

## Influence of Ecotourism Potentials and Community Development in Enugu State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*At the international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), ecotourism has incorporated environmental responsible travel to natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature and accompanying cultural feature both past and present that promote conservation. The purpose of this study therefore was to investigate the influence of ecotourism potentials on community development in Enugu State. To achieve the purpose two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Review of literature was done accordingly. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of respondents from each local government area. The questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. To test the hypotheses and to ascertain whether to reject or retain them, simple regression analysis was adopted and tested at .05 level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that ecotourism potentials and tourism impact has a significant influence on the community development. Based on the findings it was recommended that counsellors in collaboration with government and ecotourism officers should intensify awareness to community members and tourists on the need to adequately organized and manage tourism activities in a way that may ensure tourism development and sustainability in the*

*private sector, non-governmental organization and host community for effective development in the areas.*

**Keywords:** *Ecotourism potentials, community development, Enugu State, Nigeria*

### Introduction

Tourism is one of the most remarkable success stories of modern time, which started on a massive scale only in the 1960s, and has grown rapidly and steadily over the past 30 years in terms of money generation and the number of people who travel from one destination to another. It is noteworthy that tourism has both benefit and far adverse effects on the society, the natural environment and local cultures. It must therefore be properly managed to harness its positive effects while reducing and/or eliminating the negative effects. "Inappropriate tourism development and practice can degrade habitats and landscapes, deplete natural resources, and generate waste and pollution. In contrast, responsible tourism can help to generate awareness of and support for conservation and local culture, and create economic opportunities for

countries and communities" (World Wild Fund (WWF) 2001).

At the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), ecotourism has been defined by incorporating environmental responsible travel to natural areas in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socioeconomic involvement of local peoples (Ceballos-Lascarain, 1996). Ecotourism can be distinguished from nature tourism by its emphasis on conservation, education, traveller's responsibility and active community participation. It embraces the following elements, such as, primary attraction, which is the natural environment; while the socio-cultural attractions within the destination area can also play a role. Secondly ecotourism strives towards addressing the three dimensions of sustainable development: ecological, socio-cultural and socio-economic sustainability. It therefore, minimized the impact on the natural and cultural environment and at the same time providing benefits to host communities. The importance of ecotourism is that it addresses the three dimensions of

sustainability. It therefore, reconciles economic development and nature conservation. Based on this, ecotourism potentials lay emphasis on ecotourism conservation, education, traveller's responsibilities and active community participation.

Tourism is the world's largest employer according to estimates of the World Travel and Tourism Council. It is often touted as a creator of employment and a mechanism of development for the communities where it imposes itself. Often, however, the jobs that tourism creates are not adequate living-wage, secure jobs with benefits, jobs where people can develop skills, and they usually do not comply with labour standards. WTO rulings regarding labour standards as "barriers to free trade" are threats for workers in the tourism industry who already have little job security and labour rights and who have few, if any, other options for employment (Luvanga & Shitundu, 2003).

Tourism development in Nigeria has witnessed massive appraisal and growth with the discovery and establishment of numerous natural and tourist's site all around the country like; the Millennium park in Abuja, Kajuru castle in Kaduna, Cross River National park, Afi

Mountain sanctuary, Obudu Mountain resort in Cross River state, Yankari games reserve, Wikki warm spring, Idanre hills, Gashaka Gumti National park, Kamuka National park. The presence of these tourist's sites has really created immeasurable impact in-terms of esthetics but little has been observed in-term of their socio-economic impact.

