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**Residents' Perception of Host-Guest Interaction about Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF) As Festival Tourism**

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**Abstract**

In Ghana, Kwahu Easter Festival (FEK) is one of the festivals different from each other in their meaning and history. The study examines the residents' awareness of host-guest interaction about KEF as festival tourism by using Doxey's Irridex Framework. Primary data was sourced from 110 local residents by using questionnaires and convenience sampling technique. The results of the study revealed that the paragliding recreational activity has become so famous and has even become a tourism sign post for KEF in Ghana. It was also observed that indecent dressing and promiscuity ranked as the worse negative behaviour during KEF. Majority of the respondents perceived that there were more street carnivals during KEF instead of using the festival to settle family disputes in various towns/villages as it was the original ancestral way of festival celebration. Interestingly, among the 110 respondents, "Antagonism" was rather turned round from "hostility towards tourists" to "hosting the tourists" in the community. It is recommended that since the community members are friendly towards tourism activities, GTA and

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tour operators in Ghana should take full advantage and advertise the tourism potential in the community and use such as part of tour packages. To restore the original ancestral idea of organizing KEF, in the course of the celebration one day should be declared as "Family Day" to enable families and clans to gather to settle disputes.

**Keywords:** Kwahu Easter, Mountain Odweanoma, paragliding, street carnival

## INTRODUCTION

Africa has diverse indigenous cultures that can be described as having a hidden comparative advantage in the development of festival tourism; this is because these festivals possess distinctive cultural and nature-based attractions. Tourism in Ghana has become a major socio-economic activity and one of the most important and fastest growing sectors of the Ghanaian economy. In the opinion of Akyeampong and Asiedu (2008) Ghana can boast of a variety of traditional/cultural events which are spread throughout the length and breadth of the country and the calendar year. One of such festivals is the Easter Festival heavily promoted and celebrated in Kwahu Communities in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

As proposed by Felsenstein and Fleischer (2003) local festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for tourism development worldwide. Festivals are now widely promoted as both international events and domestic tourism activities that distinguish a destination like Kwahu Community from others in the world's competitive tourism market. Africa has in the past, in the 1970's and 1980's, attempted to develop major cultural festivals that could be placed in and identified with the continent. These include Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) in Nigeria, Union of Radio and Television Networks of Africa (URTNA) awards in South Africa and Pan-African Federation of Filmmakers (FESPACO) in Burkina Faso. Interestingly, in 1992, the then Ghana Tourist Board and the government of Ghana staged in Central Region the first Pan-African Historical Theatre Festival (PANAFEST) which has since then given a special boost to African travel and increased West Africa's share of overall African tourist arrivals. It also true that Emancipation day Celebrations and National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFAC) have promoted festival tourism in Ghana.

In Ghana the extent of use of festivals for tourism promotion is not widely explored and one can easily say that, this is because majority of the festivals have evolved for non-touristic purposes (Imbeah, 2006). Furthermore, few studies relatively exist, in the review of local literature concerning the host-guest relationship and developmental impacts of festival tourism in Ghana (Imbeah, 2006; Acheampong and Asiedu, 2008; Gyasi, 2013). Gradually tourism is now moving away from gazing to participation which also implies that as two or more cultures (natives and festival tourists) merge different levels of interaction result (Imbeah, 2006). To what extent are the festival tourists welcomed into the Kwahu community during the Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF) and what feelings do the natives have is a must research study area in Ghana.

The general objective of this study was to examine the trend and type of relationships that manifest between the host community and festival tourists.

However, the study addressed the following specific objectives:

- a).To identify tourism activities that have made the Kwahu Easter Festival popular
- b).To assess the attitudes of the local people towards the festival tourists
- c).To examine the negative behaviours displayed during the festival.
- d).To ascertain the changes noticed in the celebration of the festival as compared to the olden days

Among the Research Questions were: What changes have been noticed about the celebration of the festival by the natives? What negative behaviours do the natives observe during the festival? How do the Kwahu natives describe the interaction between the host and the festival tourists?

