



Assessment of Socio-Economic Impact of Recreational Fisheries amongst Residents of Argungu Community, Kebbi State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study assessed the socio-economic impact of recreational fisheries amongst residents of the Argungu community of Kebbi State, Nigeria. Accidental and snowball sampling techniques were used to administer one hundred (100) questionnaires to the residents of the Argungu community. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents revealed more males (76.6%) than females (23.4%). Also, the age group 31-40 years recorded the highest (48.1%), followed by the age group 21-30 years (33.8%) while ≥ 50 years is the least (2.6%). Respondents with secondary school education recorded the highest (35.1%) while post-secondary education was the least (14.3%). Most of the respondents are Muslims (59.7%) while Christianity recorded 40.3%. Also, the majority of the respondents (46.8%) are farmers/fishermen while the student is the least (6.5%). Many (59.7%) of the respondents have stayed in the study area for ≥ 20 years. The majority (63.6%) of the respondents participate in the fishing festival. Perception of the host community towards Argungu fishing festivals indicated that the Fishing festival keeps culture alive recording the highest mean value of 4.42. Business opportunity, source of revenue/foreign exchange and expansion of the local market are the major socio-economic impacts of the fishing festival. The challenges facing the sustainable development of the fishing festival are poor funding, insecurity, political instability, gender inequality etc. The study recommends that the construction of accessible roads and provision of other infrastructural facilities like a regular supply of electricity will increase the influx of visitors to the Argungu festival.

Keywords: *Argungu, Fisheries, Recreational, and Socio-economic*

Introduction

Recreational fishing also known as sport fishing is a Fishery conducted by individuals primarily for sport but with a possible secondary objective of capturing fish for domestic consumption but not for onward sale (Olorunpomi, 2015). Thus recreational fisheries involve both subsistence fishing, where the catch is consumed, and leisure fishing, where the fish are returned live to the water. Both types of recreational fishing are not only extremely important activities but also valuable resources contributing significantly to national economies and conserving biodiversity. Recreational fishing can be enjoyed at any age, provides an escape from the stresses of modern life, and provides an opportunity to connect with family and friends through shared outdoor experiences (Ayodele, 2017). Sport fishing methods vary according to the area fished, the species targeted, the personal strategies of the angler, and the resources available.

Sport fisheries have the potential to provide stable

alternative livelihoods for poor coastal villagers. The industry would provide new income to improve food security and build community resilience to external impacts such as climate change and fluctuations in commodity prices (Dantata, 2007). Development of sport fishing would not only provide communities around the riverine area with income opportunities but also bring benefits of conserving vital fisheries resources, by converting unsustainable capture fisheries into viable release fisheries; providing the incentive and knowledge to support ecosystem health and resilience; and supporting extensive capacity building across fisheries research, business and tourism (Yusuf, 2002). Argungu Fishing Festival is probably one of the most eloquent efforts by an African people to relive and maintain a significant feature of its socio-cultural heritage. The annual festival at Argungu indeed signifies a Nigerian people's unique efforts at reasserting its basic values and beliefs, hence its relative distinctiveness vis-à-vis the other peoples around it (Yusuf, 2002). Internally, it has equally become a primary factor in

local-level development and inter-ethnic mixture. The festival is probably the oldest known institution of its kind among most of the riverine people of Nigeria. In the modern context, it has become the most widely attended annual festival in Nigeria and perhaps in Africa as a whole (Yusuf, 2002). The festival has contributed significantly towards the development of Argungu town and community over the years, and as a result of the growing popularity of the festival, Argungu district has progressively emerged out of oblivion to receive national and international recognition. The district has also been progressively identified and segregated for special infrastructural attention (Yusuf, 2002). Argungu Fishing Festival is an annual event that takes place in Argungu town, Kebbi State of Nigeria. About 30,000 fishermen, and villagers, participate in a week-long traditional fishing competition, which includes other cultural events (Dantata, 2007).

Recreational fisheries is not just an enjoyable pastime but it is an important engine of the economy in many regions (Eyo and Ahmed, 2010). This notwithstanding, the sector is little known and little appreciated in African countries like Nigeria. A major reason for the sector's lack of profile is the lack of accessible information on the sport fishery's economic dimensions and importance. The economic importance of the fishery is not well understood and, to a large extent, the industry is getting eclipsed by other business sectors that can more coherently demonstrate their stature. However, this study is intended to examine the socio-economic impacts and challenges facing the sustainability of the Argungu fishing festival in Kebbi State.

