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Tourism development preferences among the residents of Lake Bosomtwe Basin, Ghana

Francis E. Amuquandoh · Laud A. Dei

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Abstract Controversy over the extent to develop tourism in tourist destinations remains unresolved. This paper examines the extent of tourism development residents are prepared to tolerate in the Lake Bosomtwe. A resident survey undertaken during January 2006 in the basin reveals that residents are more oriented to large scale tourism. The major perceived reason for this preference is that large scale tourism development will help provide for the material needs and wants of the basin's population. It is concluded that residents of Bosomtwe basin equate large inflows of visitors with success and fame, but field observations indicate that the residents will wreck the basin's environment if tourism development is left in their sole control.

Keywords Environment · Residents · Scale preference · Tourism development

Introduction

Human activities including tourism are known to be organized on different scales ranging from small to large. Scale of operation is often important to the

success of organizations, economic enterprises and tourism-related businesses. Gardner and Stern (1996) argue that the element of scale continues to be a fundamental issue in all economic systems. Thus, the question as to, at what scale would production be profitable or sustainable still remains unanswered.

There is no universally accepted definition of scale. Most economists including Begg et al. (2003), define scale as the output of a firm whilst tourism practitioners consider it as the volume of tourist inflows or dimension of tourism development in an area. As Britton (1987) notes, there are alternative definitions of scale ranging from physical size, retail turnover, and minimum capital requirements to tariff of product sold.

This paper looks at a host population's perspective on the issue of scale. The motivation originates from the fact that residents are the people who usually bear the brunt of the negative effects of tourism development. In the words of Smith (1985), it is the host area including its people and their cultures rather than the invading humans that will die unless effective management polices are developed and implemented.

With specific reference to the Lake Bosomtwe Basin, excessive tourism development in the basin stands the chance of reducing the aesthetic beauty of the basin, thereby destroying the main attraction that draws visitors to the area. While the geographical, ecological, and cultural attributes of the basin attract visitors, the fragility and limitations of these same elements make the Lake's environment and its

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communities vulnerable to the pressures of tourism. The ecosystem of the area is so fragile that if the spread of tourism development is not carefully planned and implemented, it may end up degrading and depleting the very resource base.

Evidences from mountain ecosystems, particularly the European Alps, suggest that intense tourism development along the steep portions of the basin's walls (slopes ranging from 30° to 40°) could render the basin susceptible to environmental damage. In other words, large scale removal of forest for access roads and hotel buildings could make the slopes less able to absorb and retain water, thereby stimulating soil erosion, flooding and perhaps landslides. Such conditions are already common in the European Alps where hundreds of square kilometres of forest have been removed and replaced by ski pistes, cable cars, pylon and access roads (Tyler 1989).

Besides, the enclosed nature of the Bosomtwe basin (Fig. 1) requires that every aspect of tourism development is carefully planned and implemented. Since the water in the basin does not circulate and mix with other running water bodies, any pollutant entering it may not only disperse or dilute, but will build up to a point of irreversibility (Burton 1995).

Problem of scale

Tourism is among the industries that are very much concerned with the scale of development, given its global nature and propensity to open virgin and vulnerable environments to the public. The subject of scale has been discussed in the form of mass and

alternative tourism. Mass tourism which is synonymous with large scale tourism development was highly promoted and recommended by the Advocacy platform in the 1960s. The advocacy platform is a school of thought that regards tourism as an instrument of good, with enormous potential to generate economic benefits at the destination level. The main assumption underlying this thinking is that attracting visitors to tourism destinations could serve as a conduit of meeting residents' economic needs. Thus, the advocacy platform provides the supportive foundation and justification for tourism development. Mass tourism is characterized by large scale movement and hosting of visitors at a destination as well as building of heavy infrastructure such as star rated hotels and restaurants.

