



Tourism Patronage/Participation Before and after the 1st & 2nd Phases of Covid-19 Pandemic within River Ethiopia Region

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ABSTRACT

This study examined tourism patronage/Participation before and after the 1st and 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within River Ethiopia Region. A total of 350 (comprising of 200 locals and 150 tourists/visitors) questionnaires were administered to the respondents in the study area using the descriptive survey research design. 298 copies of the administered questionnaires were retrieved. Data obtained were analyzed using statistical diagrams (tables, percentages, and graphs) and the hypotheses formulated were tested using Student T-test. Results of the first hypothesis tested showed significant difference in the tourism resources (areas) patronized between the various sites along the River Ethiopia region, and in the tourism patronage/participation before and after the 1st & 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within the River Ethiopia Region. The study also contributed in identifying the environmental potentials of the various tourism resources/regions around River Ethiopia affected by Covid-19 pandemic by recommending possible measures to address the lopsided development of tourism in the River Ethiopia Region. The study recommended that, there should be proper management and maintenance of tourist/cultural sites, and provision of funds for tourism projects which will in turn attract tourists patronage to the tourist/cultural sites within the region.

Keywords: *Tourism patronage, Participation, COVID-19 Pandemic, River Ethiopia, Region*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is fast becoming a major source of employment contributing greatly to the GDPs of many countries of the world. Although Nigeria has not taken advantage of the great potentials of her tourism resources over the years, the sector is gradually contributing to the country's GDP and economic development in recent times. For example, Nigeria recorded a total of 5 million tourists in 2016, ranking 59th in the world in absolute terms with revenue of 1.98 billion USD in the same year, accounting for 0.50 percent of the gross national product (World Data Info, ND).

The corona virus triggered a new type of recession that was different from the past triggers of recession (Ozili & Arun, 2020). Ozili and Arun observed that the 2016 recession in Nigeria was caused by the fall in the price of crude oil (Obi & Ndakara, 2020), balance of payment deficit, adoption of a floating exchange rate regime, an increase in the pump price of petrol, activities of pipeline vandals, and infrastructure weaknesses. Much fear is now being expressed that Nigeria will slide into another recession as a result of the covid-19 disease in particular, the tourism sector was affected as the travel opportunities for American, European, and Chinese tourists, who usually spend billions of naira annually, were severely curtailed (Nwabuisi & Awritefe, 2022). There were increased flight cancellations, cancelled hotel bookings and cancelled local and international events worth over \$200billion. The flow of goods through global supply chains vastly reduced significantly given that these countries that were the world's largest manufacturers and exporters, and the governments of these countries ordered the closure of major factories (Ndakara, Obi, Okinono et al, 2020; Ozili & Arun, 2020).

Travel and tourism are among the most affected sectors by the pandemic, with flights grounded, hotels closed, workers have either lost their jobs or are on furlough, and travel restrictions were put in place in virtually all countries around the world. Just as projected by the International Air Transport Associations (IATA) in March 2020, the corona virus and pandemic seriously disrupted tourism resources, and this caused major losses

in developing countries like Nigeria. Despite the attractive and stabilized outlook of the Nigeria tourism sector in the pre Covid-19 era, the emergence and resurgence of this disease is believed to have drastically affected tourism resources (Ekwujuru, 2016; Bukola, 2017; Bello, Bello & Raja, 2014). It is therefore worthwhile to explore the consequences of the pandemic on Nigeria's tourism resources especially within localities like River Ethiope Region in Ethiope East Local Area of Delta State, Nigeria. This paper thus sought to investigate tourism patronage/participation before and after the 1st and 2nd phases of COVID-19 pandemic within River Ethiope region. Two research hypotheses were formulated to ascertain the impact of the corona virus outbreak on tourism activities within the River Ethiope region. They are:

- i. There is no significant difference in the tourism resources (areas) between the various sites along the River Ethiope region.
- ii. There is no significant difference in the tourism patronage/participation before and after the 1st & 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within River Ethiope Region.

