

DOI: [10.22620/agrisci.2025.45.007](https://doi.org/10.22620/agrisci.2025.45.007)

Rural tourism sites, awareness and participation in Igalamela-Odolu local government area, Kogi state, Nigeria

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Abstract

Rural areas connect man to nature and contribute significantly to rural livelihood. The research assessed rural tourism sites and tourist participation in Igalamela-Odolu Local Government Area, Kogi State, Nigeria. Data were obtained through semi-structured questionnaire and were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel and Chi-squared test of freedom. Result revealed that males (91.7%) were the dominant tourist's gender category. Most male (55.27%) tourists were singles, while 64% of the females were married with none in either gender reported as divorced. Observations revealed that most common age group was between 30-40 years old. A high percentage (55.27%) of tourists were students, while a large majority (98%) were literate. It was observed also that the recurrent visitors accounted for highest percentage (92.33%) and that public buses were the primary means of transportation for tourists. Recreation and nature sighting (23.92%) were common intentions for rural tourism, while holiday visits ranked first among the reasons for participation. A larger percentage (59.53%) of information about common challenges in rural tourism was conveyed verbally. One of the main challenges was inadequate information regarding restaurant availability for tourist utilization. With the satisfaction derived, tourists reported having a memorable and enjoyable experience, leading them to decide to revisit the destination. The relationship between the level of education was statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$). The study results indicated that tourism has both positive and negative impacts on tourist destinations.

Keywords: destination community, environment, participation, rural tourism, tourists

INTRODUCTION

In development of rural tourism, stakeholders, especially people, play an important role. Thus, resident communities have their right to participate and enjoy the benefits of tourism activities and are responsible for protecting tourism resources as corroborated with the Vietnam Tourism Law (2017). Rural tourism can be termed eco-tourism, green tourism, agro-tourism. Besides accommodation its covers other services such as events, festivities, outdoor recreation, production and sale of handicrafts and agricultural products (Odigwe, 2019). Local community engagement holds considerable value in tourism, benefitting

locals, their lifestyle, and key environmental, cultural, and traditional factors – which serve as the main attraction in tourism. Thus, the needs and aspirations of locals must be maintained (Dolma Foundation, 2018). Most rural areas in Nigeria are rich in natural features that could be developed into rural tourist attractions. These natural endowments serve as tourism assets, highlighting the potential of these locations, as supported by Ryumkin & Malykhina (2018). However, social factors, including insecurity, have hindered the development of these natural sites in remote parts of the country, leaving them untapped (Olawuyi & Raphael, 2018).

Rural tourism, though a small sector of the global tourism market, has contributed

significantly to development—not only economically but also through social and environmental benefits (Odigwe, 2019). Tourist demand, behavior, and economic conditions influence and reposition the advancement of rural tourism participation. The social exchange concept was applied to identify factors affecting local community participation in tourism. The findings revealed that the perception of these factors, both positive and negative, influences people's participation, as observed by Nguyen Thi My Hanh (2016).

Rural tourism can help address existing socio-economic challenges, particularly by leveraging technology that has advanced rural tourism development, as supported by Kumar & Sekhar (2020). The development of community values can be enhanced through an understanding of sustainable rural tourism from the customer's perspective, which could increase as customer loyalty is recognized as a vital factor for sustainability (An & Alarcon, 2020). Urban areas have received much attention due to their socio-economic vibrancy, which is often lacking in rural regions. Thus,

rural tourism serves as an employer of labor beyond the oil and agricultural sectors, fostering innovative entrepreneurship development (Alarape & Ajayi, 2016).

Global agendas emphasize the need for sustainable development in managing rural areas to create high-quality tourism products (Widawski et al., 2023). Environmental challenges, resource management for eco-development, and the establishment of participatory management systems are key considerations (Agenda 21). Rural sustainable tourism also aligns with the objectives set by Agenda 2030.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The study was carried out in Igalamela-Odolu Local Area of Kogi State, Nigeria, located at longitude 7 0 49" N and latitude 6, 0 44" N (Ekundayo, 2018) in the southeastern part of Kogi State, along the right bank of the River Niger.

