



Comparative Evaluation of Community Participation in Ecotourism Development in Borgu and Zurguma Sector of Kainji Lake National Park, Niger State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: The objective of this study is to compare community involvement in ecotourism development in Borgu and Zurguma sector of Kainji Lake National Park, Niger state, Nigeria appropriate standard methods. Results (mean values) obtained were 4.24, 4.18, 4.15, 4.11 and 4.10 respectively for communities involvement in decision making, ecotourism project, in protection and preservation of natural resources in provision of job opportunities, for protection and preservation of natural resources respectively. Data analysis shows that community involvement in ecotourism development are statistically significant except for the cutting down of tress which is not significant. The study recommend that more awareness should be created for the important of ecotourism development in the study area.

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Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) describes community as a group of persons having the same or similar interests. For some time now, an essential part of eco-tourism development that has been emphasized is the community involvement in the planning process and decision-making. This emphasis is based on the view that planning should include the residents of an area, and they should be given the chance to participate in the planning of the area's future development and express their opinions related to the kind of future community they would like to live in (Inskeep, 1991). There are wide varieties of interpretations associated with the concept of community participation in the field of tourism. Drake (1991), however, refers to local participation as the ability of local communities to influence the outcomes of development projects that

have an impact on them. Ecotourism development may initiate conflicts when governments impose it on a community without consulting the local people (Scheyvens, 2009). Thus, the opportunity for control of tourism should be in the hands of the community members living close to the tourism facility; that is, tourism should be community driven (Snyman, 2012). It is however necessary that there must be some input of policies and legislation from governments to enable the local community to actively get involved in the tourism development process. Ecotourism development is a local issue because it is at the local level that action takes place. Hence, Murphy (1995) recognizes that more actors should become involved, those who are experts and those who are affected. Such an interaction may lessen the frustrating delays of past

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confrontations and lead to more harmonious development. Ecotourism has become one of the world's major economic sectors with the capability to play a significant role in the sustainable development of natural areas (Powell and Ham, 2008). Powell and Ham, (2008) also explained that the appeal of ecotourism as a conservation and development tool derives from the related benefits and perception that is feasible alternative to the more conventional and destructive mass tourism form of tourism development. For ecotourism and conservation policies to be successful in protected areas the attitudes and level of participation of community residents play a major role. Host community participation in tourism businesses is one of the important indicators for sustainable tourism. The general attitudes of community residents towards tourism can be improved by both tangible and intangible benefits that these populations receive from involving directly in decision-making processes. Stakeholder involvement in the tourism development is a critical factor of success, yet there are many local communities being excluded or mainly minimally involved in the planning and management of natural resources in protected areas. According to Rastegar (2010), there are different levels of people in community which need different levers for motivation and satisfaction which should be identified. Negative attitude towards ecotourism and conservation in protected areas often arise from poor relationship between residents and management and also inequity in the distribution of benefits derived from these ventures.

There is need for increase in the level of community involvement in ecotourism development because

activities of local communities impact positively or otherwise on the success of their involvement in biodiversity conservation (Barr, 1995). Human management will call for an overall socio economic development of the residents of fringe. The total exclusion of human population from the development or decision making of ecotourism centers can leads to conflicts between the host community and the government. Presently policy makers suggest participatory approach where human population will be an inherent part of ecotourism development in order to reduce conflicts in ecotourism centers. Committees may be formed where interest of the people in and around the destination will be kept under consideration (Field, 1997). Hence, the objective of this study is to compare community participation in ecotourism development of in Borgu and Zurguma sector of Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area: Kainji Lake National Park is located in the North West central part of the country between latitude $9^{\circ}45'N$ and $10^{\circ}23'N$ and longitude $3^{\circ}40'E$ and $5^{\circ}47'E$. It is made up of two sectors (Borgu and Zurguma) situated in Borgu/Mashegu and Kaima/Baruten Local Government Areas of Niger and Kwara State respectively. It covers a total land area of 5,340.82Sq (Ayeni, 2007). Kainji Lake National Park was established in 1979 by the amalgamation of two former game reserves Borgu and Zurguma under decree 46 of 29th July 1979, thereby making Kainji Lake National Park the pioneer National Park in Nigeria (Ayeni, 2007).