Enugu state is one of the very prominent tourist's destination in Nigeria with rich cultural and natural tourist's site distributed around the state like; the Miliken Hill, Nike Lake, Iva Valley Coal Mines, Opi lake, Obinofia Ndiuno lakes and caves, Ngebe lakes, Attakwu lake, Obanukwu lake, Odoro lakes and caves, Iheneke lake, Odor-Ugwu cave, Ogba Nmuogubi cave, Ogba Gwoo Gwoo cave, Ogba Ihenekweagu cave, Inyi Chine cave, Isu Awaa cave, Nyaba beach, Attakwu beach, Awgu FGH hills, Nsukka hills, Udi hills, Udi wonderful stone site, Ugwu Enechhi shrine, Isi Ujulu shrine, Ega-Aga shrine, Eka Ana shrine, Ugwu Owere shrine, Pine forest reserve, Eucalyptus reserve, Ezeagu tourist complex where they have lakes, waterfalls, warm and cool springs and panoramic landscapes; Awhum waterfall, Ngwo waterfall, Amagunze Akpawfu lake complex and Ngene Ani lake.

Enugu State is a major hub in Nigeria, Africa and the world over with its prominence in the world of culture and natural resource reserves. Tourism activities in Enugu State have made a major impact in terms of tourism practices and experience. Anikwe (1990, 2007) ascertain that Enugu State has long before now been a hive of tourism with its rich cultural base which has experience a lot of appreciation and attracted attention and admiration of people within and outside Nigeria, as its cultural troops were major feature in national and international events like the Expo '79 opening ceremonies of the national sports festivals, the 1960 independence day's celebration and has witness special invitation around the world for the purpose of entertainment and presentation in countries like Ghana, Brazil, America and the Great Britain. He further noted that the Iriji (new yam festival) and mmanwu (masquerade festival) stated in 1986 and are usually stage in Enugu State, southern eastern part of Nigeria in August. The festival features a lively display of over two hundred masquerades from different parts of Igbo land and other states in Nigeria. The unique shapes, size and colourful attire of the masquerades, as well as their rhythmic dances and acrobatic displays, make the

festival an astounding and memorable event. The festival organizers attempt to create a tourist attraction to improve economic conditions by celebrating Igbo masquerade traditions that reflect social and political values. The inji-mmanwu festival is presented in a powerful art that is hoped would bring both moral virtue as well as economic benefits to the state.

It is on this note that, the need for programme development and awareness creation becomes necessary to provide knowledge to participants, community members or tourists, with skills and steps to follow in planning tourist programmes for visitors and all. Therefore, the guidance and counselling programme is a detailed scheme of an intervention(s) which are intended to be carried out arising from the felt needs in a given school, community or society, or checklist, need assessment data (Anake, 2017). This calls for follow up and evaluation service, in which the counsellor appraises guidance and educational programmes for tourist. The evaluation of the programmes help in achieving the aim and objectives it was designed for. Therefore, in order to decide to trace the beneficiaries of a particular programme, to investigate the extent to which they (participants) have benefited from the counselling programme. This will

enable the counsellor ascertain the effectiveness of the programme for tourist and community development.

Studies by Okonkwo and Odum (2012) and Amalu (2013) has reported that despite the vast number of tourists' sites and attractions located in Enugu state, very little or no patronage by tourists are recorded in this areas. It is in this regards that this study seeks to investigate the potentiality of tourism through these tourists' attraction and its impact o the people and economy of Enugu state.

Enugu has abundance of ecotourism sites spread across the state but little is known about them. This has also made the state not to be listed as one of the tourism states in the in the country by the Nigeria Tourism Development Commission (NTDC).

The attitude of the host communities towards tourism in the state is very poor. Host communities see ecotourism as a waste of time and resources since they cannot see what to benefit from visiting hills, caves, waterfall and other related natural sites. Although literatures show some level of evidence in ecotourism engaging people as tour guides and other opportunities for employment, the case of Enugu State is different due lack of infrastructure and awareness of

benefits from developing the sites. This, in turn, gives rise to low patronage as they cannot act as tour guides nor even encourage tourists as well. Moreover, the culture of the people of Enugu state encourages gender inequality and osu caste system.

