

Hospitality Facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort and Tourism Development in Cross River State, Nigeria

Chinyere Ukpokolo and Olusola Samson Folorunso

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 of 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 study examined the hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort, Cross River State, Nigeria with a view to establishing the extent to which they contribute to tourist's comfortability and subsequently tourism development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used. Findings were analysed using simple percentages and descriptive analysis respectively. The study established that hospitality facilities such as the canopy walk way, the cable car, breath-taking landscape, well-equipped mountain villas, coupled with the serene environment and unique climatic condition of the resort all provide a complete touristic experience for the tourists. Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that it is these facilities that contributed most to their decision of choosing 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 study concludes that the hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort significantly contribute to tourism development in Cross River State and Nigeria.

Key Words: Hospitality Facilities, Resort, Sustainable tourism development, Cross River, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, which is richly blessed and endowed with both physical and cultural tourism potentials, has been relatively insignificant on the world tourism map (Olugbamila, 2005). The country offers a wide variety of tourist attraction such as extended and roomy rivers and ocean beaches ideal for swimming and other water sports, unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature, ranging from tropical forest, magnificent waterfalls, some new rapidly growing cities and climatic conditions in some parts, particularly conducive to holidaying. However, many of these amazing and fascinating resources are yet to be exploited to their maximum potentials. This is due to the fact that Nigeria national economy is essentially petroleum-driven, with the result that tourism does not play a significant role in the economy. Much prominence has been given to oil production as the major source of revenue, particularly, foreign exchange at the expense of other industries, including tourism. Tourism, with potential for preserving traditional ways of life in local customs, rich and varied handicrafts and other colourful product depicting or illustrative of arts and lifestyle, and the authentic unsophisticated but friendly attitude of many in the Nigeria population, is been treated as a minor sector in Nigeria.

Research further proves that tourism industry in Nigeria is still in its infancy, although emphasis is now being placed on its development by the government and different private organizations, in realization of both its recreational values and contributions to the growth of the country. Yet, there are still rooms for further and great development that has not been tapped into (Olugbamila and Omole, 2012). Resort facilities are part of tourism potentials that are not properly structured to contribute to the overall development of Nigeria.

Hospitality is derived from the Latin word *hospes*, meaning "host", "guest", or "stranger". *Hospes* is formed from *hostis*, which means "stranger" or "enemy" (the latter being where terms like "hostile" derive). By metonymy the Latin word 'Hospital' means a guest-chamber, guest's lodging, an inn. *Hospes* is thus the root for the English words 'host' (where the 'p' was dropped for convenience of pronunciation), hospitality, hospice, hostel and hotel. In the West today, hospitality is rarely a matter of protection and survival and is more associated with etiquette and entertainment. However, it still 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).

Resort facilities are usually both tourism and hospitality oriented. Developing travel destinations, on the other hand, is less competitive and therefore has been 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 (Getz, 2007). Although these destination attributes have been widely acknowledged as travel incentives and play a central role in destination selection and it is still unclear whether demographic differences exist and how these attributes are related to destination preference (Wong, 2011).

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 Nigeria. Many attractions in Nigeria remain untapped and even at their raw stage; they are being enjoyed by few outsiders who tend to appreciate what we have than we the owners; either very rich visitors in quest of exoticism or adventurous people in search of new challenges and experiences.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

Tourism is a dynamic, evolving, consumer-driven force. Tourism is the world's largest industry. This viewpoint may be correct if all the interrelated components are placed under one umbrella; the components of tourism are:

Table 1: Overview of Tourism and Hospitality Industry

Travel	Lodging	Foodservice	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)

Tourism offers the greatest global employment prospects. This trend is caused by the following factors:

1. The opening of borders
2. An increase in disposable income and vacations
3. Cheaper and more exclusive flights
4. An increase in the number of people with more time and money
5. More people with the urge to travel

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the industry's Business Leaders' forum – tourism and travel generates, directly and indirectly, more than 12 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP), investment, and employment creating 814million jobs worldwide in 2014 (WTTC, 2015: 2-3). There are some debate regarding the exact size and growth of tourism, however, tourism has grown at an accelerated pace over the last few decades. In 2011, there were over 983 million international tourist arrivals worldwide, representing a growth of 4.6% when compared to 940 million in 2010. International tourism receipts (the travel item of the balance of payments) grew to US\$1.03 trillion (€740) in 2011, corresponding to an increase in real terms of 3.8% from 2010.

