EXPLORING TOURISM ATTRACTIONS IN OUIDAH, BENIN: VISITOR EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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Abstract: The aim of the study is to explore visitor experiences and propose strategic improvements for tourism in Ouidah (Benin), a town renowned for its cultural and historical landmarks, including the Route of the Slaves and the Temple of Pythons. Using data collected from an online survey of 105 participants from Benin and abroad, the research highlights the strong appeal of Ouidah's heritage attractions while identifying critical areas for enhancement, such as infrastructure, accessibility, and promotional efforts. Findings show the Slaves' Route (24.8%), Python Temple (24.3%), and Gate of No Return (22%) are the most visited, while sites like the Indigo Color Home (3.1%) remain under-visited, indicating the need for better promotion.Word-of-mouth of 46% of respondents was the main information source, followed by miscellaneous sources (36%), while internet and travel agencies played minor roles. Infrastructure was rated mainly "Good" (58%), though issues included poor road conditions, limited public transport, lack of signage, and inadequate amenities such as restrooms and shaded areas. Safety, environmental management, and authenticity of Vodun heritage interpretation were also concerns. A rate of 70% of respondents would "definitely" recommend Ouidah, showing strong potential for repeat and referral tourism. Recommendations include infrastructure upgrades, accessibility improvements, interactive cultural experiences and diversified promotion. The findings emphasize the need for sustainable tourism practices, community engagement, and targeted marketing strategies to strengthen Ouidah's position as a cultural destination in West Africa. Actionable recommendations are provided to guide policymakers and tourism managers in elevating visitor satisfaction and preserving the town's unique legacy. Survey results also revealed seasonal peaks in visitation during February, April, July, and August, aligning with school holidays and favoring domestic tourism. The underrepresentation of some niche attractions points to opportunities for thematic circuits and experiential packages. Respondents stressed the need for better guide training, multilingual materials, and eco-friendly site management. Addressing these gaps can extend visitor stay, diversify the tourism offer, and ensure long-term destination resilience.

Keywords: Ouidah, Benin, cultural heritage tourism, visitor experience, sustainable destination development
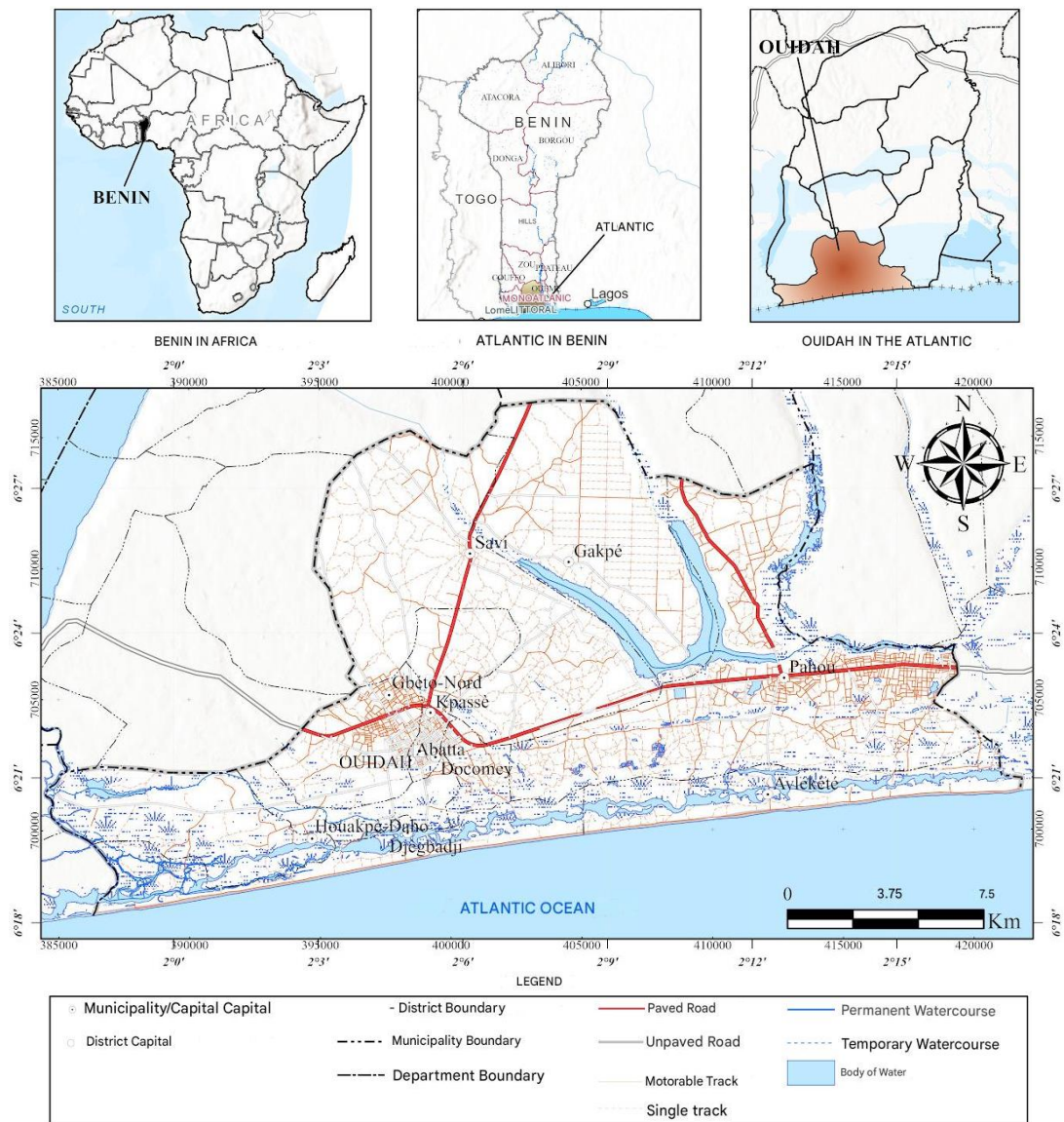
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INTRODUCTION