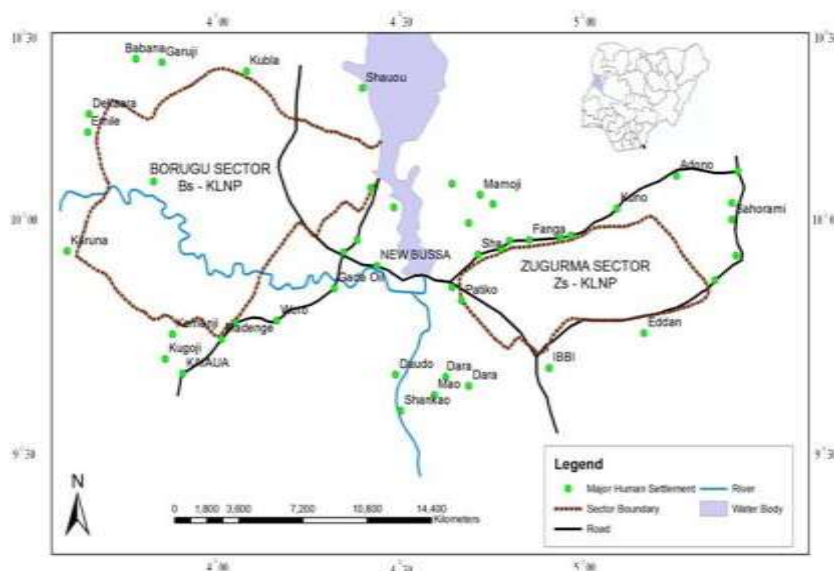


Fig 1: Map of Kainji Lake National Park. Source: Ayeni, 2007

Study Population and Sample Size: For the purpose of this, the target populations were the residents of communities surrounding Kainji Lake National Park. The sample size was put at one hundred and twenty respondents.

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling techniques was used to select two (2) communities from each of the Sector. One hundred and twenty respondents were randomly selected from the four communities (Ibbi, Felegi, Malale and Wawa).

Method of Data Collection: Questionnaire were personally administered by the researcher and was interpreted to local languages of the respondents with the help of an interpreter. The questionnaire contained a series of structure question which were related to the research work and directed to respondents with the aim of gaining firsthand information. The questionnaire consisted of closed ended questions.

Data Analysis: Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics where results were expressed in tables, frequency and percentage. Chi square was use to compare and contrast the involvement in ecotourism between the two sectors. All analyses was performed using SPSS version 23.0.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 revealed the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents, majority of the respondents are male with 62.5% and female recorded 37.5%. Furthermore, age group 40years and above had the highest with 27.5% while 15-20 is the least (4.2%).

Majority of the respondents are married (69.2%) while 30.8% are unmarried. Respondents with secondary school certificate recorded the highest with 35.8% while primary certificate had 27.5% and tertiary certificate is the least (13.3%). The table also showed that most of the respondents are Muslim with 59.2% and traditional religion was the least (5.0%). The table further revealed the size of household of the respondents in which, 4-6 household size recorded the highest (47.5%) and 10 household and above is the least with 7.5%. Table 2 revealed the role of the communities in ecotourism development, in which community involved in decision making recorded the highest mean value of 4.24, followed by community involves in ecotourism project and community helps in protection and preservation of natural resources had a mean of 4.18 and 4.15 respectively.