Tourism industry can provide government with revenues through accommodation and restaurant taxes, airport user's fees, sales taxes, park entrance fees, employees' income taxes, and many other fiscal measures. It can also stimulate investment as well as improve local infrastructure and people's living condition; it is not surprising that more and more government (both local and international) join in the queue of competing for the tourism market. This is evident in the case of India with their recent surge in providing world class adequate health care with state-of-the-art facilities which has drawn the attention of many towards the country; this has greatly improved their exploit into medical tourism. The competition of attracting tourist is getting keener, it raises a serious question which this study intends to provide substantial answers to especially in the area of what can effectively attract tourist to visit a certain destination.

Hospitality is more or less embedded in tourism. Distinctively, the hospitality industry we know today with a number of high profile companies is vastly different from even a decade ago. The increase in travel has brought about an equivalent increase in lodging demand;

naturally, then as now, people on the move required food, beverage and accommodation (Walker 2009). Transportation changed the nature of the hotel industry. First it was rail travel that prompted hotels to develop as the popular resorts and frontiers opened. Hotel is the most common term in hospitality world. 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.

Resort hotels came of age with the advent of rail travel. Increasingly, city dwellers and others had the urge to vacation in locations they found appealing. Traveling to these often more-exotic locations became a part of the pleasure experience. In the late 1800s, luxury resort hotels were developed to accommodate the clientele that the railways brought. The leisure and pleasure travellers of those days were drawn by resorts, beaches, or spectacular mountain scenery. At first, many of these grand resorts were seasonal. However, as automobile and air travel made even remote resorts more accessible and increasing number of people could afford to visit, many resorts became year-round properties. Resorts communities sprang up in the sunshine belt from Palm Springs to Palm Beach. Some resorts focused on major sporting activities such as skiing, golf, or fishing; others offered family vacations. Further improvements in both air and automobile travel brought exotic locations within the reach of the population. In order to survive, the resort hotels became more astute in marketing to different types of guests. For example, some resorts allow no children in the high season because they would interfere with the quiet ambience for guests who do not want the noise of children. Other resorts go out of their way to encourage families (Walker, 2009). Many resorts now attract conventions, conferences, and meetings. This enabled them to maintain or increase occupancy, particularly during the low and shoulder seasons.

Tourists and guests go to resorts for leisure and recreation. They want a good climate – summer or winter, rain or dry, autumn or spring, harmattan or fall; in which they can relax or engage in recreational activities. That is why a resort is designed to provide guests with facilities suitable for experiencing tourism and hospitality. Some of the factors that promote hospitality and tourism patronage are:

- Price and Pricing
- Culture of the People

- Entertainment and Relaxation
- Landscape of
- the Destination
- Weather and Climate
- Accessibility to the Destination
- Safety and Security
- Attitude of Host People
- Service and Utility

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM FACILITY MANAGEMENT

There are a number of definitions of facilities management. One that is commonly used 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. In any discussion of facilities management it is, however, necessary to stress the importance of integrative, 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).

Facility management (or facilities management or FM) FM represents a wider range of activities than just business services and these are referred to as non-core functions. They vary from one business sector to another. In a 2009 Global Job Task Analysis the International Facility Management Association (IFMA) identified the core competencies of facility management as:

- communication
- emergency preparedness and business continuity
- environmental stewardship and sustainability
- finance and business
- human factors
- leadership and strategy
- operations and maintenance
- project management
- quality
- real estate and property management
- technology.

