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## Assessing Hospitality Services in Obudu Mountain Resort, Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Hospitality services and efficient service delivery play vital roles in enhancing tourist experiences at tourist destinations. This study assessed the Hospitality services in Obudu Mountain Resort (OMR). Data for the study were obtained through in-depth interviews, personal observations, and administration of two sets of self-structured questionnaires. The first set of questionnaires was administered to thirty-five hospitality staff of the resort with a minimum of three years of working experience. The second set was administered to randomly selected 120 tourists who have spent a minimum of two nights in the accommodation facilities of the resort. Findings from the study show that services provided by the hospitality unit of Obudu Mountain Resort include accommodation as noted by 100% of the staff respondents, food and beverages (100%), entertainment (92.0%), and laundry (84.0%). Also, accommodation service was rated good by most respondents (72.7%), 18.2% rated it poor and 9.1% rated it excellent. Also, laundry service was rated good by the majority of tourist respondents (67.3%) while 32.7% rated it poorly. Similarly, the Food/beverage service was rated good by the majority of the respondents (62.5%), 30.5% rated the service excellent while laundry service was rated poor by 16.5% of the tourist respondents. For effective hospitality service delivery in the resort, it is important to strengthen areas of weaknesses while improving further on the areas of strength.

## INTRODUCTION

Man, regardless of race, culture, tribe and economic status always craved for pleasure, comfort, happiness, freedom and privacy. The hospitality industry readily provides an avenue to meet these needs (Enemuo *et al.*, 2016). The industry provides specialized services which enhanced tourist's

experiences at tourist destinations. Hospitality services include all services and products provided by the accommodation sector which include hotels, boarding houses, motels, tourist camps, holiday centres, resorts and others. Similarly, the International Labour Organisation (ILO),

stressed that hospitality services also include those rendered by restaurants, bars, cafeterias, snack bars, pubs, nightclubs, and other similar establishments for the comfort of both local and international tourists (ILO, 2010). Hence, the services provided by the hospitality sector can greatly influence tourist's experiences and can create amazing memories about the visited destination. Hospitality services and the manner they are rendered to tourists could encourage or discourage future visitation by tourists. Besides enhancing tourist's experiences, it also contributes significantly to the image of the destination.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development also stressed that the incredible growth in both domestic and international global travel in recent times has also resulted in a corresponding increase in global demand for hospitality services by both local and international tourists (OECD, 2008). Therefore, the industry is experiencing profound investment in new facilities and equipment in order to meet the rapidly increasing needs. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) similarly reported that there is an increase in global demand for hospitality services attributed to a sharp increase in global travel with an astounding rise from 674 million international tourist arrivals recorded in 2010 to over 1.4 billion in 2019 (UNWTO, 2020). This sharp increase also includes travel to global eco-destinations which have similarly resulted in a corresponding increase in demand for hospitality services in protected areas globally. Hospitality services in eco-destinations likewise involve services in relation to food, drink, and accommodation. Tourists to eco-destinations will normally patronize destinations that meet their needs and avoid those that did not just like tourists to other destinations. Therefore, the hospitality sector of eco-destinations always strives to satisfy their guests in order to gain their loyalty and

sustain patronage. Additionally, because satisfaction is a subjective issue and reflects personal feelings or experiences as a result of consumption of services. Hence, it could strongly influence individual tourists' rating of, length of stay, repeat visit, and choice of eco-destination (Mihaela, 2014; Manhas and Tukamushaba, 2015). Availability of varied services and efficient service delivery at a destination promote and sustain patronage while poor service delivery is harmful to sustaining patronage and loyalty as well as the survival of eco-destination. Moreover, good patronage is the goal of every service-oriented industry. Therefore, the objectives of this paper, are to identify different hospitality services available in the resort, determine the maximum length of stay by tourists and evaluate the level of tourist satisfaction with the services rendered to them by the hospitality unit of the resort.

