

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF TOUR GUIDE ON VISITORS SATISFACTION AT ADO-AWAYE, OYO STATE

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Abstract

Tour guides are among the most critical human elements in the tourism experience, their importance lies not just in transferring factual information, but in shaping the visitor's perception of the destination itself. The research investigated how visitors perceive the quality and impact of guided tours at Ado-Awaye Suspended Lake. A quantitative approach was used with a descriptive quantitative survey, data collected from 174 respondents. Results showed that most visitors were that most visitors were men (74.7%), educated and single, and 70.1% were not repeating visitors. All the visitors experienced guided tour, and rated their experience good and they possess good knowledge of the site. Results further showed the satisfaction of visitors with the tour guide services, especially in areas such as communication, friendliness, and site knowledge as efficient and recommendable. However, some challenges were noted, including the need for better guide presentation and engagement and confidence level of tour guides. The test of relationship shows there is significant relationship between tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction with tour guide services and tourist perception of tour guide ($P < 0.05$). The study recommends improved guide training, clearer communication, and structured feedback systems to enhance the visitor experience and satisfaction.

Keywords: Ado-Awaye, Suspended Lake, Tour Guide, Visitor Satisfaction, Tourism, Repeating visit

Introduction

Tour guides are among the most critical human elements in the tourism experience, serving as interpreters, facilitators, and intermediaries between destinations and visitors (Moreno-Melgarejo *et al.*, 2020). While mountainous regions serve as global repositories for a vast array of tourism attractions; consequently, mountain-based activities are estimated to constitute approximately 15% to 20% of the global tourism industry (Silva *et al.*, 2014; Olaniyi & Bada, 2020). High-quality

interpretation and information sharing are essential for elevating the guest experience. Improvements in these areas directly correlate with heightened demand for services and a significant boost in tourist patronage (Abidakun & Tunde-Ajayi, 2021). The importance of the tour guide lies not just in transferring factual information, but in shaping the visitor's perception of the destination itself (El-sharkawy, 2014). Satisfaction in tourism is fundamentally defined by the interplay between pre-consumption expectations and the empirical reality of the visit (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019).

Visitor satisfaction is a critical determinant of a tourist destination's success, influencing repeat visitation and positive word-of-mouth recommendations (Chang, 2014). While research in this area has yielded inconsistent results, the consensus remains that satisfaction is achieved when performance outweighs expectation, whereas a performance deficit leads to dissatisfaction (Huang *et al.*, 2010; Abidakun & Tunde-Ajayi, 2021). As noted by Lhendup and Panda (2020), this level of fulfillment is best quantified by examining a tourist's willingness to recommend the destination, their desire for repeat visitation, and their overall assessment of front-line service providers like tour guides (Gesimba, 2024).

The World Federation of Tourist Guides Association (WFTGA, 2003) defines a tour guide as an individual who provides guided services in a visitor's preferred language while interpreting the cultural and natural heritage of a specific area. Such professionals typically hold area-specific qualifications recognized or issued by relevant governing bodies. Beyond this foundational definition, El-sharkawy (2014) in his study emphasized that a guide's specialized knowledge, skills, and interpersonal abilities are critical determinants of participant satisfaction. Because guides maintain continuous and intensive contact with their groups, they possess the unique capacity to transform standard itinerary items into extraordinary experiences. Consequently, they bear the primary responsibility for ensuring sustained visitors' satisfaction throughout the entire duration of the tour.

Ado-Awaye Suspended Lake is one of the only two Suspended Lakes in the whole world (Akande, 2017). The Suspended Lake is located in Oyo State and this ought to make it an instant destination choice for tourists (Adetola & Ofili, 2022). The tour guiding service is one of the critical services provided by tour operators and destination management of the site. It is considered essential for tourist satisfaction and experience in package tours (Cetinkaya & Oter, 2016). Enhancing tour guide performance based on empirical findings can lead to improved visitor satisfaction, increased visitation rates, and economic benefits for the local community. Therefore, the objective of this study is to investigate and evaluate the impact of tour guides on visitor satisfaction at Ado Awaye, providing insights that can inform policy and practice in tour guide management and offering insights into the specific dynamics of tour guide-visitor interactions at cultural heritage sites in Nigeria.