1.1. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

1.1.1. The Concept of Tourism and Tourism Resources

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in the global economy, significantly contributing to the world's GDP. The term tourism can be defined as "a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon that causes movement of people to the country, outside destination, or environment, for personal, business purposes" (UNWTO, 2020). The tourism sector is a major source of employment globally, which is a labor-intensive industry. The supporting industries of tourism are accommodation, transportation, food and beverages, retail and culture, hospitality, and sports (WTTC, 2015). The tourism sector of a country provides benefits and opportunities for its people. The tourism resources belong to the service sector of the economy, which has its unique characteristics.

Main features of tourism fall within specific attributes of a service product. They are inseparability, heterogeneity, intangibility, and perishability. In the global economy, tourism plays a prominent role in economic development, and the increase in the tourism resources may positively influence economic growth. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), tourism is considered one of the driving forces for economic development. Gamage, Kuruppuge and Haq (2017) reveal that tourism is the fastest growing industry in developed and developing economies, and tourism is considered the largest source of employment opportunities with the highest revenue creator in an economy.

The Covid-19 pandemic situation badly affected on the economic development of almost all countries in the world. It caused the largest downfall of the global economy in history. Advanced economies like the USA, UK, Japan, and Europe experienced downfall of their economies due to the spread of Covid-19. The World Trade Organization showed that trade activities dropped by 32% in 2020. The poor economic performance was due to the weak demand, supply chain disruptions, travel restrictions, and the Lockdown policy, which were preventive actions for further spread of the virus. Those restrictions posed pressure on the economic growth of the world. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimated the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic have increased global unemployment between 5.3 million to 24.7 million (ILO, 2020). This resulted to the loss of economic activities with loss of jobs. The Covid-19 outbreak impacted all sectors of the economy, such as manufacturing, tourism, financial, service, trade, transport, and people in every field in every country with more significant economic shocks. Due to the uncertainty and fear of the pandemic, most firms had low profits as people were advised to stay at home, with travel bans and cancellation of events, and prohibition of mass gatherings (Horowitz, 2020).

1.1.2. Tourism Resources along River Ethiope

Delta State has some historical, cultural and socio-political tourist centers that attract visitors from around the globe (Ndakara & Boyitie, 2019; John, 2000). One of the most noticeable tourism attraction in Delta State is the River Ethiope Source at Umuaja and its tributaries. River Ethiope is reputed to be the deepest inland waterway in Africa (at 176km). Its source is at the root of a giant silk-cotton tree at Umuaja in Ukwani Local Government Area (LGAs) of the State and the river flows through seven Local Government Areas in the state. It is a place of worship for Olokun traditional religion and also a common site for faithful of the Igbe Religious Movement ((Bichaka, Christian & Badassa, 2007; Khuoje, 2013). The River Ethiope is a river of outstanding beauty. The river is about 50 kilometer long. The river provides services such as flood control, recreation, spiritual homage, water supply, food, research and education, medicine, building materials among others to the many communities through which it passes. However, Bello et al. (2014) revealed that the ability of River Ethiope to continue to provide these services to man is being seriously hindered as a result of development pressure and the inability of the Delta State government to harness its potentials due to ignorance and corruption.

The tourism potentials of River Ethiope, if well equipped and harnessed more than it is today is capable of increasing the Delta State's internally generated revenue it is one of the major recreational centers in the state.

River Ethiopie has been described as one of the wonders of the world, as the river-with bubbles of water running from the base of a large cotton tree that forms into a large body of water can be accessed in Umuaja (Ileoje, 2004). Today, as observed, the River Ethiopie source in Umuaja has been harnessed and beautified such that it attracts tourists to the site which had led to the re-opening of the long abandoned Onoku river.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

1.2.1. Integrated System Theory

The integrated system theory was postulated by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1988. Integrated systems theory is manifest in the work of practitioners in many disciplines, for example the works of biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, linguist Béla H. Bánáthy, and sociologist Talcott Parsons; in the study of ecological systems by Howard T. Odum, Eugene Odum; in Fritjof Capra's study of organizational theory; in the study of management by Peter Senge; in interdisciplinary areas such as Human Resource Development in the works of Richard A. Swanson; and in the works of educators Debora Hammond and Alfonso Montuori (Rajabalinejad & Dongen, 2018).