Methodology

Study Area Description

Argungu is located in the Sudan Savannah grassland zone of Nigeria. The area lies in the Sokoto River Basin at an altitude of about 225 metres above sea level and covers an area of about 276 hectares. It is located on latitude 12°44'N and longitude 4°31'E. As of 2007. Argungu had an estimated population of 47,064. The city is the seat of the Argungu Emirate, a traditional state. The city is a major agricultural centre for the area, with key crops including tobacco, peanuts, rice, millet, wheat, and sorghum. The city also hosts an annual international fishing festival (Argungu Fishing Festival). The Argungu fishing festival was held again in the year 2020 from 11th-14th March. Argungu has been a strong centre of administration, right from its establishment at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to date. The dominant ethnic group at the destination is the Hausa with a small minority of the inhabitants from other groups.

Study Population

The study population comprises Argungu residents.

Sampling technique and sample size

This study is heterogeneous. Therefore, a multistage sampling technique was used. This involved a combination of techniques. Since the population size of Argungu residents is unknown, accidental sampling was used to select ninety (90) residents because they are the

largest in the composition of the population. The population size of the Argungu traditional council is also unknown, therefore Snowball sampling techniques were used to pick ten (10) members. This gave a total of 100 respondents as the sample size though seventy-seven (77) questionnaires were retrieved and analyzed.

Method of Data Collection

A questionnaire (N=100) with a series of structured questions was administered to the residents of the community.

Method of data analysis

Data obtained from the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics using *Microsoft Excel*.

Results and Discussion

Results

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, it was revealed that more males (76.6%) than females (23.4%). Also, the age group 31-40 years recorded the highest (48.1%), followed by the age group 21-30 years (33.8%) while ≥ 50 years is the least (2.6%). Respondents with secondary school education recorded the highest (35.1%) while post-secondary education was the least (14.3%). Most of the respondents are Muslims (59.7%) while Christianity recorded 40.3%. Also, the majority of the respondents (46.8%) are farmers/fishermen while the student is the least (6.5%). Many (59.7%) of the respondents have stayed in the study area for ≥ 20 years. The majority (63.6%) of the respondents participate in the fishing festival. Perceptions of the host community towards Argungu fishing festivals are presented (table 2), it was observed that fishing festivals keep culture alive and help maintain the ethnic identity of the residents recorded the highest mean of 4.42 while it leads to the building of hotels and restaurants is the least with a mean of 3.83. Table 3 presents the socio-economic impacts of the fishing festival, in which business opportunity, source of revenue/foreign exchange and expansion of local market recorded the highest mean of 4.18, 4.14 and 4.06 each, followed by better social life, jobs/employment opportunities and increment in standard of living with a mean of 4.04, 3.89 and 3.81 while enhancement of more investment is the least with a mean of 3.79. The challenges facing the sustainable development of the fishing festival are shown in Table 4, in which poor funding and insecurity recorded the highest challenges with a mean of 4.19 and 4.00 each, followed by political instability and gender inequality with a mean of 3.86 and 3.78 each while poor motivation and gender inequality recorded the least challenges with a mean of 3.57 and 3.42 respectively.

Discussion

Every region of Nigeria has at least one major festival that attracts tourists from all over the World. These festivals are mostly concerned with resource conservation and utilization, maintaining and promoting traditional life. Thus traditional festivals celebrate issues that border on occupation like fishing, hunting and farming just like the Argungu Fishing Festival. The study revealed that the majority of the

respondents were males. This is so because, in most Hausa/Fulani communities, the female gender is always at most times restricted at home and not permitted to interact with strangers due to religious beliefs. Married females are believed to be full-time housewives and as such only males are engaged in outdoor activities like fishing and farming. This corroborates with the findings of Arowosafe and Omopariola (2015), that males play a major role in hunting and fishing activities in rural areas. The finding also revealed that those in the age range of 21-40 years constituted the highest population. This suggests that the majority of the respondents belong to the active age population. This was by Crompton and McKay (2017) who reported that youth constituted a larger percentage of participants in most events. Moreover, it was revealed that the majority of the respondents were Muslim, followed by Christianity while no traditional religion worshippers were recorded.