Cutting of tree in the communities has decrease is the least with a mean of 3.54. Perception of the communities towards ecotourism development is shown in above table 4.3, it was revealed that ecotourism development provides job opportunities and ecotourism development helps in protection and preservation of natural resources recorded mean value of 4.11 and 4.10 respectively. Ecotourism development has enhances construction of schools and health facilities also recorded mean value of 4.08 and 4.05 respectively. The least mean value of 3.43 was ecotourism development has increased price of goods in this community. Table 4 revealed the comparison of the community involvement in ecotourism development, the chi-square analysis shows that the findings are statistically significant except for the cutting down of tress which is not significant.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents

Demographic	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	75	62.5
	Female	45	37.5
Age Group	15-20	5	4.2
	21-25	15	12.5
	26-30	20	16.7
	31-35	25	20.8
	36-40	29	24.2
	40 and above	33	27.5
Marital status	Married	83	69.2
	Unmarried	37	30.8
Level of education	No formal education	28	23.3
	Primary	33	27.5
	Secondary	43	35.8
	Tertiary	16	13.3
Religion	Christianity	43	35.8
	Islam	71	59.2
	Traditional	6	5.0
Size of Household	1-3	21	17.5
	4-6	57	47.5
	7-9	33	27.5
	10 and Above	9	7.5
	Total	120	100

Source (Field survey, 2022).

Table 2: Role of Communities in the Ecotourism Development

Variables	Completely Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Completely Agree	Mean	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
Community involved in decision making for ecotourism development	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	32(32.0)	88(73.3)	4.24	1 st
Cutting tree in our community has decrease	11(9.2)	28(23.3)	45(37.5)	19(15.8)	17(14.2)	3.54	8 th
Community helps in protection and preservation of natural resources	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	8(6.7)	51(42.5)	61(50.8)	4.15	3 rd
Community members are always consulted in ecotourism development	0(0.0)	2(1.6)	6(5.0)	55(45.8)	57(47.5)	4.13	4 th
Community involves in conservation activities	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	31(25.8)	48(40.0)	41(34.2)	4.08	6 th
Communities involves in ecotourism project	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(3.0)	35(29.2)	82(68.3)	4.18	2 nd
Community have a voice in development issues	0(0.0)	18(15.0)	36(30.0)	29(24.2)	37(30.8)	3.96	7 th
Community are involves in protective of the environment	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	19(15.8)	51(42.5)	50(41.7)	4.09	5 th

Source (Field survey, 2022).

Table 3: Perception of the communities towards Ecotourism Development

Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Rank
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)		
There is an increased cost of living	0	19(15.8)	53(44.2)	44(36.7)	4(3.0)	3.85	10 th
Our community experienced overcrowding problems	0	7(5.8)	42(35.0)	51(42.5)	20(16.7)	3.91	9 th
Ecotourism development provides job opportunities	0	0	0	31(25.8)	89(74.2)	4.11	1 st
Ecotourism development leads to immigration problem	0	0	29(24.2)	58(48.3)	33(27.5)	3.97	7 th
Ecotourism development has enhance donation from tour operators	0	0	18(15.0)	63(52.5)	39(32.5)	4.01	6 th
Ecotourism development has enhances construction of schools	0	0	0	45(37.5)	75(62.5)	4.08	3 rd
Ecotourism development has enhances construction of health facilities	0	0	8(6.7)	51(42.5)	61(50.8)	4.05	4 th
Ecotourism development has enhances a better social life	0	0	35(29.2)	55(45.8)	30(25.0)	3.95	8 th
Ecotourism development has increased price of goods in this community	4(3.3)	27(22.5)	51(42.5)	37(30.8)	1(0.8)	3.43	11 th
Ecotourism development has contributed to protecting and preserving ecotourism resources	0	0	12(10.0)	59(49.2)	49(40.8)	4.03	5 th
Ecotourism development helps in protection and preserving natural resources	0	0	0	39(32.5)	81(67.5)	4.10	2 nd

Source (Field survey, 2022).

Ecotourism conservation has multivariate benefits if well implemented and these can only be addressed with the recognition of the relationship between the Parks and the surrounding communities (Furze *et al.*, 1996). Majority of the respondents are male and still in their active and productive state of life which make

them to show more willingness to be involved in conservation activities. Age has significant influence on attitude and perception of local communities towards conservation area (Kmech, 1996). Older respondent are less likely to support conservation because they would have been living in their

communities before the establishment of the park. Consequently the establishment of the park would bring about some restriction in the utilization of some natural resources which they would count as deprivation of what had initially belong to them. Most of the respondents had secondary education; this is expected of a rural setting. However there are more

than to be done on the path of the park management and the government to support and create an enabling environment for education of the rural populace because the more the people are enlightened especially on conservation education, the more the cooperation and support expected from such individuals.