Perceptions about mass tourism began to change in the 1970s when researchers (Young 1973; Doxey 1975; Turner and Ash 1975; de Kadt 1979) observed the significant negative impacts of tourism in the Caribbean Islands. Forms of mass tourism investigated by these researchers were considered unsuitable in view of the negative impacts on the environment, the way in which it corrupts the local cultures and its accompanied high leakages to multinational companies involved. As Miller and Twining-Ward (2005) suggest with these evidences the neo classical economic theories, on which mass tourism development models were founded were challenged and tourism was criticized as widening the gap between the rich and poor, increasing crime rates and disrupting traditional life styles.

Gradually, tourism was seen more as a double-edged industry with the potential of yielding both positive and negative fruits. This led to emergence of the adaptancy platform, a school that encourages the search for alternatives or sustainable forms to replace mass tourism (Jafari 1989). Subscribers to the adaptancy platform recognize that tourism is not all good, nor is it all bad (Mathieson and Wall 1982). The school appeared in the late 1970s and early 1980s and its supporters include community developers, consultants, religious groups, academicians and conservationists (Gartner 1996). Alternative tourism is used as a generic term to cover tourism forms such as soft tourism, ecotourism, green tourism, low-impact tourism, nature tourism, gentle tourism, progressive tourism, responsible tourism, appropriate tourism and sustainable tourism (Mader 1988; Himmetoglu 1992;

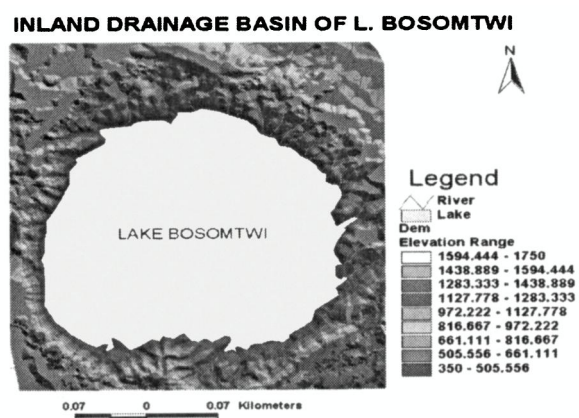


Fig. 1 Lake Bosomtwe Basin

Mowforth and Munt 2006). Proponents of alternative tourism argue that tourism should be conducted on a smaller scale in terms of the numbers and dimensions of tourism development.

Closely related to the debate on the appropriate scale of tourism development in communities is the concept of sustainability. Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Though the roots of sustainability are found in the western itch for ecology and environmental issues (Rist 1997), it has been interpreted in economic, cultural and social terms. In the words of Mowforth and Munt (2006) sustainability has become a contested concept that is socially, economically and politically constructed to reflect the interest and values of those involved. Consequently, the meaning of sustainability may vary from individuals, groups and organizations.

Factors affecting residents' support for tourism development

A number of studies have been conducted in the past two decades as part of the effort to identify the key factors that influence residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism development. Among the specific variables that have been examined include expectations of economic benefits (Akis et al. 1996; Gursoy and Rutherford 2004; Haley et al. 2005), proximity to the tourist zone or contact with tourists (Belisle and Hoy 1980; Keogh 1990; Mansfeld 1992; Faulkner and Tideswell 1997), socio-demographic characteristics (Husband 1989; Teye et al. 2002).

Studies indicate that economic benefits are one of the most important elements sought by locals (Keogh 1990; The New Zealand Ministry of Tourism 1992; Akis et al. 1996; Gursoy and Rutherford 2004; Haley et al. 2005). In a study commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism (1992), it was noted that most respondents surveyed in all the communities recognized the tourism industry as an important economic activity and held strong positive views about tourism creating jobs. Keogh (1990) had earlier linked this observation to the fact that the majority of residents of most destinations see tourism as an economic tool.

A number of studies including those conducted on community reaction to tourism in Central Florida (Milman and Pizam 1987), at Nadi in Fiji (King et al. 1993) and Urgup in Turkey, (Tosun 2002) have found that generally, socio-demographic variables do not influence respondents level of support for tourism. Other studies have however demonstrated that evaluation of costs and benefits varies with socio-demographic characteristics (Husband 1989; Teye et al. 2002). For example, Teye et al. (2002) found socio-demographic variables as having significant influence on residents' attitudes towards tourism.