Ouidah boasts a significant tourism potential rooted in its rich historical and cultural heritage, encompassing human, ethnographic, and artisanal traditions (Tosina, 2019). As part of Benin's development strategy under the PAG (2021-2026), the city benefits from projects aimed at advancing beach, memorial, cultural, and sustainable tourism.

Positioned between the Atlantic Ocean and the lagoon, Ouidah is a notable tourism hub, featuring iconic sites such as the Temple of Pythons, the Slave Route, and the Gate of No Return. The aim of this study is to highlight visitor satisfaction and experience by showing what aspects of Ouidah's tourism attractions visitors found most memorable; the challenges and improvement areas by spotlighting issues such as infrastructure, accessibility, and service quality; tourism promotion and cultural heritage by examining the awareness of Vodun beliefs, historical sites, and how the destination is perceived. Therefore it is meant to explore visitor experiences and propose strategic improvements for tourism in the historic town of Ouidah, Benin. Geographically, Ouidah spans over 364 km² within the Atlantic Department and hosts a population of 102,428 as of 2023. Its natural setting between the ocean and lagoon offers fertile ground for tourism development, while its administrative structure of ten districts and 60 villages reflects a rich cultural and historical heritage. It is bordered to the south by the Atlantic Ocean, to the east by the Commune of Abomey-Calavi, to the west by the Commune of Grand-Popo, and to the north by the Communes of Kpomassè and Tori-Bossito (Figure 1).

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Figure 1. Ouidah location at continental, regional and local level (Source: Authors, 2025)

The city's physical environment features a humid climate with alternating rainy and dry seasons, a diverse ecosystem, and soil variations supporting sacred forests and plantations. Its strategic location and unique environmental characteristics make Ouidah a vital component of Benin's tourism landscape (Town hall of Ouidah, 2019).

Ouidah, founded in the 16th century by Djedji Kpassè, second king of the Xwéda, emerged as a settlement called "Gléwé," reflecting its agricultural origins. Over time, the name evolved into "Ouidah," derived from the French transcription of "Xwéda." The Xwéda people were the city's first inhabitants, laying the foundation for its historical and cultural significance. Situated 42 km west of Cotonou along the Atlantic coast, Ouidah holds a prominent place in Benin's history. The city gained international attention in recent decades due to large-scale cultural events, symbolizing its modern renaissance. Efforts to reconcile its legacy as a slave port with aspirations for cultural revival define this transformative era. Its strategic location and unique environmental characteristics make Ouidah a vital component of Benin's tourism landscape (Town hall of Ouidah, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has long been a priority for successive governments in the Republic of Benin (Hountondji et al., 2025; Ishioro & Uwanoghor, 2023; Amakpe, 2022; Gbedjihounde, 2019; Pan, 2019; Ononeme, 2010), with significant efforts directed toward its development over several decades. The adoption of the National Long-Term Perspective Studies (NLTPS) in 2000 set an ambitious goal for Benin to become by 2025 a nation renowned for good governance, unity, peace, economic prosperity, cultural prominence, and social well-being. Building on this vision, the 2013 national tourism policy aimed to position Benin as a leading West African destination, prioritizing the preservation of its cultural and natural heritage.

Since 2016, public authorities have significantly intensified their focus on tourism development. The Government Action Program (PAG 2016-2021) launched extensive investments in flagship projects to generate economic growth and

employment, with the tourism sector expected to create 175,000 direct jobs by 2021 and contribute 3,781 billion CFA francs in cumulative revenue during 2018 -2025. Reforms and large-scale projects have been implemented to transform tourism, culture, and arts into engines of economic progress, unemployment reduction, and cultural promotion.