Most of the ecotourism sites in the state such as red rock site, anunebe tree site and so on, place restrictions on female gender and "the osus" from patronizing them except after purification. This contradicts many people's faith and no average civilized person will appreciate such attraction. On the other hand, communal dispute associated with land ownership has discouraged tourism development in the state. Tourist safety is key to any ecotourism destination. No tourist will embark on a tour to an unsafe destination.

Enugu state is known to be one of the developed states in Nigeria, with good roads, infrastructures and amenities but none of these roads lead to any ecotourism site. Inaccessible road to most of the tourists sites especially those ones within rural areas as this has made transportation cost to the sites very costly and discouraging while most sites are still undeveloped and impossible to be accessed by visitors. There is a general

lack of infrastructure, support services and the manpower to run a functional tourism destination. Available sites are yet to be harnessed and developed for the benefit of government and host communities.

## **Theoretical framework**

### ***Basic needs theory***

Psychologist Abraham Maslow first introduced his concept of a hierarchy of needs in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" and his subsequent book *Man and Personality*. This hierarchy suggests that people are motivated to fulfill basic needs before moving on to other, more advanced needs. This hierarchy is most often displayed as a pyramid. The lowest levels of the pyramid are made up of the most basic needs, while the more complex needs are located at the top of the pyramid. Needs at the bottom of the pyramid are basic physical requirements including the need for food, water, sleep, and warmth. Once these lower-level needs have been met, people can move on to the next level of needs, which are for safety and security. As people progress up the pyramid, needs become increasingly psychological and social. Soon, the need for love, friendship, and intimacy become important. Further up the pyramid, the need for personal esteem and feelings of accomplishment

take priority. Like Carl Rogers, Maslow emphasized the importance of self-actualization, which is a process of growing and developing as a person in order to achieve individual potential.

Abraham Maslow believed that these needs are similar to instincts and play a major role in motivating behavior. Physiological, security, social, and esteem needs are deficiency needs (also known as D-needs), meaning that these needs arise due to deprivation. Satisfying these lower-level needs is important in order to avoid unpleasant feelings or consequences. Maslow termed the highest-level of the pyramid as growth needs (also known as being needs or B-needs). Growth needs do not stem from a lack of something, but rather from a desire to grow as a person. In this study, the basic needs theory could possibly be considered as one factor that plays a key role in the psychology of residents of Enugu state and their attitude and participation in tourism activities putting the economic needs of the people into consideration and also considering the economic status and the hierarchy of needs of every residents that is considered a potential participant in tourism activities. It is worthwhile to put the issue of the attitude of the people, their economic status and hierarchy of their needs into

consideration as a determinant factor to ascertain their level of appreciation and involvement in tourism based activities.

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of ecotourism potentials and community development in Enugu State. Specifically, the study seeks to examine the influence of:

- a. Ecotourism potentials and community development
- b. Tourism impact and community development.

### **Research hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

- a. Ecotourism potentials does not significantly influence community development.
- b. Tourism impact does not significantly influence community development

### **Literature review**

The literature review was based on the hypotheses under study, which are as follows:

### **Ecotourism potentials and community development**



Ecotourism is defined as travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any existing cultural manifestation (both past and present) found in these areas or communities (Celallos-Lascurain, 1987). Ecotourism is also defined as “responsible travel” to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the wellbeing of local people (Blamey, 2001) cited in the International Ecotourism Society (TIES).