The distance between where residents live and tourism concentration areas has also been found to affect their perceptions of the impacts of tourism and support for the industry. Researchers including Faulkner and Tideswell (1997), Jurowski and Gursoy (2004), Keogh (1990) and Haley et al. (2005) have observed that residents who live close to attractions have less positive perceptions of impacts and less favourable attitudes toward tourism.

On the other hand, some researchers including Belisle and Hoy (1980) and Mansfeld (1992) have observed that residents who live close to attractions have more positive perceptions of tourism impacts and a more favourable attitude toward tourism.

Apart from these, psychologists including Skinner (1938) and Hardin (1968) link humans' preference for vastness to their genetic make-up. Hardin describes humans as innately egoistic (selfish, envious, and greedy), and inclined to act only in ways that advance their interest. Prior to this, Skinner' posits that humans are genetically programmed to destroy the environment. He argues that humans are short-term egoists by nature and that people's behaviour is determined much by its immediate personal consequence, rather than its long-term consequences or its consequences to others. Skinner claims modern humans have inherited this way of life because short-term egoism was a requisite to survival under the condition of life in which our species evolved.

Apart from the efforts of identifying factors that influence residents' support for tourism, a number of theories and models have been put forward to help explain why residents respond to tourism as they do, and under what conditions residents react to tourism development. After assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the various models including Doxey's irridex index (1975), Butler's destination life cycle model

(1980), the dependency theory and the social exchange theory, the present researcher considered the irridex model as the most appropriate framework for developing an understanding of residents' scale of tourism development preference in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin.

Based on observations from West Indies and Canada, Doxey (1975) argued that residents' reaction to tourism would change in a predictable manner passing through four stages: euphoria (delight in contact), apathy (increasing indifferent with large number), annoyance (concern and annoyance over price rise, crime, rudeness, cultural rules being broken) and a final phase of antagonism (covert and overt aggression to visitors). The model assumes that communities are homogenous in nature and a large number of visitors cause tension which ultimately leads to antagonism.

The study area

Lake Bosomtwe Basin is a popular tourist destination in Ghana, West Africa. The meteorite depression is situated in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, about 32 km south-east of Kumasi, the regional capital. It is roughly circular in outline and nearly 8 km (5 miles) in diameter (Fig. 2).

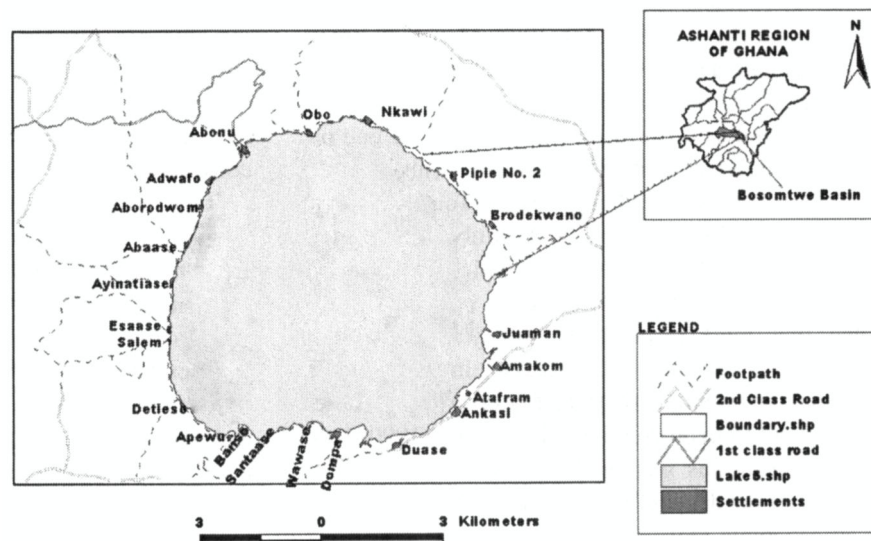
The Lake is surrounded by very steep slopes. The inner walls of the Lake are steeply sloped, ranging from 30° to 40°; near the lake, flatter and gentle slopes ranging from 5° to 15° are common. With

regard to areas outside the rim and the ranges, slopes are between 20° and 25° whilst valleys are wide. The altitude of the enclosing hills range from 150 to 500 m above the water level of the lake. The highest parts of the rim are found in northeast-southwest trending range of the lake. In the vicinity of the Bosomtwe Ridge Forest Reserve, for example, there are heights of over 700 m in most places.

