



Analysis of Residents Perception of Mountain Tourism in Selected Communities in Ido-Osi Local Government Area, Ekiti State, Southwest, Nigeria

*AGBEBI, PA; ADEOGUN, O

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Technology, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Abeokuta, Nigeria

**Corresponding author Email: piusagbebi@gmail.com
Co-author Email: abimbola@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: The study examined the perception of mountains tourism by residents of some selected communities in Ido/Osi local government area, Ekiti State. Specifically, the study examined; residents' perceived personal benefits derivable from mountain tourism; its perceived impact on community life and image; perceived impact on community economy; perceived attachment to mountains and hills tourism, and perceived promotional campaign in providing an awareness of the destinations to outside world. The study population was the residents of the selected communities in Ido/Osi local government of Ekiti State. 200 residents were purposively selected from the communities. Data collection was through self-administered questionnaires. Descriptive and one-sample T test statistical tools were used to analyze socio-economic characteristics of respondents and hypothesis respectively. The study showed that the perceptions of residents of the communities about mountains tourism were positive and significant. The study will contribute to the existing knowledge of mountain tourism, particularly as related to perception of residents of the communities in Ekiti State and Nigeria at large. Thus, it is pertinent for Ekiti State government to explore the mountain tourism sites in the communities for development and transformation in order to help the State achieve her sustainable tourism development goal and also improve her internally generated revenue.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/jasem.v27i10.1>

Open Access Policy: All articles published by **JASEM** are open-access articles under **PKP** powered by **AJOL**. The articles are made immediately available worldwide after publication. No special permission is required to reuse all or part of the article published by **JASEM**, including plates, figures and tables.

Copyright Policy: © 2023 by the Authors. This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY- 4.0)** license. Any part of the article may be reused without permission provided that the original article is cited.

Cite this paper as: AGBEBI, PA; ADEOGUN, O (2023). Analysis of Residents Perception of Mountain Tourism in Selected Communities in Ido-Osi Local Government Area, Ekiti State, Southwest, Nigeria. *J. Appl. Sci. Environ. Manage.* 27 (10) 2122-2132

Dates: Received: 27 August 2023; Revised: 25 September 2023; Accepted: 03 October 2023 Published: 30 October 2023

Keywords: mountain tourism; perception; community; residents.

Mountain tourism is a type of tourism activity which occurs in a defined and limited geographical space of mountains and hills with distinctive characteristics and attributes that are inherent to a specific landscape, topography, climate, biodiversity and local community. It comprises a broad range of outdoor leisure and sport activities; an attributes that position it for frequently patronized segment of tourism sector worldwide (UNWTO, 2019). Mountains and hills tourists have diverse reasons for visiting destinations some of which include to experience nature in its primal state, wildlife viewing, conservation education and cultural heritage tourism around the mountains and hills. Many countries whose primary attractions

are natural areas are experiencing dramatic increases in tourist arrivals. The International Ecotourism Society (TIES, 2006) posited that Global Ecotourism Fact Sheet revealed that UNEP and Conservation International have indicated that most of tourism's expansion is occurring in and around the world's remaining natural areas. Sun-and-sand resort tourism has now "matured as a market" and its growth is projected to remain flat. In contrast, "experiential" tourism which encompasses ecotourism, nature, heritage, cultural, and soft adventure tourism, as well as sub-sectors such as rural and community tourism is among the sectors expected to grow most quickly over the next two decades (TIES, 2006) . The impact of