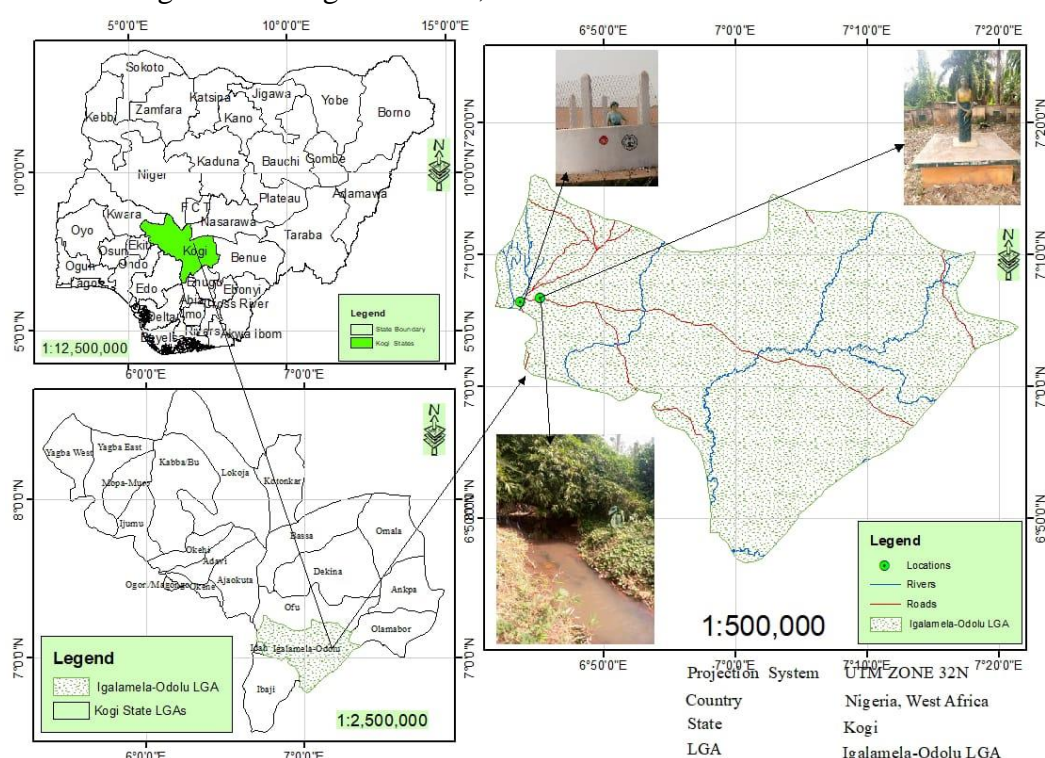


Figure 1. Map of Igalamela-Odolu local area of Kogi State, Nigeria and the rural tourist sites.

It is the traditional home of the Igala people and the seat of the Attah of Igala, their paramount monarch. The area has an estimated population of approximately 600,000 people, with a total land area of 3329 km². Farming is the primary occupation of the residents. The vegetation ranges from mixed leguminous (guinea) woodland or Guinea Savannah to forest Savannah, popularly known as “Derived Savannah”. Typical forest trees in the region include *Melica excelsa* (Iroko), *Triplochiton scleroxylon* (Obeche), *Ceiba pentandra* (Silk Cotton Tree), *Mansonia altissima* (mansonia), *Terminalla superba* (Afara) and *Entandrophragma cylindricum* (Sapele wood), *Hymenocardia acida* (wedding heart), *Danellia oliveri* (African balsam), *Parkia biglobosa* (Locust Beans), *Dialum guineense* (velvet Tamarine). The average maximum and minimum temperature are 33.2°C and 22.8°C, respectively while annual rainfall ranges from 1016 mm to 1524 mm.

Data Collections and Sampling Techniques

Three rural tourist sites were purposively chosen based on availability: the Monument of Oma-Aidoko, the Statue of Inikpi, and the Inachalo River. One hundred (100) tourists were selected upon contact at each site during their visit, resulting in a total of 300 tourists for the study. Data were collected using a semi-structured questionnaire designed to cover the demographic characteristics of the tourists, their level of participation, and their perceptions of the challenges associated with rural tourism in the study area.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using R (version 4.2.1), Minitab version 21.3.1 and OriginLab Pro 2021. Analysis of variance was performed on data to determine the extent of participation in rural tourism, and the purpose of rural travel. Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel test was used to determine the relationship between social-economic attributes and tourism participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of the Rural Tourists

The result revealed that majority of tourists (91.7%) were male, while the remaining 8.3% were female. Most tourists (41.67%) were 30-40 years old (female had 60% and male 40%). Students (55.27%) formed the majority of tourist occupations among males, while females (64%) were predominantly civil servants. The least represented occupation was farming. A large percentage (98%) of the tourists had tertiary education. The majority of male tourists (55.27%) were single, while 64% of female tourists were married, with none reported as divorced, as presented in Table 1.

Level of Participation and Purpose of Visit in rural tourism by the tourists

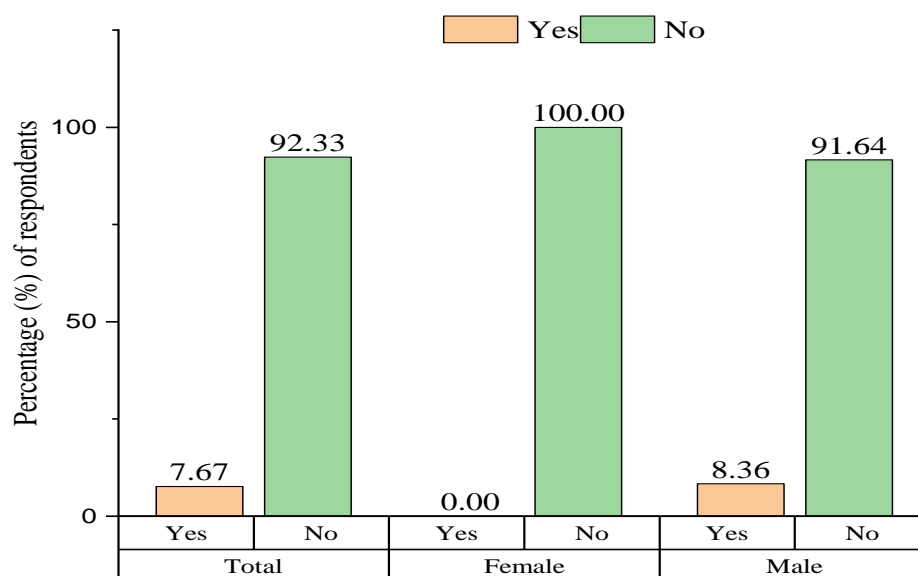
A large percentage of tourists (92.33%) were recurrent visitors, while 7.67% were first-time visitors (Fig. 2 and 3). Regarding gender response, all female tourists (100%) were recurrent visitors. Among male tourists, 56.75% had visited the site twice, while 68% of female tourists had visited more than three times. None of the tourists, regardless of gender, had visited the site five (5) times or more.