The basin has both natural and cultural resources for tourism promotion. The potential includes water sports, adventure, village stay, rich culture, ecotourism, farm tourism and educational tours. However, these tremendous opportunities are yet to be translated into reality. The earliest records of tourism in the basin date back to 1918 when the first rest house was built near Abonu by Captain Blantyre, the then British Commissioner for the Ashanti Protectorate. Like the other rest houses in the then Gold Coast, it was meant for the exclusive use of British officials during their duty tour of that area.

The basin is occupied by 22 small villages with most of them having population of less than a thousand people. Administratively, the basin falls under the jurisdiction of two districts in the Ashanti Region namely Bosomtwe-Atwima-Kwanwoma to the north (12 settlements) and Amansie-East to the southern half (10 settlements). Traditionally, each community has a Chief through whom the people are mobilized for development. Generally, the Chief is the custodian of the community lands and also custodian of the customary practices of the people.

Fig. 2 Map Showing the Lake Bosomtwe Basin, Ashanti Region, Ghana



Although, the two system of governance (the traditional represented by the Chief and the modern by elected and appointed public office) exist side by side, they all work towards a common goal which is the development of the communities. The basin is one of the most deprived parts of Ashanti Region and unemployment is a major problem. The majority of jobs are found in the agriculture and fishing sectors which are experiencing decreases in output due to population increase.

Methodology

Data for the study were obtained through a questionnaire survey of 628 household heads or their representatives (any household member over 18 years) that resided around Lake Bosomtwe during January, 2006. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used for the selection of the subjects. The first stage involved the use of simple random techniques to select eleven out of the 20 communities. However, Abonu, the most developed community in terms of tourism-related infrastructure, was purposively selected to serve as the experimental unit. The second stage consisted of the proportional allocation of the 660 respondents (sample size) among the 12 selected communities. In the third stage, the random sampling technique was used to select the required stratified sample size for each community. These methods generated a total of 628 respondents in the following representation: 93 for Abonu, 30 for Adjaman, 81 for Amakom, 35 for Obo, 42 for Pipie, 83 for Ankasi, 34 for Apewu, 51 for Banso, 37 for Detieso, 96 for Duase and 40 for Esaase.

Data were collected through a questionnaire which consisted of two sections: tourism development preference and socio-demographic characteristics. The first section measured the scale of preference and the reasons for such choice. In an open-ended format respondents were asked to express why they consider their chosen scale of tourism development the most appropriate for the basin. Given the open-ended nature of this particular question, the post coding method (compilation of responses, development of coding scheme) was followed to assign codes to responses for analysis. Care was taken so that the codes reflected all the respondents verbalization and feelings whether they are positive, negative or combination of them. The section dealing with

socio-demographic characteristics of residents requested information about their age, sex, educational attainment, marital status, religion, occupation and income. Questions were asked orally (face-to-face conversation) and were directed to the household head or his/her representative who constituted the object of the research. This approach was favoured over that of self-responding or writing due to the relatively high illiteracy rate in the Ashanti region. Government of Ghana (2000) reports that the illiteracy rate for the region is 40% and the situation is often worst in the rural areas.

Prior to beginning their work in the communities, the field assistants participated in the 3-day survey training that took place from 5 to 7 November, 2005. Eight participants were trained in interviewing techniques and the translation of the contents of the questionnaire into the local language-“Twi”. The procedures followed during the training session were class presentation and mock interviews of classmates. Six participants were finally selected to constitute the data collection team. The selection was based on their in-class participation, performance in the field practices and fluency in “Twi”. The fieldwork lasted for two weeks from 1st to 14th January, 2006 with the researcher personally serving as the driver and principal supervisor.