**Corresponding author Email: piusagbebi@gmail.com*

mountains and hills tourism activities can be viewed at various levels ranging from social, ecological, cultural and political (Saayman et al., 2005). In any way one tends to look at it, the negative and positive impacts cannot be ignored, while making necessary efforts at maximizing the positive impacts. The relevance of studies on residents' perceptions and attitudes of mountains and hills sites and the impact of their visits cannot be ignored especially when attempt has to be made to develop or improve facilities in a particular destination. In Nigeria, it is interesting to note that the vast tourism potentials such as Table Mountains, beautiful landscapes, colourful folks, overwhelming serenity, wildlife, waterfalls, and other rich festivals, architecture, and crafts have necessitated towards the existing tourism drive in the country. This will encourage more influx of visitors and tourists into the country. Mountains and Hills have been identified as major potentials for tourism development in some countries of the world today where substantial revenues are realized from tourists who have passions for mountains and hills tourism and patronize them for recreational purposes. It is suffice to say that several recreational activities are now domiciled in mountains and Hills areas while many people travel to these areas for touristic purposes. Nigeria is not left out in this regard; mountains and hills areas are now a beehive of interesting activities that provide pleasure and comfort for some categories of tourists in Nigeria and other countries. Many families visit these areas to spend their holidays and participate in various interesting and beneficial recreational activities for their rejuvenation and psychic well-being (Agbebi, 2021). Some communities in Ido/Osi local government areas are

endowed with flora and fauna including hills and mountains which could be a source of wealth to the communities and the entire local government. But there is the belief that there are no benefits derivable from these resources, and poor community engagement and attachment is apparently feasible. Also, there is insufficient knowledge of the impact on community life and image, and on the community economy. There is also perceived dearth of promotional campaign of the destination. The perceptions of the residents of the communities about mountain tourism sites and the impact that their visits will bring to bear cannot be ignored especially when attempt has to be made to develop or improve facilities of the sites. Since mountains and hills tourism products are offered to satisfy interest of the residents and others, their perceptions therefore serve as basis to either improve on existing facilities being provided or develop additional ones. Therefore, the objective of this work is to examine the residents' perception of mountain tourism in selected communities in Ido-Osi Local Government Area, Ekiti State, Southwest, Nigeria

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area: The study was carried out in Ido/Osi local government area of Ekiti State. The local government is among the 16 functioning areas of Ekiti State with its administrative headquarter situated in the town of Ido Ekiti. It comprises mainly of rural towns and few villages which are; - Osi, Orin, Igbole, Aaye, Usi, Ilogbo, Ido, Ayetoro, Ifaki, ifishin, and Ora (Figure 1).

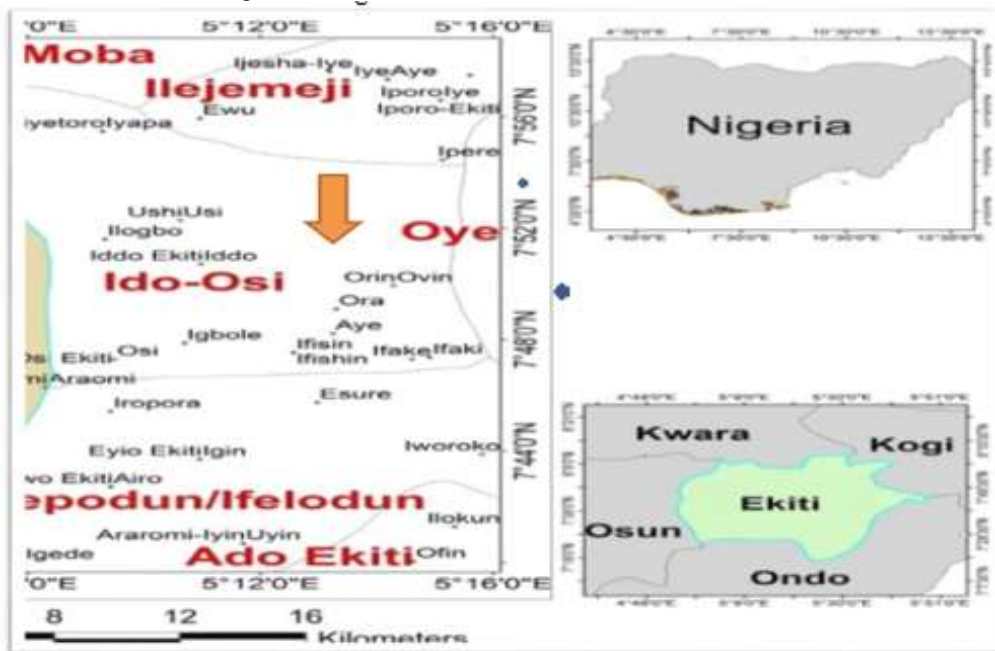


Fig. 1. Map of Ekiti showing the Study Area. (Source: Field Survey, 2022)

