especially from the road downhill to the mountain top. They observed that the view of the resort was beautiful - characteristics associated with the sight of the hills, valleys, spurs, curves and slopes are conspicuous fun seekers. As affirmed by Mr Mathew Obede, one of the informants, "Yes, yes, if you seriously want to appreciate Nature, you need to be here" (Matthew Obede, Personal communication, August, 2016). Mr. Joseph Lukata, however expressed the challenge of driving to the site: "The place is situated, up the mountain" and driving up the hill is "always scary" (Joseph Lukata, Personal communication, August, 2016). This, however, has not discouraged him from coming to the resort as he concludes:

Yea, this place, why I choose this place more than South Africa, is the beauty of Nature. If you come around here, you would appreciate

God. You will see the beauty of God. You will see how the Creator, how God created the world because sometimes you will see how the weather will just change. You see how the place will just look like, you see so many things. I just like, I just like seeing nature (Personal communication, 2016).

Although this is an individual's opinion, comparing the resort with South Africa points to the tourist assessment of the touristic provisioning and experience at Obudu Mountain Resort.

Facilities Management Strategies at Obudu Mountain Resort

The management of some facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort has been contracted to an engineering firm to ensure the sustainability of the resorts. According to Mr. Peter Johnson, the Water Park and the Cable Car are managed by FONET, a private engineering company employed by the state government to maintain the mechanical facilities at the resort. The in-house engineers take instructions from FONET. FONET conducts weekly and monthly maintenance activities to avoid sudden breakdown of any equipment. It would be recalled that

Cable Car is one of the most appealing facilities at the resort. Fifty-one percent of the respondents agreed that the planning and

management of facilities at Obudu Mountain resort has been effective (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Effective Planning and Management of Obudu Mountain Resort Facilities

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agreed	4	7.8
Agreed	26	51.0
Disagreed	20	39.2
Strongly Disagreed	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

Source: Okpokolo and Olusola (Fieldwork 2016)

Opinions were divided on the tourists' evaluation of the state of maintenance of the facilities. On the abandonment of some of the facilities, the officer in-charge, Mr. Gabriel Odinga, affirmed that the management company and the government have differences about the financial allocation for the maintenance of the facilities. Consequently, the company suspended the operation of the amusement facilities (Cable Car, Golf Cars and others) until compromise was reached. He was optimistic that the issues would soon be resolved. Although observation indicate that Obudu Mountain Resort still holds promise in the hospitality industry, adequate financial allocation to the

resort will contribute in sustaining the site as a viable tourism centre in Cross River State.

Obudu Mountain Resort, despite the high quality facilities and services available, is affordable to visitors and tourists (see Table 2 for rank rate prices). Respondents maintained that the travel cost is relatively high, although they, however, affirmed that this is not within the control of the managers of the resort. On charges at the resort, respondents agreed that tariff and charges at the resort are moderate compare to the quality and variety of facilities available (see Tables 2 & 3).

Table 2: Obudu Mountain Resort Rooms and Meals Rates

S/N	Room Types	Amount	Deposit
1	Standard Double Chalet	₦25,000 ₦42,500 (Family Unit)	₦30,000 ₦50,000
2	Superior Double Chalet	₦27,500	₦30,000
3	African Huts	₦28,500	₦30,000
4	Club Chalet	₦30,000	₦35,000
5	Executive Suite	₦35,000	₦40,000
6	Royal Suite	₦47,500	₦55,000
7	Presidential Suite	₦55,000	₦60,000
8	Governor's Lodge	₦65,000	₦70,000
9	Mountain Villas	₦75,000	₦80,000
10	Presidential Retreat	₦250,000	₦255,000
MEALS		BREAKFAST LUNCH DINNER	₦3,000 - ₦3,500 per person ₦3,000 - ₦3,500 per person ₦3,000 - ₦3,500 per person

(Bar Menu and Light Meals from
₦600 – Children catered for)

Source: Okpokolo and Olusola (Fieldwork 2016)

Hospitality Facilities and Tourism Development

Data from IDI conducted with tourists indicate that majority of the informants agreed that the facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort because

contributed immensely their patronage of Obudu Mountain Resort. The visitors/tourists agreed that the facilities at the resort are fascinating enough for touristic interest. However, respondents hold diverse

opinions on the state of these facilities.

One of the tourists, Ms Funmilola, was of the opinion that it takes appealing facilities like the ones Obudu Mountain Resort offers to attract a lot of people to that place despite its distance and accessibility challenge. Due to the pleasing hospitable facilities of Obudu Mountain Resort, 41.2% strongly agree to visit the site again, while 43.1% agreed, 9.8% disagreed, 5.9% strongly disagreed. Thus, 84.3% of the tourists/visitors are willing to

come back to Obudu Mountain Resort. Repeat visits provide feedback to managers of tourism sites of the quality of their services and the extent to which they meet the needs and expectations of visitors and tourists. Increasing patronage may be an indicator that visitors are fascinated and satisfied with the service provisioning at a site, while opposite may indicate the contrary. From all indication, facilities at Obudu Mountain Resorts are major drivers in the promotion of the site as tourist attraction (see Figure 3 below).