Ross and Wall (1996) propose a conceptual framework that consists of the relationships between tourism and local communities, between tourism and biological diversity and also between community and biodiversity. The authors noted that, a favourable institutional environment is crucial for successful ecotourism. Such institutions are local governments, conservation policies and NGOs. Hence if community benefit economically from tourism they are ready to use resources sustainably and to maintain biodiversity which in turn will attract tourism. When the relationship between the above mentioned elements are in accordance and the institutional conditions are supported, pre-requisites for

successful ecotourism are given; and ecotourism can thus contribute to both natural conservation, social and economic development.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2014) reported global international tourist arrivals increase by 5% in 2013, reaching a record of 1,087 million arrivals. The world tourism barometer despite global economic challenges, international tourism results were well above expectations, with an additional 52 million international tourists travelling the world in 2013. In 2014, UNWTO forecasts 4% to 4.5% growth demand for international tourism was strongest for destinations in Asia, and the Pacific (+6%), (+6%) and Europe (+5%). The leading sub-regions were south-east Asia (+10), central and eastern Europe (+7%), southern and Mediterranean Europe (+6%) and north Africa (+6%) (UNWTO, 2014).

Accordingly, World Tourism and Travel Council (2002) estimated that in the year 2000 ecotourism alone contributed 154 million US\$ in revenues and growth by 20% annually. However, economic volume and growth alone are not useful measures for evaluating the success of ecotourism. Economic growth and development are to different aspects, a

thorough evaluation must address and measure an improvement as compared to conventional tourism.

Similarly, Walpole and Godwin (2005) affirmed that benefits for local people are understood in financial terms. Following these authors, ecotourism is economically successful as long as they met financial impact on the region (or a more local region) is positive. On this Ashley and Hussien (2000) stated that well being is not only about increased income. Other dimensions of poverty that must be addressed include food, insecurity, social inferiority, exclusion, lack of physical assets and vulnerability. It becomes evident that by integrating livelihoods, the research interest expands beyond financial indicators. In line with this, Ashley and Elliot (2003) noted that, measuring tourism's contribution to local economic development does not just mean taking key macro-growth indicators, such as output and employment, destination level, local multiplier impacts are also important, which include formal and informal sectors employment, as well as indirect impacts such as improved infrastructure and public services. Other abstract benefits include participation, empowerment and improved governance, non-financial benefits include, community infrastructure, like

transportation, communication, education and health; while quality employment, investment of income are considered as social aspects of empowerment.

Besides, one form of ecotourism that maximizes community participation in decision making and benefit sharing is community based ecotourism (CBBET). Scheyvens (2007) suggest that the term CBET should be reserved for those ventures which are based on a high degree of community control, rather than those almost entire controlled by outside operators. It is however rare to find community-based initiatives that are not manage, co-managed, or initiated from outside the community (Weaver, 2002) cited in Jones (2005). Therefore, in so many ecotourism areas, community members end up to being mere workers of lower level instead of being at the lead of the development.

### **Tourism impact on community development**

Tourism is known to significantly contribute to development, both directly and indirectly. Traditional tourism heavily relies on natural attractions which with time get negatively affected (Singh, 2004). For this reason new forms of tourism attractions are now being developed.



Community-based tourism is one of such development – modern tourism, which is targeted at improving social, economic situations of the local communities.

According to Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhil (2005), new tourism is a force capable of dramatically improving economic and social well being of the communities across the globe. For example, pro-poor tourism focuses on poverty reduction. It possesses three elements, namely, to accelerate growth and development of local areas; to improve the distribution of income and wealth; and to accelerate social development. Similarly David (2005) affirmed that, any type of tourism that aims at generating benefits for the poor and to unlock the opportunities for the poor is pro-poor. Pro-poor tourism seeks to improve the economy for poor people. It enhances linkages between tourism business and poor people, or communities, so that the poor are able to participate more effectively in tourism development, their benefits are diverse.

Ajake and Amalu (2012) in their study on the potentiality of tourism in Ezeagu local government area of Enugu State assess the operational economic value of tourism in the state and noted that, while culture was a major boast for tourism in the state; numerous and unique

natural tourists' sites and attractions exist around the state that could drive the state to the status of the most attractive tourism destination in Nigeria. If this can be achieved effectively, planning and development of the sites are put in place at the various attractions are still in their natural state without being developed into accessible attraction. They also emphasized that lack of investment by government or non-government organizations or private investors' interest is the major factor contributing to the poor state of tourism in the state.