Role of the Facilities Manager in the Context of a Resort

Mudrak *et al.*, (2004), affirms that resort facilities managers (FMs) operate across business functions. The number one priority of an FM is keeping people alive and safe. Facility managers have to operate at two levels:

- 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.
- 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.

This is accomplished by managing:

Health and safety: The FM department in a resort is required to control and manage many safety related issues. Failure to do so may lead to injury, loss of business, prosecution and insurance claims. The confidence of guests/tourists and investors in the business may also be affected by adverse publicity from safety lapses.

Fire safety: The threat from fire carries one of the highest risk to loss of life, and the potential to damage or shut down a business. The facilities management department will have in place maintenance, inspection and testing for all of the fire safety equipment and systems, keeping records and certificates of compliance.

Security: Protection of employees and the resort often comes under the control of the facilities management department, in particular the maintenance of security hardware. Manned guarding may be under the control of a separate department.

Maintenance, testing and inspections: Maintenance, testing and inspection schedules are required to ensure that the facility is operating safely and efficiently, to maximize the life of equipment and reduce the risk of failure. Statutory obligations must also be met. The work is planned, often using a computer-aided facility management system.

Cleaning: Cleaning operations are often undertaken at off peak periods and early hours, but provision may be made during times of occupations for the cleaning of toilets, replenishing consumables (such as toilet rolls, soap) plus litter picking and reactive response. Cleaning is scheduled as a series of periodic (daily, weekly, monthly) tasks. The training and certification of cleaning operatives is increasingly a factor in the award of contracts to cleaning services providers.

Operational: The facilities management department has responsibilities for the day-to-day running of the resort; these tasks may be outsourced or carried out by directly employed staff. This is a policy issue, but due to the immediacy of the response required in many of the activities involved the facilities manager will often require daily reports or an escalation procedure.

Some issues require more than just periodic maintenance, for example those that can stop or hamper tourists' activities at the resort or that have safety implications. Many of these are managed by the facilities management "help desk" that staff via for the front office department of the resort and are able to be contacted either by telephone or email. The response to help desk calls are prioritized but may be as simple as too hot or too cold, lights not working, photocopier jammed, coffee spills, or vending machine problems among other like shortcomings in the resort.

Business continuity planning: Resorts should have a continuity plan so that in the event of a fire or major failure the operation can recover quickly. In large organizations it may be that the staff moves to another site that has been set up to model the existing operation. The facilities management department would be one of the key players should it be necessary to move the operation to a recovery site.

Space allocation and changes: In many resorts, layouts and designs are subject to frequent changes. This process is referred to as churn, and the percentage of the staff moved during a year is known as the churn rate. These moves are normally planned by the facilities management department using computer-aided design.

Consideration may also be given to vending, catering or a place where staff can make a drink and take a break from work to ensure higher productivity.

Facility Management Strategy for Resorts

The development of a facilities management strategy is a project in its own right and must be undertaken rigorously using appropriate techniques and tools. The resort should follow three stages – analysis, solution and implementation – to produce an effective strategy for the management of its facilities:

- ◆ *Analysis* – all relevant facts are assembled, including the resort’s objectives, needs and policies, a review of resources, processes, systems and the physical assets, together with their attributes in terms of space, function and utilization.
- ◆ *Solution* – criteria for judging options are defined and evaluated against the objectives of the resort to produce the facilities management strategy.
- ◆ *Implementation* – this completes the strategic planning and development process through the establishment of an implementation plan that incorporates the key elements of procurement, mobilization, training, communication, review and feedback.

On completion, the facilities management strategy should become an integral part of the resort’s strategic and operating plans. The facilities management strategy document should incorporate:

- ✓ Financial objectives
- ✓ Goals and critical success factors (in terms of quality, cost and time objectives)
- ✓ Targets for potential efficiency gains and quality improvements
- ✓ Customer (tourists/guests/visitors) requirement
- ✓ Technical issues
- ✓ In-house/outsourcing strategy
- ✓ Procurement strategy
- ✓ Human resources plan
- ✓ Business processes
- ✓ Methodology for managing change
- ✓ Information and communication technology (ICT) strategy.

