

Motives of Tourists': Socio-Economic and Challenges of Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF) in Ghana

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the Motives of Tourists; Socio-Economic and Challenges of tourism in Kwahu in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised six (6) communities (Mpraeso, Atibie, Obomeng, Obo Oworobong, and Nketepa in Kwahu South District Assembly (KSDA) in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were employed to select two hundred (200) respondents for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was questionnaires. The study employed the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to code and process the collected data. Descriptive and relational statistical techniques involving frequencies, percentages, summations, diagrams, and tables were employed in analysing the data. The Chi-square test analysis was used to explore the relationships and differences in perceptions. The study indicated that every tourist, whether local (Ghanaian) or foreign, had at least one of the following motives in mind for participating in the festival; To socialize; For relaxation; For education to participate and witness the paragliding festivals; To take photographs of festival scenes; Other motives like to sell items, especially souvenirs. The study also revealed that the KEF has had some positive socio-economic impact or implications on the area. These among others include: job creation, income generation for locals of the area, infrastructural development, and projection of the image of the area as the festival has become one of the biggest gatherings of revellers in the country, drawing people from all walks of life, nationally and internationally as a result of the introduction of paragliding since 2005, socialization enhancement, medium for cultural exchange and education, and finally serves as a medium for portraying the cultural identity of the people of Kwahu. The study also indicated that the major challenges encountered by tourists during the event were listed in order of degree of intensity: High cost of living, poor road network in the area, intermitted electricity and water supply, poor sanitary conditions in the area, poor health facilities, and unwelcoming attitude of some local residents of the festival area. It is recommended that, residents must be educated about the potential benefits of tourism as an industry helping to achieve sustainable community development. It is also recommended that Ghana tourism authority and Kwahu District Assembly should collaborate to improve on social amenities in the municipality to attract more foreign and local tourists during the festivity.

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1. Introduction

Tourism is the movement of people to other places, for all manner of activities, spanning several days, except remunerated jobs. Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations and the facilities created to cater for

their needs. [1]. Tourism has since the mid-1980s emerged as a significant sector in the Ghanaian economy and society; this is manifested in several ways. In the newspapers and on the air waves, public officials proclaim the role of tourism as a major foreign exchange earner and generator of jobs. Now the country is awakened to the potential of tourism and so government officials, communities and individuals do not hesitate to exploit it, there is hardly a public event or occasion organised these days without a tourism angle to it [2]. Growing recognition of socio-economic potential of tourism is now manifested in events such as festivals, Emancipation Day and PANAFEST. These events are also celebrated with the view of marketing Ghana as an international tourism destination. Globalization of the world's economy is a phenomenon sweeping across all countries and continents. The tourism sector of the economy is not immune to this new force. Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Many new destinations have emerged alongside the traditional ones of Europe and North America. In spite of occasional shocks, international tourist arrivals have shown virtually uninterrupted growth: from 25 million in 1950, to 277 million in 1980, to 435 million in 1990, to 675 million in 2000, and currently 940 million [3].

Festivals are now widely promoted as hallmark events that distinguish a destination from others in the world's competitive tourism market. Local festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for tourism development worldwide [4]. Festivals can be used to generate income and to boost local esteem. Africa, in the past has made an attempt to develop major cultural festivals that could be placed on the world's tourism map. These include Festivals of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Nigeria, Union of Radio and Television Networks of Africa (URTNA) awards in South Africa, Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FESPACO) in Burkina Faso, and Pan-Africa Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) in Ghana. These events have achieved international status, in terms of tourist attractions, and destination promotion.

In Ghana, one of the foremost local communities which have Easter as its main festival is the Kwahu people. To their credit the Easter festival, which is celebrated by Ghanaians of all walks, has been "franchised" to them as a special Kwahu affair; hence the brand name - *Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF)*. To the people of Kwahu, Easter is a traditional heritage bestowed on them by their forefathers many years ago [5]. The Kwahus, like any other Akan tribe, had a festival called "Okwahu Afahye". It was celebrated from October through to December, with its peak in December. Kwahus, known to be good traders, and with trading as their main occupation, later had problems with the timing of the Okwahu Afahye, when the majority of her citizenry migrated to Accra, Kumasi, and other major urban centres in Ghana. The peak of the local trading calendar, which falls in December due to Christmas festivities, started affecting patronage of the Kwahu Festival, which also peaked in December. The business-minded Kwahus avoided the festival, and rather opted for the Easter break, to attend the traditionally mandated "home-coming" events. The Kwahu home-coming culture, which was inbuilt in the Kwahu Festival, brought the Kwahus home from other places in Ghana, and the Diaspora (notably Europe and America) to assist the home-based locals, the chiefs and youth associations to develop the Kwahu Traditional Area. According to oral tradition, to sustain patronage, the Kwahu Traditional Council shifted the festival to Easter season, hence the new emphasis - Kwahu Easter Festival.