Argungu fishing festival is perceived to keep the culture of the indigenous people alive and helps maintain the ethnic identity of the residents and in turn provides an opportunity for residents to interact with different people. The festival is a tool for conserving natural resources and maintaining and promoting traditional life. The effective conservation of natural resources is closely linked to the use of local knowledge and hence the life of the community (Asogwa *et al.*, 2012a). This finding is in line with Yusuf and Akinde (2015), that development of tourism facilities can help the inheritance of culture and better knowledge of culture, believed that the development of tourism facilities can protect and inheritance of culture and that visitation of tourists can help to impact the cultural exchange of hosts and tourists. However, the cultural significance of the Argungu fishing festival is rated highest and this suggests the festivals are perceived to be of high cultural significance because they bring people from various backgrounds together for a common cause. The historical significance of festivals has earlier been reported by Bonye (2006) that festivals reflect the rich diversity of history and culture of tribal life in the various traditional groupings in Africa. Humans can interact, understand and appreciate the different religion and culture that exists. Cudny (2014), earlier reported the unique character of festivals in celebrating culture and the fact that they provide opportunities to improve the image of the host community by bringing the community to the limelight. WIPO (2012), opined that festivals serve as rendezvous for meetings, and contacts among people interested in a certain form of culture and art, as well as researchers and experts working in the fields related to cultural festivals.

The socio-economic impacts of the fishing festival on the host community indicated that it brings about business opportunities, a source of revenue/foreign exchange and expansion of the local market. The findings of this work suggest that the Argungu Fishing Festival has socio-economic benefits for the host community. This work concurs with Arowosafe and Omopariola (2015), that the social and economic benefits of Mare festivals in Idanre, Ondo state Nigeria

constitute the highest percentage of the impacts as expressed by the respondents. The findings also support the findings of Arowosafe *et al.* (2019) that the economic benefits of festivals predominantly dominated research on the impacts of festivals on the community. This explains the reason for including more sales in business as part of the derivable economic benefits of the Argungu Fishing Festival. According to Fosu (1999), the economic contributions of festivals especially through visitors' spending, bring most of the citizens together to take part in cooperatives and savings schemes and this helps to initiate development projects. Economic benefits in terms of job creation and increasing rate of sales of local goods and services are in the short run which leads to expansion of the local market during the Festival period. This agrees with the report of Khalil *et al.* (2007) on the roles of tourism in generating short-run economic development for Pakistan's economy.

The challenges facing the sustainable development of the fishing festival are poor funding and insecurity as glaring indicators. This implies that inadequate funding has proved as one of the most serious problems confronting proper and effective management of the Argungu Fishing Festival. Mbaeyi (2000), ascertains that cultural resource management globally is capital-intensive, but in Nigeria, as in most other developing countries, it is considered within the realm of social services and non-profit ventures that depend almost solely on subventions or allocations from the government. Not only are these subventions or allocations grossly inadequate, they are also irregularly or untimely released. Worse still, evidence shows that money allocated and meant for some cultural activities in Nigeria, is at times ill-utilized, owing to corruption (Emeghara, 2006). This finding is consistent with Awarite, (2005) who reported that Nigeria is one of the countries where there is an apparent lack of proper public awareness and appreciation of the value of cultural resources. Perceptions of risks are not exclusively country-focused because, in situations where a particular tourist destination is not directly characterized by political instability and significant risks of insecurity, risk factors may constrain tourists from avoiding the tourist destination because of potential transnational insecurity incidences. According to Kapuściński and Richards (2016), the factor of perceived risks in potential travellers fundamentally builds on the fact that violence, crime and political strife instil fear in people desiring to visit affected areas.

Conclusion

This research work has assessed the socio-economic impacts of the Argungu Fishing Festival in Kebbi State and the perception of the host community towards the Fishing festival. The perceived impact of the festivals is to keep culture alive and help maintain the ethnic identity of the residents. It also provides an opportunity for the residents to interact with different cultures as a result of interaction with visitors. Also, the positive economic impacts of the festival cannot be over-

emphasized. This explains the reason for the willingness of the people to support this annual celebration. Some of the derivable economic benefits include; business opportunities, sources of foreign exchange and expansion of the local market. The major challenges that affect the sustainability of the festival are poor funding and insecurity. Argungu fishing festival is considered one of the most entertaining cultural tourism celebrations in Nigeria that attracts visitors from different parts of the Kebbi State and the World at large with a multiplier effect on the local economy thereby contributing to the Nation's Gross Domestic Product.