The majority of visitors (91.33%) use public buses for tour transportation, followed by those who drive their own automobiles (6.67%) and those who rent cars (2.00%) (Fig. 4).

Table 1. Socio-economic characteristics of the rural tourist in the study area

| Parameters | Total | Female | Male (%) |
|---------------------------|-------|--------|----------|
| Gender | | 8.3 | 91.7 |
| Age Groups | | | |
| >20 | 8.33 | 0.00 | 9.09 |
| 20-30 | 17.33 | 12.00 | 17.82 |
| 30-40 | 41.67 | 60.00 | 40.00 |
| 40-50 | 20.33 | 24.00 | 20.00 |
| <50 | 12.33 | 4.00 | 13.09 |
| Occupation | | | |
| Business | 2 | 12 | 1.09 |
| Civil Servant | 44 | 64 | 42.18 |
| Farmer | 1.33 | 0 | 1.45 |
| Student | 52.67 | 24 | 55.27 |
| Level of Education | | | |
| No formal education | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Secondary | 2 | 8 | 1.45 |
| Tertiary | 98 | 92 | 98.55 |
| Marital Status | | | |
| Single | 53.67 | 36 | 55.27 |
| Married | 46.33 | 64 | 44.73 |
| Divorced | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Field Survey (2023)


Figure 2. Tourists' response regarding whether it was their first time undertaking a rural holiday
Source: Field Survey (2023)

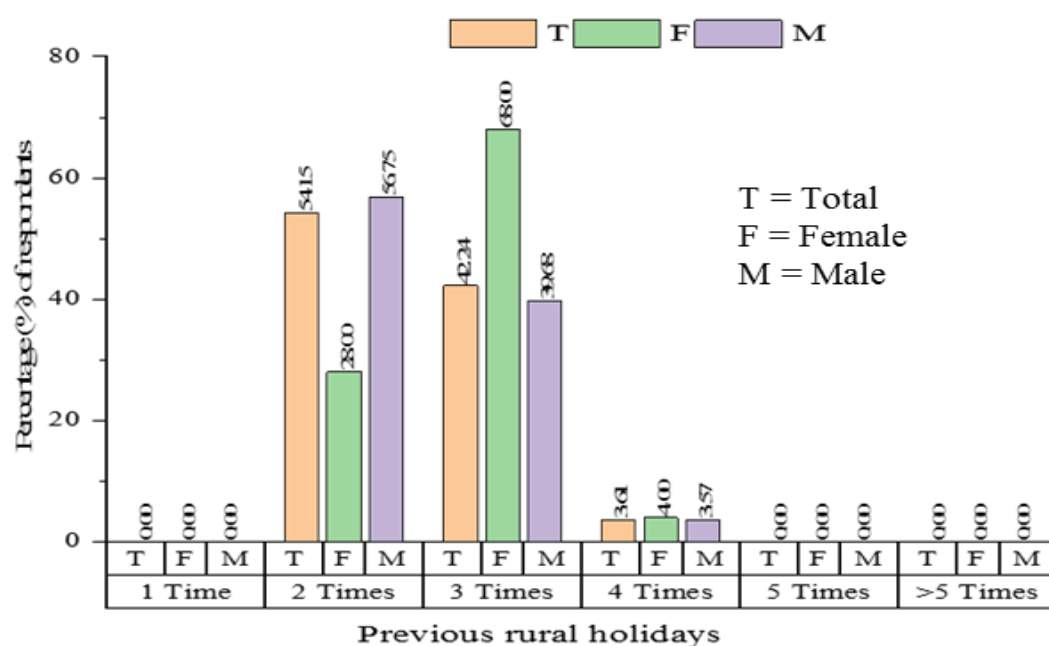


Figure 3. Number of times tourists have previously undertaken rural holidays
Source: Field Survey (2023)