These initiatives include the development of tourist sites, enhancement of institutional frameworks, improvement of tourism products, and substantial sector funding. The momentum continued with the PAG (2021-2026) further solidifying the government's commitment to tourism as a tool for economic and cultural elevation on the international stage.

Between 2016 and 2021, several projects focused on Ouidah underscored its importance as a religious, cultural, and historical tourism hub. These include the rehabilitation of the Pendjari Wildlife Park, the creation of the "Route des Tata" circuit, and the initiation of the International Museum of Slavery. Other efforts include restoring the Portuguese Fort, developing the Avlékété beach station, and modernizing existing sites like Ganvié and Abomey-Calavi. By 2030, Benin aspires to welcome over two million foreign visitors and double tourism revenues, with Ouidah, located just 40 kilometers from Cotonou, poised to play a central role in this vision. Renowned for the iconic Porte du Non-Retour, a monument to the memory of slavery (Vignondé, 2002), Ouidah exemplifies the convergence of religious, cultural, and historical tourism (PR, 2016).

Ouidah's appeal lies in its rich heritage as both a spiritual capital of Vodun and a historical port linked to the transatlantic slave trade. Scholars such as Rieucau (2019) highlight Ouidah's unique position as a site embodying the duality of Vodun culture and slavery memory, while Amadoudji (2021) underscores the coexistence of memory sites and Vodun places of worship. This blending of history and spirituality attracts visitors to key landmarks, including the Temple of Pythons, Kpassè Sacred Forest, and the Slave Route. Research by Boko et al. (2018) further confirms Ouidah's exceptional natural and anthropogenic tourism potential, bolstered by favorable bioclimatic conditions during certain months. Within West Africa, Ouidah's positioning as a Vodun spiritual center and slave trade heritage site parallels destinations like Gorée Island in Senegal and Elmina Castle in Ghana, where memory tourism blends education, cultural identity, and reconciliation. These sites demonstrate the role of heritage tourism in fostering cross-border cultural networks and attracting diasporic visitors (Araujo, 2010). The understanding of cultural diversity through intangible traditional practices (Tătar et al., 2024) as well as the unique natural settings can preserve this heritage and boost tourism in African countries (Tegegne et al., 2022). Recognizing these strengths, the Beninese government has restructured tourism activities in Ouidah to maximize their impact. Events such as the Vodun Days, an annual international celebration of Vodun art, culture, and spirituality, have significantly increased visitor numbers. The 2025 edition alone attracted 435,000 visitors, compared to 97,000 the previous year, underscoring the festival's success in elevating Ouidah's profile as a regional cultural destination.

This growth is supported by ongoing efforts to modernize and promote Ouidah's attractions while ensuring the preservation of their authenticity and cultural significance. Before the establishment of this festival, tourist arrivals in the city of Ouidah were low despite its natural and cultural assets. In the absence of complete and reliable statistics, data from visits to the Ouidah Museum between 2006 and 2020 were utilized (Boko et al., 2018).
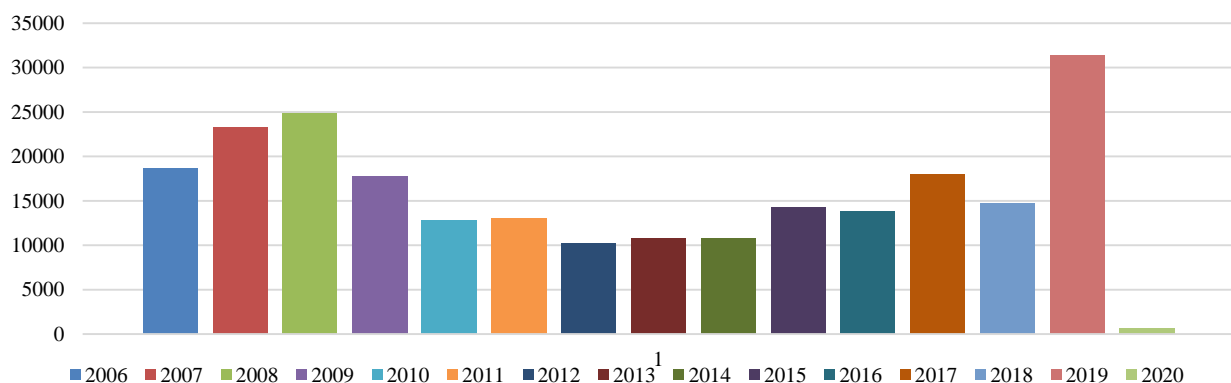

Figure 2. Evolution of the number of visits to the Ouidah Museum from 2006 to 2020 (Source: Town Hall of Ouidah, 2019)

Tourist arrivals in Ouidah have fluctuated over time, increasing from 18,690 in 2006 to 31,329 in 2019 (Figure 2). The low figures in 2020 were due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the closure of the museum for renovations. Based on these numbers, visits tend to concentrate during February, April, July, and August, months that coincide with school holidays, thus promoting domestic tourism among students. At the beginning of 2021, the Beninese government began renovation work on the Ouidah History Museum, which has remained closed to this day.

