



Ecotourism Development and Welfare of Host Community in Doguwa Local Government, Kano, Nigeria

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Kano state, specifically Doguwa local government possess enormous ecotourism attractions where stakeholders make effort to develop ecotourism in the area, through the provision of necessary facilities, infrastructure and marketing, nonetheless, destination’s contribution in improving the lives of the host communities is low due to low tourist patronage. Thus, the study intended to establish if there is any significant relationship between ecotourism development and welfare of host community in Doguwa Local Government, Kano. Cross sectional, descriptive and correlation designs were employed. The data were collected using non standardized instruments, with items on ecotourism development and welfare of host community, using a target sample size of 410. The study carries out a reliability test using Cronbach alpha and arrived at Cronbach alpha coefficient above 0.7, and validity test using content validity index with CVIs above 0.7, KMO above 0.7, Bartlett’s test sig less than 0.05, determinant greater than 0.000, communalities above 0.5 and rotated component matrices discriminated and loading highly on distinct factors. The data were analysed at univariate, bivariate and multivariate levels using frequency, percentage, mean correlation and regression. The findings reveal a significant relationship between ecotourism development and welfare improvement of host community (Sig = 0.00) which coincided with the result generated from interview. And it was recommended that government in partnership with other stakeholders should be involved in tourism development.

Keywords: Ecotourism, welfare, infrastructure, marketing.

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1.0: Introduction

Evidence has shown that service industry, particularly ecotourism is recognized as a major global industry and contributed immensely to the growth of global economy despite the global economic challenges (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill, 2005). United Nation World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO, 2013) and Rajput (2019) reported that ecotourism serves as

a catalyst of growth and development of other economic sectors of many countries in the world through the generation of foreign exchange earnings, income to the local people, employment, government revenue and other multiplier effects. This is in conformity with Rana (2016) that found “ecotourism can fundamentally change the economic dynamics of



business because of its recognition of ecological and cultural costs of doing business as well as championing local economy” (P. 235).

Similarly, ecotourism, which characterized by travel to natural areas that contributes to its conservation, educate the tourists and improves the welfare of host community (The International Ecotourism Society, TIES, 1999) has become a thriving global economy and one of the fastest growing segments of tourism worldwide. This was facilitated by the increase in human population, technological development, and preferences for leisure activities, which often result in an increase in demand for recreational activities in many parts of the world.

As argued by Sinha (1997) and Kumar (2019), there is probably no other economic activity which transects so many sectors, levels and interests as ecotourism, manifested in the increase in total income for the total economy, foreign exchange earnings for the nation hosting the guests, direct and indirect employment generation and the stimulation of secondary economic growth. As a result, today ecotourism has emerged as the fastest and multifaceted

human activity in the world with its positive impacts reaching out to so many sectors of the economy, and a tool of developing other industries through increase in supply of goods and services (Seth, 1999). However, despite the unprecedented phenomenal growth of Ecotourism in global economy and its positive impacts on welfare improvement of many destinations, its performance in developing destinations like Doguwa local government in particular was below expectation, in spite of various efforts made by the stakeholders in creating conducive environment for ecotourism development in the area (UNWTO, 2013). Therefore, the purpose of the study was to establish if there is any significant relationship between ecotourism development and welfare of host community in Doguwa Local Government, Kano State, Nigeria.