As festival tourism becomes part of the mainstay of tourism development in Ghana, researchers and festival planners have an obligation to seek greater understanding of the interaction between the host and guests. The study would contribute to knowledge on festival tourism and also help strengthen government and private agencies in establishing long term scheduling of festivals in Ghana so that tour operators can promote them effectively.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the prime local communities in Ghana which have "Easter" as its major festival is the Kwahu inhabitants and this festival is "commercialized" with a brand name, "FEK", meaning Kwahu Easter Festival. Originally the Kwahus had a festival called "Okwahu Afahye" and it was celebrated from October to December. Since trading is the main livelihood of the Kwahus in Ghana, they later had problems with the timing of the "Okwahu Afahye" when majority of Kwahu natives migrated to other towns and urban market centres in Ghana. The peak of the local trading calendar, which fell in December due to Christmas festivities in Ghana, affected badly its patronage. As a sequel, the business-minded Kwahus avoided the festival and rather opted for the Easter break, to attend the traditionally mandated "home-coming" celebrations. According to oral traditional history, with the quest to sustain patronage of the "Okwahu Afahye", Kwahu Traditional Council shifted the festival to Easter season. What has contributed to the hype is the introduction of the Paragliding activities on Mountain Owdaeonoma in 2005 by the then Minister for Tourism. Paragliding is a common tourist event in most developed countries like Holland, Germany, Sweden, USA and Australia. Apart from South Africa and Kenya, in Africa, Ghana is the next country that organizes Paragliding Event with collaborations from other agencies. Admittedly, the introduction of paragliding into the Kwahu Easter Festival has led to the attraction and involvement of more local and international festival tourists. Festivals like Kwahu Easter Festival are now commercialized commodity to the host communities and they help to develop local pride and identity for the local people (Amoako-Attah, 2001). It is therefore imperative that the relationship between the host communities and festival tourists should not be abused and taken for granted

### Traditional Festival Defined

In the opinion of Bame (1991), traditional festivals, of which many are held in different areas of the country, Ghana, throughout the year, are of great interest to the tourists and very important cultural attraction features. These festivals are often associated with durbars of which the chiefs are carried in palanquins and are accompanied by the drummers, horn blowers and other members of their entourage. As espoused by Busia (quoted in Bame,1991 and in Imbeah, 2011), Afahye or festivals "are seasonal occasions when in addition to offerings and prayers to ancestors, there are elaborate ceremonies

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involving rites of purification, drumming, dancing, singing or the recital of tribal history and the reaffirmation of the values the tribe shares and cherishes". However the prime element is ritual, which is usually solemn and often esoteric.

From the foregoing, one can indeed say that KEF, which has been considered as a tourism product, is no exceptional as there is the pouring of libation to the deity in the paramountcy.

### **Types of Festivals**

Bame (1991) explained that traditional festival may be classified into three closely related and sometimes hardly distinguishable types using the central focus around which the activities of the festival are organized as criterion.

The first type of festival is the 'harvest festival'. This is because the festival is associated with agricultural occupation and harvest. The people sacrifice portion of their first fruit of crops from their farms to the Supreme Being through lesser gods. The commemorative festival, which is the second type of festivals, is the dramatization of sacred myths, the traditions of origin or the real historical events in the life of the participating communities and the legends. The third type of festival is the festival for the gods, which is celebrated annually in honour of specific spirits or gods. Kwahu Easter Festival can be described as commemorative festival. For KEF the main feature of the festival is the state purification rites. All these three types of festivals are however not mutually exclusive but are interesting and interlocked so much so that the dividing line between one type and another is very thin.

### **The Concept of Tourism**

In the opinion of Leiper (1979), tourism has no single definition which is generally accepted because of the complexity of the subject; in the literature varied views reveal that though there are varied definitions, the core concern remains the same in all discussions. Tourism is the science, art and business of attracting visitors, transporting them, accommodating them and graciously catering to their needs and wants (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009). In addition, as proposed by Matheison and Wall (1982), tourism is described as "the temporary movement to a destination outside the normal home and workplace, the activities undertaken to during the stay and the facilities created to cater for the needs of tourists". Huzinker and Kraph (1974, cited in Leiper, 1979) defined tourism as the sum of the phenomena and relationships arriving from the travel and stay of non-residents, in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not connected to earning remuneration.