METHODOLOGY
Our research was conducted in collaboration with researchers from the Abomey-Calavi University and relied on the application of an online survey in French language which achieved a response rate of 105 respondents from 120 distributed quizzes, applied during February 16th and March 8th, 2025. The response rate strengthens the reliability of our findings and highlights the engagement of participants in exploring tourism in Ouidah. Links of the quiz were sent to Beninois as well as foreign tourists having visited the historic town of Ouidah, Benin.

The quiz link was distributed to travel guides who accompany tourists across Ouidah as well as to Beninois from Abomey-Calavi and Cotonou cities who visited Ouidah. The filtering questions related to age, gender and education revealed that Ouidah's tourism sector primarily attracts young people aged between 18-35 years (79%) (Figure 3),

educated (67% with a bachelor's degree) visitors (Figure 4), with a majority being female (59%), suggesting a target audience that values cultural and historical experiences, requiring tailored marketing, immersive storytelling, and interactive heritage-based tourism initiatives as also revealed by other studies (Dehoorne et al., 2023).

This study uses a digital questionnaire accomplished through Google Forms to collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data (Manggaberani, 2024) from tourists in Ouidah's tourism sector, highlighting inclusive participation and employing a deductive approach for insights. The survey included both closed and open-ended questions. The study limitations refer to the small sample of respondents who are mostly of young age and the lack of stakeholders' perspective.
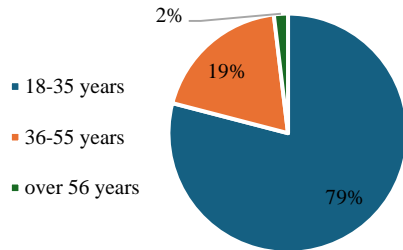
Figure 3. Participants' age to the survey

Figure 4. Respondents' education level

(Source: Online survey applied to Ouidah visitors during February-March 2025)

RESULTS

Ouidah, located on the Atlantic coast of Benin, is a city rich in history and culture, known for its central role in the slave trade and as the birthplace of the Vodun religion. Just 40 kilometres from Cotonou, this city offers a unique blend of historical, cultural and spiritual sites that attract visitors from around the world.

These various sites include natural wonders, historical and cultural heritage sites, and more. Most visitors first go to the Python temple, by thousands each month. This site is part of several other sites in the center of Ouidah, such as the Basilica of Ouidah, the French cemetery, and the Historical Museum of Ouidah (Figure 5).

However, it should be added that beyond these sites, there is also the slave route, not to mention the Kpassè forest.

Figure 5. Iconic attractions of Ouidah Town (Source: Authors, 2025)

In relation to the visitor attraction sites, the distribution of visitor interest across various tourist attractions in Ouidah highlights significant disparities in popularity. The Slaves' Route leads with 24.8% of visitors, closely followed by the Python Temple at 24.3%, and the Gate of No Return at 22% (Figure 6), emphasizing their historical and cultural appeal. The History Museum of Ouidah attracts 16.4%, serving as an educational hub, while the Contemporary Art Museum of Zinsou and Sacred Kpasse Forest each draw 12.3%, showcasing niche interests in art and religion. Less frequented sites, like the Indigo Color Home (3.1%) and several others, each account for under 1% of visits, suggesting limited visibility or specialized appeal. These results suggest that historical memory and Vodun heritage drive tourism in Ouidah, while lesser-known sites could benefit from increased marketing efforts and diversification strategies (Weidenfeld, 2018).