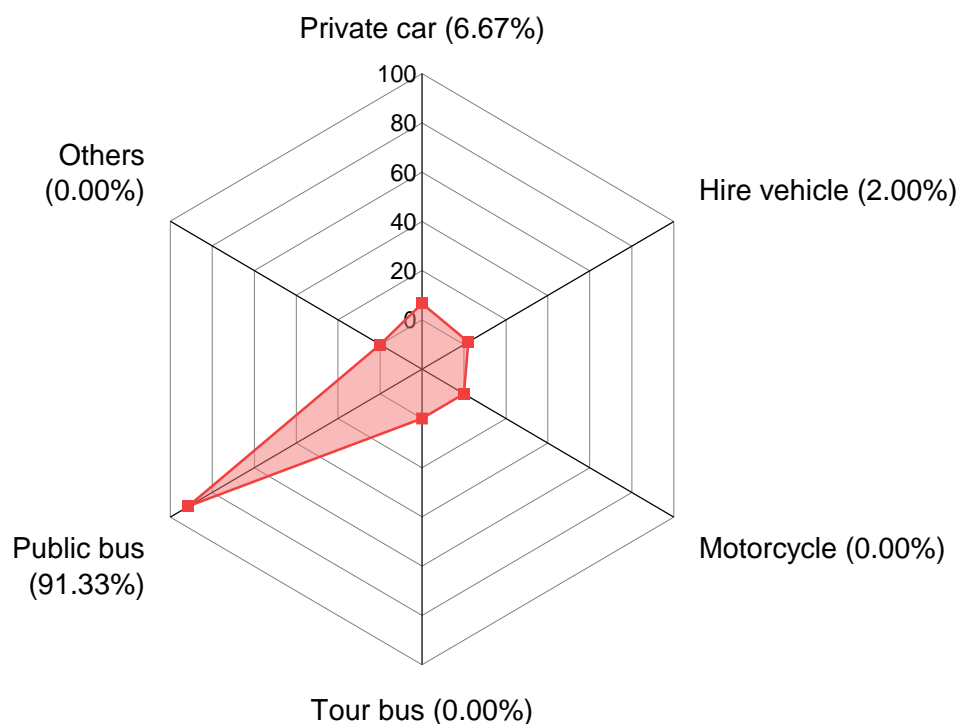


Figure 4. Common modes of transportation used by rural tourists
Source: Field Survey (2023)

Significant variations in mean percentages ($p < 0.05$) from ANOVA, using gender as replicates are indicated by bars with distinct letters.

The extent of involvement in rural tourism, with families accounting for the highest percentage (63.45%), spouses or

partners comprising a moderate percentage (32.0%), and friends collectively representing the lowest portion (4.54%). Significant variations in mean percentages ($p < 0.05$) from ANOVA using gender as replicates are indicated by bars with distinct letters (Fig. 6).

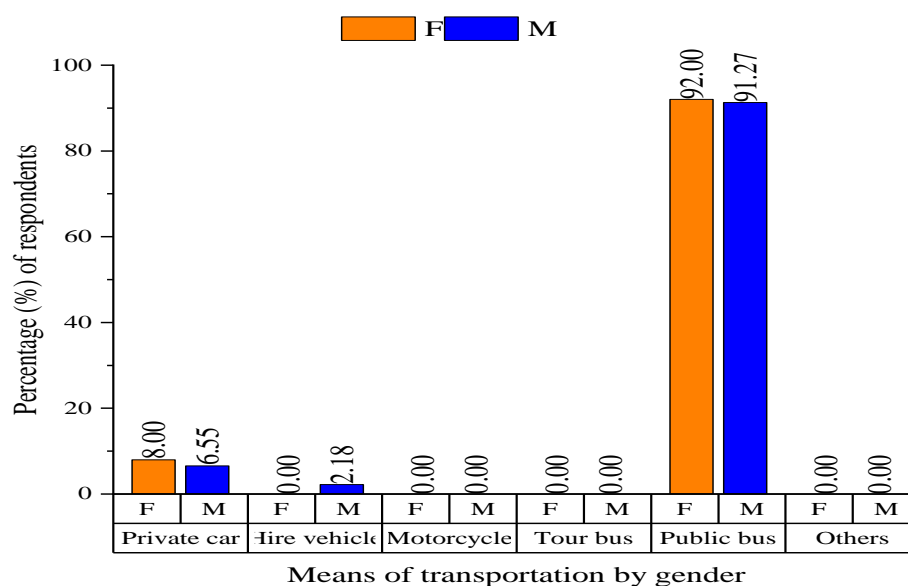


Figure 5. Gender dis-aggregated modes of transportation used by rural tourists
Source: Field Survey (2023)

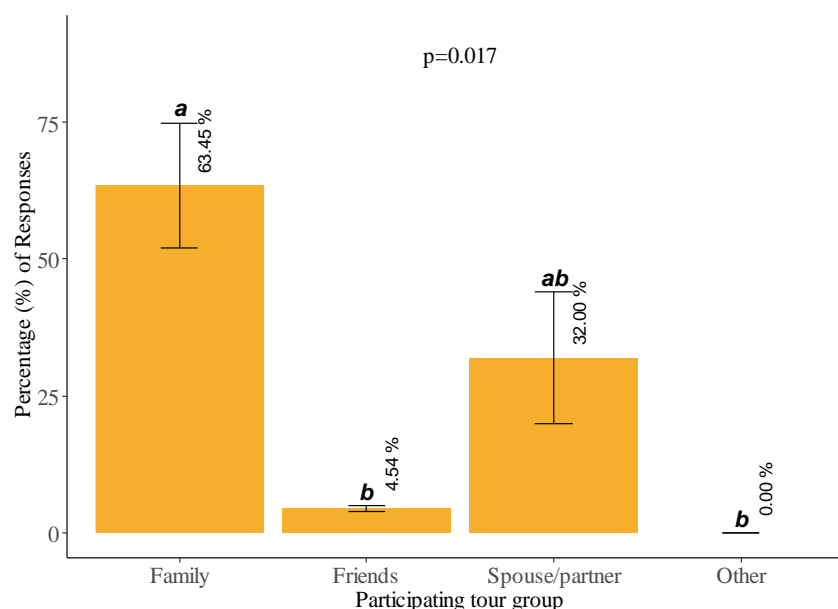


Figure 6. Type of tourists groups in rural tourism
Source: Field Survey (2023)

Rural tourism experiences with a rural residence accounted for the lowest percentage (23.6%), while the largest proportion (23.92%) reported leisure and nature viewing as the most popular reasons for visiting rural areas. The most common reason for travel was visiting friends and partners (2.07%), followed by business travel (10.29%), and holidays (16.19%). Respondents did not provide further justifications for starting a rural tourism business (Fig. 7).