Materials and Methods

This study adopted a quantitative approach using a descriptive quantitative survey. The target population includes all visitors to the Ado-Awaye suspended lake attraction during the time of data collection. While there is no exact published figure on the number of tourists visiting the site yearly, site officials and local tourism stakeholders estimated that the number of visitors ranged between 150 to 300 individuals per year, especially during holidays and festive periods. The population includes both domestic and international tourists, men and women, across different age categories, and with varying levels of education and travel experience. They represented individuals who had direct interactions with tour guides at Ado-Awaye Lake, making their feedback relevant for assessing satisfaction levels. The sample size for the total population size of 304 was 174. This was according to the sample size of Taro Yamane (1967) equation adopted by Orga and Dalhatu (2024), at a margin error of 5 per cent and confidence level of 95 per cent. The respondents were selected using non-probability sample, convenient or accidental sampling technique. Questionnaires administered were analyzed using descriptive statistics; these will include frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations presented in tables and charts. Inferential statistics includes chi-square for test of relationship.

Results and Discussion

Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

The results showed that most visitors were men (74.7%). This is common because adventure and outdoor tourism often attracts more men than women (Abidakun & Tunde-Ajayi, 2021). Many visitors were young adults aged 21–35 (63.8%), which agrees with studies showing younger people travel more for fun and exploration (UNWTO, 2023). Most of them were single (70.7%), which means they had fewer family commitments and more freedom to travel (Cohen and Cohen, 2012). Many visitors had tertiary education (76.4%), and educated people are often more interested in nature and cultural tourism (Asmelash & Kumar, 2019). Business owners (40.2%) and civil servants (35.1%) made up most of the visitors, showing that the lake is popular among working people. A key result was that 70.1% of visitors were not visiting for the first time. Repeat visitors often mean they liked their past experience and were satisfied with the place (Taiwo *et al.*, 2025)

Table 1: Socio-characteristics of participants

Variable	Frequency (174)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	44	25.3%
Male	130	74.7%
Age		
10-20	5	2.9%
21-35	111	63.8%
36-45	54	31.0%
46 and above	4	2.3%
Marital Status		
Single	123	70.7%
Married	51	29.3%
Divorced	0	0%
Educational qualification		
Primary Education	6	3.4%
Secondary Education	25	14.4%
Tertiary	133	76.4%
No Formal Education	10	5.7%
Occupation		
Student	43	24.7%
Civil Servant	61	35.1%
Business Owner	70	40.2%
Other	0	0%
Is this your first visit to Iya Lake?		
Yes	52	29.9%
No	122	70.1%

Tourist Perception of Tour Guide at Iya Lake

Figure 1 revealed that all the respondents (100%) experienced a guided tour during their visit.

Figure 2 revealed all of the respondents claimed tour guided is needed at Iyake Lake (100%).

Figure 3 revealed that majority of the respondents prefer their tour with the tour guide (96.6%), while 3.4% prefer their tour personally.

Figure 4 revealed that majority of the respondents rated the tour guide good (50.6%), 29.9% rated very good, 10.3% were neutral, 6.9% rated poor and 2.3% rated tour guide very poor.

Table 2 revealed the tourist perception of tour guide. The variables were subjected to mean scores and the mean value ranged from 2.25 to 1.57. “Tour guide is necessary at Iyake Lake” and “Visitors should not be allowed to go on a tour to Iya Lake” had highest mean value of 2.25 while “The tour guide was audible enough” had the lowest mean value of 1.57.

Discussion

Cetinkaya and Oter, (2016) noted that tourists often value tour guides as “the face of the destination,” meaning their performance strongly influences how visitors feel about a place. These results suggest that tour guides at Iyake Lake are meeting visitor expectations and play a strong role in shaping positive experiences.