SUSTAINABLE FRAMEWORK FOR HOSPITALITY FACILITIES

Sustainable tourism development means the optimal use of social, natural, cultural and financial resources for national development on an equitable and self-sustaining basis to provide a unique visitor experience and an improved quality of life through partnerships among government, the private sector and communities (Lameed, 2010)

There are usually six developmental goals that accompanies sustainable practices, they are:

1. Ensure adequate and appropriate national capacity to manage the sustainability of the tourism sector
2. Continuously improve the sustainability of the marketing mix in light of emerging global marketing trends
3. Develop efficient and cost effective transportation options to facilitate a sustainable level of destination accessibility
4. Ensure the sustainable use of the natural environment and the cultural heritage for the benefit of all
5. Develop and strengthen the links between tourism and other economic sectors nationally and regionally to maximize the multiplier effect on the economy and reduce leakages
6. Manage the health, safety and security issues that impact the sustainability of tourism

A modern resort is expected to operate on a 'Four Es' philosophy which is interpreted as "to look after our Environment, we need to be Efficient, economically sustainable and able to Educate effectively. Sustainable resort management is about finding alternative solutions to resort management issues which are directly related to facility management.

To therefore ensure resort sustainability, it is highly essential for the resort management to start with a review of how they are operating to find what they are not doing well and what needs to change. They must be prepared to replace inefficient appliances or retrofit existing equipment to improve efficiency and output and reduce emission. They need to consider cost and its benefit. Sustainability messages should be incorporated into guest inductions and guided tours and discreet reminders are to be placed around the resort. Most visitors love being part of innovative energy conservation. Obudu Mountain Resorts operate in a closed environment so

every move made by the management as regard sustainability is visible to guests, tourists and visitors. Customers will be impressed with innovative thinking and clever management. Most visitors will enjoy being part of protecting the environment that has attracted them. Obudu Mountain Resorts can sustain –or even improve–their unique experience and perhaps gain a marketing edge to attract environmentally conscious guests and tourists.

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The main objective of the study is to examine the extent to which hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort contribute to tourism development in Cross River State. As the study was based on demand side to expose the tourists' subjective opinion of the importance of the facilities in shaping their interest to choose the destination, descriptive and quantitative researches were deemed as the best way to execute the study. The research employs both qualitative and quantitative methods of enquiry. The data were collected from various concerned sectors and this tends to provide solution to the research questions. The qualitative analysis addressed the core operational activities of the resort as related to the impact of the facilities on guest patronage and tourism development. It also addresses sustainability measures among other core elements of the research scope. The quantitative approach on the other hand focuses on the responses obtained from tourists at the resort.

Random and purposive samplings were adopted for this research work. A group containing five persons was selected for focus group discussion; purposive sampling was used in selecting the key informants who provided key information about the resort. And questionnaires were randomly shared to tourists at the resort.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Service and Facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort

Obudu Mountain Resort offers the leisure seeker and the conference goer a complete contrast. Not only in its temperate climate but also its exciting and different location nestling at the top of the mountain. The Obudu Mountain Resort is situated on a plateau at 1576 metres above sea level on the Oshie Ridge of the Sankwala Mountains. The temperate climate offers a total contrast and welcomes respite from Africa's tropical heat. Idyllic tranquility, beautiful scenery

and jaw dropping view make it ideal for the lone adventurer, families on reunion, young couple or holiday group.