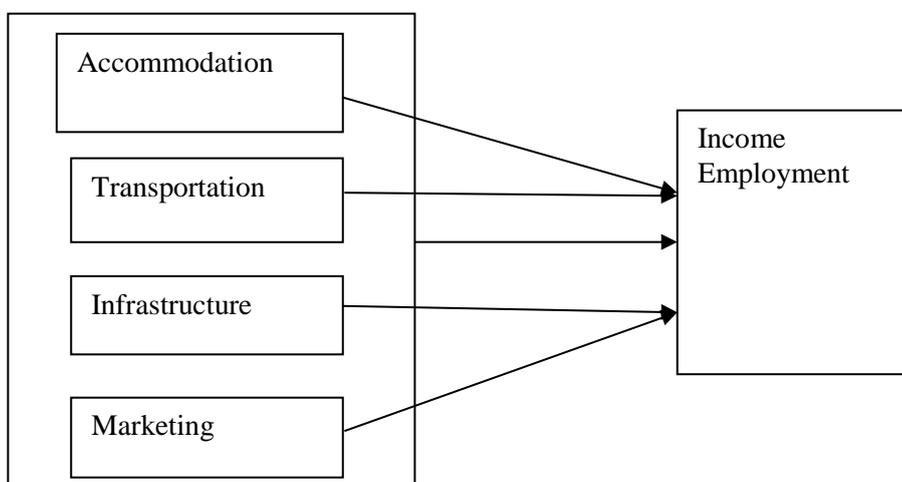
2.0: Review of Related Literature

This study focuses on the concepts, review and analysis of related literature as extracted from the study variables of ecotourism development and welfare of host community, according to authors, experts, conceptual and theoretical perspectives as follows:

Conceptual Framework

Ecotourism Development

Welfare of Host Community



Source: Sinha (1997), modified by a researcher (2025).

Ecotourism Development

According to Rajput (2019), ecotourism “is responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and sustain the wellbeing of local people” (P.1). Thus, the concept is used to describe ventures that are characterized by high environmental consideration, increases control and involvement of the local residents, as well delivers a significant benefit to the host community. It is clearly distinguished from other tourism ventures that are largely or even totally planned and managed by outside investors and generate little benefits for local people (Scheyvens, 1999 & Nelson, 2004). Therefore, ecotourism offers amalgam of services which make up the delivery of the tourist product that occurs in a fragmented system, consisting of accommodation, transportation, infrastructure and marketing. Moreover, the development of ecotourism would largely be determined by the facilities available and marketing, and would have several consequences on national, states, local economies and welfare of host community. It generates employment, income, affects the production of goods and services, development of skills and entrepreneurs, which ultimately contributes to the improvement of welfare standard of host community. As a result, maximizing local benefit through employment and empowerment of local community can be encouraged more by proper training, enlightenment, and financing (Kumar, 2019).

Accommodation

According to Inkpen (1998), hotel is defined as a place where traveler can receive food and shelter provided, he can pay for it. Ecotourism industry has some advantages over other industries where destinations possess several attractions, and therefore, only infrastructures and superstructures are needed to be developed in the form of hotels, motels, restaurants etc. to be added to make the place more accessible and comfortable to prospective ecotourists. However, as evidenced in many empirical studies, the problem of hotels accommodation is

apparent in many developing destinations of which Doguwa is inclusive (Bankole, 2002), whereas most of the available hotels are located in the urban areas (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004).

Transportation

As ecotourism involves movement of people from one place to another, thus requiring a means of which one could use to convey himself from tourist generation to tourist destination (Holloway, 1996). Therefore, adequate transportation is another vital component of tourism system where it provides the critical linkage between market source and destination for accessibility to generating markets. As argued by Seth (1997), that modern tourism uses different mode of transportation consisting of automobile, intercity bus services, railway services, ships and airlines. Moreover, Seth (2006) added that “automobile is the most popular mode of travel all over the world” (P. 6). That coincided with Sinha (1997 & 1999), unlike developed destinations where air travel is the most predominant and leading mode of transportation, and contributes immensely to the host community’s welfare in terms of income and employment, in developing destination, automobile is the predominant means of transportation by ecotourists, that provides numerous benefits to host community, and also to the providers of tourism services. This was evidence as a result of their linkage between market source and destination, and transportation between cities, attractions and within urban and rural areas.

Infrastructure

World Bank (2013) reported that both developed and developing destinations around the world have benefited immensely from tourism as a result of an increase of international arrivals, facilitated by: rapidly growing income; technological development; freer intraregional travel; increased leisure time; dynamic trade and investment; government promotion measures;

etc. Moreover, Sharma (2017) opined that “the operation of ecotourism facilities, services and amenities are often dependent on a number of travel infrastructure networks” (P.18). Thus, as found in many other empirical studies such as Bankole (2002), due to low level of tourism infrastructure in most developing destinations, led to low income and employment and welfare improvement to member of the host community. Therefore, infrastructural challenges are holding back developing destinations from fully benefiting from the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2013). Most of the developing destinations are lacking in this tourism infrastructure which as opined by Seth (1999) serves the need of both local residents and available visitors to the destination.