The distribution of visitor interest across Ouidah's attractions reveals a clear concentration around historically and spiritually significant sites, with the Slaves' Route, Python Temple, and Gate of No Return collectively attracting over 70% of visitors. This dominance underscores the enduring appeal of memory tourism and Vodun heritage, yet it also exposes a lack of diversification in the tourism offer. Attractions like the Indigo Color Home and other lesser-known sites remain underutilized, suggesting either inadequate promotion or a mismatch between visitor expectations and site presentation. This imbalance risks overburdening popular sites while leaving others underfunded and underdeveloped.
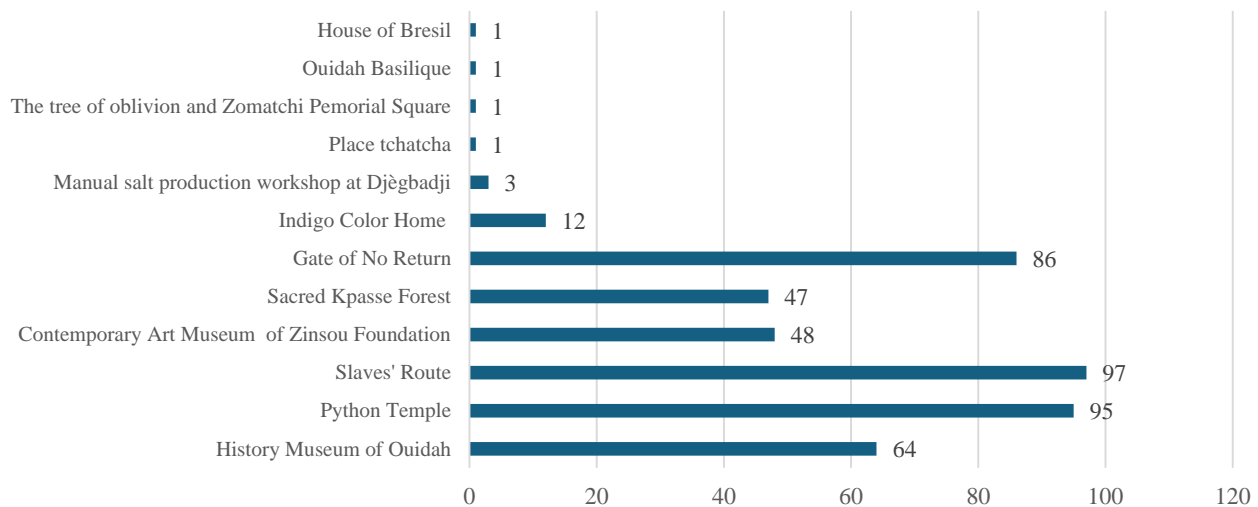

Figure 6. Respondents who visited Ouidah's attractions (Source: Online survey applied to Ouidah visitors during February-March 2025)

The overall assessment of tourist experience is an important research tool meant to improve hospitality services and find out the satisfaction level (Juliana Sihombing et al., 2024; Huete Alcocer & López Ruiz, 2019) therefore the current study results showed that the largest segment, accounting for 58% of responses, reflects tourists who rated their experience as "Good." This indicates that the majority had a generally positive impression of their visit.

Following that, 31% of tourists rated their experience as "Excellent," showcasing a significant portion of highly satisfied visitors who likely found the attractions, services, or cultural offerings outstanding. Meanwhile, 11% rated their experience as "Average," suggesting areas where expectations were met but not exceeded, pointing to potential opportunities for improvement. Importantly, 0% of tourists rated their experience as "Bad," signalling the absence of major dissatisfaction or issues (Figure 7).
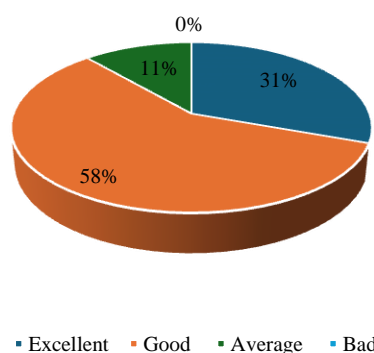

Figure 7. Participants' responses related
to the overall experience assessment

Figure 8. Participants'
responses related to information sources

(Source: Online survey applied to Ouidah visitors during February-March 2025)

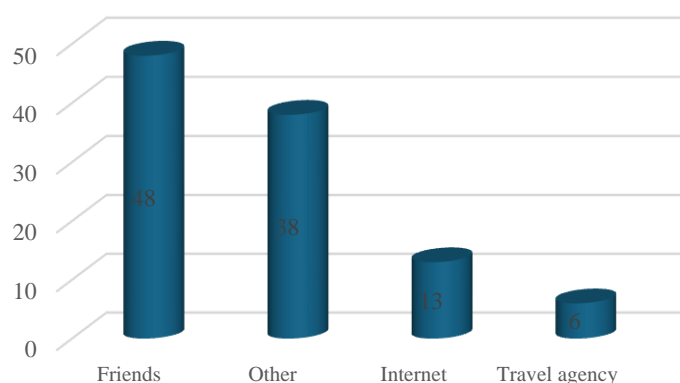Surveying information sources helps understand tourist behavior (Gretzel, 2008), improve site visibility (Avram, 2015) destination image (Van-Dúnem et al., 2021) and tailor marketing. Related to the surveyed tourists' information