The study instrument was pre-tested during the last week of November, 2005 on 48 respondents who were purposively selected during the community entry stage. The pilot survey helped the researcher to assess the viability of the survey instrument and the necessary modifications were made before the actual fieldwork. It also threw more light on some of the problems that were likely to be encountered during the main survey.

A total of 660 household heads constituted the sample, out of which 628 (95%) provided usable data for the study. The difference of 5% was due to either respondents refusing to participate or ending the interview process half-way.

Research results

Extent of tourism development preference

The tenets of sustainable tourism development require residents to be actively involved in all stages of the

tourism development process including the decision as to the extent of tourism development to be allowed in an area. In order to determine the extent of tourism development residents would tolerate in the Bosomtwe basin, the survey asked respondents to tick their preferred scale (larger, medium and small). Using the raw scores of respondents, the relative preference for the three scales were derived.

The distribution was as follows: large scale tourism development (88.4%), small (6.4%) and medium (5.3%). It is worth noting that the residents' lay concept of 'large' is relative to what pertains in Abonu (the gateway to the basin). Perhaps, the proximity and the presence of visible hotel buildings make Abonu an obvious reference point. Currently, Abonu attracts an average of about 60 visitors per week but the number swells to about 1000 during the major public holidays such as Easter Monday and Republic Day.

Extent of tourism development preference by respondents profile

It is an established fact that individuals' preference for items, systems and governance is influenced by socio-demographic and economic factors. Characteristics of respondents explored in this analysis were district of residence, community, age, marital status, educational attainment and income levels.

The chi-square (χ^2) statistic was employed to determine whether significant relationships exist between respondents' socio-demographic and economic characteristics and preference for tourism at significance level of 0.05.

As evident from Table 1 a significant relationship exists between districts of residence and scale of tourism development preference ($P = 0.000$). Table 1 suggests that while residents' of Bosomtwe-Kwanwoma district favoured small scale tourism development (85%), those in Amansie-East were oriented to large (54.1%) or medium (55.5%) scale. It emerged that Amansie-East district is yet to implement its tourism development programme and perhaps would like to establish something bigger than what exists in Bosomtwe-Kwanwoma district.

In the same vein, a significant relationship was established between residents' communities and scale of tourism development preference. On the whole, communities such as Duase (16.6%), Akaasi (13.7%)

and Amakom (12.4%), were noted to favour large scale tourism while communities like Bansa (18.2%), Agyeman (6.1%) and Apewu (6.1%) preferred medium scale.

Indeed Duase and Ankaasi are the two communities competing to serve as the tourism gateway for Amansie-East. Hence, their preference for large scale tourism development is probably to outplay each other and also to compete with Abonu in Bosomtwe-Kwanwoma District. As previously observed, communities in Bosomtwe-Kwanwoma including Abonu (30%) Pipie (12.6) Adwarfo (10%) and Obo (10%) were more in favour of small scale development. This may be explained by their real life encounter with visitors. The rest were torn between small and medium scale projects (Table 1).

Unlike the first two variables, no significant relationship was established between age and scale of tourism development preference. However, the youth seem to favour medium scale (42.4%) to some extent, whilst the aged prefer small scale (27.5%). The middle aged seemed uncertain as they were associated with all the scales (large: 50%, medium: 45.5% and small: 57.5%), (Table 1).

Like age, no significant relationship was established between sex and tourism development preference. On the whole males were found to register higher preferences for the various scales than their female counterparts (Table 1). The high preference for all the scales suggests uncertainty.

Although, significant relationship was established between marital status and tourism development preference, the pattern exhibited was not different from that of sex. Higher preferences (large: 91.4%, medium: 78.8% and small: 82.8%) were identified with the married residents than their single counterparts (large: 8.6%, 21.6% and 17.5%) (Table 1). In relative terms, the married residents can be said to favour large scale (91.4%), whilst the single were oriented to medium scale tourism development (21.6%).