The statistical test ($p = 0.05$) of significance on each purpose of rural tourism was identified. The hierarchy of the percentages

of respondents on recreation, nature sighting and rural house experience showed no significant differences, while holidays and business were categorized as common reasons. Additionally, visiting friends was grouped with holidays and business but was less common than the first three reasons. Visiting friends and partners, along with other purposes, were identified as the least common motivations for rural tourism. Bars with different letters indicate significant differences in mean percentages ($p < 0.05$) from ANOVA using gender as replicates (Fig. 8).

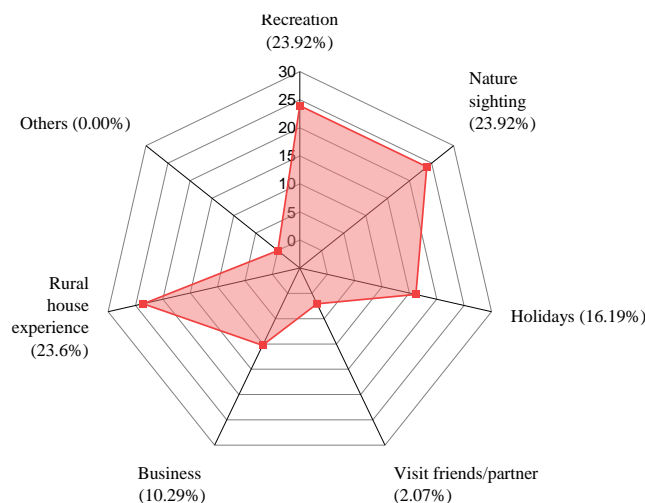


Figure 7. The tour's purpose provided by the respondents (total percentages)

Source: Field Survey (2023)

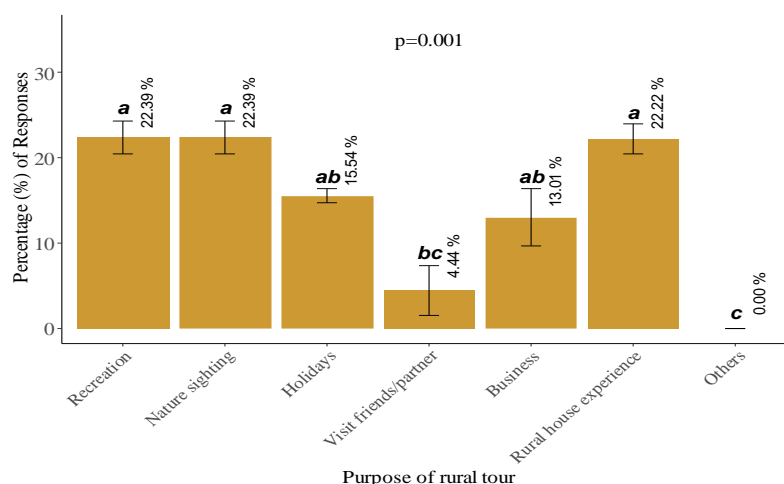


Figure 8. Mean percentage responses for the purpose of the tour as presented by respondents

Source: Field Survey (2023)

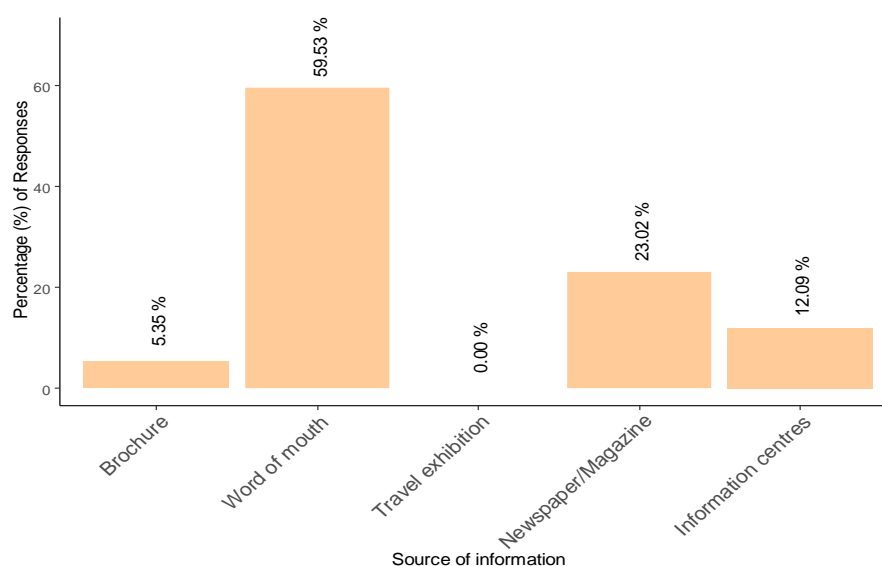


Figure 9. Sources of information on rural tourist sites
Source: Field Survey (2023)