The theory as applied by Awaritefe and Awaritefe (2007), there is presently a global shift from formal/institutionalized tourism, characterized by mass tour and guided visit to specific places, to alternative small scale tourism forma, that emphasize individual search for self fulfillment and unique experiences in diverse environments within a region which is applicable to the River Ethiopie Region. A holistic rather than reductionist framework of tourism planning is therefore desirable in order to fulfill the diverse travel needs and expectations of contemporary tourist, while simultaneously ensuring sustainability of environmental resources in destination regions (Awaritefe and Awaritefe, 2007).

The integrated system theory brings together principles and concepts from ontology, the philosophy of science, physics, computer science, biology, and engineering, as well as geography, sociology, political science, psychotherapy (especially family systems therapy), economics, and other related social science theory. Integrated system theory promotes dialogue between autonomous areas of study as well as within systems science itself. In this respect, with the possibility of misinterpretations, Hong, Chi, Chao, & Tang (2003) believed a general theory of systems "should be an important regulative device in science," to guard against superficial analogies that "are useless in science and harmful in their practical consequences."

Systems integration is a major challenge across many disciplines, with a large number of technical, project, organisational or environmental problems occurring as a result of improper integration. 'Integration' is defined as 'an act or instance of combining into an integral whole'. In engineering practices, integration may have different meanings depending on the different phases of the lifecycle and across different disciplines. For example, integration in requirements, software, hardware, design, production or green engineering has different meanings. According to White (White, 2020), 'integration' refers to the activity of combining several implemented system elements and activating the interfaces to form a realised system (product or service) that enables interoperation between the system elements and other systems in the environment to satisfy system requirements, architecture characteristics and design properties. In addition, 'integration engineering' is seen as a set of activities that define, analyse and execute integration across the lifecycle, including interactions with other lifecycle processes (White, 2018). Integration engineering concerns the discovery, analysis, learning, planning, designing, developing, executing, managing and monitoring of integration matters across the full product or system lifecycle. Integration matters may be related to technical systems, humans or the related environment, and may include structural, operational, functional or other technical or non-technical characteristics.

People demand products, systems, or services (PSS) to fulfill their needs. These PSS must function well and perform the tasks required. Furthermore, they should not harm people, or damage their property or the environment. The expectation is that products and services will be able to easily integrate with the related environment and deliver optimal performances (Rajabalinejad, et al., 2019). The satisfaction of these needs is a fundamental economic driver, which may provide great competitive advantage for different industries. Harmonious integration creates a unique selling point for businesses. In fact, smooth integration is a prerequisite in modern society. In other words, societies need products and services that can be used effortlessly in the appropriate context. Augmented Reality and its integration with human life in the form of cameras, wearables, games or educational products reminds us of the need for the integration of technology with everyday life. Artificial Intelligence and machine learning are other examples of technology being used to facilitate higher capabilities and better performance (Rajabalinejad, 2018a,b, 2019a,b,c,).

The optimal integration of products with everyday life faces numerous challenges due to the high pace of technological advancement and the dynamic needs of the environment across the full system lifecycle. Systems must remain fit for purpose and adapt their services according to their environmental dynamics. The optimal integration of new technology with operational systems is becoming increasingly important, with resilient services increasingly demanded (Wied, Oehmen, & Welo, 2020). Failure to achieve proper integration creates risks and wastes valuable resources. The improper integration of new systems may expose stakeholders

to additional costs, lead to suboptimal services, waste scarce resources, harm people, damage assets, or even damage other systems or the environment. Suboptimal integration often leads to the redesign and reengineering of products or services, which can become very expensive if problems are recognised too late, for example in the operational phase or at the end of a project lifecycle. A survey conducted by the Standish Group revealed that risk mitigation during the operational phase may be up to 30 times more expensive than risk management in early design phases (Bijan, Yu, Stracener, & Woods, 2013). Brombacher (2019) showed that a high percentage of consumer electronic products are returned to the manufacturer without any fault, primarily because of issues concerning their integration with human life or the environment (Brombacher, 2019).