From the foregoing, one can say that tourism can be defined as the movement of a person or group of persons from an origin to a destination for not less than 24 hours and not more than one consecutive year for any purpose (Gosh, 2006) like sightseeing, attending festival and coronation of a king or chief without being involved in any paid work at the destination.

### **Attitude towards Tourism by Host Community**

Perceptions are often derived from experiences formed through persuasion, social influence and attitude changes. In a research done by McGehee and Andereck (2009), residents' attitudes towards tourism are derived from the personal benefits received once the service provided to the tourist is complete. The results of the service will yield positive or negative experiences for residents and as a result, newly established attitudes will form the residents' decision to whether to continue support for additional touristic activities. Some of the literature so far reviewed suggests that, the attitudes of host communities towards tourism are not correlated with such factors such as distance from tourism areas,

degree of involvement in the industry, a variety of socio-economic factors and the stages of touristic development (Wall and Mathieson, 2006; Butler, 1980). Within the host population, at the initial stages of tourist development are normally accompanied by enthusiastic response on the part of locals as they perceive the potential benefits that investors and visitors bring to their community. As shown in Figure 2.0 (Appendix B), the initial euphoria and enthusiasm which are associated with preliminary phases of tourism begin to fritter away as the industry expands and tourist numbers increase. "We are proud to have tourists see our culture and our beautiful island. We recognize some erosion of our traditional social fabric is inevitable in the pursuit of economic prosperity and we are prepared to accept a degree of erosion, what we are not prepared to accept is destruction of that social fabric". These are some of the responses gleaned from the review of social impacts done by Fox (1977). The perceptions of and attitudes of host community towards continued expansion of facilities and services to satisfy tourist demands may rapidly become increasingly antagonistic and may eventually reach total rejection of tourists' presence as shown in Figure 2.0 (Appendix B). Attitudes of this kind vary in intensity and mode of expression from grieving statements expressed by the locals (Gyasi, 2013).

#### **Historical Background of the Study Area**

The name Kwahu is appropriately referred to as the "Hill District" ("Beposo") because of the Kwahu scarp which rises from 220m to 640m above sea level. It is placed as being the second largest mountain in the Eastern region. Kwahus are said to be a heterogeneous collection of people with majority being Ashanti. This scarp has two prominent mountainous-peaks namely the Odweanoma and Apaku. The second physiographic region is the Forest Dissected Plateau which consists of steep sided Birimian rocks rising to heights up to 240m above sea level. The institution of chieftaincy plays a vital role in the political system in Kwahu communities. Abene is the paramount seat of the Paramount Chief who has divisional chiefs directly responsible to him in the governance of the people in the communities.

The high altitude and the rocky landscape affect agriculture negatively especially mechanized farming. The hilly nature of the district is vital for the development of mountaineering sports. Some of the mountains have nice scenery and interesting features such as waterfalls, ancestral caves, walkways and Neolithic engravings. The Odweanoma Arc Mountain (OAM) at Obomeng is the second highest mountain in the Republic of Ghana, with a height of 2,535m and hosts receptacles for television, radio and civil aviation antennae (Kwahu South District Assembly (KSDA), 2012). The mountain also facilitates the promotion of paragliding activities in the country, as it was identified by international experts as "a perfect take-off point for paragliding" (Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), 2015).

As far as climatic conditions are concerned, between the months of November and March, however, the community is affected by the tropical continental air masses making the area warm and dry. The plateau is relatively cool, an attractive factor for foreigners, particularly those from the temperate world. According to oral history, the Basel Missionaries recorded the following description about Abetifi's climate in 1885 as "the Switzerland of West Africa, with nights as cool as May nights in Europe".