Purposive sampling technique was used to choose the number of respondents in each of the eleven communities. There were 200 respondents chosen in all the communities. The researcher used questionnaire administration to collect primary data from the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into five sections to address the five objectives of the study; section ‘A’ described the socio-economic characteristics of respondents; section ‘B’ examined the benefits derivable from mountains and hills tourism; section ‘C’ examined poor community engagement and attachment with the nature; section ‘D’ examined impact on community live and image, section ‘E’ examined impact on community economy; section ‘F’ examined dearth of promotional campaign of the destination. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 and 0.90 which indicated reliability of the instrument (Nunnally, 1978). The total Cronbach's alpha is reliable when all the measures are above the cut-off value of 0.70 as recommended by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Variable measured were; gender, age, education, occupation, marital status.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Demographic and Socio-Economic characteristics of the Sample Population: The study described the demographic and socio-economic information of respondents as gender which represents 128 (64%) respondents of the total sample population were male while 72 (36%) were female.

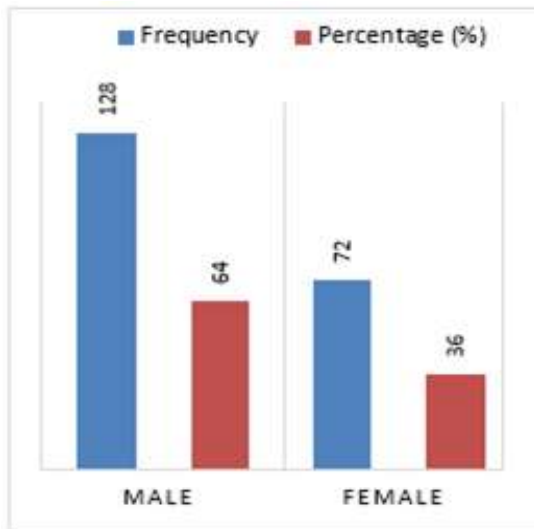


Fig.1 2D column chart representing the frequency and percentages of the male and female respondents. Source: Field survey, 2022

The sample populations were aged between 25-65 years; (25-35 (30%), 36-45 (35%), 46-55 (20%), and 56-65 (15%).

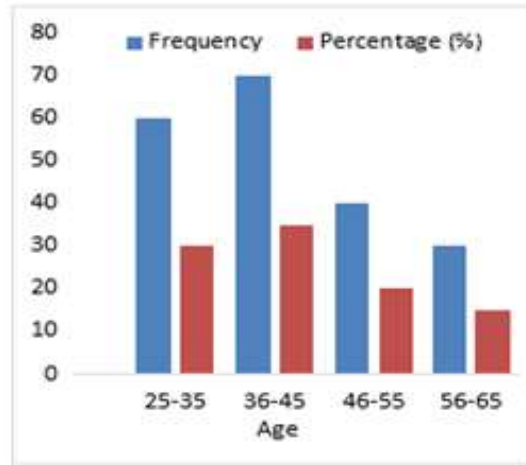


Fig.2. shows the age distributions of respondents

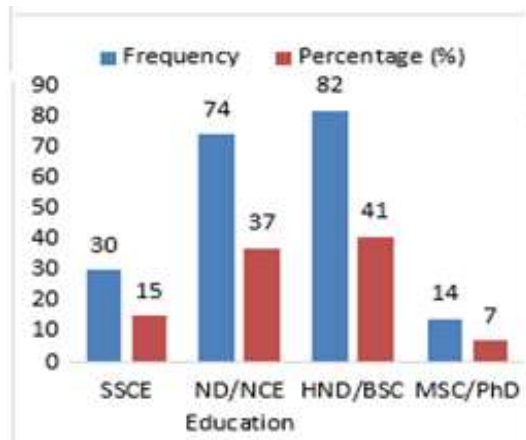


Fig.3. shows the levels of respondents' education.