Furthermore, Anikwe (2007) stated that in Enugu State, there are other cultural events that attract tourist to the area. These are chieftaincy, coronation ceremonies, which involves a stipulated period of initiation, installation rites carried out by title men, elders and initiates on behalf of the community. Others are the Ozo title taking ceremonies, traditional marriage, these ceremonies left the initiates to greater position of social significance, honour and recognition. Another interesting aspect of tourism activities in the state is its rich cultural troupes with esteemed traditional dances, such as the Ikorodo dancing troupe, the Atilogwu dances and the state cultural performance groups to behold and are also social events

that attracts tourist to the state (Anidiobu, 2013).

Accordingly, Michael (2007) asserted that, tourism creates opportunities for economic activities to slum communities. The poor have access to economic activities which they can use to change their destiny. This calls for the need to empowered and strengthen their participation in decision making. Pro-poor tourism therefore, can facilitate the growth of small enterprises in host communities and this encourages local residents to actively participate in economic activities.

In line with this, Rolfers (2009) affirmed that rural tours have supported Soweto local communities in South Africa, and the residents are eager to get into contact with the tourist, to talk about their personal experiences and life situations. Such talks serve the purpose of correcting and improving the negative image of rural communities conveyed by media. He concluded that community based tourism is a developing market which could create more employment and better income opportunities for local communities.

In the case of co-management, it is crucial for the community to return control over the land. Otherwise community members may end up being mere workers

of lower level instead of being owners of the development (AFRA, 2004). Apart from participation, local communities can be included in benefit sharing through the provision of community infrastructure. Maasai leaders in Tanzania's Serengeti NP claim such community investments. "We should get schools, dispensaries and other benefits like our brothers in Kenya". They get money and jobs from game reserves campsites and lodges, from tourism and from wildlife (Honey, 1999).

## **Methodology**

### **Research design**

The research design used for this study is survey research design. This design involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena. Studies that make use of this approach are employed to obtain a picture of the present conditions of particular phenomena. It is directed towards determining the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of investigation.

### **The area and population of the study**

The area of the study was Enugu State, out of which only six local government areas were used for the study. These are Ezeagu, Nkanu East, Nkanu

West, Nsukka, Oji River and Udi. The population consisted of community members within the area of study. The sample size was 200 community members drawn from a population of 1638 in the study area.

### Sampling technique

Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the selection of the respondents from each local government areas. The choice of community members was born from the fact that they seem to possess adequate knowledge of events around the area of study.

### Instrumentation

The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and evaluation. The reliability estimate of instrument was established through the Cronbach Alpha

reliability method and reliability index ranges from 0.78 to 0.83 which was high enough.

### Presentation of results

In this section, each of the study hypothesis was re - stated and the result of data analysis carried out to test it is presented below. Each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance.

### Hypothesis one

Ecotourism potentials do not significantly influence community development.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is ecotourism potentials; while the dependent variable is community development. Simple regression analysis was the employed to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
Simple regression result of the influence of ecotourism potentials on community development

R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Error of the estimate		
.633 <sup>a</sup>	.401	.398	1.34524		
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	240.1663	1	240.166	132.713	.00
Residual	358.314	198	1.810		
Total	598.480	199			

Dependent variable: Community development

Independent variable: Ecotourism potentials

Table 1 showed the result of the simple regression analysis of the influence of ecotourism potentials on the community development. The regression model produced an adjusted  $R^2$  of .221. This indicated that ecotourism potentials accounted for 22.1% of the determinant community development in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that ecotourism potentials is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value obtained from the regression table was F - 132.713 and the significant value of .000 (or  $p < .05$ ) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 198. The implication of this result is that the

null hypothesis is rejected and the finding drawn from the result is that there is significant and high influence of ecotourism potentials on the community development.