Geographers must be aware of this need to overcome the integration challenges and deliver the services demanded. They need to design for integration because it ensures that the products are modular, reusable, upgradable, context aware, self-organising and interoperable, as well as offering data-driven capabilities. In relation to systems, integration by design facilitates implementation and operation, and also simplifies the training of operators for capital assets. This implies the need for methods and techniques to support the proper integration of newly developed systems or products. The challenge here is far beyond technical installation and entails more than the integration of hardware, software and humans in relation to a single product or system. In fact, integration issues occur at different levels, and their consequences may extend beyond technical matters. The high pace of technological development demands strategies that not only fulfill the technical requirements but also successfully address the interoperability and dependability of systems, data integrity, security or privacy matters (Ukoji & Ndakara, 2021; Rajabalinejad, 2018).

The integrated system theory is applicable to tourism destination regions since the theory identified the tourism resources in Nigeria which River Ethiope Region is inclusive. The theory can be applied in comparing the patronage/participation of tourism facilities in tourists sites in Nigeria by looking at the residents' perception on the state of tourism. The theory can be applied in ascertaining whether the environmental potentials of the various tourism resources/regions around River Ethiope are affected by Covid-19 pandemic.

II. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study Area: Location and Size

The River Ethiope Region is located in Delta State which is situated in the southern part of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The River Ethiope Region lies approximately within latitude $05^{\circ}00'N$ and $06^{\circ}30'N$ of the equator and longitude $05^{\circ}00'E$ and $05^{\circ}45'E$ of the Greenwich meridian. It is bounded by Edo State in the North, Bayelsa State in the South-East, Anambra State in the East and the Atlantic Ocean in the west. Delta as a state has experienced rapid increase in size over the years, due to the presence of various tourist sites such as Umuaja shrine along the river and its Source, hotels, bars, beaches and restaurants along the River banks attracts several tourists to the region, thus resulting to increased development of the area. The study area covers approximately $1,920\text{km}^2$.