Marketing

The large size and the increasing sophistication of the numerous tourism products due to competition led to specialization. For product development, marketing and management, specialised products provide competitive advantages, where consumers with specific interests are best served by products that relate well to those interests (Cooper et al, 2005). Moreover, Sinha (1997) argued that in developing destinations, certain marketing skills are needed to effectively operate an ecotourism business. Therefore, to compete successfully destinations often need to structure their business and marketing practice in response to significance changes in the business environment, such as globalization, deregulation and technology (Sinha, 1999).

Ecotourism Development and Welfare

According to Heathwood (2005) and Kumar (2019) see welfare as the provision of a minimal level of wellbeing through availability of goods and services, health, prosperity, happiness, improved income, employment, etc. which are developed to help people function more satisfactory in their interaction with others and thus, lead to more fulfilling. Ecotourism development therefore involves developing

mechanism through which developing destinations develop capacity to improve the welfare of host community. This view was concurred by Heffernan, et al. (1992) and Keplan (2002) who see the welfare as an organized effort to ensure a basic standard of decency in relation to the physical and mental wellbeing of the citizenry. Therefore, ecotourism serves as the major source of diversification, and catalyst of growth and development of other economic sectors of many countries in the world, through the generation of foreign exchange earnings, income to the local people, employment, government revenue, conservation, population growth, and other multiplier effects, leading to an improvement in living standard of the host communities. These views were anchored by Hall, (2007) and Seth (1999) who stressed that ecotourism is a multifaceted human activity with wide ramifications that permeates practically all sectors of national life. Moreover, Kumar (2019) added that ecotourism “helps educate the traveller; provides funds for conservation; directly benefits the economic development of local communities; and fosters respect for different cultures and for human rights” (P. 275).

3.0: Methodology

In philosophical foundation, the study used both epistemology and ontology based on the principle of positivism and interpretive using deductive and inductive approaches. Positivist Epistemology was employed, considering the nature of study variables of ecotourism development and welfare of host community, study objective and hypothesis which are relational, measurements of variables which are quantitative, and also reality outcome of welfare improvement which is predictive, and measurement, which are based on the principle of positivism and empiricism, strictly rely on the principle of research design develop before the commencement of the study. Thus, being qualitative and quantitative, the study employed cross sectional, descriptive and correlation designs. The data were collected using non standardized instruments with items on ecotourism development and welfare of host

community, using a minimum sample size of 399. In ascertaining the validity of the instruments, the researcher used face, content and construct validity, with CVIs above 0.70. In determining the factor structure, the researcher conducted factor analysis and arrived at the following results: Commonality tables, with coefficients above 0.5, determinants with coefficients above 0.000, correlation matrix which shows the items are linearly correlated, KMO with coefficient above 0.70, Bartlett test significant at less than 0.05. Similarly, the study conducted reliability test and arrived at Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.75. Moreover, in ascertaining the capability of data for the conduct of further parametric statistics of correlation and regression, the researcher subjected the data to further diagnostic test of normality test, linearity test, no multi-collinearity test and homogeneity test. The findings reveal the data are good for parametric statistics. Then the study subjected the data to further correlation and regression.

4.0 Findings:

The study analyses the data and presents the findings based on the objective of the study to

establish if there is any significant relationship between ecotourism development and welfare of host community in Doguwa Local government. Thus, to address this objective effectively necessitates the researcher to formulate a research question: Is there any significant relationship between ecotourism development and welfare of host community in Doguwa Local Government, Kano state, Nigeria? Therefore, to answer this question effectively also, the study uses Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient and regression, and the results are tabulated on table 4.1 and 4.2 respectively.