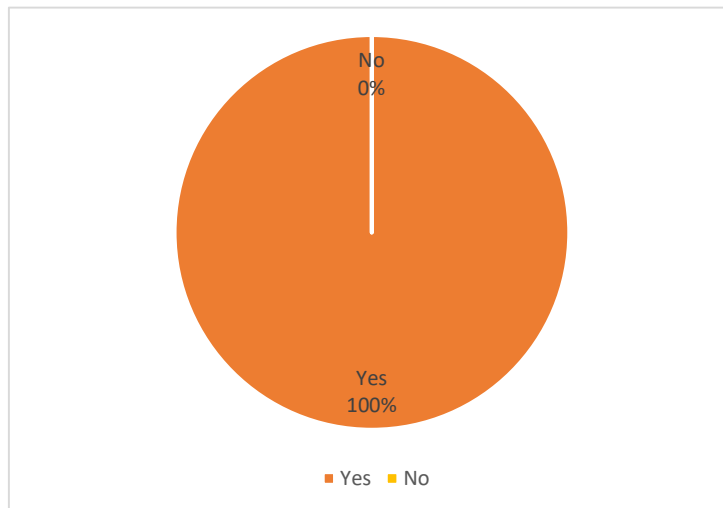


Figure 1. Guided tour experience



Figure 2. The need for guided tour at Iyake Lake

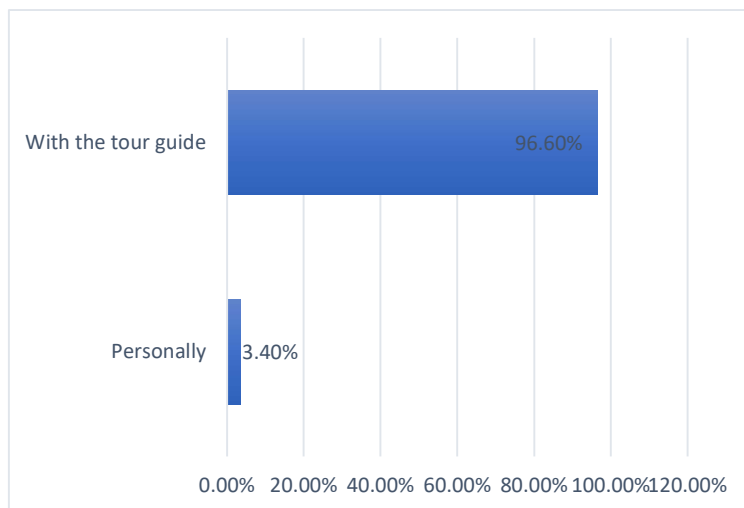


Figure 3. Preference for Tour Experience

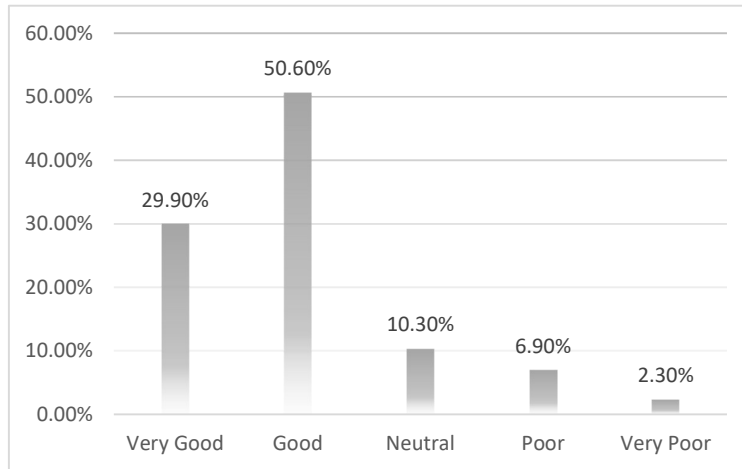


Figure 4. Performance of tour guide

Table 2: Tourist Perception of Tour Guide

Variables	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev.
Tour guide is necessary at Iyake Lake	40 (23.0%)	81 (46.6%)	33 (19.0%)	10 (5.7%)	10 (5.7%)	2.25	1.06
Visitors should not be allowed to go on a tour to Iya Lake	12 (6.9%)	16 (9.2%)	7 (4.0%)	108 (62.1%)	31 (17.8%)	2.25	1.07
The tour guide is presentable and well-coordinated	86 (49.4%)	47 (27.0%)	18 (10.3%)	11 (6.3%)	12 (6.9%)	1.94	1.22
The tour guide is interesting and lively	52 (29.9%)	94 (54.0%)	16 (9.2%)	7 (4.0%)	5 (2.9%)	1.96	0.90
The tour guide has good communication skills	107 (61.5%)	34 (19.5%)	15 (8.6%)	10 (5.7%)	8 (4.6%)	1.72	1.13
The tour guide was audible enough	115 (66.1%)	35 (20.1%)	7 (4.0%)	17 (9.8%)	0 (0%)	1.57	0.96