Easter Festival in Kwahu is one of the most celebrated holidays in the country and has become a national affair of late, especially with the introduction of paragliding activities on the Kwahu mountains in 2005, as well as spirited campaigns by a majority of the Accra-based private radio stations; notably Peace FM, Happy FM, and Adom FM,. Paragliding is a common event in most of the developed countries like Germany, Holland, Sweden, Australia, and U.S.A. In Africa, apart from South Africa and Kenya, Ghana is the only country that organizes this event [6]. Twinning the paragliding event with the

Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF), since 2005, has led to the attraction of more local and international visitors in recent times. With the introduction of additional activities, such as street carnival, highlife concept, joint-traditional durbar of chiefs, health walks, and myriad of sporting activities, KEF has the advantage of extending the tourist season, generating revenue for both government and local authorities, supporting existing businesses, and encouraging new start-ups. Festivals have major impacts on the development of cultural tourism, often economic, social, environmental and political.

Traditionally, chiefs in Ghana find it convenient to have durbars to honour their ancestors, and also rally their subjects for developmental projects. For the Kwahu state in particular, such festive occasions constitute major vehicles for fundraising, and also for securing other vital support from the central government and subjects [5]. In view of this, many Kwahu local communities are rolling out well-crafted festivals and home-coming events to raise crucial socio-economic resources for local development. Festivals are attractive to the host communities, because it helps to develop local pride and identity for the local people, so if these festivals are structured well, it can be used as a tool for tourism promotion [7].

According to these scholars, tourism has great potential to affect the lives of community members in both positive and negative ways as we have seen from the above model. The community support for tourism development is the bases to understand residents' attitudes and opinion about tourism. Tourism development is not simply a matter of matching product supply with tourist demands; local acceptability must also be considered. Tourism development affects residents' habits, daily routine, social lives, beliefs and values. Perception of impact or attitudes towards tourism varies according to individual differences: Personal benefits, level of involvement, level of community tourism development, and residents' characteristics [8].

Personal Benefits: Residents who perceive themselves as benefiting from tourism are likely to view tourism as positive, while residents who perceive themselves as incurring cost are likely to view it as negative. Thus residents who perceive a greater level of personal benefit from tourism express more a positive attitude toward tourism and are more supportive of tourism development than those who do not receive any benefit. Similarly, resident's attitudes towards tourism development are often related to Level of Involvement with the industry. Residents who are knowledgeable about tourism as well as those who are more involved in tourism decision making are often more positively inclined toward the industry. Also, those who are more engaged in the industry through high levels of contact with the tourists are more positive toward tourism and express more positive attitudes than those who are uninvolved [9]. The attitude of residents towards tourism development is also related to the *Level of community Tourism Development*. Residents who do not have interest in tourism may not have any positive impact from tourism. Sentiments about one's community has been a predictor of attitudes about tourism, that is community attachment and is most often measured as *length of time living* in the community or have been born in the community. *Demographic characteristics* of residents also affect their attitudes and perceptions of tourism. *Distance* from tourism area also affects resident attitudes. Similarly, *Gender, age, income* and *education* also influence residents' attitudes and perception about tourism [10]. The matter of gender also has some conflicting results. A study in rural New Zealand showed that women had a more negative view than men in believing there would be increased traffic noise and a rise in crime rates [3]. In rural Norway, women were more concerned about social consequences, reduced safety and wage differences, while the men were more interested in economic and political consequences. This was due to women staying behind in the village while the men were earning money by working away from the village. Some studies have shown there is no gender difference [11]. The level of education also helps determine residents' attitudes towards tourism, with higher educated people having a more positive view of tourism and the

other group with no tourism education background have negative attitudes towards tourism [8].

Tourism has emerged as one of the most sustainable economic ventures globally. It is one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of external economic activities. Its high growth and development rates, considerable volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development, and introduction of new management and educational experience actively affect various sectors of the economy, which positively contribute to the social and economic development of the country as a whole. In Ghana the sector suffers from priority attention. It's potential as an engine of economic growth has not been appreciated, compared to the priority attention it receives from other West African countries like Cape Verde, Gambia, and Senegal. This is visible in the relatively low allocation of budgetary resources to push the sector forward. Budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Tourism has even declined from GH¢17,225,167 in 2011 to GH¢9,658,622 in 2012 [2].