Correlation Matrix

The correlation matrix measures the strength and direction of the straight line relationship between ecotourism development and welfare of host community. It shows the items in the study are related with each other, and their nature in terms of the direction, either positive or negative, using correlation values as manifests on table 4.1 and 4.2 respectively as follows:

Table 4.1: Correlations Matrix

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ACCOMMODATION (1)	1							
INFRASTRUCTURE(2)	-.208**	1						
TRANSPORT(3)	.278**	-.017	1					
MARKETING(4)	-.037	.105	.094	1				
ECOTOURISM(5)	.552**	.374**	.652**	.521**	1			
INCOME(6)	.425**	-.376**	.481**	.101	.329**	1		
EMPLOMENT(7)	-.191**	.429**	.059	.175**	.196**	-.171**	1	
WELFARE(8)	.169**	.057	.411**	.216**	.405**	.620**	.667**	1

** . Correlation values significant at .01

The correlation matrix on table 4.1 reveals the linear relationship among the components of the study variables. This testifies that all the

components under the study are significance at $p \leq 0.01$. This means that data are highly related.

Table 4.2: Hierarchical Linear Regression Result (1) on Ecotourism Development and Welfare of Host Community.

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	B	Beta								
Constant	2.625*		2.346*		2.157*		1.605*		1.236*	
	*		*		*		*		*	

Gender	.072	.067	.077	.068	.082	.71	.054	.047	.068	.059
Age	-.005	-.008	.007	.010	-.004	-.006	-.065	.032	.002	-.004
Education	-.067	-.110	-.072*	-.118*	-.076*	-.124*	.055	-.107	-.033	.087
Accommodation			.109**	.172*	.124**	.194*	.064	.086	.059	.093
Infrastructure					.086*	.114*	.064	.088	.056	.074
Transportation							.274**	.382*	.259**	.361*
Marketing									.132**	.176*
R ²	0.017		0.047		0.059		.190		.220	
Adjusted R ²	0.008		.035		.044		.175		.202	
R ² Change	.017		.029		.012		.132		.029	
F-Change	1.876		9.690		4.017		51.093		11.793	
Sig F Change	.134		.002		.046		.000		.001	
F	1.876		3.868		3.927		12.309		12.598	
Sig	.134		.004		.002		.000		.000	

** P <0.01

* P <0.05

Similarly, the result on table 4.2 Indicates that the components of ecotourism development consisting of accommodation, transportation, infrastructure and marketing are linearly correlated with all aspects of welfare standard Of income and employment at significance $p < 0.01$ level of significant (sig. 0.000), manifesting in accommodation ($r=0.552$ and 0.169), infrastructure ($r=0.374$ and 0.411), transportation ($r=0.652$) and marketing ($r=0.521$ and 0.411). This is more clearly explained as manifesting on the models as follows:

Model One

Result in model 1 indicates that the control variables: gender, age and education of the host community members were not linearly correlated with welfare and not predicting the welfare of host community ($F=1.876$, $sig=0,134$). $W=2.625 + 0.072G -0.005A - 0.067E$.

However, when these control variables are merged with accommodation, they become significantly correlated with welfare.

Model Two

Result in model 2 indicates significant and linear model of accommodation and education (F=3.868, sig=0.004). Accommodation contributes 2.9% to the welfare of the host community (Beta =0.172, p< 0.01), implying that increase in accommodation led to increase of 0.172 on the welfare. $W=2.346 - 0.072E + 0.109A$

Model Three

Result in model three indicates significant and linear model of accommodation, infrastructure and control variables (F=3.927, sig=0.002). Accommodation and infrastructure predicted 5.9% of welfare of host community with infrastructure contributing 1.2% and accommodation contributing 2.9%. Accommodation (Beta=0.194, P < 0.01) positively contributes to the welfare of host community. While infrastructure (Beta=0.114, p<0.01) also positively contributes to the welfare of host community. $W=2.157+0.082G-0.084A-0.076E+0.124AC+0.086 I$

Model Four

Result in model four indicates a significant and linear model with accommodation, infrastructure, transportation and control variables (F=12.309, SIG=0.000).