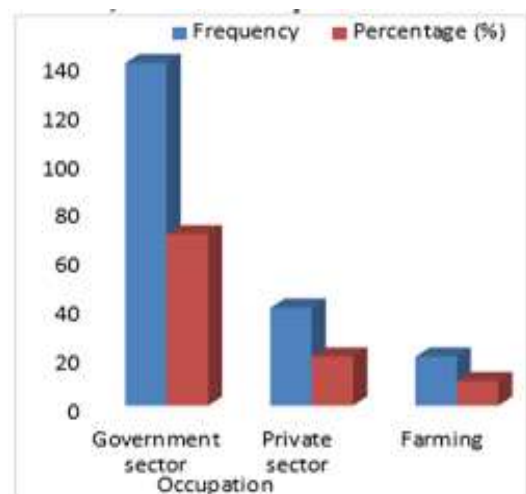


Fig.4. shows the occupation of respondents Source: Field survey, 2022

The educational levels of respondents ranged from SSCE (30 (15%), ND/NCE (74 (37%), HND/Bsc (82 (41%) and 14(0.7%). On socio-economic profile of

respondents, 80 which represent 40% worked in public sector while 52 (26%) worked in private sector. There were 68 (34%) who own their private businesses. As regards Length of residency in the community, 20 (10%) respondents have been living in the community in the last 10-15years, 24 (12%) in the last 16-20years, 60 (30%) in the last 21-25years, 50 (25%) in the last 26-30years while 66 (33%) were on ground since 31 and above years. This is an indication that all respondents were familiar with the environment and all the natural resources that are domiciled there. Fig 7 shows the marital status of respondents. The married population account for 36% (72), singles account for 47% (94), which is the highest. Divorced respondents account for 12% (24) while separated account for 5% (10).

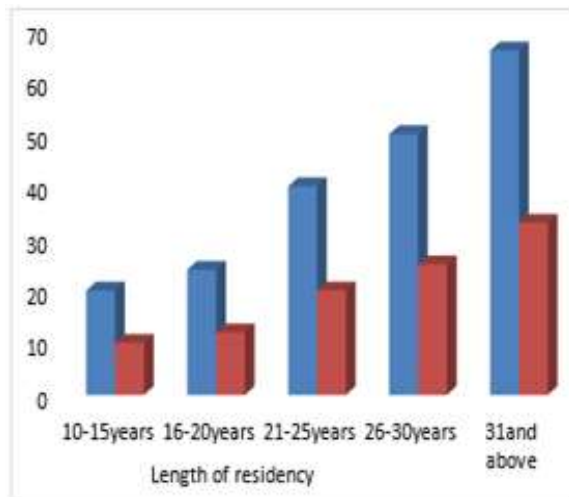


Fig.5. shows the length of residency of the respondents Source: Field survey, 2022

The religion of respondents are also important. The Christians account for 78% (156), Muslims account for 18.5% (37), Traditionalists account for 3.5% (07).

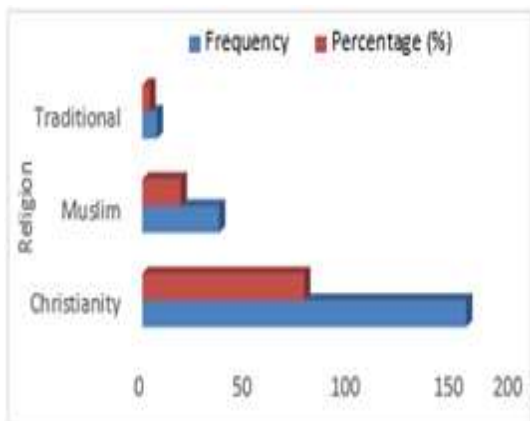


Fig. 6. Shows the distribution of religion of respondents in the communities Source: Field survey, 2022

The educational levels of respondents ranged from SSCE (30 (15%), ND/NCE (74 (37%), HND/Bsc (82 (41%) and 14(0.7%). On socio-economic profile of respondents, 80 which represent 40% worked in public sector while 52 (26%) worked in private sector. There were 68 (34%) who own their private businesses.