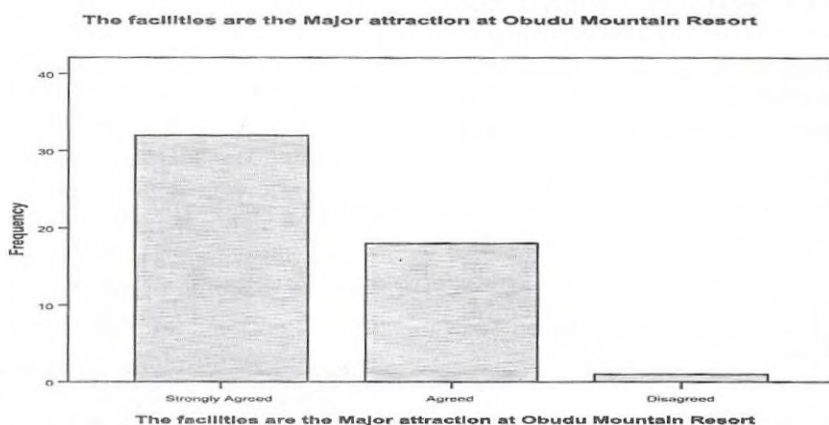


Fig. 3: Facilities are the Major Attractions at Obudu Mountain Resort

Source: Okpokolo and Olusola (Fieldwork 2016)

Informant however points out that some of the facilities were out of use and this has affected patronage. A tourist, Ms. ESe, posits that the facilities would have contributed more to patronage if other things are working. She went further to affirm

that the resort could generate substantial amount of income for the government through higher tourists' patronage. Generally, the respondents believe that the facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort are good, and with great potentials for attraction.

Table 3: Obudu Mountain Resort Facilities and Attractions Pate

S/N	Routes and Venue	Hiking Time	Rate ₦ Per person
1	Water Fall	6 hours	2,000
2	Cataract View	3 hours	1,000
3	Facilities Tour	1 hour	1,000
4	Grotto	40 minutes	500
5	Grotto – Group Picnic	Half day	1,000
6	Aero Plane Field Over View	2 hours	400
7	Monkey Face View	1 hour	300
8	Holy Mountain	2 hours	1000
9	Intestine Road View Point	1 ½ hours	400
10	Cameroon Border View Point	5 hours	1,500
11	Igaga Water Falls	3 hours	1,500
12	Retest View Point	5 hours	1,500
13	Mountain and Village Walk		1,000
14	Bird Watching		1,500
15	Horseback Riding (Round Trip)	1 hour	2,000
16	Cable Car (Round Trip)	Adults	1,500
		Children (5-12yrs)	750
		Groups of children (10 or more pass)	600
17	Water Park	Adults	1,100
		Group of children (10 or more pass)	550/440
18	Becheeve Nature Reserve/Canopy Walkway	Adults	300
		Children	50
19	Game House	Charge per Round	Charge per Game

Source: Okpokolo and Olusola (Fieldwork 2016)

However, Mr. Johnson Usaya, a regular tourist at the resort, submits that he was a bit disappointed that the resort has not been able to maintain the same standard in terms of facility management, especially in the area of maintenance, as it was during the tenure of former Governor Donald

Duke as the state (1999 - 2007). He felt the new management has not done enough to keep the resort busy as it was. He advised that the other facilities such as the Golf Car and the Conference Hall attractions needed to be more attractive. He however lauded the efforts of the present

administration in outsourcing the maintenance of Cable Car, which to him was a good strategy. Mr. Gabriel believed the income generated for the resort by the Cable Car would make tourism a viable economic activity in Cross River State.

Discussion

Tourism is a dynamic, evolving, consumer-driven phenomenon. In the Twenty-first Century, tourism is the world's largest industry. Tourism industry is constitutive of a set of interrelated components, varying from travel, lodging and food service to recreation (see Table 1). These are nodes on tourism network. Each of these components plays a significant role in ensuring a memorable touristic experience. Tourism components create a chain or a network of an interrelated system through which a tourist navigate to actualise the dream of an eventful adventure and encounter. Cultural heritage and resources of a people attract people in search of fun and touristic experience

to a site. In Nigeria, the range of cultural heritage include "works of art, library and archival materials, prehistoric and historic sites and monuments, and natural landscape" (Edet, 1990: 90). Obudu Mountain Resort constitute part of the cultural heritage of Cross River due to its naturally endowed serene and amazing climatic condition and alluring landscape. Other facilities provided at the site contribute in attracting tourists to the site, and ensure increase patronage of the resort. Similarly, the various recreational and hospitality facilities make tourists' stay at the resort even more memorable. Findings indicate that these facilities contribute most to tourists' decision to choose the resort for holiday and other purposes. A resort should offer event facilities, conference, dining and recreation facilities (IndiaMart, 2016). All of these can be found at Obudu Mountain Resort, which has positioned it as tourist destination of choice.