The tour guide was able to answer questions effectively	115 (66.1 %)	34 (19.5 %)	7 (4.0%)	11 (6.3%)	7 (4.0%)	1.63	1.09
The tour guide contributed positively to my perception of Iyake Lake	109 (62.6 %)	48 (27.6 %)	0 (0%)	10 (5.7%)	7 (4.0%)	1.61	1.04

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Tourist Satisfaction with Tour Guide at Iya Lake

This section provides findings on visitors' satisfaction with the tour guide services at Iyake Lake. It focuses on whether tourists were satisfied, their level of satisfaction, and which aspects of the tour they valued the most. Understanding visitor satisfaction is important because it shows how tour guide services influence the overall experience and perception of the destination.

Figure 5 revealed that majority of the respondents (93.7%) were satisfied with the tour guide services while 6.3% were not.

Figure 6 revealed the level of satisfaction, 89.1% were very satisfied, 4.3% were somewhat satisfied, while 6.3% were not satisfied with the tour guide services.

Figure 7 revealed the services mostly used, Introduction Aspect (64.4%), Iyalake Explanation (29.9%), Engagement Ability (3.4%), Mode of Communication (2.3%).

Table 3 revealed the tourist satisfaction with tour guide services. The variables were subjected to mean scores and the mean value ranged from 1.89 to 1.40. "The tour guide demonstrated a good knowledge of the Iyake lake" had highest mean value of 1.89 while "The tour guide communicated clearly and effectively throughout the tour" had the lowest mean value of 1.40.

Discussion

This suggests that while guides are delivering good explanations and initial briefings, there may be room to improve interactive engagement and communication styles during tours. These findings support earlier studies that emphasized the link between quality guiding services and tourist satisfaction. El-sharkawy (2014), found that a professional guide not only shares knowledge but also creates memorable experiences that influence repeat visits. Similarly, Weiler and Black (2014), highlighted that well-prepared introductions and accurate information delivery positively shape tourists' perceptions of a site. The results show that tourists at Iyake Lake are highly satisfied with tour guide services, particularly in terms of introductions and information delivery. However, improving interaction and communication styles during tours could further enhance visitor experiences and encourage repeat visits.