The forest however, remains in their natural state in the reserve areas. Among them are the Southern Scarp Forest Reserve (146.38km<sup>2</sup>) and the Oworobong South Forest Reserve (35.54km<sup>2</sup>). According to the recent records obtained from the Forestry Department of Kwahu South District in 2011, all the reserves cover a total size of 181.92km<sup>2</sup>.

### Ethnicity and Culture

Kwahu community is a heterogeneous community predominated by Kwahus who form 66% as evidenced in a survey conducted recently by KSDA. Other significant tribes are Ashantis-17% and Ewes-15%. There are also people from the northern part of Ghana and other parts of Ghana. Most of the migrants have lived in the district all their lives. Christianity is the dominant religion and constitutes 89.5% of the population. Traditionalists form 3.6% whilst Muslims and pagans form the rest. As a people, Kwahus are Akans. They are well noted for celebration of Easter when all well meaning citizens come back home to join their relatives to celebrate the occasion. In the olden days, the occasion was used to resolve family problems.

From Figure 1.0 it is observed that as two or more cultural groups interact, namely host community and tourists, over time any of the above in the figure can manifest depending on how the stakeholders of tourism development handle the level of intrusion into the host community by tourist in the name of festival. For example, when we measure for "embrace", euphoria can manifest on the ground among the natives. Also, when we measure for "tolerance", it manifests in the form of apathy among the host community. In addition, when "adjustment" is measured as host and guest interact, annoyance/irritation show up among the natives. Furthermore, when "withdrawal" is measured, antagonism is displayed among the locals.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Irritation Index		Continuum Strategies	
Embrace	Natives like the idea of tourism and are welcoming of new visitors and tourists.	Euphoria	Usually associated with initial stages of area development for tourism projects. Natives welcome developments
Tolerance	Natives are slightly less involved with tourists and begin to see tourists as simply a part of daily life in the community.	Apathy	Tourists are slightly less welcomed, with natives becoming more formal with tourists. Planning shifts to marketing.
Adjustment	Natives begin to change their patterns and routines to avoid tourists and any interaction with them.	Annoyance/Irritation	Saturation is approached; natives may show reservations about tourists. Planning begins to aim to limit growth.
Withdrawal	Natives go out of their way to avoid tourists and may even leave the area during peak season or carry out routines in different areas (eg. shopping).	Antagonism	Irritations expressed, outsiders seen by natives as cause of all problems

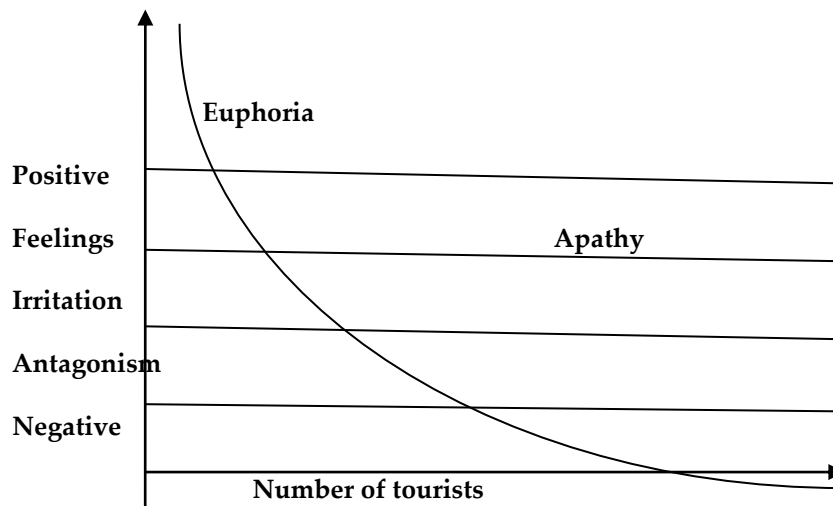
Adapted from Doxey, 1976 (quoted in Matheson and Wall, 1982),

### Figure 1.0: Index of Tourist Irritation

From the diagram, Figure 2, it is pictorially demonstrated that as the numbers of tourists (guests)

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increase the feelings of the natives (host) can wane from positive to negative reaction which can finally end up as “antagonism” where people now see the tourists as harbinger of all that is bad in the community. The locals think that the tourists have corrupted the youth and have no respect for property in the community.