Table 4: Components of Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Travel	Lodging	Food Service	Recreation
Air	Hotels and Motels	Restaurants	Attractions
Cruise	Meetings	Foodservice	Gaming
Rail	Conventions	Kiosk	Parks
Coach	Exposition	Cafeteria	Recreation
Automobile	Incentives	Home Delivery	Camping

Source: Walker (2009)

As facilities are major attractions, they provide different forms of satisfaction for guests and tourists. Tourists have opportunity for various leisure and recreational facilities, which contribute to their length of stay and memorable tourist experience. The Canopy Walk way, Cable Car, health and conference facilities add to the natural environment of the resort and provide a complete touristic experience. Obudu Mountain Resort is a major site in tourism industry in Nigeria, attracting series of international sporting activities such as the Annual Obudu Mountain Marathon Race. In the past decade, Carnival Calabar, an annual international carnival which takes place in the month of December, has also contributed in putting Obudu in global map of tourism, providing lodgings and side attractions for participants at Carnival Calabar. In a survey conducted by TravelStart in 2007, Obudu Mountain Resort was reported as the most popular tourist attraction in Nigeria at the time (see TravelStart, 2013), and was rated as the best resort in West Africa in 2011 (Trip Advisor, 2012). Various facilities at the resort have contributed to the increase in patronage of the resort, and the subsequent increase in tourism awareness among the locals, and the international community. The resort

has become the symbol of Cross River State, as it contributes to tourism development in Cross River State. The increase in tourists' desire for a home away from home experience; away from the hustles and bustles of every-day life of the modern world, to a natural and serene environment has brought about a corresponding increase in the level of importance attached to resorts providing such experience.

Resort facilities are expected to provide an all-inclusive tourism experience for guests and visitor. Obudu Mountain Resort, from available indicators, offers an array of touristic attractions that draw tourists to the site. It offers such facilities as conference and dining facilities, facilities for relaxation and games and sports, accommodation, waterfalls, spas, sight-seeing and children facilities. Findings from this research indicate that majority of the informants noted that facilities at a resort contribute significantly to touristic experience. This calls for a maintenance culture that ensures sustainability of facilities. According to Eyster (2013), there are basically two ways of looking at the management of facilities in the context of a resort. The first is to consider what must be done to maintain current services or even to

improve upon them – a largely short-term perspective.

The second adopts a longer-term view that takes into account the potential changes likely to be faced by the resort in the future and how these will impact upon the services required. Some of the informants at Obudu Mountain resort canvass for continuous maintenance of the facilities, better management and adequate funding of the resort by the government to ensure that the resort continues to compete favourably with other tourists' attractions locally and globally. Although funding is often identified as key element in resort sustainability, other management issues, such as facilities management strategies, that contribute in ensuring sustainability of facilities are also crucial. As Reece (2013) rightly noted, facilities management strategy is the cornerstone of accommodation (or space), not as an adjunct to it, and therefore needs to encompass a diverse range of issues that impinge on the success of the resort's core business.

Conclusion

Tourism, as a world-wide phenomenon is also an important element of socio-economic development in many countries. Obudu Mountain Resort is one of the most unique tourism destinations in

Nigeria and the climatic condition, landscape and facilities at the site make Cross River State one of the key tourism destinations in West Africa. A resort needs to be all-inclusive, and be able to meet the needs of visitors and tourists at one destination. This encourages patronage as visitors are more likely to stay longer in such destination. Availability of many hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort attract many tourists to the resort and increases its patronage. Promotion of tourism is tied to hospitality facilities as these constitute a node on the tourism network. Little wonder that hospitality facilities such as Obudu Mountain Resort play a significant role in tourism development in Cross River State in Nigeria. Better management evident in planning and demand forecasting contributes also in tourism development. Sustainability lies in the continuous maintenance of facilities, as this encourages repeat visits.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are hereby made:

- i. Good transport network enhances the patronage of a site. Cross River government needs to put into maximum productivity the Airport at Bebi in order to aid ease of

- accessibility to Obudu Mountain Resort from major cities around the world, and steady transportation network from Calabar need to be provided to support the local transport scheme and foster tourists' transit and destinations linkages.
- ii. Sales promotion, marketing and branding redefine destinations for increase patronage. Cross River State government needs to engage professional expertise to handle strategic business development activities in the areas of sales promotion, marketing and branding.
 - iii. Cross River State government's periodic intervention for on-site maintenance can be said to be strategic. To ensure best practice that leads to continuous patronage of the resort in order to further boost tourism in Cross River State, state government needs to work hand in hand with the management team of the resort and ensure that all existing framework and policy for the resort's sustainability are professionally implemented.
 - iv. The golf cars, resort shuttles and tourist coaches at Obudu

Mountain Resort should be reinstated to increase the level of tourists' exploration of the resort.

- v. Events such as pageant/beauty awards, gala awards, company's annual general meeting, concerts, live shows, exhibitions, trade fares, and other ceremonial activities attracts visitors to a resort. Management of Obudu Mountain Resort needs to explore avenue of attracting more of such activities.

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