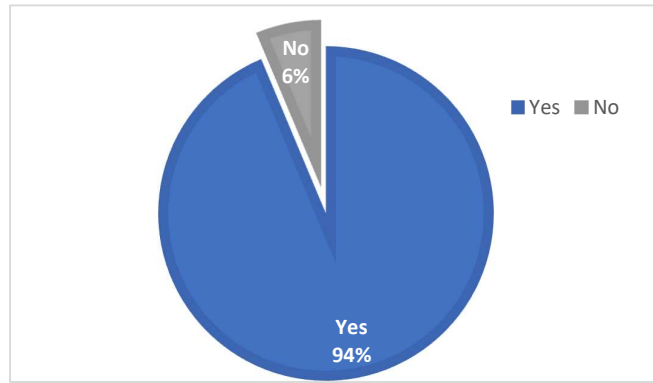


Figure 5. Satisfaction with tour guide services

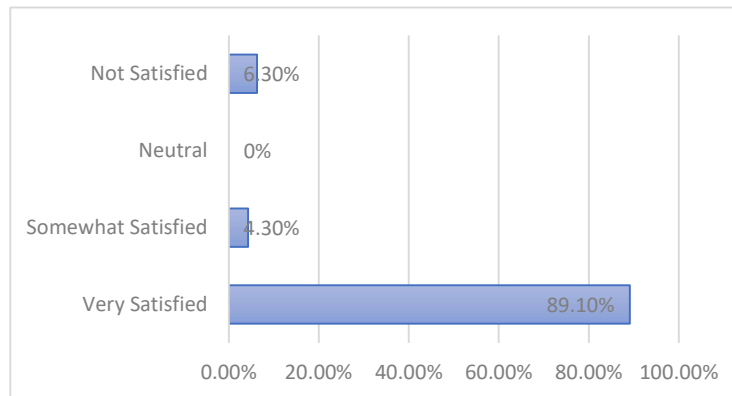


Figure 6. Level of satisfaction

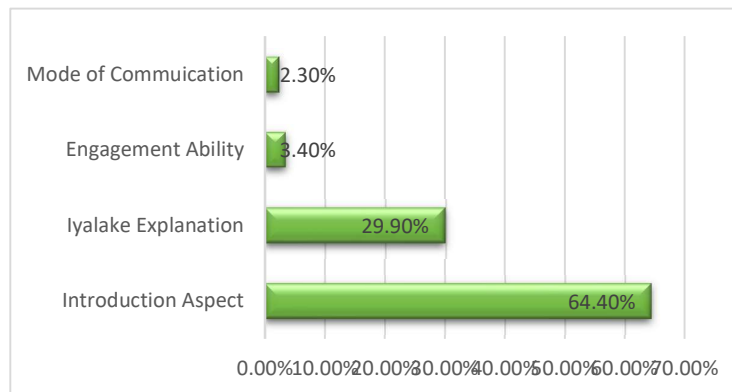


Figure 7. Services rendered by tour guide

Table 3: Tourist Satisfaction with Tour Guide Services

Influencing factors	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
The tour guide demonstrated a good knowledge of the Iyake lake.	91 (52.3%)	54 (31.0%)	6 (3.4%)	4 (2.3%)	19 (10.9%)	1.89	1.28
The tour guide communicated clearly and effectively throughout the tour	121 (69.5%)	42 (24.1%)	6 (3.4%)	5 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	1.40	0.70
The tour guide was friendly and approachable	79 (45.4%)	72 (41.4%)	18 (10.3%)	5 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	1.71	0.77
The tour guide engaged the visitors with interesting facts and stories	128 (73.6%)	33 (19.0%)	0 (0%)	10 (5.7%)	3 (1.7%)	1.43	0.90
The tour guide was well-organized and managed the tour efficiently.	107 (61.5%)	42 (24.1%)	12 (6.9%)	13 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	1.60	0.91
The tour guide helped to make the visit more enjoyable and engaging	83 (47.7%)	74 (42.5%)	12 (6.9%)	5 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	1.65	0.74

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Influence of Tour Guides on Visitor Satisfaction

Tour guides play a key role in shaping visitors' experiences at tourist sites. Their knowledge, behaviour, and communication skills can greatly affect how visitors enjoy and remember their visit. This section explores how tour guides at Iyake Lake influence the overall satisfaction of visitors. It looks at visitors' views on the

professionalism, efficiency, and helpfulness of the guides, and how these factors impact their enjoyment and willingness to recommend the site to others.

Figure 8 revealed that majority of the strongly agrees (54.6%) that the tour guide possess quality and professional service.

Figure 9 revealed the efficiency, 47.7% rated very efficient, 31.0% rated efficient, while 7.5% rated not efficient and 13.8% were neutral.

Figure 10 revealed majority of the respondents (81.6%) would recommend the tour guide to others.

Table 4 revealed the tourist satisfaction with tour guide services. The variables were subjected to mean scores and the mean value ranged from 1.99 to 1.60. “I can recommend Iyake lake to others because of the tour guide” had highest mean value of 1.99 while “I enjoyed my tour mostly due to the guided tour” and “The tour guide helped me better understand Iya Lake” had the lowest mean value of 1.60.

Discussion

This shows that visitors generally view the guides as competent and professional in carrying out their duties. High levels of professionalism among tour guides are important because they create a positive visitor experience and help build trust in the destination (Weiler & Black, 2014). Professionalism also ensures that visitors feel safe, informed, and engaged during their tours. The results from this study are consistent with the work of Chang (2014), who found that professional guiding services significantly increase visitor satisfaction and willingness to revisit.

Table 4 aligns with previous studies showing that effective tour guiding enhances perceived value and satisfaction among tourists. Moreover, 56.3% strongly agreed they would recommend Iyake Lake to others due to the tour guide, demonstrating the strong influence guides have on positive word-of-mouth and repeat visitation (Huang *et al.*, 2010). However, the presence of neutral and disagreement responses indicates some variation in visitor perceptions, which could relate to individual expectations or tour experiences.