Globally, certain national events/festivals have evolved to achieve international status, in terms of popularity, patronage, and financial accruals. Examples include Salzburg Easter Festival (Austria), Bendigo Easter Festival (Australia) and Carnival in Rio' de Janeiro (Brazil). Furthermore, unique carnivals and festivals like the Mardi Gras in New Orleans, Oktoberfest in Munich, Reggae Sunsplash in Jamaica, and Running of the Bulls in Pamplona (Spain) are noted to trigger strong multiplier effects in the hosting economies. For instance, the 17-day celebration of Spoleto Festival of the city of Charleston, South Carolina, attracts 100,000 people to Charleston and generates \$70 million in economic impact [3]. The largest beer festival in Europe, the Oktoberfest, held annually in Munich (Germany), is reported to have attracted 6.2 million visitors in 2006 [3]. Against this backdrop, one is at a loss as to why Ghana is not taking advantage to package some of the popular, established, indigenous, traditional festivals as a tourism hallmark event, to diversify Ghana's tourist product offering, and by and large improve her domestic and international tourist earnings.

Traditional festivals abound in all the ten regions of the country and also throughout the lunar year. This makes for all year celebration of festivals, which are different from each other in their meaning, history and, activities [12]. If these festivals are structured well, it can be used as a tool to promote tourism [13, 14-15]. However, few studies relatively exist, in local scholarship, concerning the developmental impacts of festival tourism in Ghana [12, 16-17]. One of the most popular festivals in Ghana that has attracted media hype of late is the Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF) [18].

The Kwahu people have a traditional home-coming culture inbuilt in their Easter festivities. It is a traditional norm for a Kwahu indigene to visit home during Easter. The occasion is used to pay homage to ancestors, honour family elders, fraternize with other family members, and resolve all intra-family impasse and rivalries. Consequently, all Kwahus domiciled elsewhere in Ghana, as well as in the Diaspora (notably Europe and America), are expected to come home annually. This is a major avenue for the development of cultural tourism, event tourism, and visiting friends and relatives (VFR) tourism. Coupled with the areas' unique geographical features (mountains, waterfalls, cool weather, indigenous art and craft industry etcetera), other nature-based tourism strands could also be promoted. The Ghana Tourist Board, in collaboration with other stakeholders, is engaged in spirited efforts to brand KEF as a major tourist product, together with the Kwahu Paragliding event. Yet there is paucity of academic research as to the real touristic and socio-economic benefits that could accrue from turning a purely traditional festival into an international tourist product. The purpose of the study was to examine Motives of Tourists; Socio-Economic and Challenges of tourism in Kwahu in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study sought to answer these research (1) what are the motives of tourists in participation of Kwahu Easter festival (2) To what extent did the festival contribute to the socio-economic life of the people? (3) What are the challenges faced by the tourists in Kwahu Easter festival.

2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised six (6) communities (Mpraeso, Atibie, Obomeng, Obo Oworobong and Nketepa in Kwahu South District Assembly (KSDA) in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were employed to select two-hundred (200) respondents for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to enable the researcher get required information from specific target population of defined interest, such as the festival planning committee, and local residents who have visited/participated in the festival at least twice within the last five years. A convenience sampling technique was further employed to elicit information from the festival tourists. This technique sampled those who were readily accessible with a minimum effort and it was used because visitors to festivals have no sampling frame [19]. The main instruments used for data collection was questionnaires. One hundred and twenty (120) questionnaires were administered to the local residents who were well versed with Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF). The basic criterion was sampling the views of local residents who had stayed at KSD for at least five years since such people are assumed to have enough experience about the celebrations. Twenty (20) respondents were selected from each of these six communities. The remaining eighty (80) questionnaires were administered to the festival tourists. Motives of the festival tourists were group into these broad areas; education and experience, socialization, relaxation, participation, to take photographs and other. Questions socio-economic significance of KEF and challenges were also solicited. The study employed the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to code and process the collected data. Descriptive and relational statistical techniques involving frequencies, percentages, summations, diagrams and tables were employed in analyzing the data. The Chi-square test analysis was used to explore the relationships and differences in perceptions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Travel Motivations of Tourists

There are a variety of forces and pressures in an individual's social and cultural environment which may influence that individual's needs and motivations, or desire to take part in tourism. At the basic level, for example, the motivation for many people to take a holiday is to relax, to rest, to have a change and to get away from the routine, in order to survive in modern society. The motivation for choosing a particular tourist site varied among the tourists. The choice of a particular tourist site depended on the reasons for the visit. For some tourists it was physical or natural features, for pleasure and refreshment, or cultural - out of interest in the host community, their traditions and historical places. As is evident from the study, the most popular motives of Ghanaian festival visitors were for socialization and derivation for pleasure. Other forms of motivation included;

- to learn the culture of the festival town
- to participate in the paragliding festival
- to take photographs of festival scenes
- to sell items, especially souvenirs
- To ease boredom of work and routine of everyday chores.