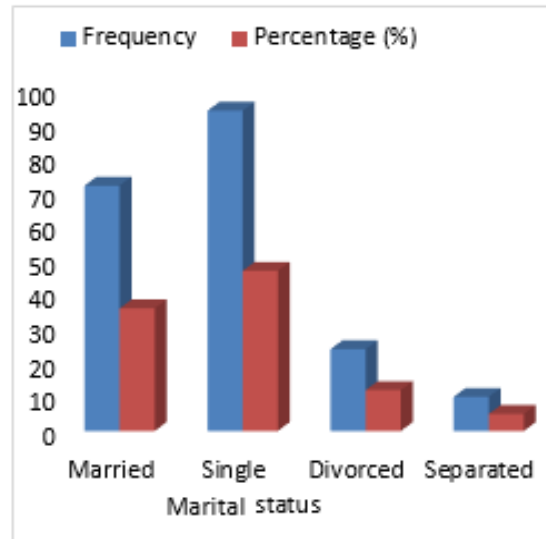


Fig.7. Marital status distribution of respondents Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 1 shows the response of residents of the communities on their perception about the personal benefits derivable from nature tourism. The substantial part of the communities strongly agreed that there will be health benefits (mean value =2.25, Std.D = 1.377). Also, some residents agreed that nature tourism will bring about enhancement of knowledge (mean value =2.24, Std.D =1.346). As regard recreation, some respondents also agreed that ecotourism will bring about rejuvenation of the body and psychic well-being of people (mean value =2.36, Std.D =1.407). The residents of the community equally agreed that ecotourism will be good for self-rehabilitation (mean value =2.17, Std.D = 1.161). Table 2 indicates all the perceived impact of ecotourism on community life and image. Residents of the communities agreed that it will make the communities popular (mean value = 1.81, Std.D =0.96). In the case of cultural integration of the people, the respondents agreed that the nature tourism will bring about cultural integration (acculturation) as indicated in the analysis (mean value =1.83, Std.D =0.827). Some respondents also agreed that ecotourism will bring about social integration within the communities (mean values =1.72, Std.D = 0.886). Infrastructural development was another considered variable where the mean values was 1.84, and Std.D was 0.905. Also, the residents agreed that nature tourism will be good image to the communities.

Table 1: Response of residents on Perceived Personal benefits from ecotourism

S/N	Variables	S A	A	U	D	S D	Mean	Std. D	Remarks
1	Health benefit	80	60	10	30	20	2.25	1.377	Strongly agree
2	Enhancement of knowledge on nature	70	80	06	20	24	2.24	1.346	Agree
3	Recreational purpose	50	96	-	20	34	2.36	1.407	Agree
4	For rehabilitation	60	94	10	24	12	2.17	1.161	Agree
5	Income from souvenir sales to tourists	84	66	20	20	10	2.03	1.173	Strongly agree

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 2: Response of residents on Perceived Impact of ecotourism on community life and image

S/N	Variables	S A	A	U	D	S D	Mean	Std. D	Remarks
1.	Popularity of the communities	84	96	-	14	06	1.81	0.969	Agree
2.	Cultural integration	76	92	24	06	02	1.83	0.827	Agree
3.	Social integration	94	84	10	08	04	1.72	0.886	Strongly agree
4.	Infrastructure development	78	94	14	10	04	1.84	0.905	Agree
5.	Good image posture	84	104	-	08	04	1.75	0.828	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2022

In table 3, respondents’ perceived impact of nature tourism on the economy of the host communities clearly showed that the growth and development of small scale businesses received positive response with a mean value of 1.82 and standard deviation of 0.91. Also, on the perceived employment opportunities, there was agreement (mean value = 1.73, Std.D = 0.748). Furthermore, there was an agreement on the

perceived increase rates of revenues into the communities (mean value = 1.89, Std.D = 1.001). On the perceived infrastructural development of the communities, the respondents were strongly agreed (mean values = 1.90, Std. D = 1.215). In the area of perceived demand for local products, respondents were positive in their responses (mean value = 2.21, Std. D = 1.197).