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Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	59	76.6
	Female	18	23.4
Age Group	21-30	26	33.8
	31-40	37	48.1
	41-50	12	15.6
	50 and above	2	2.6
Marital status	Married	61	79.2
	Unmarried	16	20.8
Level of education	No-formal education	15	19.5
	Primary	24	31.2
	Secondary	27	35.1
Religion	Post- Secondary	11	14.3
	Islam	46	59.7
	Christianity	31	40.3
Major Occupation	Traditional	-	-
	Student	5	6.5
	Civil Servants	11	14.3
	Farmer/fisherman	36	46.8
Length of Residence (Years)	the Artisan/businessman	25	32.5
	≤10	31	40.3
Participation in the Argungun Fishing Festival	≥20	46	59.7
	Yes	49	63.6
	No	28	36.4
	Total	77	100.0

Source (Field survey, 2022)

Table 2: Perception of the host community towards Argungu fishing festivals

Perception	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	Remark
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
It keeps culture alive and helps maintain the ethnic identity of the residents	39	50.6	32	41.6	5	6.5	1	1.3	-	-	4.42	1st
Fishing festivals Improved the community's image	34	44.2	26	33.8	13	16.9	2	2.6	2	2.6	4.14	5th
Fishing festivals have Preserved the cultural identity	35	45.5	27	35.1	8	10.4	3	3.9	4	5.2	4.12	7th
It has improved the quality of life of the host community members	34	44.2	25	32.5	5	6.5	3	3.9	10	13.0	3.91	8th
the fishing festival has provided an opportunity for residents to interact with different people	37	48.1	28	36.4	8	10.4	2	2.6	2	2.6	4.25	2nd
It has improved the community's image	34	44.2	30	39.0	10	13.0	3	3.9	-	-	4.23	3rd
It has attracted visitors to the area	37	48.1	26	33.8	6	7.8	6	7.8	2	2.6	4.17	4th
Increase in Infrastructure development	30	39.0	18	23.4	20	26.0	6	7.8	3	3.9	3.86	9th
This leads to the building of hotels and restaurants	26	33.8	28	36.4	10	13.0	10	13.0	3	3.9	3.83	10th
The standard of living of the host community has increased because of the fishing festival	36	46.8	21	27.3	15	19.5	4	5.2	1	1.3	4.13	6th

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 3: Socio-economic impacts of the fishing festival

Socio-economic Impacts	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Mean	Remark
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Jobs/employment opportunities	23	29.9	29	37.7	21	27.3	2	2.6	2	2.6	3.89	5th
Better social life	27	35.1	31	40.3	15	19.5	3	3.9	1	1.3	4.04	4th
Business opportunity	38	49.4	24	31.2	10	13.0	1	1.3	4	5.2	4.18	1st
Enhancement of more investment	18	23.4	33	42.9	20	26.0	4	5.2	2	2.6	3.79	7th
Source of revenue and foreign exchange	32	41.6	33	42.9	7	9.1	1	1.3	4	5.2	4.14	2nd
Improve in standard of living	31	40.3	15	19.5	22	28.6	4	5.2	5	6.5	3.81	6th
Expansion of local market	30	39.0	29	37.7	14	18.2	1	1.3	3	3.9	4.06	3rd

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 4: Challenges facing the Sustainable Development of the Fishing Festival

Challenges	Not a Challenges		Minor Challenges		Neutral		Moderate Challenges		Major Challenges		Mean	Remark
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Low awareness	7	9.1	2	2.6	14	18.2	32	41.6	22	28.6	3.78	4th
Inadequate motivation	7	9.1	7	9.1	18	23.4	25	32.5	20	26.0	3.57	7th
Gender inequality	14	18.2	4	5.2	14	18.2	26	33.8	19	24.7	3.42	8th
Low water level	4	5.2	11	14.3	18	23.4	18	23.4	26	33.8	3.66	5th
Poor funding	-	-	5	6.5	11	14.3	25	32.5	36	46.8	4.19	1st
Insecurity	1	1.3	7	9.1	12	15.6	28	36.4	29	37.7	4.00	2nd
Political instability	1	1.3	9	11.7	16	20.8	25	32.5	26	33.8	3.86	3rd
Poor infrastructure	3	3.9	9	11.7	22	28.6	25	32.5	18	23.4	3.60	6th

Source (Field survey, 2022)