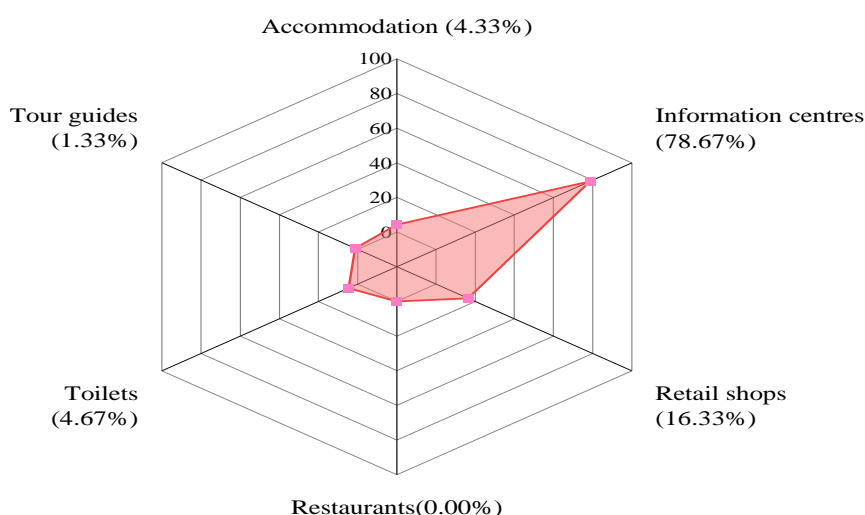


Figure 10. Perception of inadequacy of facilities (percentage disagreements) by tourists
Source: Field Survey (2023)

Sources of information and tourist challenges

Information sources regarding the rural destination in the study area is given in Fig. 9. A large percentage of tourists (59.53%) obtained information verbally from family members, relatives, friends, teachers, and similar sources. Some tourists accessed information through newspapers and magazines (23.02%), while none reported travel exhibitions as a source.

Observations revealed that inadequate information was the most significant challenge affecting rural tourism facilities, followed by retail shops (16.33%) and accommodation, which had the lowest percentage (4.33%) (Fig. 10). Additionally, tour guides were found to be insufficient (1.33%) during the study (Fig. 11). Despite these challenges, tourists appeared satisfied during site viewing.

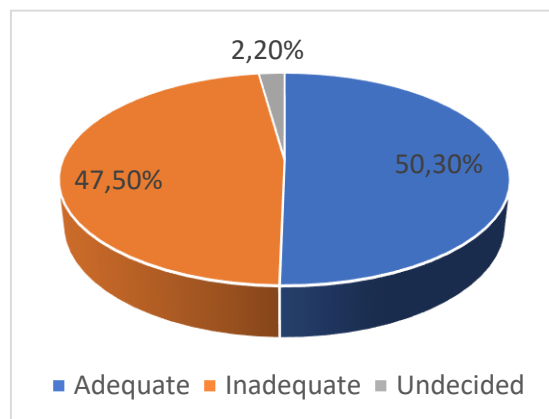


Figure 11. General perception on the adequacy of rural tourism facilities
Source: Field Survey (2023)

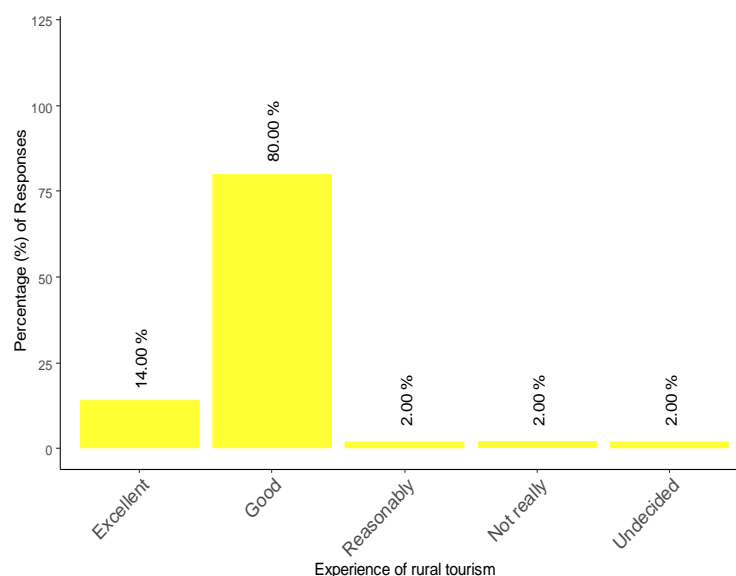


Figure 12. Perception on the experience of rural tourists
Source: Field Survey (2023)

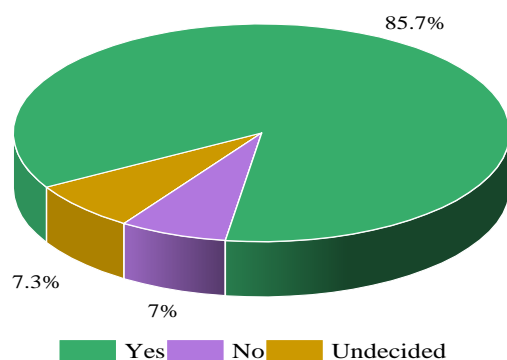


Figure 13. Decision to embark on rural tourism again
Source: Field Survey (2023)

The satisfaction trend showed that the majority (50.3%) were generally satisfied with the available facilities at the tourism site, while 47.5% were dissatisfied due to perceived inadequacies in rural tourism facilities. The lowest percentage (2.2%) remained undecided about the status of the facilities (Fig. 12). Perceived opinions of the tourists revealed that highest percentage (80.0%) of them had good time of their stay during visitation while least percentage (14.0%) of them shows its excellent (Figure 12). Also, the study revealed that tourists' tendency and intention on return

visitation was observed. It was revealed that majority of the tourists (85.7%) percentage had in tension to return/embark in revisiting the sits, followed by moderate percentage (7.3) were undecided on desire to return while the least percentage (7.0 %) of them did not shows any intention (Fig. 13). As shown in Figure 10, it was observed that tourists find information inadequacy as the most common challenge in terms of facilities for rural tourism, followed by the presence of retail shops (16.33%), toilet facilities (4.67%), and accommodation (4.33%) (Fig. 10). The inadequacy of tour guides which recorded the least (1.33%) of common challenges while none of tourists did not find restaurants to be inadequate in their responses (Fig. 11). The study revealed that the majority (50.3%) percentage of tourists were generally satisfied with the adequacy facilities of the rural tourism, moderate (47.5%) percentage of them shows that the rural tourism facilities were inadequate and the least (2.2%) percentage of them were undecided on the facilities (Fig. 12). The majority of tourists (80%) considered their visit enjoyable, while a smaller percentage (14%) rated their stay as excellent (Fig. 12). Regarding the tendency to embark on rural

tourism, most tourists (85.7%) expressed a desire to return to the site, while 7.3% were undecided. The smallest percentage (7%) had no interest in revisiting the destination (Fig. 13).