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## METHODOLOGY

### Description of the Study Area

The study was carried out in Obudu Mountain Resort, Cross River State, Nigeria. The Obudu Mountain Resort (OMR), formerly known as Obudu Cattle Ranch, is a cattle ranch and resort in the highlands of Cross River State in the South Eastern part of Nigeria (Figure 1). Obudu Mountain Resort is located in Obaliku Local Government Area of Cross River State. It lies between longitude  $6^{\circ} 21' 30''$  and  $6^{\circ} 22' 30''$  N and latitude  $9^{\circ} 22' 0''$  and  $9^{\circ} 22' 45''$  E, with an approximate area of 104sqm, and a height of about 1576m above sea level (Cross River State Tourism Bureau, 2010). Cross River State shares a boundary with Benue State to the North, Enugu and Abia States to the West, Cameroon Republic to the East and Akwa-Ibom State and the Atlantic Ocean to the South. OMR is situated on a relatively flat Plateau on the Oshie Ridge of Sankwala Mountains. It is an area of idyllic tranquillity,

beautiful scenery and breathtaking views. It has 22 U- bends that consist of the most exciting “the Devil’s Elbow” which is halfway through the stretch. OMR enjoys a climate typical of the temperate regions of the world. It has a temperature of between 26°C to 32°C between November and January and the low-temperature range of 4°C to 10°C between June and September (Okojie and Ijaola, 2011).

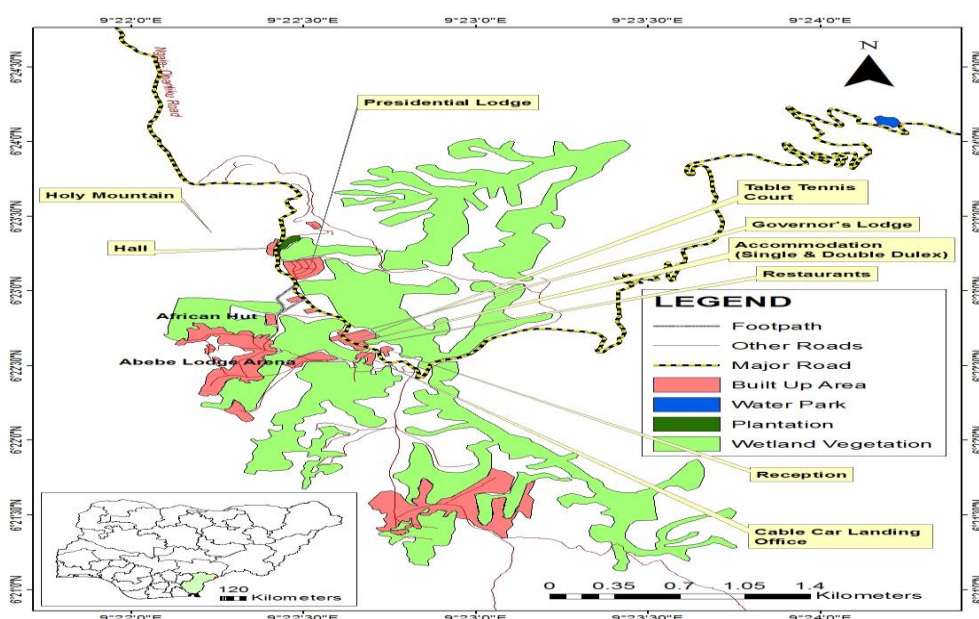
### Data collection

A two-stage sampling technique was employed for the study. The first stage involves a simple random selection of staff with a minimum of three years of working experience in the resort. In the second stage, hospitality staff who have worked in the hospitality sector of the resort for a minimum of three years were selected and the first set of questionnaires to elicit information on available hospitality services and facilities was administered to all the thirty-five staff who fell into this category. Thus, no hospitality staff and hospitality staff with less than three years of working experience were excluded from the study. The second set of questionnaires that provided information on tourist’s satisfaction was administered to

one hundred and twenty (120) randomly selected tourist respondents who have stayed for at least two nights in the resort. Therefore, tourists who have not spent at least two nights previously in the resort were similarly excluded from the study. In all, a total of one hundred and fifty-five questionnaires was administered for the study. However, one hundred and fifty (150) were retrieved and used for the analysis. The Likert 3-point scale was used for scoring and rating tourists’ level of satisfaction ranging from excellent (1), good (2), and poor (3).