Obudu Mountain Resort provides accommodation in the form of African round huts and chalets on stilts maximizing the breathtaking views. Obudu Mountain Resort also offers self-contained 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. The food and beverage offering is found in the Terrace Restaurant and Bar with a cosy and relaxing atmosphere made complete by the blazing log fire. National and international cuisine is guaranteed to suit all tastes and the healthy appetites from a days' nature walk or round of golf. The Obudu Mountain Resort offers 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 center. Dining is available at one of the hotel's 4 restaurants. A poolside bar is on site where guests can unwind with a drink. 4 restaurants, 2 outdoor pools, and a water park are available at this resort. Additionally, a fitness center, a poolside bar, and a 24-hour business center are onsite. Business-related amenities at this 3-star property consist of a 24-hour business center and meeting rooms. 2 meeting rooms are available. This family-friendly resort also offers a children's pool, a seasonal outdoor pool, and an arcade/game room.

Restaurant Facilities

- The Anape Restaurant - Onsite restaurant. Guests can enjoy drinks at the bar.
- Steak House Restaurant - Onsite restaurant. Guests can enjoy drinks at the bar.
- The Water Park Restaurant - Onsite restaurant.
- The Terrace Restaurant - Onsite 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 center.

Tourist Attractions

The tours to view the magnificent scenery and spectacular birdlife are a must for the visitor to this part of the world and these tours can be taken on foot or on bicycle. For those who forgot to pack binoculars, the Canopy Walkway which is situated in the trees allows visitors thrilling close- ups of the birds in their natural habitat high above the ground. A major talking point for guests is Africa's longest cable car system. At 4 kilometres, Obudu Mountain Resort 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 mountainside 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. This is ideal weather for trekking over the high ground and enjoys the extensive views that stretch out across the plateau. This may be tropical Nigeria, but this resort portrays the climatic attributes of a mountain top.

The 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 Bebi Airport which lies between Obudu and the Resort. On arrival to the resort, guests are welcomed in the heavily decorated reception (with a massive Cow head hanging on the wall) where information is dispensed.

Recreational activities to engage in at the Resort:

- ◆ **Sight-seeing** – for tourists that love watching birds and nature, then a binocular will really help enjoy viewings.
- ◆ **Hiking** – for mountain climbers, firm boots that are strong enough to pull through the journey are usually recommended.
- ◆ **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.
- ◆ **Sports** – a golf course is available for golf lovers.
- ◆ **Working out** – the fitness Centre is equipped with modern facilities that help tourists stay in shape.

Weather and Climate

Weather is the atmospheric condition of a place over a period of time. In this study, we try to find out the atmospheric condition of Obudu Mountain Resort during the field survey which was in the summer of 2016. Positioned barely north of the equator, most of Nigeria experiences 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 precipitation. 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 26⁰C – 32⁰C between November and January while the lowest temperature range of 4⁰C – 10⁰C is recorded between June and September. Our respondents strongly agreed and agreed at 90.2% and 9.8% respectively that the weather condition of the resort is cold.

Obudu rainy season 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 8⁰C to - 2⁰C, and this was witnessed by the researchers, but July and September are quite wet. The clouds and rain keep temperature from becoming uncomfortably hot; daily highs during this period average in the low 80s. Overnight lows run in the upper 60s. More so, Obudu resort was believed not to be warm because 66.7% of our respondents disagreed on the fact that the weather at time of visit is warm, 23.5% strongly disagreed and only 9.8% agreed. The extremity of the cold weather was strongly agreed by our respondents at 64.7%, 29.4% agreed, 2% and 3.9 disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Some of the informants however stress that coupled with the facilities, the weather was also a determinants to their choice of the resort. Mr. Gabriel says 'the climate and the environment of this place attracted me here' – Mr. Gabriel, when asked about what attracted him to the resort. Mr. Frank Nomvethé on the other hand was full of praise to God for the beautiful weather at the resort. He says: "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: Saturday 20th – Sunday 21st August, 2016)

