

structured questionnaire were administered to the respondents and focus group discussion was conducted with five groups consisting of

different ages of men and women. The data generated for the study were analyzed using mean and ANOVA statistical tools

Table 2: Socio-cultural influence of religious activities on identified sites

S/N	SOCIO-CULTURAL INFLUENCES	FREQUENCY	MEAN	DECISION
1.	Promotion of indigenous culture	100	2.9	Disagreed
2.	Learning of other people culture	218	3.7	Agreed
3.	Reduction of social ills	131	3.1	Agreed
4.	Preservation of culture	130	3.0	Agreed
5.	Improve quality of life	220	4.3	Agreed
6.	Disrespect for culture of the people	142	3.1	Agreed
	Total	941	20.6	
	Cluster Mean	3.4		

Table 1 reveals that the mean responses of promotion of indigenous culture, learning of other people's culture, reduction of social ills, preservation of culture, improve quality of life and disrespect for culture of the people are 2.9, 3.7, 3.1, 3.0, 4.3 and 3.1 respectively. The decision rule states that any mean from 3.0 and above is considered positive. This indicates that there are positive socio-cultural influences of religious activities on the identified sites.

Table 3: Religious tourism influences on the natural environment of the identified sites

S/N	Natural environmental Influences	Frequency	Mean	Decision
1.	Conservation of natural environment	131	2.9	Disagreed
2.	Noise pollution	187	3.4	Agreed
3.	Waste pollution	209	3.7	Agreed
4.	Exploitation of natural resources	111	3.0	Agreed
5.	Urbanization	253	3.0	Agreed
6.	Structural deformation and Graffiti	121	2.7	Disagreed
7.	Deforestation	121	2.4	Agreed
8.	Erosion	143	2.0	Disagreed
9.	Landslide	140	1.7	Disagreed
	Total	1647	24.8	
	Grand Mean	2.8		

Table 2 present that the mean responses of conservation of natural environment, noise pollution, waste pollution, exploitation of natural resources, urbanization, structural deformation and graffiti, deforestation, erosion and landslide are 2.9, 3.4, 3.7, 3.0, 3.0, 2.7, 2.4, 2.0 and 1.7 respectively. The decision rule states that any mean below 3.0 is considered as negative. This indicates that the natural environmental influences of religious activities on the identified sites were perceived as negative, with indication of natural environment not conserved, presence of waste and noise pollution, exploitation of

natural resources, urbanization of the community, deformation of structural aesthetic, deforestation, erosion and landslides.

Table 4: Perception of the host communities on the religious tourism in various communities

S/N	Perception of influence by host communities	Frequency	Mean	Decision
1.	Enjoyment of religious activities	165	4.3	Agreed
2.	Means of development	197	4.4	Agreed
3.	Source of livelihood and job opportunity	176	4.4	Agreed
4.	Way of Losing their culture and norms	87	3.5	Agreed
Total		635	16.6	
Grand Mean		4.2		

Table 3 reveals that the mean responses of the perception of host communities on enjoyment of religious activities, religious activities as means of development, as source of livelihood and, as job opportunity and ways of losing their culture and norms are of 4.3, 4.4, 4.4 and 3.5 respectively. The decision rule states that any mean from 3.0 and above is considered positive. This indicates that the residents of the host communities perceive the influences of religious tourism as positive.

Table 5: Reduction of negative influence of religious tourism

S/N	Ways negative influence of religious tourism can be reduced	Frequency	Mean	Decision
1.	Ownership of resources by community	220	3.9	Agreed
2.	Host community participation in tourism planning/development	220	3.9	Agreed
3.	Implementation of environmental impact assessment (EIA) before development	176	3.9	Agreed
4.	Grass-root education of heritage resources/environmental resources	209	3.7	Agreed
5.	Education of tourist on the culture of the host community.	177	3.7	Agreed
Total		969	19.1	
Grand Mean			3.8	

Table 4 shows that the mean responses of ownership of resources by community, host community participation in tourism planning and development, implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment before development, grass-roots education of heritage resources/environmental resources, education of tourist on the culture of host community are 3.9, 3.9, 3.9, 3.7 and 3.7 respectively. The decision rule states that any mean from 3.0 and above is considered positive. This indicates that negative influence of religious tourism can be reduced if measure indicated above is put in place.

A. Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of environment of communities where religious tourism takes place and the environment where there are no religious activities

Table 6: Religious tourism and the environment

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean square (variance)	F-Cal	F-critical	Decision
Between samples	942.76	3	314.25	8.04	2.60	Ho rejected
Within samples	12,737	326	39.07			
At 5% level						

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the mean rating of the socio-cultural life of communities where religious tourism takes place and the communities where there are no religious activities.

Table 7: Religious tourism and socio-cultural life of communities

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean square (variance)	F-Cal	F-critical	Decision
Between samples	3,909.8	3	1303.3	63.6	2.60	Ho rejected
Within samples	6,688.2	326	20.5			
At 5% level						

4. Major Findings

The major findings drawn from the results of the data analysis were as follows:

- i. The identified religious activities that take place in the identified sites are adoration and other Christian activities. The traditional festivals of various sites were identified as prominent and Islamic activities were least identified to occur in south-eastern Nigeria.
- ii. The identified religious activities improved economic lives of host

communities with provision of job opportunities, trade and development of the community.

- iii. Religious tourism improved the socio-cultural lives of the communities as it has reduced social ills in the communities and promoted some indigenous festivals of the communities. It was seen that crime rate and robbery were reduced as the youth were gainfully employed, also the festivals of the host communities were seen to prominent as tourists export the cultural

artifices and heritage of the communities as they leave.

- iv. Religious activities in the identified sites have resulted in the degradation and destruction of the natural environment of host communities. This was evident as the majority of the responses indicated there were environmental pollution from noises and waste, structural deformation and deforestation.
- v. Religious stakeholders and tourists were disrespecting the culture of the communities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This work has attempted to evaluate the environmental and socio-cultural influences of religious tourism on the host communities of selected sites in south-east Nigeria, the major findings of the research led to the following conclusion:

There are religious activities that give room for religious tourism in the south-eastern Nigeria. They include adoration, Christian religious activities and traditional festivals.

The religious activities have socio-cultural changes in host communities, which include: changes in quality of life, reduction of social ills and social exchange of culture.

The natural environment of host communities is threatened, as the environment is becoming hazardous to the residents, if measures and policies are not developed to address these negative issues, the lives of the residents are endangered.

The traditional and cultural lifestyle of host communities is gradually getting lost to new religious practices migrating into the communities.

Religious tourism contributes to the economic improvement of host communities through the

provision of jobs, trades and structural development.

The stakeholders of religious tourism and host communities need to work in partnership to sustain the environment of the communities.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings of the research work:

1. In Nigeria today, many communities are hosting religious sites in the forms of adoration grounds, prayer camps, churches and traditional centers. Religious activities has in these places bring about development of various communities. The government should partner with religious bodies to help in the planning and development of host communities concerned.
2. Policies and practices that ensure sustainability of natural and socio-cultural lives of the host communities should be developed at the early stage of development to avoid the negative effect at the maturity stage.
3. Host community should participate in the development process, to give the host communities a sense of ownership and control over the resources of the communities.
4. Government should ensure that religious stakeholders carry out environmental impact assessment (EIA) before commencing any building and development in any community.
5. Proper drainage and waste disposal system should be constructed by religious stakeholders during development process to avert pollution of the community during maturity stage.
6. Religious stakeholders should create awareness on religious practices to help in checking religious fanaticism and

give room for religious tolerance in the

host communities.

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