### Method of Data analysis

The data obtained from the survey were analysed by descriptive statistics using frequencies and percentages, pie charts and bar tables. Inferential statistics such as Chi-square analysis was used to test for association between socio-economic characteristics of tourists and their perceived satisfaction of hospitality services in the resort. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 16.0 was used for the analysis.



**Figure 1: Showing the Map of Obudu Mountain Resort (OMR)**  
 Source: Field Survey, 2018

## RESULTS

**Table:1** shows the services provided by the hospitality unit of Obudu Mountain Resort

which include accommodation as noted by 100% of the staff respondents, food and beverages (100%), entertainment (92%), and laundry (84%).

**Table 1: Types of services provided by the hospitality unit of OMR according to staff respondents**

Services	Frequency	Percentage
Accommodation	35	100
Food and Beverage	35	100
Entertainment	32	92.0
Laundry	30	84.0

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 2 shows the level of tourists' satisfaction and the rating of the services by the hospitality unit of Obudu Mountain Resort by tourist respondents. Accommodation service was rated good by most respondents (72.7%), 18.2% rated it poor and 9.1% rated it excellent. Also, laundry service was rated good by the

majority of tourist respondents (67.3%) while 32.7% rated it poorly. Similarly, Food/beverage was rated good by the majority of the respondents (62.5%), 30.5% rated the service excellent while laundry service was rated poor by 16.5% of the tourist respondents.

**Table 2: Perceived efficiency and rating of hospitality services in OMR by tourist respondents.**

Services	Perceived Rating	Frequency	Percentage
Accommodation	Poor	20	18.2
	Good	80	72.7
	Excellent	10	9.1
<b>Total</b>		110	100
Laundry	Poor	36	32.7
	Good	74	67.3
	Excellent	0	0
<b>Total</b>		110	100
Food and Beverages	Poor	18	16.5
	Good	69	62.5
	Excellent	23	30.5
<b>Total</b>		110	100
Entertainment	Poor	17	15.5
	Good	77	70.0
	Excellent	16	14.5
<b>Total</b>		110	100

Source: Field Survey (2018)

Table 3 shows the chi-square analysis which elicits the association between socio-economic characteristics of tourists and their perceived efficiency and rating of hospitality services in the resort. The analysis revealed that age, education, sex and annual income have significant relationships with the perceived level of satisfaction and rating of hospitality services in the resort. The analysis shows that age significantly influences the perception of efficiency and rating of hospitality services. Age has P-value = 0.001, educational level = 0.014, annual income 0.004 and purpose of visit 0.047 respectively.

Table 4 shows the number of previous visits by tourist respondents to OMR. The table shows that tourists who have visited the eco-destination twice were the highest (41.7%) and those who have paid 3 visits previously accounted for 26.1% of tourist respondents. Also, those who have visited four times were 13.0% while 10.5% of the respondents have visited the resort more than five times previously.

**Table 3: Summary of chi-square tests of association between socio-economic characteristics of tourists and their perceived satisfaction of hospitality services in Obudu Mountain Resort**

Parameter	Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ )	P value	Inference
Age of tourists and perceived satisfaction of hospitality service	9.461	0.005	Significant association
Education qualification of tourists and perceived satisfaction of hospitality service	12.544	0.014	Significant association
Sex of tourists and perceived satisfaction of hospitality service	26.470	0.001	Significant association
Occupation of tourists and perceived satisfaction of hospitality service	14.664	0.066	No Significant association
Annual income and perceived satisfaction of hospitality service	25.739	0.004	Significant association