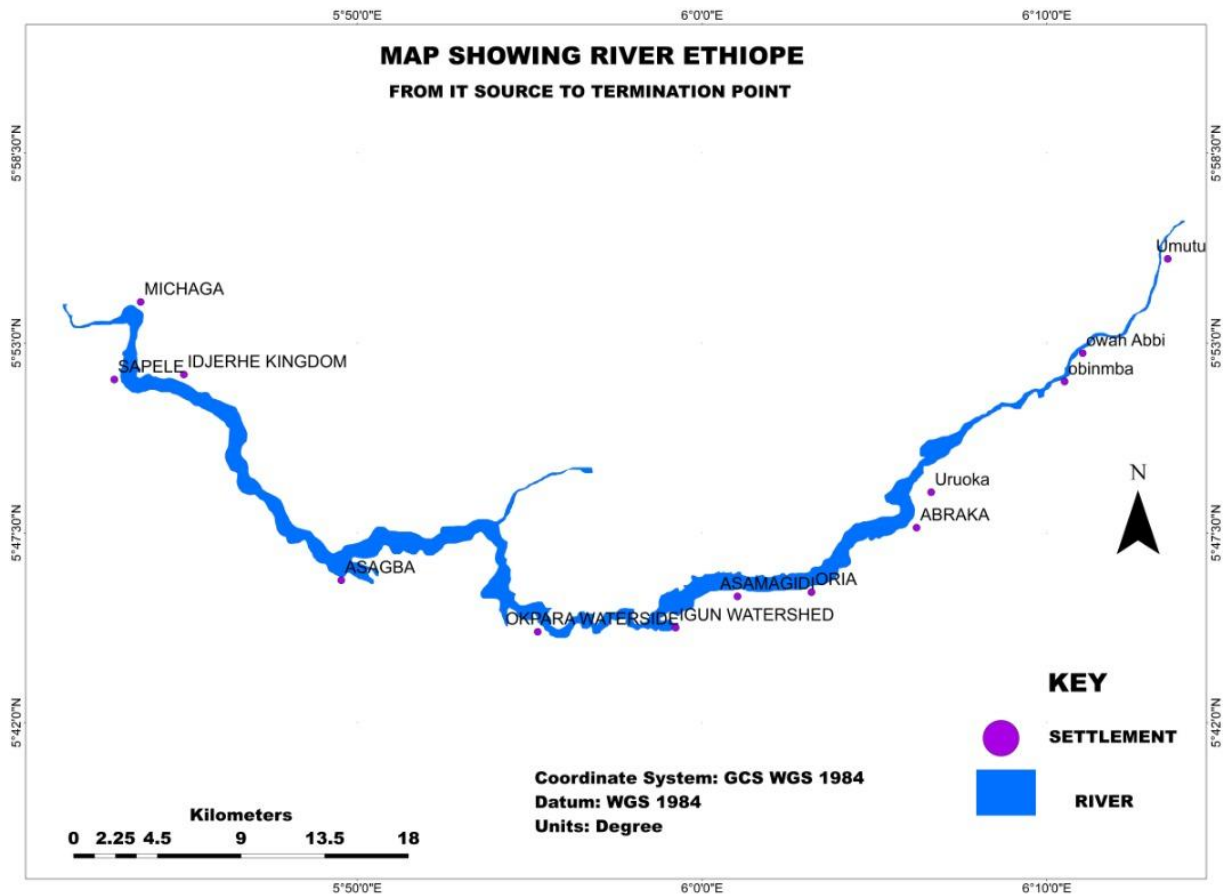


Fig 3.1: Map Showing River Ethiope Region

Source: Arc GIS Design (2021)

The study adopts the quantitative method and makes use of the questionnaire as the instrument of data collection. The questionnaire was distributed to a sample of 350 respondents obtained from a population of 497,668 with the aid of Taro Yamane formula. Stratified random sampling was used to select the participants for the study by dividing the population into different strata, and the simple random sampling method was used to select respondents that participated in the survey. A reliability value of 0.89 was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, which established its reliability for use in data collection. The Geographic Information System software (ArcGIS, 2021 version) was used to produce spatial analysis map to depict the spread of Covid-19 pandemic in Delta State. The data collected in the research work was analyzed with the use of T-Test that was employed to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. This was done with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) and results obtained were presented in tables. Results presentation and discussion follows next.

III. RESULTS PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results Presentation

Table 1 showed the tourism facilities available before and after the 1st and 2nd Phase of covid-19 Pandemic within River Ethiope tourism region in Delta State. About 128 tourism facilities was recorded within River Ethiope tourism region in Delta State with 76 facilities recorded before the outbreak of Covid-19 which reduced to 52 after the 1st and 2nd Phase of covid-19 Pandemic. It was observed that tourism patronage increased during events, occasion, festivals, memorial events and other relevant occasions which took place before the outbreak of Covid-19 which recorded a high turn up especially in Abraka, Umuaja, Umutu, Obiaruku, and Eku which reduced drastically after the 1st and 2nd Phase of covid-19 Pandemic. It could also be deduced that most of the tourists who patronize tourism resources within River Ethiope tourism region in Delta State are not residence of the region. They do so for tour purpose other than mere tourist visit.

Table 1: Tourism facilities available before and after the 1st and 2nd Phase of covid-19 Pandemic within River Ethiope tourism region in Delta State

Towns/Cities	Availability of Tourism Facilities		
	Total No. of Facilities	Before the Covid-19 outbreak	After the 1 st & 2 nd phase of Covid-9 pandemic
Abraka	46	29	17
Umutu	15	9	6
Umuaja	18	9	9
Obiaruku	22	12	10
Ekue	27	17	10
Total	128	76	52

Source: Delta State Tourism Board, Ministry of Commerce and Tourism, 2021

Table 2 showed the seasonal variation of tourism patronage in the area. It could be deduced that about 123, 45, 110, 880, 19, 243, and 155 people patronized of Hotel, Natural Park, Monument, Beach, Palace, Tourist tour and Bar/Restaurant respectively from January to December indicating that tourism patronage is higher in seasonal period than non-seasonal period. It could therefore be deduced that places with natural monuments, hotels, natural parks, palace, gardens, bar/restaurant, and eateries have higher patronage than places which don't have.