sources (Figure 8), the findings show that the primary sources of travel planning information, with 48 people (the majority) relying on recommendations from friends emphasise the trust placed in personal connections and highlight the importance of word-of-mouth recommendations. Thirty-eight people use diverse, unspecified channels ("other sources"), reflecting varied approaches to gathering information. The Internet, utilised by 13 individuals, indicates a smaller but growing reliance on digital resources. Meanwhile, travel agencies, consulted by only 6 people, show a minimal role in modern trip planning. This distribution underscores a shift towards personal and digital sources while traditional options like travel agencies face declining popularity. These insights suggest opportunities to optimise and expand online travel resources for broader use. Strengthening online promotion, social media campaigns, and partnerships with travel agencies could enhance visibility and attract more visitors (Kotler et al., 2017).

Surveying tourist infrastructure and services (Figure 9) ensures tourist needs are met, identifies gaps, and enhances destination appeal and satisfaction (Munir et al., 2025). The illustrated left-side chart reveals that 58% of tourist infrastructure is rated as "Good," followed by 24% as "Average" and 18% as "Excellent," with 0% rated as "Bad." This indicates an overall positive perception of the infrastructure, with most facilities meeting or exceeding expectations, though there remains room for improvement to elevate the "Average" ratings to higher levels and enhance the tourist experience. Investments in accessibility, maintenance, and visitor facilities could increase satisfaction and lead to higher "Excellent" ratings.
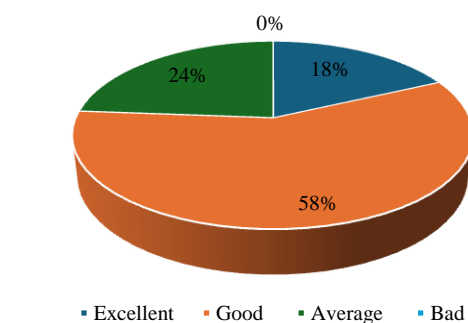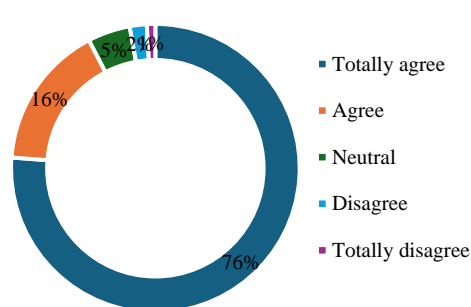

Figure 9. Participants' response related
to tourist infrastructure assessment;

Figure 10. Participants' responses related to
the attractions' impact on the local industry

(Source: Online survey applied to Ouidah visitors during February-March 2025)

Tourist attractions drive visitor interest, generate economic growth, and highlight cultural and natural heritage, boosting local tourism (Ursache, 2015). The illustrated right-side chart (Figure 10) demonstrates a strong belief in the positive impact of attractions on local industry, with 76% of respondents fully agreeing and another 16% agreeing. Neutral opinions are limited to 5%, while minimal disagreement is evident, with only 2% disagreeing and 1% totally disagreeing. Overall, the data reflects a predominantly favorable perception of the role attractions play in enhancing the local economy and industries, with only a small fraction expressing skepticism.

Furthermore, through open-ended questions, respondents identified challenges to the destination which can hinder a positive experience with the destination through issues related to accessibility, security, orientation (Dumitrascu, 2023). Thus the encountered tourism-related challenges refer to *accessibility and infrastructure* which translated into poor road conditions; difficult access due to bad roads and lack of parking; insufficient public transport; inadequate or poorly indicated public transport options; challenges for people with mobility issues due to impractical paths and stairs. For *orientation and information* concerns are raised referring to the lack of clear signage; insufficient or unreadable signs; limited multilingual information; lack of information in multiple languages; absence or limited availability of guides. For *visitor experience* tourists complained that the tours are too lengthy; sites are overcrowded; there are challenges in reserving tickets in advance. For *services and amenities* complaints referred to insufficient restrooms; lack of well-maintained toilets; limited dining options; few places to eat or refresh; lack of resting areas; limited spaces for rest and shade.

For *safety and comfort* concerns were raised related to security; the unsafe feeling due to theft or lack of surveillance. In terms of *climate challenges,* complaints referred to the difficulty of managing heat or rain without proper infrastructure; slippery paths and dangerous animals. For *environmental and cultural preservation* tourists revealed pollution and waste management concerns which are poorly handled as well as site degradation. For the *emotional and cultural impact* was highlighted the emotional impact of learning about the history of slavery. For *specific site challenges* at the Temple of Pythons it was the fear of snakes and the challenge of handling them. In terms of *local interactions,* concerns were raised about the locals asking for money and inconsistent storytelling. In order to counteract these challenges, respondents also gave their opinions and suggestions for the destination's improvement through open-ended questions. Ideally a thriving tourist destination depends on cultural immersion and local engagement to create meaningful experiences supported by good infrastructure, smart site development and inclusive policies, all maintained through sustainable practices, effective promotion and consistent upkeep to ensure accessibility and enjoyment for every visitor which can therefore subsequently ensure a higher length of stay (Mihai et al., 2023).