**Hypothesis two**

Tourism impact does not significantly influence community development.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is tourism impact; while the dependent variable is community development. Simple regression analysis was the employed to test this hypothesis.

The result of the analysis was presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

Simple regression result of the influence of tourism impact on community development

R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Error of the estimate		
.568 <sup>a</sup>	.323	.320	1.43030		
	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	193.423	1	193.423	.549*	.000
Residual	405.057	198	2.046		
Total	598.480	199			

Dependent variable: Community development

Independent variable: Ecotourism potentials

Table 2 showed the result of the simple regression analysis of the influence of tourism impact on the community development. The regression model produced an adjusted  $R^2$  of .320. This indicated that the tourism impact accounted for 32.0% of the determinant community development in the study area. This finding is a critical indication that tourism impact is relatively high in the area of the study. The F-value obtained from the regression table was  $F = 94.549$  and the significance value of .000 (or  $p < .05$ ) at the degree of freedom (df) 1 and 198. The implication of this result is that the null hypothesis is rejected and the finding drawn from the result is that there is significant and high influence of the tourism impact on the community development.

### **Discussion of findings**

This section is concerned with the discussion of the research finding. The results of the first hypothesis revealed that there is significant and high influence of ecotourism potentials on the community development. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (2014) reported global international tourist arrivals increase by 5% in 2013, reaching a record of 1,087 million arrivals. The world

tourism barometer despite global economic challenges, international tourism results were well above expectations, with an additional 52 million international tourists travelling the world in 2013. In 2014, UNWTO forecasts 4% to 4.5% growth demand for international tourism was strongest for destinations in Asia, and the pacific (+6%), (+6%) and Europe (+5%). The leading sub-regions were south-east Asia (+10), central and eastern Europe (+7%), southern and Mediterranean Europe (+6%) and north Africa (+6%) (UNWTO, 2014). Ashley and Hussien (2000) also stated that well being is not only about increased income. Other dimensions of poverty that must be addressed include food, insecurity, social inferiority, exclusion, lack of physical assets and vulnerability. It becomes evident that by integrating livelihoods, the research interest expands beyond financial indicators.

The results of the second hypothesis revealed that there is significant and high influence of tourism impact on the community development. The finding is in line with Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhil (2005), new tourism is a force capable of dramatically improving economic and social well being of the communities across the globe. For

example, pro-poor tourism focuses on poverty reduction. It possesses three elements, namely, to accelerate growth and development of local areas; to improve the distribution of income and wealth; and to accelerate social development. Similarly David (2005) affirmed that, any type of tourism that aims at generating benefits for the poor and to unlock the opportunities for the poor is pro-poor. Pro-poor tourism seeks to improve the economy for poor people. It enhances linkages between tourism business and poor people, or communities, so that the poor are able to participate more effectively in tourism development, their benefits are diverse.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Based on the results of the study it was concluded that ecotourism potentials and tourism impact significantly influence community development. It was therefore recommended that:

1. Counsellors in collaboration with government and ecotourism officers should intensify awareness to community members and tourists on the need to adequately organized and manage tourism activities in a way that may ensure tourism development and sustainability in the private sector, non-governmental organization and host community for effective development in the areas. It is

on this, that the potentiality of tourism will be felt by all stakeholders in its existence and accountability by host communities to ensure and harnessed development in the area.

2. Government and other stakeholders to give an awaken desire to the occasion of investing in host communities, by creating job opportunities, sought revenue through sale of goods and services by local people, collection of tour tax by government and managers of such sites or communities.

3. Eco-tourists and government and host communities should make destinations safer, reduce possible hostile attitudes from the local communities and making destinations more attractive.

4. Also government policy on ecotourism should effect positive linkage between tourism income, natural conservation and community development.

5. Local communities of ecotourism, to continue in their support to parks and reserves for effective management and development in the areas. This is to prevent vandalisation and armed conflict with invaders-community to retain control over land for adequate maintenance of tourist areas.



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