Perceptions Relationship between social economic attributes and tourism participation

The relationship between socio-economic attributes and purpose of participation revealed by Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel (M2) test is presented in (Table 2A-F). The relationship between gender and occupation as relates to purpose of rural tourism participation reveals $M2 = 82.734$, $df = 3$, $p\text{-value} < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$ (not statistically significant) between gender and

occupation (Table 2A). However, the Mantel-Haenszel $\chi^2 = 13.509$, $df = 1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0002374$ between gender and education was statistically significant (Table 2B). The Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel test ($M2 = 1214.3$, $df = 3$, $p\text{-value} < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$) showed not statistically significant between age and occupation, while in the education it indicates a significant value ($M2 = 9.8146$, $df = 4$, $p\text{-value} = 0.04367$) (Table 2C-D). Marital status and gender revealed $M2 = 1214.3$, $df = 3$, $p\text{-value} < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$ (not statistically significant) and $\chi^2 = 3.6564$, $df = 1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.05586$ (is statistically significant).

Table 2. Socio-economic attributes of the participants in the rural tourism in the study area

A. Gender vs Occupation (H_0 = Purpose of participation in rural tourism, is independent of gender and occupation)

| Gender | Occupation | Purpose of participating in rural tourism | | | | | |
|--------|------------|---|-----------------|---------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| | | Recreation | Nature Sighting | Holiday | Visit Friend/Partner | Business | Rural Housing Experience |
| Female | Business | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | Civil | 16 | 16 | 9 | 1 | 16 | 16 |
| | Servant | | | | | | |
| | Farmer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Student | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 6 |
| Male | Business | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | Civil | 116 | 116 | 71 | 4 | 61 | 116 |
| | Servant | | | | | | |
| | Farmer | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| | Student | 152 | 152 | 109 | 11 | 41 | 148 |

Legend: Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel $M^2 = 82.734$, $df = 3$, $p\text{-value} < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$

B. Gender vs Education (H_0 = Purpose of participation in rural tourism, is independent of gender and Education)

| Gender | Education | Purpose of participating in rural tourism | | | | | |
|--------|---------------|---|-----------------|---------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| | | Recreation | Nature Sighting | Holiday | Visit Friend/Partner | Business | Rural Housing Experience |
| Female | Literate | 23 | 23 | 16 | 7 | 19 | 23 |
| | Semi-literate | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Male | Literate | 271 | 271 | 183 | 15 | 105 | 267 |
| | Semi-literate | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |

Legend: Mantel-Haenszel $\chi^2 = 13.509$, $df = 1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.0002374$

C. Age vs Occupation (H0 = Purpose of participation in rural tourism, is independent of age and occupation)

| Age | Occupation | Purpose of participating in rural tourism | | | | | Rural Housing Experience |
|-------|---------------|---|-----------------|---------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| | | Recreation | Nature Sighting | Holiday | Visit Friend/Partner | Business | |
| <20 | Business | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Civil Servant | 20 | 20 | 8 | 0 | 10 | 20 |
| | Farmer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Student | 5 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| 20-30 | Business | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | Civil Servant | 40 | 40 | 33 | 1 | 20 | 40 |
| | Farmer | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Student | 10 | 10 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 10 |
| 30-40 | Business | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Civil Servant | 56 | 56 | 27 | 4 | 32 | 56 |
| | Farmer | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | Student | 66 | 66 | 48 | 6 | 23 | 66 |
| 40-50 | Business | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| | Civil Servant | 5 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 5 |
| | Farmer | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | Student | 53 | 53 | 40 | 4 | 6 | 49 |
| >50 | Business | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | Civil Servant | 11 | 11 | 8 | 0 | 11 | 11 |
| | Farmer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Student | 24 | 24 | 17 | 3 | 3 | 24 |

Legend: Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel $M^2 = 278.64$, $df = 12$, $p\text{-value} < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$

Source: Field Survey (2023)

D. Age vs Education (H0 = Purpose of participation in rural tourism, is independent of age and education)

| Age | Education | Purpose of participating in rural tourism | | | | | Rural Housing Experience |
|-------|---------------|---|-----------------|---------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| | | Recreation | Nature Sighting | Holiday | Visit Friend/Partner | Business | |
| <20 | Literate | 25 | 25 | 11 | 0 | 15 | 25 |
| | Semi-literate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20-30 | Literate | 51 | 51 | 41 | 4 | 27 | 51 |
| | Semi-literate | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 30-40 | Literate | 122 | 122 | 75 | 10 | 55 | 122 |
| | Semi-literate | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| 40-50 | Literate | 59 | 59 | 45 | 5 | 11 | 55 |
| | Semi-literate | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| >50 | Literate | 37 | 37 | 27 | 3 | 16 | 37 |
| | Semi-literate | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Legend: Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel $M^2 = 9.8146$, $df = 4$, $p\text{-value} = 0.04367$