Table 4: Comparison of the Involvements of the Two Sector in Ecotourism development

Variables	Borgu Sector		Zugurma Sector		X ²	P-Value
	Involves F (%)	Not Involves F (%)	Involves F (%)	Not Involves F (%)		
My community are involved in decision making in ecotourism	45(75.0)	15(25.0)	38(63.3)	22(36.7)	14.645	0.000
My community are involved in ecotourism projects	36(60.0)	24(40.0)	32(53.3)	28(46.7)	10.256	0.006
My community have a voice in development issues	31(51.7)	29(48.3)	23(38.3)	37(61.7)	4.081	0.001
My community are involved in protection of the environment	42(70.0)	18(30.0)	39(65.0)	21(35.9)	5.994	0.049
My community are consulted in ecotourism development	26(43.3)	34(56.7)	29(48.3)	31(51.7)	9.846	0.000
My community are involved in conservation activities	38(63.3)	22(36.7)	35(58.3)	25(41.7)	12.984	0.000
My community are involved in protection and preservation of natural resources	37(61.7)	23(38.3)	34(56.7)	26(43.3)	17.572	0.001
My community discourage cutting of tree	21(35.0)	39(65.0)	25(41.7)	35(58.3)	7.946	0.130

P ≤ 0.05. Source (Field survey, 2022).

With respect to the role played by the communities in ecotourism development, it is shown that majority of the respondents indicated that the communities are involved in decision making, ecotourism project, helps in protection and preservation of natural resources. This implies that the community are involved in decision making which can be done when representatives of the residents attended quarterly meetings. The implication is that the representatives took decisions concerning the development of the projects on behalf of the community members. This outcome reflects that people around the park perceived resources within the biota as a direct function for survival where people could acquire their daily need. This conforms to Bashir (1995) who termed park resources as 'the prerequisite for their survival' and Okunola and Lawal (2013) suggested that protected areas should be a succor to the socio-economically poor people within the buffer zone through involving them in decision making and developing there infrastructural development. This finding is consistent

with an observation made by Adu-Yeboah and Obiri-Yeboah (2008), at Mafi-Dekpoe, Ghana. They reported on the active participation of community members in decision-making and implementation of the pipe borne water project at Mafi-Dekpoe.

The perception of the communities towards ecotourism development revealed that ecotourism development provides job opportunities and ecotourism development helps in protection and preservation of natural resources recorded the highest mean. The job opportunities provided can be attributed to priority given to the host community during employment. Ecotourism was perceived as a development opportunity for the host community because of the main benefits. These results confirm the findings of previous studies showing that ecotourism development leads to environment protection (natural and cultural) and an increase in job opportunities (Rasoolimanesh *et al.*, 2017). These are important aspects for sustainable tourism development in rural

areas. The development of ecotourism activity in rural areas generates extra income for the local budget that could be invested for future tourism development plans and conservation of the tourism attractions, ensuring the sustainability of the area. Also, Pearce *et al.*, (1996) insisted that the purpose of participation for many individuals is to exercise power or at least some influence over the outcomes of tourism development in the community which can involve priority in job selection.

The comparison of the community involvement in ecotourism development, the chi-square analysis shows that the findings are statistically significant except for the cutting down of trees which is not significant. This denotes that community involvement may offer the necessary solution for sustainability in the development of ecotourism attractions in the region. Local people should, therefore, be involved in tourism development activities in such a way that they can see the benefits of tourism and thus support its development.

Conclusion: It was observed from the study that the communities were involved in decision-making, involvement in ecotourism projects and helps in protection and preservation of natural resources, ecotourism development have provides job opportunities for the communities. Although much could be done to educate the local people on their moral obligation as residents towards the development of ecotourism in their communities. The study recommends that government and parks authority should initiate a meaningful policy on community participation.

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