Landscape

The landscaping of the resort is impressive with aesthetic buildings and structures because none of our respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed but they strongly agreed and agreed at 37.3% and 62.7% respectively that the landscape is impressive. Some of the sight-seeing features include mountains, hills and lakes, river, ponds and streams because our informants never disagreed with the fact that these features can be found at Obudu Mountain Resort. Ms Efe was full of praise for “Holy Mountain” and she described it as ‘incredible’. Other tourists were also visibly impressed with the area view of the resort, especially from the road downhill to the mountain top. The landscape of Obudu Resort Mountain Resort is amazing, the view from top to bottom is extremely beautiful and hardly would any of the characteristics associated with the sight of the hills, valleys, spurs, curves and slopes go unnoticed. The entire environment of the resort is adorable. As affirmed by one of the interviewees. “Yes, yes, if you seriously want to appreciate Nature, you need to be here”. (Mr. Elias Agada Personal communication: Saturday 20th – Sunday 21st August, 2016)

In his contribution, Mr. Frank Nomvethe says “Well, one of the major challenges while coming here, you know, the way the place is situated, up the mountain, you know, driving up is always scary” (Personal communication, Sunday 21st August, 2016) This shows the adventurous part of the resort activities.

When asked why he preferred Obudu Mountain Resort to other resorts in Africa, he says:

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: Sunday 21st August, 2016)

It can be deduced from the series of interviews conducted for this study that the tourists whose opinions were sampled had no issues with the tariff and service charges on facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort as indicated in Table 2 and Table 3. However, one of the tourists, Mr. Frank Nomvethe says he wants to seriously see improvement in almost the various setting of the resort, he advocated that the entire resort should be lightened up at night to further add to the beauty of the resort and its facilities. He further stresses that the tariff is complementing.

Table 2: Obudu Mountain Resort Rack Rate

S/N	ROOM TYPES	AMOUNT	DEPOSIT
1	Standard Double Chalet	₦25,000	₦30,000
		₦42,500 (Family Unit)	₦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	₦3,000 - ₦3,500 per person
		LUNCH	₦3,000 - ₦3,500 per person
		DINNER	₦3,000 - ₦3,500 per person
		(Bar Menu and Light Meals from ₦600 – Children catered for)	

Source: Authors' Field Work (2016)

HOSPITALITY FACILITIES AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Generally speaking tourists were pleased with the facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort because most of our respondents agreed with that these facilities have contributed immensely to the increase in patronage of Obudu Mountain Resort. The visitors/tourists agreed that the facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort are fascinating enough for touristic interest. More so, most of our respondents strongly agreed that the facilities were the major attraction at Obudu Mountain Resort as shown in Figure 1. The facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort are truly world class. However; there are diverse opinions as to the perspective of the tourists about the state of these facilities. Due to the pleasing hospitable facilities of Obudu Mountain resort some of the visitors strongly agreed at 41.2% to visit the site again, while 43.1% agreed, 9.8% disagreed, 5.9% strongly disagreed. More so, it could be said that 84.3% of the tourists/visitors are willing to come back to Obudu Mountain resort if given the opportunity to visit again.

One of the tourists, Ms Fateye was of the opinion that it takes appealing facilities like the ones Obudu Mountain Resort boast of, to attract a lot of people to that place despite its distance and accessibility. Ms. Efe in her own view asserted that there are a lot of things (facilities), but they are not being put into proper use. She felt the facilities would have contributed more to patronage if other things are working. She went further to affirm that the resort can generate

substantial amount of income for the government through high level of tourists patronage, but all the facilities must be in good shape for this to be achieved. In his own opinion, Mr. Elias Agada describes the facilities at Obudu as good. He says the facilities are alright. They are world class facilities with great capacity for attraction. Ms. Fateye on the other hand says the facilities are okay.