These motives were however different from foreign visitor' motives. As shown in the [Table 1](#) below, most of the foreign tourists visited the festival for education and to witness and participate in paragliding activities. Nigerian respondents visited the occasion for education. Here education refers to learning the culture and also the issues pertaining to paragliding. The Germans also attended for education and relaxation but most importantly as a study tour to partake in paragliding, some of the Germans also came as expert paragliders to assist GTA to organise this event effectively. The American respondents came as experts in paragliding to assist the authority in charge. From the discussion above one could easily say that tourist may choose destination for more than one reason.

Table 1. Motives of Tourists for Attending Festival.

Nationality	Motives						Total
	Education	Socialization	Relaxation	To Participate	To take Photographs	Other Motives	
Ghana	12	16	6	6	2	2	44
Nigeria	1	2	0	0	0	0	3
South Africa	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Germany	5	0	4	11	0	0	20
USA	4	2	2	3	0	0	11
Total	24	20	12	20	2	2	80

Source: Fieldwork.

3.2. Socio-Economic Significant of KEF

In the case of Kwahu South district, previously the festival was celebrated without tourism inclination or motives, it was just recently that the potential tourist sites and activities such as paragliding have been discovered by the help of Ghana Tourist Authority through KSDA. Therefore, a study of this nature cannot encompass all the economic and social benefits that tourism might have for the area.

Table 2. Social-Economic Significance of the KEF

Socio-Economic factors	Level of Agreement				
Creation of Job Opportunities	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Total
	53 44.1%	47 39.2%	15 12.5%	5 4.2%	120 100%
Income Creation for the localities	40 33%	32 27%	12 10%	36 30%	120 100%
Infrastructural Development	30 25%	32 27%	24 20%	34 28%	120 100%
The festival increases image of the area	56 47%	36 30%	12 10%	16 13%	120 100%
Enhances socialisation	58 48%	50 42%	7 6%	5 4%	120 100%
Medium for cultural exchange and education	27 22.5%	34 28.3%	32 26.7%	27 22.5%	120 100%
Provision of entertainment opportunities for residents of the area	44 36.7%	40 33.3%	5 4.2%	31 25.8%	120 100%

Source: Fieldwork

Table 2 summaries some of the socio-economic significance of the KEF in relation to the people of the Kwahu South District Assembly. To simplify the results given in the table above, responses under “strongly agree” and “agree” will be aggregated as one. Clearly, it can be observed that a majority of respondents in the communities agree that the KEF leads to creation of jobs in the communities [20, 21]. These jobs tend to be seasonal; examples are the sales officers who sell and promote goods and services for their compa-

nies and service providers, drivers, tour operators, guides, hoteliers and telecom operators who employ people to promote their services. Alcoholic and beverage companies also employ people to promote and sell their products during this period.

The majority (60%) of the respondents agree that the KEF serves as a source of income for businesses and individuals that supply goods and services to tourist, including accommodation, entertainment and shopping [22]. However, a significant proportion of the respondents (30%) disagree that KEF is a source of income for them since by their rural settings they do not benefit from the festival [8].

On the social aspects, seventy-seven percent (77%) of the respondents believed that the KEF has enhanced the image of the communities in the catchment area since people from far and near visit the area during the event. The KEF has assumed international dimension due to the introduction of paragliding activity since 2005. Tourists from Western countries have made it a regular feature on the tourist calendar to visit the occasion annually. For instant according to Ghana Tourist Authority (2010) report, 22% of the visitor population were Americans, 4% British, Germany 5% and others. However, thirteen (13%) of the respondents, mostly in the rural areas, disagree that the KEF has enhances the image of the area.