Transportation significantly predicts 19% Of the welfare of host community together with accommodation, infrastructure and control variables. Transport was the only significant predictor of welfare (Beta =0.382, p<0.01). The change in transportation led to an increase of 0.382 in the welfare of host community.

$$W=1605+0.054G-0.065A-0.055E+0.067AC+0.067I+0.274T.$$

$$W=1.605+0.274T$$

Model Five

Result in model five indicates that transportation and marketing significantly and linearly predicted 22% of the welfare of host community (F=12.598, sig=0.000). Transportation (Beta=0.361, p<0.01) positively and significantly improves the welfare of host community by 13.2%. While marketing (Beta=0.176, p<0.01) positively and significantly improves the welfare of host community by 2.9% as indicated by R2 change values. A change in transportation led to 0.361 positive change in welfare while a change in marketing also led to a 0.176 positive change in the welfare. $W=1.236+0.259T+0.132M$

Based on the above therefore, null hypothesis was therefore rejected and alternate hypotheses accepted and concludes a significant relationship between ecotourism development and welfare of host community.

Table 4.3: Hierarchical Linear Regression Result (2) on Ecotourism Development and Welfare

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	Beta	B	Beta
Constant	2.625**		1.214**	
Gender	0.077	0.067	0.085	.074
Age	-0.005	-0.008	-0.015	-0.023
Education	-0.067	-0.110	-0.062	-0.102

Ecotourism			0.549**	0.407*
R ²	0.017		0.182	
Adj R ²	0.008		0.172	
R2 Change	0.017		0.165	
F-change	1.876		63.822	
Sig-F Change	0.134		0.000	
F	1.876		17.641	
Sig	0.134		0.000	

** P <0.01

* P <0.05

Model One

Model One result indicates that control variables: gender, age and education are not significant predictors of welfare (F=1.876, SIG=0.134).

Model Two

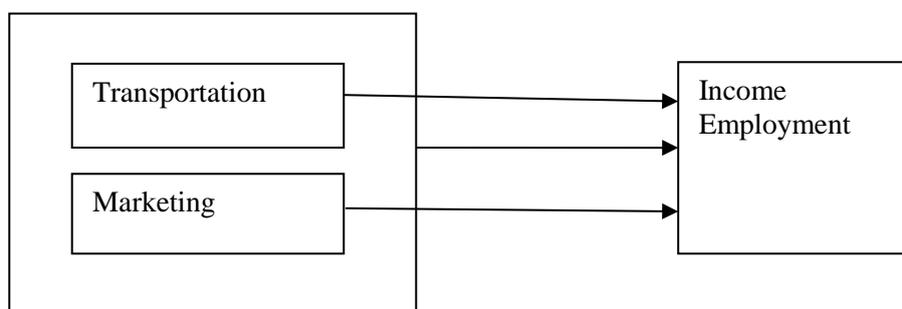
Result in model two indicates a significant and linear model predicting 18.2% of welfare of host community (F=17.641, SIG=0.000). Ecotourism and control variables predict 18.2%, with

ecotourism contributing 17.2% being the only significant predictor of welfare of host community. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted and conclude that there is a significant relationship between ecotourism and welfare. Model: W=1.214+0.549E. Moreover, for the purpose of triangulation, the summary of the Result from Interview was synchronized with quantitative result. Based on the result of hierarchical linear regression from table 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, the study has come up with modified conceptual framework as follows:

Table 4.4: Modified Conceptual Framework

Ecotourism Development

Welfare of Host Community



5.0: Conclusion

The study found a significant and linear relationship between transportation and welfare of host community in Doguwa. Therefore,

transportation positively and significantly improves and predicts the welfare of the host community by 13.2%. Similarly, marketing positively and significantly improves the welfare

of the host community by 2.9%. Moreover, ecotourism development contributes positively and significantly to the welfare of host community, and being the only significant predictor of the welfare, contributes with 17.2%. These findings are in conformity with the findings of other empirical studies such as: Samini (2011); Rojidi (2011); and Ezebilo (2010).

6.0: Recommendation

Government in partnership with other stakeholders should be involved in tourism development in terms of provision of accommodation, facilities, promotion of the destination and management. This will promote overall local socio-economic development in the area and impact more positively on improving the welfare of the host community.

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