Education is among the variables that are known to influence people's preference for goods and services. A significant relationship was established between residents' educational attainment and their tourism development preference. The preference pattern for large scale development was middle school-leavers (62.7%), primary-leavers (29%) and secondary school-leavers (8.3%). A similar pattern emerged

Table 1 Tourism development preference by socio-demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Scale of tourism development			Total	χ^2 Statistic (<i>P</i> -value)
	Large (%)	Medium (%)	Small (%)		
District					
Bomsomtwe-K	44.9	45.5	85	67.4	0.000*
Amansie East	55.1	54.5	15	32.6	
Community					
Abonu	13.0	15.2	30	14.2	0.003*
Aygeman	5.8	6.1	5	5.7	
Amakom	12.4	9.1	17.5	12.6	
Adwarfo	4	–	10	4.1	
Pipei	5.2	6.1	12.5	5.7	
Obo	4.5	9.1	10	5.1	
Ankaasi	13.7	6.1	–	12.4	
Apewu	5.4	6.1	–	5.1	
Banso	7.4	18.2	7.5	8	
Deteiso	6.1	3	–	5.6	
Duase	16.6	12.1	–	15.3	
Esaase	5.9	9.1	7.5	6.2	
Age					
<35	31.4	42.4	15	30.9	0.101
35–54	50.3	45.5	57.5	50.5	
>55	18.4	12.1	27.5	18.6	
Sex					
Male	68.8	66.7	75	67.4	0.567
Female	33.2	33.3	25	32.6	
Marital status					
Single	8.6	21.2	17.5	9.9	0.016*
Married	91.4	78.8	82.5	90.1	
Education					
<Primary	29	12.1	20	27.5	0.000*
Middle/JSS	62.7	51.5	75	62.9	
>Secondary	8.3	36.4	5	9.6	
Income					
<Gh¢100	20.5	21.2	25	20.8	0.372
Gh¢100–399	30.4	30.3	42.5	31.2	
>Gh¢400	49.1	48.5	32.5	48	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	–
N	555	33	40	626	

* Significant level set: 0.05

Exchange rate: 1 Ghanaian New cedi (Gh¢) = 0.9902 US Dollar (USD)

for preference for small scale tourism developments (Table 1). The most educated residents were in favour of medium scale tourism development, perhaps something that will be profitable and also sensitive to the environment.

Another variable that has been found to influence people's preference for items, systems and form of governance is income. Although, no significant relationship was established between the two sets of variables, it was noted that residents' preferences for

both large and medium scale development increased with income. The pattern of preference for large scale was (low income: 20.5%, middle income: 30.3% and higher income: 49.1%), whilst that of medium was (lower income: 21.2%, middle income: 30.3% and higher income: 48.5%). The small scale was favoured most by the middle income group (42.5%).

Reasons underlying scale preference

The reasons residents associated with their preferences for the different scales of tourism development are presented in Table 2.

Among the reasons advanced in favour of large scale tourism development were to: lead to expansion of the communities (35.5%), make the basin popular (22%), enhance business and trading (19.5%), generate more employment (16.2%), ensure more benefits

to the people (7.2%) generate more income (5.6%), and ensure diverse entertainment opportunities (4.3%). Others revolved around making the project more interesting (1.1%), availability of space for large scale development (0.8%), serves as an incentives in attracting more investors (0.7%), in order to compete with Abonu (0.4%) and finally to attract more visitors (0.2%) (Table 2).

Among the reasons put forward by those pleading for medium scale tourism development were to: prevent the communities and the people from being overwhelmed (45.5%), ensure quality service delivery (21.2%), because of lack of space (15.2), ensure quality and sustainability of the industry (12.1%) and finally to ensure better management (3.0%), (Table 2).