The respondents provided some cornerstone intervention suggestions for a higher overall satisfaction level with the destination. Thus for *cultural immersion,* suggestions relate to the enhancement of the authentic cultural experience for visitors; promotion of the real vision of the local people regarding their culture. Suggestions also referred to the

provision of well-trained guides with accurate and engaging narratives as well as the need to train young professionals in tourism. For *infrastructure and accessibility* suggestions referred to regularly renovating and improving infrastructure, including roads and access routes to tourist sites as well as improving access for people with mobility issues and to clearly mark restaurants and artisan shops. For *site development* suggestions were done to construct and improve temples to highlight Beninese culture internationally; to renovate key sites, especially those on the Slave Route circuit as well as to maintain and enhance the authenticity of attractions. For *visitor experience* suggestions were made to offer horses for long-distance tours; set up refreshment stands to provide drinks, especially in hot weather; improve the overall welcome and hospitality services and to add entertainment options near attractions to attract more tourists; enhance visitor comfort with shaded areas, water points, and clean restrooms; create interactive and immersive experiences.

For *promotion and activities,* it was suggested to organize eco-tourism and cultural activities to promote Beninese tourism; invite community leaders or influential personalities to special events to generate word-of-mouth publicity; promote and market the attractions effectively; boost online visibility and run national and international promotion campaigns. For *maintenance and upkeep,* it was suggested to ensure regular maintenance and upkeep of sites and provide more guides to enhance the visitor experience. For *government and policy*, it was suggested that the government should provide qualified guides to educate the public about the city and that it should continue ongoing projects and ensure they do not compromise the authenticity of the sites. For *cultural and local engagement,* it was suggested to highlight local culture through workshops and tastings and involve the community in managing attractions.

For *environmental sustainability* it was suggested to implement eco-friendly practices to reduce environmental impact. Encouragingly, respondents offered a wide range of actionable suggestions, from enhancing cultural immersion and improving infrastructure to promoting eco-tourism and involving local communities.

These recommendations align with best practices in sustainable tourism and reflect a desire for more interactive, inclusive, and authentic experiences. The emphasis on workshops, tastings, and community-led initiatives points to a growing demand for participatory tourism that benefits both visitors and residents.

Despite all the above-listed challenges highlighted, respondents are eager to recommend Ouidah as a thriving tourist destination with a wide majority (i.e.70) who would further definitely recommend the destination to others for visitation (Figure 10). This enthusiasm fosters increased visibility and interest in the destination, boosts awareness, ultimately supporting local economic growth and preserving cultural heritage, as positive word-of-mouth often translates into greater tourism activity (Chang et al., 2025).
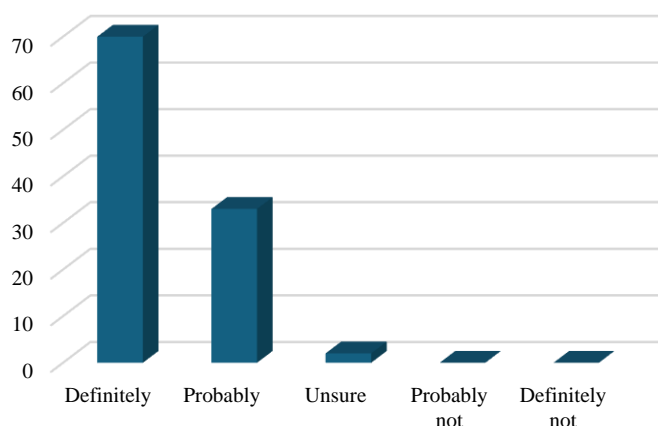

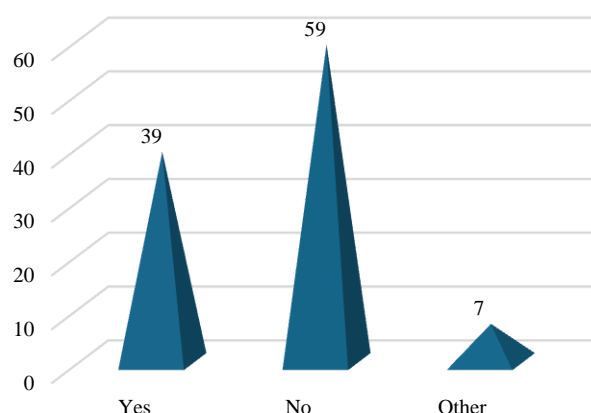Figure 10. Participants' responses related to further recommendations

Figure 11. Participants' responses related to Vodun beliefs promotion and perception in the media

(Source: Online survey applied to Ouidah visitors during February-March 2025)

Given that many of Ouidah's attractions are in close connection to the Vodun religion (Sibani, 2020) and culture, another surveyed opinion was that of the Vodun beliefs which tended to indicate a prevailing sentiment that it is often misrepresented, which may influence global perceptions (Montgomery, 2019).