Adapted from Doxey, 1976 (quoted in Imbeah, 2006 and Reisinger 2009)

#### METHODOLOGY

Target population was the residents in the Kwahu communities and a sample of 110 local residents within Kwahu communities was picked for the study. Administered questionnaires were used for the residents while self-administered questionnaires were used for the illiterate local residents. Interviews were conducted with some chiefs to confirm the history which was given from other sources. Observation was also used in the study. Given the national median age of 18 years for universal adult suffrage, persons of 18 years and above were considered in the sample size. The rationale for the choice of 18 years and above was that at age 18, it was expected that even if under parental control, one could still have some amount of control in matters regarding one's recreation or form some impressions on the interaction between the local residents and the tourists.

To elicit information from the local residents, the study employed convenience sampling technique. This technique merely samples those subjects that the researcher knows can provide the information once they were residents in the community and readily accessible with a minimum of effort (Peterson, 1988).

Once some of the respondents were unlettered, the questionnaires were done in interview form and this was mainly done in the local dialect which was Twi. This put the field assistants who were not fluent in Twi in a rather awkward position. The field assistants were later regrouped so that each group would have someone fluent in the local dialect.

The collected data were coded, entered and processed using Statistical Package for Social Science, (SPSS version 20). From the SPSS cross tabulations were made in the analysis of the variables. The data were analysed and presented using basic statistical techniques like frequencies and percentages.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

From Table 1.0 out of one hundred and ten respondents (residents) interviewed, it could be recorded that 63.6% (70 respondents) were male whereas 36.4% (40 respondents) were female. This could be explained by the fact that most of the women contacted during the festival period had no desire to be interviewed and rather preferred the men to share their views.

**Table 1.0: Gender Distribution of Respondents**

Gender	Number of Residents	Percentage (%)
Male	70	63.6
Female	40	36.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100 %</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2016

With reference to the Table 2.0 it was found in the research that the majority of the residents who had ever witnessed KEF falls within the age range of 30 to 39 years (34.5%) showing 38 of the residents, followed by 40 – 49 and 18 – 29 respectively. It can be observed that, the majority of local respondents fell in the active population category. Therefore their opinions about the attitudes of the residents towards the festival tourists are very critical in this study (Zhang, 2009). It was observed that the respondents within the age cohort of 30-39 and 40-49 had had enough exposure as regards participating and witnessing the festival in the community.

**Table 2.0: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Age bracket	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18-29	26	23.6
30 – 39	38	34.5
40-49	30	27.3
50-59	8	7.3
60 and above	8	7.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2016



**Table 3.0: Nativity of the Respondents**

Nativity of Respondents	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Kwahu Native	75	68.2
Non-Kwahu Native	35	31.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field work, 2016

With regard to education, for respondents in the study area, majority 40% (44 respondents) of them had diploma while 24.5% (27 respondents) had first degree as shown in Table 4.0 (Appendix F). It was observed that as the collection of opinions was done mostly in the urban centres like Nkawkaw, Mpraeso, Obo, Nkwatia and Atibie, the respondents sampled were educated and therefore had some knowledge about Kwahu Easter Festival as a tourist attraction in Ghana.

**Table 4.0: Educational Background of Local Respondents**

Educational Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Primary/ Elementary School	9	8.3
SHS	14	12.7
Diploma	44	40.0
First Degree	27	24.5
Postgraduate	16	14.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2016

From Table 5.0, though there are scattered potential tourism resources in the Kwahu community, the paragliding recreational activity has become so famous and has even become a sign post for KEF in Eastern Region of Ghana. 91.8 % of respondents suggested paragliding as the key tourism activity that has made KEF very popular in Ghana. Since 2005 when the paragliding was begun, every year (except 2009), the participation and engagement is massive. It has been suggested that greater levels of engagement in such memorable tourism activities can also lead to increased customer loyalty and behavioural intention (Organ et al, 2014; Brodie, Hollebeek et al, 2011; Brodie et al., 2013; Mollen & Wilson, 2010; Olsen, 2007). Statistics indicate that paragliding will be a major tourism event attraction for Ghana in future (GTA, 2016). In addition to paragliding, the newly installed tourism facilities namely, canopy walk way and zip line both located at Obo and close to Obomeng is where the street carnival is massive and very heavy in engagement and involvement by both host community and tourists. The only challenge to the patronage of the paragliding is the high cost or fare charged for this recreational activity.