Finally, those in favour of small scale tourism assigned the following reasons: to prevent the

Table 2 Reasons underlying scale preference

Scale	Reason	(%)
Small	1. To prevent the communities from being overwhelmed.	60.0
	2. To prevent crowding and congestion in the communities.	25.0
	3. Most communities are not benefiting from tourism revenue.	7.5
	4. To ensure better management.	5.0
	5. To prevent the collapse of the fishing industry.	5.0
	6. To reduce noise within the basin.	2.5
Sub-total		100.0
Medium	1. To prevent the communities from being overwhelmed.	45.5
	2. Ensure quality service delivery.	21.2
	3. Not enough space for large scale tourism development.	15.2
	4. Ensure quality and sustainability of the industry.	12.1
	5. To ensure better management.	3.0
Sub-total		100.0
Large	1. Lead to expansion.	35.5
	2. Makes it popular.	22.0
	3. Would enhance trading and business in the communities.	19.5
	4. Generate more employment.	16.2
	5. Bring more benefits to the people.	7.2
	6. Provide more income for the people.	5.6
	7. Lead to more entertainment opportunity.	4.3
	8. It will make it more interesting.	1.1
	9. Have space for large scale tourism development.	0.8
	10. To attract more investors.	0.7
	11. Compete with Abonu.	0.4
	12. Would attract more tourists.	0.2
Sub-total		100.0

communities and the people from being overwhelmed (60.0%), prevent crowding and congestion in the communities (25.0%), that communities are not benefiting adequately from current tourism revenues (7.5%), ensure better management (5.0%), to prevent the collapse of the fishing industry (5.0%) and lastly, to control noise levels within the basin (2.5%), (Table 2).

Discussion

Residents' orientation towards large scale tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin is in consonance with the philosophy of the advocacy platform. To this tradition large scale development is the best way of meeting the material needs and wants of society's population. Reasons offered by residents for their preference for large scale tourism development reflect the same thinking (Table 2). Tourism is considered by this tradition as a "smokeless" industry and the route to success, with mass tourism as a ticket to development (Economist 1989).

Further, residents' preference for large numbers of visitors into the basin is in conformity with the irridex model developed by Doxey (1975). The irridex model contends that at the inception stage of tourism development residents become euphoric about the fact that visitors find their communities attractive and willingly welcome them. To most of the people and communities in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin it is only good and hospitable communities that are visited by travellers.

The enormous economic reasons (Table 2) the residents of Bosomtwe Basin advanced for their preference for large scale tourism lend support the findings that economic benefits are the most important element sought by locals (Keogh 1990; New Zealand Ministry of Tourism 1992; Akis et al. 1996; Gursoy and Rutherford 2004; Haley et al. 2005). In a study commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism (1992), it was noted that most respondents surveyed in all the communities recognized the tourism industry as an important economic activity and held strong positive views about tourism creating jobs. Keogh (1990) had earlier linked this observation to the fact that the majority of residents of most destinations see tourism as an economic tool.

Reasons offered for the possible scales of tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin revealed

that the locals have different perspectives on how tourism can be sustained in the basin. It is evident from the study that residents in favour of large scale tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin interpreted sustainable tourism to mean the ability to draw large numbers of visitors to provide jobs, additional income and more businesses while those oriented to small scale tourism development relate the concept to quality services and maintenance of the environment. This observation is consistent with the view put forward by Mowforth and Munt (2006) that people, groups and organizations interpret the concept of sustainability to suit their interest and values.

The fact that some elements (11.7%) in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin opposed to large tourism development suggests the community is not homogenous as assumed in Doxey's 'irridex model. In contrast, the basin may be described as heterogeneous, made up of nested communities (Molotch 1976, p. 311; Guijt and Kaul Shah 1998; Burkey 1998). Guijt and Kaul Shah (1998) argue that community incorporates heterogeneity rather than homogeneity whilst Burkey (1998) claims that communities can have many features in common, but they are still complex and should not be thought of as one homogeneous group.