Source: Field Survey, 2018

**Table 4: Number of previous visits by tourist respondents to OMR**

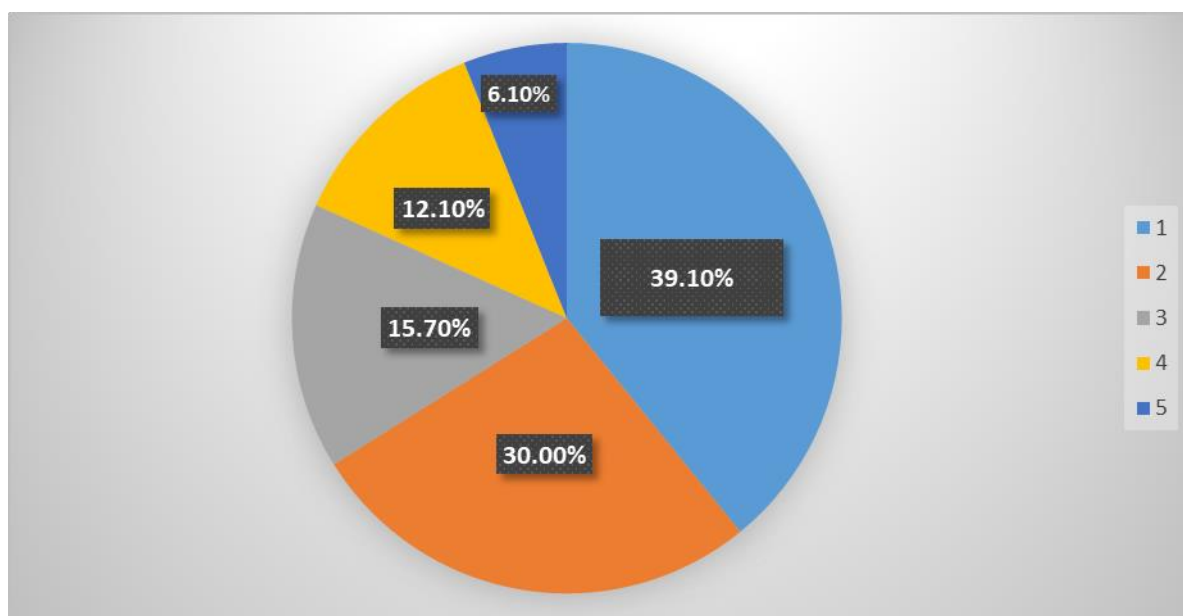
Number of times	Frequency	Percentage %
2	48	41.7
3	30	26.1
4	15	13.0
5	12	10.5
>5	10	8.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2018

**Length of the previous stay in OMR by tourists as indicated by tourist respondents**

The study revealed that the maximum length of the previous stay by most tourist respondents (39.1%) in the resort was 2 nights and 30.0% claimed they have spent 3 nights previously. Similarly, those who have

stayed for 4 and 5 nights before this study accounted for 15.7% and 12.1% respectively. Additionally, those who have stayed for more than 5 nights previously were 6.1% of the total sampled tourists (Figure 2).



**Figure 2: Showing the Average length of the previous stay by tourists in OMR**

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Table 5 presents tourist’s inflow to Obudu Mountain Resort from 2013-2017. The table shows that the majority (67.2%) of the 35,691-total number of tourists that visited

the resort for five consecutive years preceding this study were domestic tourists while international tourists accounted for 32.8%.

**Table 5: Tourist Inflow to Obudu Mountain Resort from 2013-2017**

Years	Domestic Tourists		International Tourists		Total
	Frequency	Percentage %	Frequency	Percentage %	
2013	7,927	58.0	5,741	42.0	13,668
2014	8,343	72.1	3,230	27.9	11,573
2015	8,025	75.2	2,643	24.8	10,668
2016	5,758	63.4	3,220	36.6	8,978
2017	5,638	68.4	2,601	31.6	8,239
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,691</b>	<b>67.2</b>	<b>17,435</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>53,118</b>

