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Relationship between Socio-Economic Characteristics, Perceived Value and Conservation Attitude of Visitors in Selected Ecotourism Destinations in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between visitors' perceived value, socioeconomic characteristics, and conservation attitude in three ecotourism destinations in Northern Nigeria. Structured questionnaire was administered on 575 respondents: Chad Basin National Park (CBNP) 69, Gashaka Gumti National Park (GGNP) 165 and Yankari Game Reserve (YGR) 341. Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially with Chi-square, correlation, and regression analyses. The visitors' mean perceived intrinsic value was 3.17 at CBNP, GGNP (3.66) and YGR (3.62). Mean non-use value was 4.28 at recorded at CBNP, GGNP (4.46) and YGR (4.45). Mean recreational value was 4.69 at CBNP, GGNP (4.28) and YGR (4.36). Mean use value was 3.76 at CBNP, GGNP (3.63), and YGR (3.76). The highest conservation attitude was "sustainability of wildlife lies in conservation" at CBNP (4.55), "wildlife should be valued as natural and cultural relics" at GGNP (6.20), and also at YGR (5.33). Furthermore, there was significant association between conservation attitude and intrinsic value ($r=0.442$, $p<0.01$), use value ($r=0.140$, $p<0.01$), and the overall perceived value ($r=0.289$, $p<0.01$). Conservation attitudes are thus formed from perceived values towards the eco-destinations.

Keywords: Perceived value, conservation attitude, visitors, ecotourism destination.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as one of the quick and rapidly growing sectors worldwide playing a significant role in the economy while also contributing to the growth of other sectors and their economies (Osman & Sentosa, 2013). In 2013, tourism growth rate increased more than the growth in communication services as well as services involving manufacture, retail and finance. Ecotourism which is a subsector of world tourism has now become a constantly developing and improving phenomenon most especially in developing nations around the globe (Ogunjinmi, 2015).

Perceived value is the main strategy in comprehending visitors' behavior (Woo, Kim & Uysal, 2015) because it results in satisfaction, recommendation and revisit

intention of visitors which in turn form loyalty to the destination (Kim, Woo & Uysal, 2015). Also, perceived value in service term is important in service delivery during the consumption stage and decision-making (Prebensen, Woo & Uysal, 2014). Perceived value describes individual evaluation of tourism products such as price, quality, emotions as well as social factors (Chiu, Lee & Chen, 2014). Williams and Soutar (2009) identified dimensions of perceived value to include functional value, money value, emotional value, social value and novelty value. Explaining perceived value at natural destinations, Winter and Lockwood (2004) developed the natural area value scale to measure intrinsic, recreational, non-use and use values as subsets of perceived value. Visitors develop experiences with tourism destinations, thus, tourism destination attractions, resources, accessibility and infrastructural facilities have an impact on how these visitors perceive the destinations (Al-Ababneh, 2013). A tourism product involves a compilation of diverse elements like accommodation, feeding, entertainment, security and other supporting services at tourism destinations (Zabkar, Brencic & Dmitrovic, 2010).

Visitors develop experiences with tourism destinations, thus, tourism destination attractions, resources, accessibility and infrastructural facilities have an impact on how these visitors perceive the destinations (Al-Ababneh, 2013). Rousan, Ramzi and Mohamed (2010) posited that visitors build their experiences and values from their individual perceptions of services rendered at a destination.

Eco-destinations are gradually gaining prominence as significant areas that are instrumental for biodiversity conservation and management notwithstanding some salient issue that there is no straightforward link between designating a land for conservation and eventually achieving conservation goals (Hulme & Murphere, 2001). Despite this increasing prominence of eco-destinations serving as effective tools for conservation, studies have observed that eco-destinations have been unsuccessful in curbing threats to animal populations by humans (Craigie *et al.*, 2010). In many instances, national parks have been created so as to showcase and stabilize the natural environment depicting what a wild environment should resemble (Dunn, 2009). These parks have specifically been created in natural areas with high scenic attractions with accompanying great numbers of wildlife population. Tourism has thus been important so as to solicit required support and legitimacy in conflicting land use decisions for conservation which usually has huge impact on local population (Mowforth & Munt, 2005). This has often raised issues on the impact of tourism on conservation attitude of visitors with diverse socioeconomic attributes as well as the values perceived by these visitors when they visit eco-destinations.