Table 3: Obudu Mountain Resort Facilities and Attractions Rate

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 Half	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 Children (10 or more pass)	600
17	Water Park	Adults	1,100
		Groups 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: Authors' Field Work (2016)

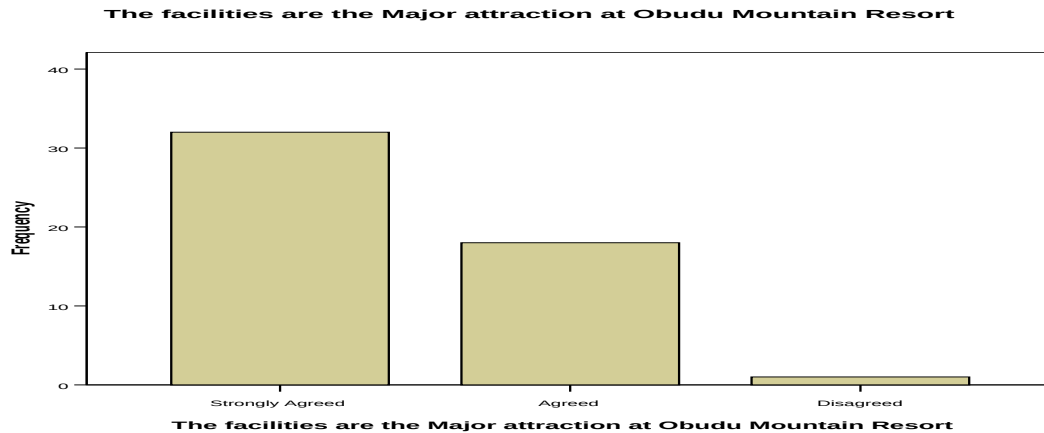


Figure 1: Facilities are the major attractions at Obudu Mountain Resort
Source: Authors' Field Work (2016)

As regards the state of the facilities, Mr. Frank Nomvethe who is 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, who was at the helm of affair of the state between 1999 to 2007. He felt the new management hasn't done enough to keep the resort busy as it was. He emphasizes on the inability of the resort to make other facilities such as the Golf Car and the Conference Hall attractive. He however lauds the effort of the present administration in outsourcing the maintenance of the very popular cable car, calling it a good strategy. His opinion was supported by another tourist, Mr. Gabriel, who describes the cable car as the number one in Africa. Mr. Gabriel believes the income generated for the resort by the cable car makes tourism a viable economic activity in Cross River State. Most of the informants submit that they would most likely visit the resort again. This assertion was buttressed by the opinion of the respondent in which a significant 41.2% and 43.1% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the fact that they will one day make a repeat visit to the resort.

Facilities Management Strategy at Obudu Mountain Resort

It is imperative to unravel the strategies for maintenance of the facilities that create guest appeal at Obudu Mountain Resort in order to ensure their sustainability. According to Mr. Sebastian Alina (Field survey, 2016) the water park and the cable car are being managed by

FONET. FONET is the engineering company employed by the state government to maintain the mechanical facilities at the resort; the in-house engineers take instructions from FONET. FONET conduct weekly and monthly maintenance activities on the facilities in order to ensure consistent functionality of the equipment. It would be recalled that cable car is one of the most appealing facilities at the resort. Our respondents agreed at 51% in Table 4 that there are effective planning and management of facilities at Obudu Mountain resort and this has encourage sustainability of the resort.

Table 4: 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: Authors' Field Work (2016)

Opinions were almost equally divided about the state of maintenance of the facilities, although almost all the facilities are in fairly good shape. The maintenance manager of the resort, Mr. Sebastian Alina was interviewed to decipher the reason behind the inactivity of the facilities, he stresses that the issue with the facilities is due to the discrepancies between the government and the operating company. He revealed that the maintenance of the amusement facilities at the resort has been outsourced to a facility management company called FONET. He further states that the management company and the government have differences about the allocation for maintenance of the facilities monthly. This is the reason why the company suspended the operation of the amusement facilities (Cable Car, Golf Cars and others) for a while until compromise was reached.