**Table 5.0: Tourism activities that have made the Kwahu Easter Festival (KEF) popular in Ghana**

Tourism Activity	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Paragliding	101	91.8
Obo canopy walk way/Zip line	4	3.6
Street carnival	3	2.7

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Music competition	2	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

For respondents in the study area as shown in Table 3.0, majority 68.2 % (75 respondents) of them were natives of Kwahu community while 31.8 % (35 respondents) were not Kwahu natives but resident in the Kwahu community as workers whose opinions were sought. It was observed that majority of the respondents were Kwahu natives and for that matter their views about the interactions between the tourists and natives were critical in the study.

From Table 6.0, it was observed that indecent dressing and promiscuity ranked as the worse negative behaviour (40 %) during KEF. There was also a proposition made by one elderly Kwahu native that, "those who were caught up in these immoral activities were mostly non-Kwahu natives who had come as tourists or excursionists". This is because every native has some relations in the community and openly engaging in immoral activities would obviously disgrace their family relations and family name in the community. Another observation was that as many of those who were caught up in promiscuity and road traffic offenses (12.7 % of negative behaviours) could not speak the native Kwahu dialect properly, proving that these were not natives but had come from elsewhere to enjoy the festival. Drunkenness and stealing (23.6 % respectively), another set of negative behaviours were equally a bother and blemish to the beauty and harmony of KEF.

**Table 6.0: Negative Behaviours identified during KEF**

Negative Behaviour	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Indecent dressing/Immoral activities e.g. promiscuity	44	40.0
Drunkenness	26	23.6
Stealing	26	23.6
Road traffic offenses	14	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Field work, 2016

From Table 7.0, it was observed that since the institution and evolution of the festival, Kwahu Easter Festival has gone through a long journey of changes in its nature of celebration. Vast majority of the respondents 65.5% (72 respondents) perceived that there were more street carnival celebrations during KEF instead of the opportunity of using the festival period to settle family disputes in various towns and villages as it was the original ancestral way of festival celebration. It is now obvious that, in the modern days, there is now heavy involvement of the youth (17.3%) in the celebration and this contributes to the street carnival which is promoted and patronized by the youth. Table 7.0 confirms this perception about the heavy involvement of the youth in the street carnival. It must be added that the street carnival usually occurs in the street of Obomeng where the whole street in the town is blocked and by-pass road is created to be used by other road users. This situation creates tough road traffic for both drivers and traffic wardens or the police.

**Table 7.0: Perceptions of Natives towards the changes in the celebration of Kwahu Easter Festival**

Nature of change in the Celebration of KEF	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Dominance of youth involvement	19	17.3
More street carnival than the family dispute settlement approach	72	65.5
Involvement of stakeholders, e.g. Coca Cola Ghana, GTA	10	9.1
Involvement of media, e.g. Adom FM	7	6.4
No change	2	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2016

It is observed that how tourist community members respond to the opportunities and challenges of tourism depends on the community members' attitudes towards the tourism industry. In terms of community attitudes, there are three main determinants because attitudes are personal and complex. The type of contact that exists between residents and tourists is the first determinant. The second is the importance of tourism industry to the individual natives and the community as a whole. Tolerance threshold in the destination is the third determinant. Other studies conducted by researchers like MaGehee and Andereck (2004), confirmed that communities are heterogeneous with a wide variety of attitudes ranging from acceptance to rejection. Those who are engaged in the tourism business as workers or those who benefit indirectly from tourism may be positive towards the industry while others may still view tourism as a nuisance or a problem to the community. In ranking the attitudes and interactions between residents and tourists using Doxey Irridex, natives were asked to rank each of the Four-Point-Attributes (FPA's): Euphoria, Apathy, Irritation and Antagonism. Among the 110 respondents, "Euphoria" was ranked as 93.6% among the FPA's as shown in Table 8.0.