Table 3: Response of residents on Perceived Impact of ecotourism on the community economy

S/N	Variables	S A	A	U	D	S D	Mean	Std. D	Remarks
1.	Growth and development of the community businesses	76	106	-	14	04	1.82	0.901	Agree
2.	Employment opportunity for the community residents	78	110	-	12	-	1.73	0.748	Agree
3.	Increased rates of revenues into the community	82	88	-	30	-	1.89	1.001	Agree
4.	Infrastructural development of the community.	92	82	-	06	20	1.90	1.215	Strongly agree
5.	Demands for the local products	64	78	24	20	14	2.21	1.197	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 4 indicates the results of respondents’ perceived engagement and attachment to nature tourism. For those that will have passion for nature tourism, the respondents were of the opinion that reasonable number of people will have the passion (mean value = 1.98, Std. D = 1.107). On the issue of people that will like going to tourism sites, substantial number of people agreed (mean value = 2.63, Std. D = 1.289). The closeness of tourism destination to the

communities will be an added advantage as indicated in the analysis (mean value = 2.09, Std. D = 1.099). On the issue of communities’ commitment to ecological resources, the responses showed positive (mean value = 1.79, Std. D = 1.005). On the perceived cultural affiliation to ecotourism sites, the responses on the average also showed positive (mean value = 1.89, Std. D = 0.966).

Table 4: Perceived engagement and attachment to nature-based tourism destinations

S/N	Variables	S A	A	U	D	S D	Mean	Std. D	Remarks
1.	Passion for environmental tourism	74	96	-	20	10	1.98	1.107	Agree
2.	Visitation to Site	40	70	40	24	26	2.63	1.289	Agree
3.	Closeness of destination to communities	62	98	10	20	10	2.09	1.099	Agree
4.	Commitment to issues about ecological resources.	92	86	-	16	06	1.79	1.005	Strongly agree
5.	Cultural affiliation to site	80	102	-	10	08	1.82	0.966	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 5 shows the perceived promotional campaign of the destination that will make the outside world know the sites of the ecotourism for patronage. Some residents believed that awareness of the sites will be as a result of promotional campaign (mean value = 1.94, Std.D = 0.883). On the use of mass media such as newspaper, Television, Radio etc., some respondents

agreed (mean value = 2.11, Std.D = 1.178). Also, the use of bill board and fliers were agreed upon by some respondents (mean value = 1.92, Std.D = 0.915) and (mean value = 2.07, Std.D = 1.042) respectively. The proactivity of the staff in-charge of marketing was also agreed upon by respondents (mean value = 2.04, Std. D = 1.160).

Table 5: Perceived Promotional campaign of the destination

S/N	Variables	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std. D	Remarks
1.	Awareness of the destination	66	94	30	06	04	1.94	0.883	Agree
2.	Use of mass media	62	90	14	20	14	2.11	1.178	Agree
3.	Use of billboard	72	86	34	02	06	1.92	0.915	Agree
4.	Use of fliers	58	102	16	14	10	2.07	1.042	Agree
5.	Proactivity of the marketing staff	68	98	12	02	20	2.04	1.160	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2022.

Test of Hypothesis: H₀. The residents’ perception of benefits derivable from nature tourism is not significant. One –sample Test statistical tool was used to determine the veracity of this claim. From table 7, the issue of whether the residents’ perception of benefits derivable from ecotourism is significant or not was tested using one –sample test from SPSS version

21. The results of the test shows that all the perceived variables would be substantially significant (P<0.05). Means were derived from a five-point scale (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3= undecided, 4=disagree, 5=strongly disagree. Hoc test revealed that a statistically significant difference exists among the variables.

Table 6. One sample test for residents’ perception of benefits derivable from nature tourism. (200participants)

S/N	Variables	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
1	Health benefit	23.103	199	0.000	2.250	2.06	2.44
2	Enhancement of knowledge on nature.	23.537	199	0.000	2.240	2.05	2.43
3	Recreational purpose	24.735	199	0.000	2.460	2.26	2.66
4	Rehabilitation	26.434	199	0.000	2.170	2.01	2.33
5	Income from souvenir sales to tourists	24.474	199	0.000	2.030	1.87	2.19

Source: Field Survey, 2022

Table 7 shows the analysis of residents’ perception of the impact of nature tourism on the economy of the host communities to ascertain the veracity of its’ significant. A one-sample Test statistical tool was

used. The results shows that all the perceived variables by the respondents would be significant (P<0.05). **H₀.** The residents’ perception of the impact of nature based tourism on economy of the host communities is not significant.