Table 3: Tourism Patronage within river Ethiope tourism region in Delta State

Months	Tourism Patronage						
	Hotel	Natural Park	Monument	Beach	Palace	Tourist tour	Bar/ Restaurant
January	13	5	3	89	1	2	11
February	6	3	2	36	0	27	9
March	4	2	5	88	2	7	0
April	2	1	1	69	0	5	20
May	5	4	17	34	1	18	24
June	7	1	3	78	1	9	14
July	7	1	4	67	1	8	27
August	8	3	2	71	2	51	0
September	11	2	12	43	1	35	0
October	25	6	28	37	0	44	19
November	13	2	10	82	2	16	0
December	22	15	23	186	8	24	31
Total	123	45	110	880	19	243	155

Source: Delta State Tourism Board, Ministry of Commerce and Tourism, 2021

Table 3 showed the Patronage and Participation of hotel facilities before and after the 1st and 2nd Phase of covid-19 Pandemic within River Ethiope tourism region in Delta State. A total of 116,835 tourists patronized major hotels in Abraka (such as Bysl Suits, Regent, 3Cee, Hotel De Bovo, Rivotel, Gordons, etc) of which Abraka had a total patronage of 65,586 before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and 51,249 after the 1st and 2nd Phase of Covid-19 Pandemic. A total of 26,940 tourists patronized major hotels in Umutu (such as MCAngel) of which Umutu recorded 15,123 patronage before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and 11,817 patronage after the 1st and 2nd Phase of Covid-19 Pandemic. No hotel facilities was found in Umuaja as such hotel patronage was not recorded. In Obiaruku, a total of 69,596 tourists patronized major hotels in Obiaruku (such as Fregmond, GNN, etc) of which Obiaruku recorded 39,069 patronage before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and 30,527 patronage after the 1st and 2nd Phase of Covid-19 Pandemic. Lastly, in Eku, a total of 62,860 tourists patronized major hotels in Eku (such as Rejjigal, etc) of which Eku recorded 35,287 patronage before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and 27,573 patronage after the 1st and 2nd Phase of Covid-19 Pandemic. A total of 276,231 tourists patronized major hotels in Abraka, Umutu, Eku, and Obiaruku with 155,065 patronage recorded before the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and 121,166 patronage after the 1st and 2nd Phase of Covid-19 Pandemic indicating that hotel patronage increased before the outbreak of Covid-19 and reduced drastically after the 1st and 2nd Phase of covid-19 Pandemic.

Table 4: Patronage and Participation of hotel facilities before and after the 1st and 2nd Phase of Covid-19 Pandemic within River Ethiope tourism region in Delta State

Hotel Destinations	Hotel Patronage		
	Total Number of Patronage	Before the Covid-19 outbreak	After the 1 st & 2 nd phase of Covid-9 pandemic
Abraka	116,835	65,586	51,249
Umutu	26,940	15,123	11,817
Umuaja	0	0	0
Obiaruku	69,596	39,069	30,527

Ekus	62,860	35,287	27,573
Total	276,231	155,065	121,166

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table 5 shows the cases of Covid-19 in Delta State. A total of 1800 confirmed cases, total active cases was 100, total discharge cases was 1,650, and total death cases was 49 was recorded in Delta State between December, 2019 to October, 2021. It was observed that Oshimili North (515 confirmed cases, 19 death cases), Uvwie (224 confirmed cases, 7 death cases), Warri South (206 confirmed cases, 1 death case) and Oshimili South (174 confirmed cases, 27 death cases), Ughelli North (148 confirmed cases, 9 death cases), and Sapele (118 confirmed cases) recorded the highest while Patani and Burutu (1 confirmed case respectively) recorded the lowest. However no Covid-19 case was confirmed in Warri South West region.