#### **Outcome of Interaction between Natives and Tourists**

**Table 8.0: Outcome of Residents and Tourist Interactions Using Doxey's Irridex**

Level of interactions between local residents and tourists	*Percentage of Multiple Choices in Ranking
Euphoria	93.6 %
Irritation	50 %
Apathy	43.6 %
Friendship not Antagonism	69.9 %

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2016

\*Respondents were given the laxity of making multiple choices for each of the “Four-Point-Attributes” (FPA’s).

\*Respondents ranked each of the FPA’s one at a time among the other attributes, e.g. “Euphoria” was ranked among the other three at a time, and then “Irritation” was ranked among the other three at a time until all the FPA’s were ranked among the FPA’s.

\*In this light, only the percentages of the multiple choices were used to do the ranking

This can mean that natives and residents like the idea of tourism development and welcome the new visitors and tourists into the Kwahu community. This implies that this is the right time for other tourism facilities to be developed in the community. Fortunately, very new two tourism facilities have been introduced at Obo, namely, Obo Canopy walkway and zip line being managed by Air Jays who also managed Air Lodge in the same community. The geographical advantage of the location of these two facilities is that they are both located on a hill, which is part of mountain Odweanoma and this gives patrons good panorama experience any time they are in the facilities. However, it was observed that the fares for the use of these facilities increase during the festival time but in other days or season the fares are low even though there is still low patronage. It is possible that the high fares compensate for the lean season to enable the owner to pay for certain fixed costs in the whole year.

In ranking the attitudes and interactions between residents and tourists using Doxey Irridex, natives were asked to rank each of the four-point-attributes (FPA’s): Euphoria, Apathy, Irritation and Antagonism. Among the 110 respondents, “Apathy” was ranked as 43.6% among the FPA’s as shown in Table 8.0. This can mean that natives and residents are slightly less involved with tourists and begin to see tourists as simply a part of daily life in the Kwahu community. This implies that the residents are indifferent as regards tourism development. It is still observed that, tourism development can still be pursued and maintained in Kwahu community because the community is still fallow and good for meaningful tourism expansion.

In ranking the attitudes and interactions between residents and tourists using Doxey Irridex, natives were asked to rank each of the Four-Point-Attributes (FPA’s): Euphoria, Apathy, Irritation and Antagonism. Among the 110 respondents, “Irritation” was ranked as 50% among the FPA’s as shown in Table 8.0. It means that natives and residents change their patterns and routines to avoid tourists and any interaction with them. Since the percentage of such residents with the feeling of “Irritation” is quite significant, tourism development can still be pursued but with the total involvement of the community members and ownership. In this instance, if tourism developers are typical natives from the Kwahu community, acceptance and cooperation with such facilities would be positive and profitable.

#### **An Inversion: “Friendship” Between the Natives and Tourists Instead Of “Antagonism” As Shown On Doxey Irridex**

In ranking the attitudes and interactions between residents and tourists using Doxey Irridex, natives were asked to rank each of the four-point-attributes (FPA’s): Euphoria, Apathy, Irritation and Antagonism. Interestingly, among the 110 respondents, “Antagonism” was rather turned round from “hostility towards tourists” to “hosting the tourists” in the community and this was ranked as 69.9 % among the FPA’s as shown in Table 8.0. What this means is that, “Antagonism” is not present among the Kwahu community so far as tourism development is concerned. It is observed that natives and residents go out

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to meet with tourists and even make friends with festival tourists in the community during peak season of the celebration of KEF and even offer to teach them preparation of some local foods and drinks.