Table 7. One sample test for residents’ perception of benefits derivable from nature-based tourism. (n=200)

S/N	Variables	t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
1	Growth and development of the community small scale business	28.569	199	0.000	1.820	1.69	1.95
2	Employment opportunities	32.697	199	0.000	1.730	1.63	1.83
3	Increase rate of revenues into the community	26.690	199	0.000	1.890	1.75	2.03
4	Improvement of the local government IGR	22.107	199	0.000	1.900	1.73	2.07
5	Increased demand for local products	26.108	199	0.000	2.210	2.04	2.38

P<0.05: Source: Field Survey, 2022

H₀: The residents’ perception of the impact of ecotourism on the life and image of the host communities is not significant. One –sample Test statistical tool was used for the analysis. The study discovered that there were more male respondents than female. The male respondents from the communities were (64%) while female respondents were (36%). This is consistent with the estimated sex ratio of 1.06 male/female 2020 Nigeria (CIA, 2020). Thus, the lower number of female respondents in this circumstance might be due to the fact that women in some communities as cultural norms are not allowed

to partake in some social activities such as mountains and hills tourism. On ages of respondents, it was revealed that higher proportion of respondents from communities were between 25-45years (65%). This showed that these age groups are within the active and productive years which have propensity for active involvement in livelihood activities such as mountains and hills tourism, and other tourism activities. This also collaborates with the findings of Ogunjinmi (2015) who reported that the highest percentage of Eco tourists in Nigeria National Parks were within 21-40 years of age.

Table 8. One sample test for residents’ perception of benefits derivable from nature-based tourism. (n=200)

S/N	Variables	One sample test for residents’ perception of benefits derivable from nature-based tourism. (n=200)					
		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of the difference	
						Lower	Upper
1	Popularity of the community	26.421	199	0.000	1.810	1.67	1.95
2	Cultural integration	31.280	199	0.000	1.830	1.71	1.95
3	Social integration	27.445	199	0.000	1.720	1.60	1.84
4	Infrastructural development	28.762	199	0.000	1.840	1.71	1.97
5	Good image	29.389	199	0.000	1.720	1.60	1.84

Source: Field Survey, 2022

On educational status of respondents, the higher proportion of literate respondents from the communities who attained tertiary level of education is consistent with national illiteracy rate of 85% as reported by CIA (2020). But inconsistent with the findings of Wuver & Attuquayefio (2006) in the Muni-Pomadze wetland in the central region of Ghana that reported that about 26% of the community selected residents lacked formal education. This also shows that prospective visitors and tourists to mountains and hills tourism in Ekiti State are well educated and thus have the knowledge and understanding of the viability of mountains and hills tourism in the State. The study revealed that occupation of respondents from communities are basically public servants (70%) while farming is the lowest (10%). On the issue of religion, the majority of respondents are Christians from the communities (78%). This is not consistent with estimated national religious adherents (Muslims 50%, Christians 40%, and indigenous belief 10% by CIA (2020). The percentage of Christian population observed in this study was higher due to the fact that the majority of residents in these communities are from Christian background. On the issue of the perceived benefits derivable from nature based tourism where respondents substantially agreed, this is consistent with Laarman and Dust, (1987) which describe nature-based tourism as consisting beneficial factors such education, entertainment and adventure that potential and existing tourists would like to partake in. On the issue of respondents perceived impact of nature-based tourism on the life and image