As stated by Chen *et al.* (2011), education may have a positive influence on environmental conservation attitude of an individual. In a study in china, Chen *et al.* (2011) also found out that people of lower age groups are more likely to have positive conservation attitudes. Vicente-Molina, Fernández-Sáinz & Izagirre-Olaizola (2013) investigated the female gender's conservation attitude to be different from the conservation attitude of the male gender while investigating socioeconomic factors. Furthermore, Chiu *et al.* (2014) revealed the relationship between perceived value and conservation attitude. Reports have also suggested that perceived value obtained from nature experience could be a significant factor in improving conservation concern (Wells & Lekies, 2012).

Although, perceived value is essential in describing visitors' opinion and experiences (Moliner, Gil, & Ruiz, 2011), there is insufficient knowledge about what drives perceived value (Prebensen, Woo, Chen &

Uysal, 2012) and also its relationship with conservation attitude which has thus made this research important so as to investigate the relationship between perceived value, socio-demographic characteristics and conservation attitude in some selected eco-destinations in Northern Nigeria. The pertinent questions for this study are 1) What are visitors perceived values towards the selected eco-destinations? 2) Do visitors have positive conservation attitude towards the selected eco-destinations? and 3) Are there a relationship between visitors' perceived values, socio-demographic characteristics, and conservation attitude?.

Materials and Methods

Description of Study Area

The study was carried out at Chad Basin National Park (CBNP), Gashaka Gumti National Park (GGNP), and Yankari Game Reserve (YGR). These ecotourism destinations are located in the Northern part of Nigeria. CBNP is located in Borno and Yobe States, and has a total area of about 2,258km^2. The park is fragmented, with three sectors. The Chingurmi-Dugurna sector is in Borno State, in a Sudan Savanna ecological zone. The Bade-Nguru Wetlands and Bulatura sectors are in Yobe State in the Sahel ecological zone. The park combines the former Chingurmi-Dugoma Game Reserve, Gorgoram and Zurgun Baneri Forest Reserves, and Bulatura Oasis. The Chingurmi-Duguma sector is in the Bama Local Government Area of Borno State, adjoining the Waza National Park in the Republic of Cameroon located on latitude 11°27'52.71"N to 11°28'27.08"N and longitude 10°37'50.60"E to 10°37'26.89"E with an area of 1,228km^2.

The Bade-Nguru Wetlands sector is part of the Hadejia-Nguru wetlands, and has an area of 938 km^2. It is also located on latitude 12°51'17.96"N to 12°28'53.34"N and longitude 10°17'12.15"E to 10°34'14.49"E while the Bulatura sector is in the Yusufari Local Government Area of Yobe State with an area of 92 km2 located on latitude 11°33'26.37"N to 11°24'31.96"N and longitude 13°48'33.60"E to 13°53'8.42"E. Annual rainfall ranges between 200-600mm during the period late May-September with temperature between 18°C-42°C. Waters from the Dorma River flood much of the sector in the rainy season, creating flood-plain wetlands that attract waterbirds and other wildlife. The resident black crowned crane (*Balearica pavonina*), the helmeted guineafowl (*Numedia meleagris*), elephant (*Loxondonta africana*), Demoiselle cranes (*Grus virgo*), white storks (*Ciconia ciconia*) have been found in the park (Important Bird Area Factsheet, 2012)

Gashaka Gumti National Park was gazetted from two game reserves in 1991 and is Nigeria's largest national park. It is located in the eastern provinces of Taraba and Adamawa to the border with Cameroon. Geographically, the park is located on latitude 7°34'25.49"N to 7°17'56.03"N and longitude 11°29'12.13"E to 11°41'57.53"E. The total area covers about 6,402 km^2, much of the northern GGNP is savannah grassland, while the southern GGNP sector of the park has a rugged terrain characterized by very mountainous, steep slopes as well as deep valleys and gorges, and is home to montane forests (Chapman *et al*., 2004). The annual temperature range is approximately 21°C-32.5°C. The annual precipitation is around 1897 mm and its typical form is rain during the months of April to October. Fauna species include yellow-backed duiker, African golden cat (*Profelis aurata*), The African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), the largest population in Nigeria of chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), the African elephant *(Loxodonta africana*), the klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*), the West African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus manguensis*), the hartebeest (*Alcelaphus buselaphus*), the world's largest antelope, the giant eland (*Taurotragus derbianus*), the roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*), the kob antelope (*Kobus kob*), the oribi (*Ourebia*

ourebi), and the rare Adamawa mountain reedbuck (*Redunca fulvorufula*) in larger stocks. The park is officially labelled as one of Africa's "Important Bird Areas" and with more than 500 species found. (Forshaw *et al.*, 2010)