The survey analysis revealed that the majority of the respondents (90%) attest to the fact that the KEF leads to socialisation. Natives from far and near come home for the occasion to meet kith and kin, disputes are resolved, marriages are contracted and also it's a time to remember the departed souls. Again, "the KEF serves as a platform for members to eat from one big common bowl and drink from the same calabash to promote the desired level of unity within the family setup" [23]. As a medium for cultural and educational exchange, (50.8%) of the respondents see the KEF as a means of cultural exchange and education. This point was not strongly supported by the elderly people since according to them, the trend and the motives of celebrating the event is gradually changing from traditional/cultural event/festival to commoditization of potential products in the area. The natives tend to learn a lot of the cultural behaviours of the tourists albeit, some being negative whilst on the other hand, the tourist also learns the culture of the natives. Some elders professed that the celebration of the event has brought some adverse effects of the Western culture onto the local cultural for example indecent dressing "some young men and women sitting on the doors of saloon cars with the upper part of their bodies outside and clutching to some bottles of liquor kept zooming from one end to another on the main street, amidst tooting and shouts of "ya ba bio moo"! To wit we have come again. That kind of dressing, during Easter is a major challenge to the cultural norms [24].

Most respondents (70%) thought the celebration of the festival provides entertainment opportunities for residents in the area. Obomeng and Mpraeso being the nerve centre of Kwahu Easter celebration are over-charged with jubilant celebrants, attracting lots of famous artistes from all part of the country. Among them are A.B. Crentsil, Amakye Dede, Nana Kwame Ampadu, Kwadjo Antwi, K. K. Fosu, Daddy Lumber just to mention a few. Moreover, the festival is also characterised with other activities some of which are touristic. These include paragliding festivals, health walks, adventure hikes, musical shows, highlife bands and street carnivals.

3.3. Challenges Faced by Tourists/Guests

Moving to a different location outside one's area of residence, even in the same region or country, is not without problems. The study identified some problems faced by the tourists in Kwahu South District Assembly and this can be found in the table below. The most prominent among these problems was the issue of high cost of living in the area during the Easter festivities.

Table 3. Challenges Faced by Tourists in KSDA.

Problems identified	% of Total
High cost of living	30.0
Poor nature of roads	25.0
Poor sanitation and dirty environment	10.0
Intermittent electricity and water supply	15.0
Poor health facilities	15.0
Attitude of local residents	5.0
Total	100.0

Source: Fieldwork

From the [Table 3](#) above, 30.0 % of the tourists complained of high cost of living in the community. Prices of goods and services shoot up. The average room rates during Easter rose significantly compared to rates existing prior to Easter. There were others who preferred to return to Koforidua and Accra to avoid these expensive hotel rates. Drivers were charging exorbitant fares; complaints were also made about payment of multiple fees that is separate entrance fees to the paragliding site and Amena Wiawe Cave. 25.0 % of which majority of the complainants were foreign tourists raised the issue of poor nature of roads as habitual challenges they encounter yearly. 15 % of both local and foreign tourists raised the issue of poor health facilities as one of the major threats to their stay at the area; inadequate pharmacy or drugstores, lack of emergency services to cater for accidents should they happen, inadequate provision of dust bins and inadequate places of convenience were posing problems to their health.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study indicated that every tourist, whether local (Ghanaian) or foreign, had at least one of the following motives in mind for participating in the festival; To socialize; For relaxation; For education to participate and witness the paragliding festivals; To take photographs of festival scenes; Other motives like to sell items especially souvenirs. The study also concluded that motives vary in relation to country of origin. Most of the foreign tourists attended the festival as experts in paragliding who wanted to witness and participate in the paragliding. It was also discovered that paragliding was the best touristic activity that drew more people both locally and internationally to the festival. The study also revealed that most respondents at least agreed that the development of the KEF has had some positive socio-economic impact or implications on the area. These among others include: job creation, income generation for locals of the area, infrastructural development, projection of the image of the area as the festival has become one of the biggest gatherings of revellers in the country, drawing people from all walks of life, nationally and internationally as a result of the introduction of paragliding since 2005, socialization enhancement, medium for cultural exchange and education, and finally serves as a medium for portraying the cultural identity of the people of Kwahu. The study also indicated that the major challenges encountered by tourist during the event listed in order of degree of intensity: High cost of living, poor road network in the area, intermitted electricity and

water supply, poor sanitary conditions in the area, poor health facilities, and unwelcoming attitude of some local residents of the festival area.

It is recommended that, residents must be educated about the potential benefits of tourism as an industry helping to achieve sustainable community development. This can be possible through the use of popular media such as radio, TV, newspapers, magazines and even village meetings. This will help them to have a more realistic or positive view of tourism development within the communities. It is also recommended that Ghana tourism authority and Kwahu District Assembly should collaborate to improve on social amenities in the municipality to attract more foreign and local tourists during the festivity.

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