CONCLUSION

Obudu Mountain Resort is one of the most unique tourism destinations in Nigeria and the appreciable climatic condition obtainable at the site has made Cross River State one of the

tourism havens in West Africa. Advent of many hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort has attracted many tourists to resort and has enormously increased its patronage. Tourism, as a world-wide phenomenon, touches the highest and deepest aspirations of all people and it is also an important element of socio-economic and political development in many countries. Governments, other public authorities, public and private decision-makers whose activities are related to tourism, and tourists themselves, consider it a priority to promote veritable tourism potential such as Obudu Mountain Resort. Because of this all these agents have registered a growing concern in sustainability as a guiding principle to allow the integration of tourism development with hospitality facilities within the policies and strategies developed for the overall national tourism development. Finally, it should be affirmed that, having considered the various finding emanated for the surveys of this research work, hospitality facilities such as Obudu Mountain Resort play a significant role in tourism development at the local and international levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research work, and to further ensure that the hospitality facilities at Obudu Mountain Resort continue to contribute to tourism development in the state and the country at large, the authors have the following recommendations:

- The Airport at Bebi should be put into maximum productivity in order to aid ease of accessibility to the resort from major cities around the world and steady transportation network from Calabar should be provided to support the local transport scheme and foster tourists' transit and destinations linkage.
- The state government should liaise with private investors and other stakeholders to put unused facilities at the resort into a productive use which can further add to the swag of the resort for increase patronage and tourism development.
- Professional expertise should be employed to handle strategic business development activities of the resort in the areas of sales promotion, marketing and branding.
- A better understanding should be developed between the state government and the private sectors to which the maintenance of some of the facilities have been outsourced to avoid fluctuation in the use of the facilities which will help to ensure that tourist are given maximum experience during their stay at the resort.
- The golf cars, resort shuttles and tourist coaches should be reinstated to increase the

level of tourists' exploration and exploitation of the resort within the shortest possible time.

- As part of the numerous side attractions that will be put in place, this study wish to recommend provision of nightlife, karaoke, radio service, and weekend/holiday incentives to ensure better sensitization and increase patronage.
- The annual Obudu International Mountain Race should be reinstated as soon as possible as it has been one of the key events that have projected the resort on the global tourist map.
- Events such as pageant/beauty awards, gala awards, company's AGM, concerts, live shows, exhibitions, trade fares, and other ceremonial activities should be better encouraged as the facilities are there to aid their success.
- Government should invest more in the resort, provide better working conditions for staff, more enabling environment for them to practice what t they know how to do best because happy staff makes happy customer.

REFERENCES

- Getz, D., (2007). *Event Studies: Theory, Research and Policy for Planned Events*. Oxford UK, Elsevier.
- Lameed, G. A., (2010). The Prospect of Sustainable Ecotourism in Developing Countries: A Case Study of Sierra Leone: *Presented at the Forum Organised by Sustainable & Thriving Environments for West African Regional Development (STEWARD)*
- Meyer, B., (2006). Towards a Classification of Cultural Tourists. *The International Journal of Tourism Research*, 4(1), 29-38.
- Mudrak, T., Wagenber, A., and Wubben, A. (2004). The Role of Awareness and Familiarity with a Destination: The Central Florida Case. *Journal of Travel Research*, 33(3), 21-27.
- Olugbamila, O. B., (2005). Tourism Prospects in Ondo State. *Planners Echo, published by the Ondo State Chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners, Akure, Ondo State*, 38.
- Olugbamila, O. B., and Omole, F. K., (2012). Marketing the Tourism Potentials of Owo Community for the Development of Ondo State, Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(11), 83 – 93.

Walker R. A., (2009). Green Goals in [*Institute of Hospitality*](#), Issue 40 of Winter 2015/16 page 28

Wong, I., (2011). Using Destination Attributes to Promote Event Travel: The Case of Macau. *Journal of Convention & Event Tourism*, 12(4), 241-252

World Travel Tourism Council (2015). Tourism Trends WTTC (Brochrue). London: *WTTC Publications*. 56 (4) 212 - 223