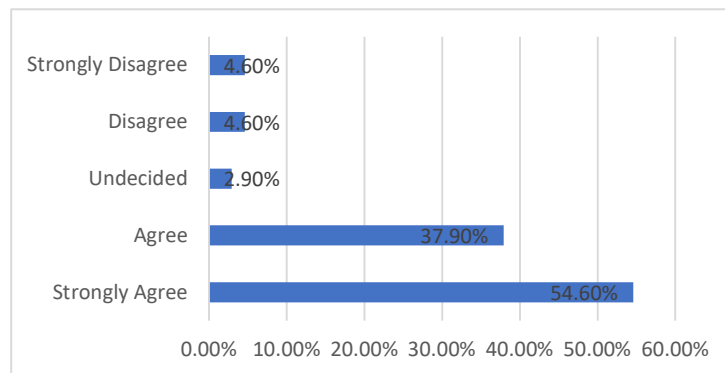


Figure 8. Quality of tour guide

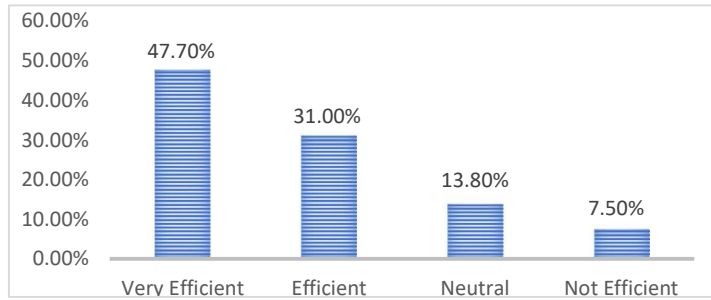


Figure 9. Efficiency of the tour guide services

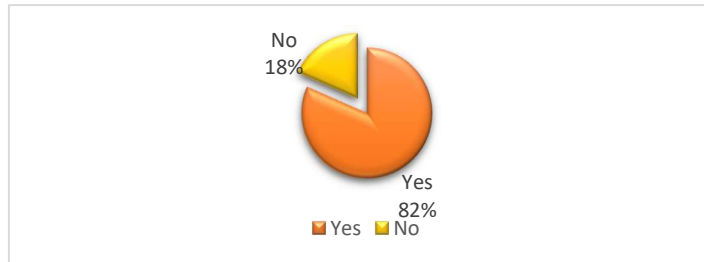


Figure 10. Recommendation of tour guide

Table 4: Influence of Tour Guide on Visitor Satisfaction

Influencing factors	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
I enjoyed my tour mostly due to the guided tour.	118 (67.8%)	32 (18.4%)	0 (0%)	24 (13.8%)	0 (0%)	1.60	1.04
I am more satisfied with my visit because of the tour guide	82 (47.1%)	68 (39.1%)	0 (0%)	24 (13.8%)	0 (0%)	1.80	1.00
I can recommend Iyake lake to others because of the tour guide	98 (56.3%)	17 (9.8%)	28 (16.1%)	24 (13.8%)	7 (4.0%)	1.99	1.28
I had value for my money due to the guided tour	103 (59.2%)	32 (18.4%)	30 (17.2%)	9 (5.2%)	0 (0%)	1.68	0.94

The tour guide made the tour more interesting.	107 (61.5%)	30 (17.2%)	28 (16.1%)	9 (5.2%)	0 (0%)	1.65	0.93
The tour guide helped me better understand Iya Lake	117 (67.2%)	20 (11.5%)	27 (15.5%)	10 (5.7%)	0 (0%)	1.60	0.95

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Factors that Influence Visitor's Satisfaction

Understanding the factors that influence Visitor Satisfaction helps to identify areas where tour guides can improve to make visits more enjoyable and memorable for tourists. The findings were based on visitors' opinions gathered during the survey.

Table 5 revealed the factors that influence visitor's satisfaction. The variables were subjected to mean scores and the mean value ranged from 2.16 to 1.58. "Tour guide should be present at the start of the presentation" and "Tour guide should be more confident" had highest mean value of 2.16 while "Tour guides should be more presentable" had the lowest mean value of 1.58.