Table 5: Covid-19 Cases in Delta State

S/N	L.G.A	No. of Confirmed Cases	No. of Active Cases
1	Aniocha North	7	1
2	Aniocha South	24	3
3	Bomadi	13	0
4	Burutu	1	0
5	Ethiope East	17	0
6	Ethiope West	83	0
7	Ika North East	26	3
8	Ika South	46	6
9	Isoko North	5	3
10	Isoko South	15	4
11	Ndakwa East	2	0
12	Ndakwa West	23	2
13	Okpe	45	0
14	Oshimili North	174	27
15	Oshimili South	515	19
16	Patani	1	0
17	Sapele	118	0
18	Udu	73	1
19	Ughelli North	148	9
20	Ughelli South	17	4
21	Ukwuani	14	7
22	Uvwie	224	7
23	Warri North	3	3
24	Warri South	206	1
25	Warri South West	0	0
	Total	1,800	100
	Mean	72	4

Source: Our World in Data, 2021; JHU CSSE Covid-19 Data, 2021

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the quality or features or attributes of tourism resources (areas) between the various sites along the River Ethiope region.

Table 4.1: T-Test Statistics^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	1.002E-013	.000		0	1.000	.000	.000
1 Tourism Resources	1.000	.000	.795	8.569	.000	1.000	1.000
Tourist Sites	1.000	.000	.354		.000	1.000	1.000

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Table 4.1 showed that the t-calculated value of 8.569 is significant (P; 8.569>0.05) at 0.05 level of significance. Data are therefore statistically significant with a sampling error of 5% which means that there is a difference between the two variables. We therefore accepted H₁ and rejected H₀. Thus there is significant difference in the tourism resources (areas) between the various sites along the River Ethiope region. Tourism resources differ significantly since the various sites along the River Ethiope region (Umuaja, Umutu, Obiaruku, Abraka, and Eku) have varying tourism potentials. This is base on the fact that sample obtained can be

generalized to the population from which it was drawn since data are statistically significant and there is sufficient evidence to support the claim.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the tourism patronage/participation before and after the 1st & 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within River Ethiope Region.

Table 4.2: T-Test Statistics^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	-9.821	6.775			.207	-27.237	7.594
1 Before	.599	.778	.329	6.957	.476	-1.401	2.599
After	.621	.210	.797		.032	.081	1.162

Source: SPSS Output, 2021

Table 4.2 revealed that the t-calculated value of 6.957 is significant (P; 6.957>0.05) at 0.05 level of significance, with a sampling error of 5%. Thus, there is a significant difference between the two tourism patronage and covid-19 pandemic. We therefore accepted H₁ and rejected H₀, and infer that there is significant difference in the tourism patronage/participation before and after the 1st & 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within River Ethiope Region. Tourism patronage/participation reduced after the 1st & 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within River Ethiope Region.

IV. DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from hypothesis one showed that, the t-calculated value of 8.569 is significant (P; 8.569>0.05) at 0.05 level of significance indicating that there is significant difference in the tourism resources (areas) between the various sites along the River Ethiope region. The result obtained from hypothesis two revealed that the t-calculated value of 6.957 is significant (P; 6.957>0.05) at 0.05 level of significance indicating that there is significant difference in the tourism patronage/participation before and after the 1st & 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within River Ethiope Region. The findings above corroborate with the findings of Uysal (2020), Charters and Saxon(2021), who observed that tourism destinations are poorly managed and patronized after the 1st and 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic which have serious impact on tourism and contributes to the loss of cultural integrity and identity of the destination.

V. CONCLUSION

The study suggest that there is significant difference in the tourism resources (areas) between the various sites along the River Ethiope region since the t-calculated value of 8.569 is greater than the t-critical value of 3.182 at 0.05 level of significance..

The study also concluded that there is significant difference in the tourism patronage/participation before and after the 1st & 2nd phase of Covid-19 pandemic within River Ethiope Region since the t-calculated value of 6.957 is greater than t-critical value of 3.182 at 0.05 level of significance.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be proper management and maintenance of tourist/cultural sites. There should be adequate provision of capital/income to fund tourism projects/develop tourist sites. This will attract tourists to patronize the tourist/cultural sites within the area.
2. There should be public enlightenment/awareness to educate tourists (visitors) and non-tourists (local residents) on the need and importance for them to partake in tourism activities.

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