Source: Obudu Mountain Resort, 2018

## DISCUSSION

### Services provided by the hospitality unit of Obudu Mountain Resort

Findings from the study revealed that the hospitality unit of Obudu Mountain Resort offers various customer-centric services which include guest rooms of varying categories such as Single, Double, Deluxe and Family Chalet. The provision of different and decent accommodation facilities that meet different tourist needs is very important for tourist destinations to attract patronage and loyalty. Similarly, the majority of visitors to the resort (67.2%) for more than five years preceding this study were domestic tourists. This agrees with the global report where domestic tourists formed the bulk of tourists in some tourist destinations as reported by UNWTO (2017) and from the findings of Amalu et al. (2016). Additionally, findings from the study also revealed that there are 160 different accommodation facilities in the resort and these varied in terms of size, interior furnishings and capacity. Hence, many tourists were able to find desirable accommodation facilities that meet their needs without necessarily compromising their choice. The hospitality unit also provides different types of meals and drinks in the restaurant and bar to meet the needs of different categories of tourists. The unit serves local, continental, inter-continental well as special meals. The hospitality unit also serves different alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. These findings agree with that of Enemu and Iredia (2013), who also noted

that food and drinks, as well as accommodation facilities, are the key features that are generally associated with hospitality service. The hospitality department of tourist destinations usually plays important role in making tourists feel warm and welcome to their temporary home for the duration of their stay. Moreover, the experiences created by the hospitality department via meals, accommodation, drinks and entertainment can overwhelm tourist's experiences beyond recreational activities or any other purpose for visiting the destination.

### Perceived tourist satisfaction and efficiency of services

The result of the study clearly shows that on average, most tourist respondents (72.7%) were satisfied with the accommodation facilities and other services offered by the hospitality units of the resort. This could suggest that the accommodation facilities in Obudu Mountain Resort are tastefully furnished and of high quality, thus, could meet the demand of many tourists who have visited other eco-destinations in Nigeria with poor room furnishings and dilapidated accommodation facilities. This agrees with the findings of Manhas and Tukamushaba (2015) who reported that the ambience of guest rooms provide feelings of satisfaction to tourists and could influence tourists to pay a repeat visit. Also, Brunner-Sperdin et al. (2012), affirms that the destination environment can affect tourist's emotions and consequently influence their overall perception of the service delivery at tourist

destinations. Similarly, the result of the study indicates that the Food and Beverage service was satisfactory to the majority of the tourists (62.5%) who rated it well while 30.5% rated it excellent. This also agrees with Nield et al. (2000) who argued that quality food and good food service contribute to tourist satisfaction. It could therefore be reiterated that the quality of food and excellent food service can be considered important marketing tools for tourist destination managers. Also, the result of the study further shows that the majority of the tourist respondents (70.0%) were pleased with the entertainment services in the resort, hence, they rated it good.

#### **Previous visits and the average length of stay by tourists**

Findings from the study also revealed that the majority of tourists to the resort (68.7%) are short-stay tourists who spent between two (2) and (3) nights and have similarly visited the resort between two (2) and (3) visits in the past. This agrees with the findings of Odunlami and Ijeomah (2016) who similarly reported that the average length of stay of the majority of visitors in Yankari Game Reserve, another eco-destination in North-Eastern Nigeria, was between two (2) and three (3) nights. It is apparent that the good rating of the services in the resort by tourists did not translate into an increase in the number of tourist's repeat visits and length of stay. These could be attributed to the cost of travel and stay in the resort. For example, the cost of accommodation alone (besides meals and drinks) in the resort is between twenty-five thousand nairas (₦25,000:00) and forty-seven thousand nairas (₦47,000:00) per night. This is beyond the reach of an average civil servant in Nigeria, except a very senior civil servant. Nevertheless, making tourists feel comfortable such that they want to come back again is an indicator that their aim for visiting the destination is a fulfilled one. It is therefore very important for the

management of the resort to regularly assess and check that every single service rendered meets the desire and the aspiration of tourists. The tourists' destinations are in business because of tourists; however, good and efficient services are key to sustaining tourists and hospitality business operations at tourist destinations.

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### **CONCLUSION**

The hospitality unit of Obudu Mountain Resort offers different services to tourists including food and drinks, accommodation, entertainment as well as laundry services, and the majority of the tourists were satisfied with the services rendered to them but tourist visitation to the resort declined after three visits, and the majority of the visitors only stay for three nights which clearly indicate the need to develop an effective strategy that will encourage tourists to pay more repeat visits and spend more than three nights in the resort.

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