### FINDINGS

One of the local communities in Ghana which have Easter as its main festival is the Kwahu community in the Eastern Region of Ghana. As a sign of social harmony, the Easter festival is celebrated by Ghanaians of all walks of life including some foreigners and as a sequel has been “franchised” as a special Kwahu affair; hence the festival is christened “Kwahu Easter Festival” (KEF).

Among the major findings of the study were:

- The paragliding recreational activity has become so famous and has even become a sign post for KEF in Eastern Region of Ghana and 91.8 % of respondents suggested paragliding as the key tourism activity that has made KEF very popular in Ghana.
- It was observed that indecent dressing and promiscuity ranked as the worse negative behaviour (40 %) during KEF and that majority of those who were caught up in these immoral activities were mostly non-Kwahu natives who had come as tourists or excursionists. Drunkenness and stealing (23.6 % respectively) were another set of negative behaviours that equally dented the beauty and harmony of KEF.
- The study revealed that most local residents (respondents) had observed that the KEF has experienced some changing trends and traits. More street carnival recreational activities (65.5%) have taken greater part of the festival as compared to the olden days where the festival was used to settle family disputes in various clans.
- It was found that the host-tourist relationship was at the “euphoria” state as prescribed by the Doxey’s Irridex Model. “Euphoria” was ranked as 93% among the FPA’s. Admittedly, residents welcome the idea of tourism development in Kwahu community. This implies that this is the right time for other tourism facilities to be developed in the community.
- The geographical advantage of the location of Canopy walkway and zip line which are both located on a hill gives patrons good panorama experience any time they are in the facilities. However, it was observed that the fares for the use of these facilities increase during the festival time.
- Interestingly, among the 110 respondents it was observed that “Antagonism” was rather turned round from “hostility towards tourists” to “hosting the tourists” in the community and this was ranked as 69.09 % among the FPA’s. What it means is that, “Antagonism” is not present among the Kwahu community so far as tourism development is concerned.
- During the festival, natives and residents go out to meet with tourists and even make friends with festival tourists in the community during peak season of the celebration of KEF and even offer to teach them preparation of some local foods and drinks.

### CONCLUSIONS

Using Doxey’s Irridex model of host-guest relationship, the study sought to assess the attitudes of the local residents towards the influx of visitors in the community to attend KEF. It was discovered that Kwahu natives and residents like the idea of tourism development and welcome the new visitors and tourists into the community. This describes the “Euphoria” mood of the residents towards the festival tourists. This means that this is the right time for other tourism

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facilities to be developed in the community. As regards residents' perceptions of the degree of changes in the celebration of KEF as a tourism recreational activity, it was observed that: more street carnivals have overshadowed the family dispute settlement approach, heavy involvement of the youth, media and business stakeholders have become the order of the day. Paragliding which is part of KEF has become a sign post for the entire festival; hence Kwahu Paragliding Festival is now synonymous with KEF. However, two challenges were the promiscuity and road traffic offences that manifested during the festival. Kwahu Easter Festival is a festival tourism event where participants and visitors really get involved and "participate" instead of the usual "gazing" festival tourism attitude.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

In view of the above discussed issues, the following are recommended:

- Since the community members are friendly towards tourism development, GTA and tour operators in Ghana should take full advantage and advertise the tourism potential in the community and use such as part of tour packages.
- To restore the original idea and bed rock of organizing KEF, it is suggested that in the course of the celebration one day should be declared as "Family Day" to enable families and clans to gather to settle disputes. This can cement the bonding among the family members and among the youth and the older generations.
- To maintain the history and importance of KEF, in the course of the year, "Festival and Tourism Education" should be massively pursued in the Kwahu community especially among the schools in the vicinity. The Traditional Council, Ghana Education Service and GTA can play a facilitating role in this assignment. "Festival and Tourism Education" Centres can be established in all the urban communities in the Traditional Area.
- The local youth should be trained and involved in safety and road traffic order in the community especially during the peak of KEF. This will boost the desire of the youth to work and contribute to the sound building of the community.
- Another recreational area centrally located in the community should be identified and developed to host the street carnivals in order to ease the road traffic on the Obo road which is always blocked for vehicle use during the peak celebration of KEF.

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