of the communities which was significant is consistent with the opinion of Chandralal, (2010) that local communities’ life impact on destination image and remarked upon increased infrastructure and better tourists’ facilities as significant influencing predators of sustainable tourism development. The issue of residents’ perceived impact of nature-based tourism on the economy of the communities were significant and consistent with the Diamantis (2004) which stressed that the main economic impacts of tourism in developing countries are divided into benefits and costs: the benefits include-balance of payments, employment, entrepreneurial activities while the costs include-opportunity costs, over-dependence on tourism, inflation etc. On the issue of community attachment and engagement to nature-based tourism which were significant, it is consistent with Giuliani (2003) which opined that place attachment simply means a positive or negative emotional bond that people experience in relation to places. Furthermore, on the issue of residents’ perceived promotional campaign of the tourism sites, which was significant, it is consistent with Cox and Wray (2011) which opined that marketing of destinations has been central to achieving a competitive tourism destination. Also, Xie and Lee (2013) emphasized that destination marketing organization (DMO) work assiduously with marketing destinations in a way that will attract the desired tourists. In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested for policy makers and all prospective participants in nature-based tourism in Ekiti State; (1). The local

government and state government of Ekiti should seek the assistance and partner with the interested individuals and private sectors to develop all nature-based related attractions of touristic values in Ekiti communities. (2). There should be regular tutoring of the residents of the communities on the benefits of nature-based tourism because this will allow all investors to make informed decisions about the types of tourism development and activities that will take place at tourism destinations. Through regular effective communication, negative impacts associated with nature-based tourism can be reduced to the simplest minimum while the positive impacts can be strengthened leading to more positive perceptions about the impacts of nature tourism among residents of the communities..

Conclusion: The study was done in order to explore the perceptions of nature-based tourism by the residents of the communities within their environment. Specifically, the study examined; residents' personal benefits, residents' engagement and attachment with nature tourism, impact on community lives and image, promotional campaign in providing an awareness of the destinations, and impact on economy of the community. All the findings that emanated from the study showed that the perceptions of the residents of the communities were significant. This indicates that the significant of nature –based tourism cannot be over-emphasized in Ekiti State.

REFERENCES

Agbebi, PA (2021). Cluster Analysis of the potential of mountains and hills for tourism development in Ekiti State. *J. Appl. Sci. Environ. Manage.* 25 (2) 449-457.

Chandralal, KPL (2010). Impacts of tourism and community attitude towards tourism: A case study in Sri Lanka. *South Asian J. Tourism and Heritage*, 3(2): 41-49.

Central Intelligence Agency (2020). Nigeria people 2020, CIA world Factbook-theodora.com. Retrieved 26th August, 2023. <https://thteodora.com> wfbcurrent>

Cox, C; Wray, M (2011). Best Practice Marketing for Regional Tourism Destinations. *J. Travel. Tourism. Market.* 28(5), 524-540.

Diamantis, I (2004). Travelling to culture: *tourism must have economic impact.* Retrieved 25th August, 2023. <https://www.redalyc.org>.

Giuliani, MV (2003). The theory of attachment and place attachment. In M. Bonnes, T. Lee, & M. Bonaiuto (Eds.), *Psychological theories for environmental issues.* Ethnoscapes. (pp. 137-70). Hants/ Burlington: Ashgate.

Laarman and Dust, (1987). Nature-based tourism Retrieved 26th August. <https://www.academia.edu>.

Nunnally, JC; Bernstein, I.H (1994). The Assessment of Reliability: *Psychometric Theory.* 3: 248-292.

Saayman, S (2005). Impact of Private Game farms on Local Community. Retrieved 23rd August,2023. <https://www.academia.edu>.

The International Ecotourism Society (2006). Fact Sheet: Global Ecotourism. Retrieved 21st August. <https://link.springer.com>chapter>

UNWTO (2019). Rural and Mountain Tourism. Retrieved 25th August, 2023. <http://www.unwto.org/rural-mountains-tourism>

Wuver, AM; Attuquayefio, DK (2006). The Impact of Human Activities on Biodiversity Conservation in a Coastland Wetland in Ghana. *West Afr. J. Appl. Ecol.* 9:1-14

Xie, KL; Lee, JS (2013). Toward the Perspective of Cognitive Destination Image and Destination Personality: The Case of Beijing. *J. Travel & Tourism Marketing.* 30(6): 538–556.