Table 5: Factors in Tour Guide Performance that Influence Visitors Satisfaction

Influencing factors	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
Tour guides should be more presentable.	118 (67.8%)	20 (11.5%)	27 (15.5%)	9 (5.2%)	0 (0%)	1.58	0.93
Tour guides should have more crowd control	104 (59.8%)	34 (19.5%)	27 (15.5%)	9 (5.2%)	0 (0%)	1.66	0.92
Tour guides should use good language	107 (61.5%)	28 (16.1%)	27 (15.5%)	9 (5.2%)	3 (1.7%)	1.70	1.02
Tour guide should be present at the start of	93 (53.4%)	20 (11.5%)	27 (15.5%)	9 (5.2%)	25 (14.4%)	2.16	1.48

the presentation							
Tour guide should be more confident.	71 (40.8%)	46 (26.4%)	27 (15.5%)	18 (10.3%)	12 (6.9%)	2.16	1.26
Tour guide should be more audible.	69 (39.7%)	93 (53.4%)	0 (0%)	12 (16.9%)	0 (0%)	1.74	0.78
Tour guides should be more engaging with tourists.	85 (48.9%)	77 (44.3%)	0 (0%)	12 (6.9%)	0 (0%)	1.65	0.80
Tour guides should be more interesting and livelier	65 (37.4%)	87 (50.0%)	7 (4.0%)	9 (5.2%)	6 (3.4%)	1.87	0.96

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, N-Neutral, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree

Hypotheses Testing

Relationship between tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction with tour guide services

Table 7 below revealed that there is a significant relationship between tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction with tour guide services (P=0.001).

Relationship between tourist satisfaction with tour guide services and tourist perception of tour guide

Table 8 below revealed that there is a significant relationship between tourist satisfaction with tour guide services and tourist perception of tour guide (P=0.000).

Table 7: Relationship between tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction with tour guide services

Variables	Chi Square (χ^2)	Sig. Value	Decision
Relationship between tour guide performance and tourist satisfaction with tour guide services	13.628	0.001	Significant

*P<0.05

Table 8: Relationship between tourist satisfaction with tour guide services and tourist perception of tour guide

Variables	Chi- square (χ^2)	Sig. Value	Decision
Relationship between tourist satisfaction with tour guide services and tourist perception of tour guide	13.109	0.000	Significant

**P<0.01, *P<0.05

Discussion of Key Findings

The findings from this study provide strong evidence that tour guides play a major role in shaping visitors' satisfaction at Iyake Lake. Several important patterns emerged from the data. First, almost all visitors (100%) reported participating in a guided tour and agreed that having a tour guide is necessary. This supports the idea that guided tours help improve visitor experiences at natural attractions. As argued by Binti *et al.* (2022), the tour guide serves as the face of the tourism experience and significantly influences how visitors perceive a site. In terms of guide performance, most respondents rated the tour guide as "very good" or "good," showing that the guide's role was appreciated. This aligns with the work of Gesimba (2024), who found that effective communication, confidence, and friendliness of guides are key to visitor satisfaction. In our study, many visitors praised the guide's communication skills, friendliness, and ability to make the tour lively and educational. Furthermore, satisfaction levels were very high, with 93.7% of respondents saying they were satisfied, and 89.1% stating they were "very satisfied." Visitors were particularly impressed with the introduction given at the beginning of the tour and the explanation of Iyake Lake.

According to El-sharkawy (2014), when guides provide clear and engaging commentary, visitors are more likely to report a sense of enjoyment and deeper connection with the place visited. The influence of the guide also extended to broader visitor outcomes. Many respondents stated they enjoyed their visit mainly

because of the guided tour, and over 80% said they would recommend the guide to others. Factors such as presentability, crowd control, and language use were identified as areas that influence visitor satisfaction. Respondents showed that they value not only what the guide says but also how they conduct themselves.

Conclusion

This study shows that tour guides play a very important role in improving the experience of visitors at Iyake Lake. The lake, being a unique natural and cultural attraction in Nigeria, offers a lot for tourists to enjoy. Without proper guidance and clear explanations, many visitors may not fully understand the history, meaning, and beauty of the site. Most tourists agreed that the presence of a good tour guide made their visit more fun, meaningful, and enjoyable. Tour guides helped them learn new things about the lake, feel more comfortable during the tour, and enjoy every part of the journey. The way the guides spoke, how they related with visitors, and how organized they were all played a big part in how satisfied people felt. The study also found that there are still some things to improve; in such that tour guides should be livelier and engaging. These are areas that, if worked on, will help raise the quality of service and make the experience even better for visitors.

A tour guide is not just someone who shows the way. At Iyake Lake, the guide is also a storyteller, a host, and a key part of what makes the visit memorable. Giving more attention to how tour guides are trained and how they interact with visitors will help promote tourism and attract more people to this special site.

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