The observation that preference for large scale tourism development increases from Abonu (the area of tourism concentration in the basin) to areas with low tourism development (Duase, Ankaasi and Amakom) is consonance with the findings Keogh (1990), Faulkner and Tideswell (1997), Jurowski and Gursoy (2004). These researchers have observed that residents who live close to attractions have less positive perceptions of impacts and less favourable attitudes toward tourism.

The observed significant relationships between place of residence, marital status and education on one hand and extent of tourism development confirms the notion that socio-demographic variables have some merits in explaining residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism (Husband 1989; Teye et al. 2002). With these findings, the influence of socio-demographic on residents' perceptions and reaction to tourism development might be said to reveal two patterns. First, most of the researches undertaken in the 1970s and 1990s did not find significant relationship between the two sets of variables whilst recent investigations conducted after 2000 demonstrate

some form of association between these sets of variables. To some extent, the observed trend is not surprising as the issue relates to a social phenomenon which is dynamic and hence vary in terms of time and space. Second, evidence suggests that in the African context and perhaps in the developing world generally (Husband 1989; Teye et al. 2002), socio-demographic variables are important elements when dealing with residents' perceptions and reactions to tourism development. Hence, the view of Teye and others that it is premature to discard socio-demographic as irrelevant variables especially in Africa.

Residents' strong desire to operate large scale tourism development (88.4%) in the fragile environment of Lake Bosomtwe, lend support to the key assumptions underlying the "tragedy of the commons" (Hardin 1968); that people operate in their own best interest, disregarding the consequence of their action on the community and the environment. Besides, when faced with an opportunity to maximize utility, individuals will choose the course of action that result in utility maximization irrespective of the consequences.

This finding is also consistent with theory put forward by Skinner (1938). He argues that humans are short-term egoists by nature and that peoples' behaviour are determined much by their immediate personal consequence, rather than its long-term consequence or its consequence on others. Skinner suggests that humans are genetically programmed to destroy the environment, given their short-term egoists nature. He claims that modern humans have inherited this character because short-term egoism was a requisite to survival under conditions of life in which our specie evolved. Thus, people's behaviour is determined mainly by its immediate personal consequences, rather than its long-term consequences or its consequences to others.

Implication for practice

The under-estimation of the potential costs of tourism development in the basin has implication for sustainability of tourism, as it could sow seeds for future tension and frustration. In other words, the people might not have been prepared enough for some of the negative effects.

Differences in perspective about the level of tourism development to be allowed in the basin have

implications for educational programmes that would be designed to address some of the residents' misplaced expectations about tourism. The heterogeneous character of the basin, which is reflected in residents' perceptions about the appropriate scale of tourism development in the area means that attention has to be devoted to each of the individual specific interest and values.

The popular notion among the residents that a destination ability to attract large numbers of visitors means success in the tourism trade has implications for the basin's ecosystem. The District Assemblies responsible for the administration of the basin have to impress upon the people that once the beauty and solitary condition of the basin are diminished tourists may no longer desire to visit the basin. Further, residents must be educated on the possibility of generating enough revenue by just attracting few high spending tourists.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to determine the extent tourism development residents consider as appropriate in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin, Ghana. The data used for this analysis were collected during January 2006 in 12 communities around the lake. Based on the main findings four main conclusions were drawn. First, the residents of Bosomtwe Basin equate large inflow of visitors with success and fame. To the majority of the people (88.4%), attraction of large numbers of visitors implies an increase in gate proceeds, large market and exposure to the outside world.

Second, most of the communities are in the euphoric stage of tourism development and therefore happy to welcome and receive large numbers of visitors. To the majority of the communities opening their communities to visitors would make them popular.

Third, socio-demographic variables are relevant in the search for understanding of residents' perceptions, attitudes tourism development in the Lake Bosomtwe Basin. Significant relationships established between place of residence, marital status and education on one hand and extent of tourism development confirms this notion

Lastly, it would not be in best interest of the basin's environment and the people to leave the tourism development process in the sole control of the communities. For unhealthy competition and greed would cause them to wreck the very environment that attracts visitors to the basin.

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