Fifty-nine respondents believe Vodun culture is not correctly promoted in international media, while 39 respondents think it is, and 7 respondents have other opinions (Figure 11). For tourism in Ouidah, a city deeply connected to Vodun heritage, understanding these perceptions (Herman et al., 2023) is vital as a misrepresentation could deter culturally curious tourists, while accurate promotion enhances Ouidah's appeal as a unique cultural destination. Recognizing the importance of religious beliefs like Vodun helps tourism studies develop strategies to preserve authenticity, educate audiences, and attract visitors, fostering local economic and cultural growth (Cousin, 2015; Gedecho & Nyikana, 2023).

DISCUSSIONS

The study reveals the enduring allure of Ouidah's cultural and historical landmarks, such as the Route of the Slaves and the Temple of Pythons, as pivotal attractions for visitors. This resonates with scholarly works by Rieucau, who identifies Ouidah as a significant spiritual and cultural hub (Rieucau, 2025).

Despite its rich historical memory, challenges such as infrastructure limitations and accessibility issues persist as identified in this study, referring to challenges such as poor road condition, as also noted in the broader tourism literature by Berepa (Berepa, 2022), emphasising the need for targeted improvements.

Figure12. The Route of Slaves, Ouidah (Source: Authors, 2025)　　　Figure13. Python Temple, Ouidah (Source: Authors, 2025)

The underutilization of digital marketing platforms (Hendrajana, 2024) highlights a critical gap in promoting Ouidah's attractions effectively. Forte's (2025) research suggests that storytelling and leveraging digital tools can elevate the visibility of such cultural heritage sites. Enhancing marketing strategies through collaborations with travel agencies and online campaigns could bring Ouidah to a broader audience, fostering its global presence.

Sustainable tourism practices (Mihalic, 2024; Joseph et al., 2021; Houenouho, 2022) emerge as a central theme, with the study underscoring the importance of community engagement (Ahrar, 2018) and ecological management (Buckley & Underdahl, 2023). This aligns with academic discussions on integrating local communities into tourism development to ensure authenticity and equitable benefits (Berepa, 2022). Visitor satisfaction, as reported, showcases Ouidah's capacity to delight its audience; however, there is room for refining experiences through interactive initiatives and better infrastructure maintenance. Amadoudji's findings on Vodun heritage underscore the need to cater to diverse visitor expectations, balancing cultural preservation with engaging experiences (Amadoudji, 2023).

The study's findings imply the necessity for strengthened infrastructure and accessibility, such as better roads and transport options, to enhance tourism in Ouidah. Sustainable practices, alongside the preservation of cultural authenticity, should be prioritized, ensuring that attractions like the Route of the Slaves and Temple of Pythons are maintained responsibly. Emphasizing digital marketing strategies, particularly leveraging social media and storytelling, could significantly amplify Ouidah's visibility and draw international audiences (Van-Dúnem et al., 2021). Visitor experiences could be further enriched by offering immersive and interactive cultural activities, alongside improving basic amenities such as shaded areas, restrooms, and refreshment stands. Community engagement in tourism planning is essential (Ahrar, 2018), ensuring equitable economic benefits and fostering local ownership of attractions.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reaffirm the significant potential of Ouidah's cultural and historical attractions to drive tourism development. Visitor feedback highlights the appeal of iconic sites such as the Route of Slaves and the Temple of Pythons, underscoring their role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering regional recognition.

However, challenges such as poor infrastructure, limited accessibility, and underutilised digital marketing platforms present barriers to achieving the town's tourism potential. To address these challenges, investments in infrastructure, including improved roads and visitor amenities, are crucial. Enhanced digital marketing efforts, leveraging storytelling and social media, can amplify the regional and global visibility of Ouidah's attractions. Engaging local communities in tourism planning and management ensures economic equity and cultural authenticity.

Furthermore, the promotion of flagship events such as Vodun Days can bolster Ouidah's reputation as a cultural hub.

By implementing these measures, Ouidah can secure its position as a sustainably managed, internationally recognised tourist destination, contributing to economic growth and cultural preservation in Benin. These findings not only serve as a blueprint for Ouidah but also provide broader insights into similar heritage destinations worldwide.

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