E. Marital status vs Occupation (H0 = Purpose of participation in rural tourism, is independent of marital status and occupation)

| Marital Status | Occupation | Purpose of participating in rural tourism | | | | | Rural Housing Experience |
|----------------|------------|---|-----------------|---------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| | | Recreation | Nature Sighting | Holiday | Visit Friend/Partner | Business | |
| Married | Business | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | Civil | | | | | | |
| | Servant | 132 | 132 | 80 | 5 | 77 | 132 |
| | Farmer | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Single | Student | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Business | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| | Civil | | | | | | |
| | Servant | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Farmer | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Student | 158 | 158 | 115 | 16 | 43 | 154 |

Legend: Cochran-Mantel-Haenszel $M^2 = 1214.3$, $df = 3$, $p\text{-value} < 2.2 \times 10^{-16}$

F. Marital status vs Education (H0 = Purpose of participation in rural tourism, is independent of marital status and education)

| Marital Status | Education | Purpose of participating in rural tourism | | | | | Rural Housing Experience |
|----------------|---------------|---|-----------------|---------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| | | Recreation | Nature Sighting | Holiday | Visit Friend/Partner | Business | |
| Married | Literate | 135 | 135 | 83 | 5 | 80 | 135 |
| | Semi-literate | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Single | Literate | 159 | 159 | 116 | 17 | 44 | 155 |
| | Semi-literate | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |

Legend: Mantel-Haenszel $\chi^2 = 3.6564$, $df = 1$, $p\text{-value} = 0.055$

The rural tourism resources in Kogi State, Nigeria, are numerous, attractive, and diverse. Among them are the Monuments of Oma-Aidoko, the Statue of Inikpi, and the Inachalo River, as well as colonial relics such as Lord Lugard House. Other notable attractions include the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers, Ogidi – an African town featuring igneous rock formations and a traditional art and craft industry – Osome Falls, and various natural landscapes with hills and terrains that serve as hiking trails (Ebiloma, 2019).

The gender distribution of the respondents reflects the socio-cultural tendency for male domination in the socioeconomic and political life of the community (Iqbal et al., 2022). The

composition of the tourists by occupation indicated that civil servant and students were those that engaged in rural tourism mostly and interested in wildlife recreation and nature studies. The high incidence among the civil servants may be due to the availability of time during festival holidays and annual leaves. This agrees with the findings of Adams & Salome (2014) and Yager et al. (2015). A large portion of the tourists could read and write and have high level of education.

Rural tourism participation was largely group-based, with family involvement surpassing all other types of participation. However, spouses and friends were also encouraged to participate.

Tourists primarily obtained information about destinations through word-of-mouth from family, friends, and relatives. It was observed that broader media coverage of rural destinations could facilitate easier tourist access and participation (Keelson et al., 2024). Most tourists engaged in rural tourism traveled by public bus, their primary mode of transportation. Notably, accessibility to tourist destinations is crucial, as inadequate transportation may lead tourists to seek alternative destinations. According to Dinu (2018), effective tourism depends on an efficient transport system. Additionally, the availability of local markets and decent tourist accommodations received positive perceptions for participation (Chikezie et al., 2023). Safer destinations and well-maintained facilities enhance tourist revisit rates and recommendations. Integrating local art and craft into tourist destinations could further enrich the experience. The decision to revisit rural tourist sites was influenced by satisfaction with nature sighting, recreation, and authentic rural experiences. This aligns with Helen and Emma-Egoro (2020), who state that a tourist's likelihood of returning depends on how well a destination meets their expectations. Rural tourism has demonstrated several benefits, including stimulating community development and providing sociocultural, recreational, and educational value. Its most significant contribution is economic growth, strengthening rural and regional economies, alleviating poverty, and improving living standards for local communities (Liu, 2023).

However, Nigeria's rural tourism industry faces numerous challenges. This study identified inadequate information about facilities and environmental conditions as the primary obstacles, corroborating the findings of Gössling & Lane (2014). The statistical analysis revealed that the relationship between socio-economic attributes and purpose of participation was significant for gender/age with education,

while gender/age with occupation was not statistically significant.

CONCLUSIONS

The research has demonstrated significant awareness and participation in rural tourism in Kogi State, Nigeria, with reference to the Monument of Oma-Aidoko, the Statue of Inikpi, and the Inachalo River Centre. Findings indicate satisfactory and significantly positive outcomes for sustainable rural tourism and destination loyalty. The accessibility of the attraction from the city, the availability of decent accommodations, scenic nature sightings, and recreational activities have positioned the tourist center as an emerging rural tourism destination capable of generating substantial economic benefits for all stakeholders. The location of the conservation center enhances its status as a multidimensional tourist attraction. There is no doubt that these tourist destinations would attract a significant number of visitors if information about them were publicized more widely through media and other channels, rather than relying solely on word-of-mouth communication. To encourage continuous tourist visitation, ensuring tourist security should be a major priority for the government and other stakeholders at the destination. The state government should capitalize on the opportunities provided by these attractions to expand other forms of tourism that would benefit local communities and generate microcapital. A balance between local economic activities and sustainable tourism development should be established to maximize long-term benefits

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to appreciate the Department of Wildlife and Ecotourism Management, Osun State University, Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria and Department of Wildlife and Range Management, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka

University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria for their infrastructural contribution towards this research.

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