Yankari Game Reserve is a large wildlife park located in the south-central part of Bauchi State, in northeastern Nigeria. It is located on latitude 9°52'4.56"N to 9°50'40.52"N and longitude 10°17'46.27"E to 10°19'12.29"E. It covers an area of about 2,244 K^2 (866 sq mi) and is home to several natural warm water springs, as well as a wide variety of flora and fauna (Ubaru, 2000). Annual rainfall in the park is between 900mm and 1,000mm. The rainy season is from May to September. Temperatures range between 18^0C and 35^0C. The park is an important refuge for over 50 species of mammals including African bush elephant (*Loxodonta africana*), olive baboon (*Papio anubis*), patas monkey (*Erythrocebus patas*), Tantalus monkey (*Cercopithecus aethiopicus*), roan antelope (*Hippotragus equinus*), western hartebeest (*Acelaphus buselaphus*), lion (*Panthera leo*) , African buffalo (*Syncerus caffer*), water buck (*Kobus defassa*), bushbuck (*Tregalaphus scriptus*) and hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*). The vegetation of the park is mainly the Aphelia savanna woodland and shrub savanna.

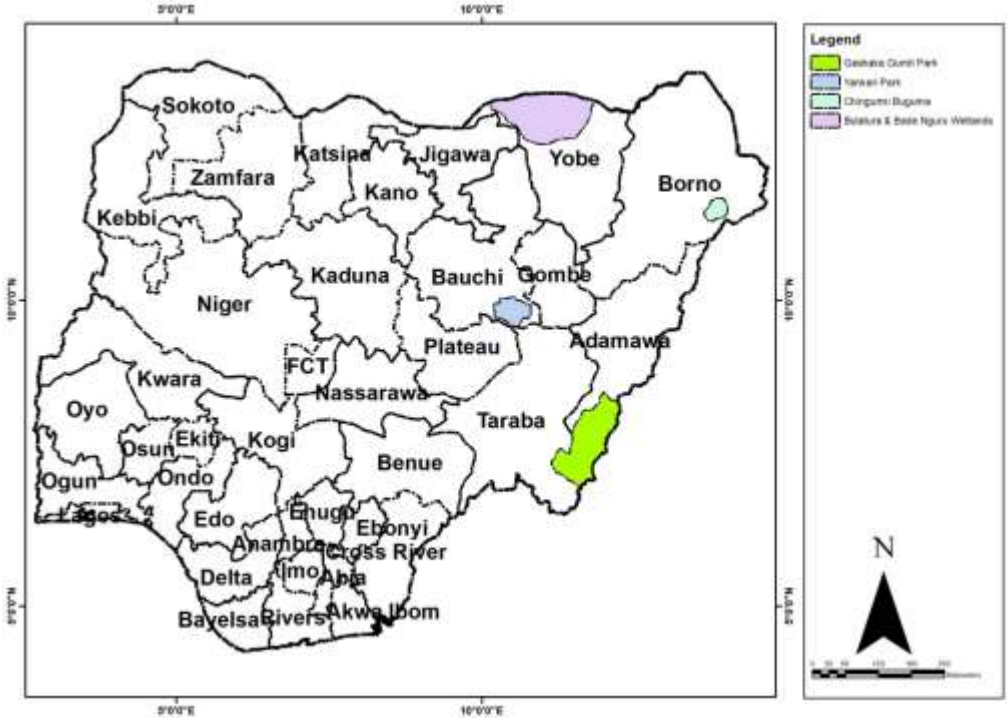

Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the location of the ecotourism destinations

Sample Design and Sample Size

The sample population for this study was visitors to Chad Basin National Park (CBNP), Gashaka Gumti National Park (GGNP), and Yankari Game Reserve (YGR). The sample size for the study was determined from 2017 arrival records of the selected study locations using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) method of sampling size determination. There were 98 visitors in CBNP in 2017, 367 in GGNP, and 42,520 in YGR. The sample size was 69 for CBNP, 165 for GGNP, and 341 for YGR. The overall sample size for the study was 575. Visitors that were at the destinations during the period of the study were randomly selected for the study.

Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

The study employed quantitative research methods in order to meet the research objectives. Structured questionnaire which was designed to capture information on perceived value and conservation attitude and visitors, was used to obtain information from the visitors. Perceived value measures were adapted from Winter and Lockwood (2004) while conservation attitude was measured using Ogunjinmi (2017) conservation attitudes scale and was rated on a 7 point scale. It was measured as strongly agree=7, Agree =6, somewhat agree=5, Undecided = 4, somewhat disagree= 3, Disagree = 2 and strongly disagree = 1. Reliability of the instruments was conducted to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha for perceived value was 0.60 and the Cronbach Alpha for conservation attitude was 0.71. The scale in the instrument had an acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach's Alpha scores were above the recommended 0.6 level (De Vellis, 1991). Data were from April to December 2018.

Data Analysis

In this study, data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23 (IBM Corp, 2015) and results were presented descriptively using frequency, percentage and tables. Inferentially, Chi square and correlation were used to test for association between selected socio-economic characteristic perceived value and conservation attitude of visitors while multiple linear regression was used to ascertain determinants of conservation attitude as multiple regression analysis helps in explaining how dependent variable changes as a result of a change in any of the explanatory variables (Koutsoyiannis, 2001)

RESULTS

Socioeconomic Characteristics of the Visitors

Table 2 reveals the socio-economic characteristics of visitors at Chad Basin National Park (CBNP), Gashaka Gumti National Park (GGNP) and Yankari Game Reserve (YGR). The highest percentage of the visitors were male at CBNP (72.5%) and YGR (53.1%) while the highest of the visitors were female at GGNP (77.6%). Most of the visitors were also within age 25-54 years at CBNP (68.1%), and YGR (48.7%) while most of the visitors were within age 15-24 years at GGNP (57%). Also, the visitors were mostly married at CBNP (53.6%), single at GGNP (35.8%) and single at YGR (52.5%). Majority of the visitors were earning ₦31,000-60,000 at CBNP (26.1%) and YGR (23.2%) while majority of the visitors were earning ₦121,000-150,000 at GGNP. Furthermore, 43.1% of the visitors at CBNP and 24.3% at YGR had BSc/ HND while 29.1% had ND/ NCE at GGNP. Majority of the visitors were civil servants at CBNP (59.4%), GGNP (97.6%) and YGR (70.4%) and Nigerians at CBNP (100%), GGNP (97.6%) and YGR (98.8%).

Table 2: Socio-demographic characteristics of visitors

Variables	CBNP (N=69)		GGNP (N=165)		YGR (N=341)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Sex						
Male	50	72.5	37	22.4	181	53.1
Female	19	27.5	128	77.6	160	46.9
Age						
15-24	13	18.8	94	57.0	148	43.4
25-54	47	68.1	68	41.2	166	48.7
55-64	8	11.6	2	1.2	14	4.1
65 and above	1	1.4	1	0.6	13	3.8
Marital status						
Single	27	39.1	59	35.8	179	52.5
Married	37	53.6	44	26.7	100	29.3
Divorce	1	1.4	26	15.8	30	8.8
Widow/widower	4	5.7	36	21.8	32	9.3
Monthly income						
< N 30,000	17	24.6	1	0.6	79	23.2
N31,000-60,000	18	26.1	8	4.8	64	18.8
N61,000-90,000	15	21.7	11	6.7	71	20.8
N91,000-120,000	10	14.5	40	24.2	54	15.8
N121,000-150,000	4	5.8	91	55.2	54	15.8
N151,000 and above	6	7.2	14	8.5	19	5.6
Educational level						
Non formal	0	0	0	0	68	19.9
Primary school	3	4.3	40	24.2	50	14.7
Secondary	9	13.0	45	27.3	82	24.0
ND/ NCE	19	27.5	48	29.1	50	14.7
BSc./ HND	30	43.5	31	18.8	83	24.3
MSc./ Ph.D	8	11.6	1	0.6	8	2.3
Occupation						
Civil servant	41	59.4	161	97.6	240	70.4
Self employed	16	23.2	2	2.4	44	12.9
Unemployed	12	17.4	0	0.0	53	15.5
Head department	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	1.2
Nationality						
Nigerian	69	100	161	97.6	337	98.8
Non-Nigerian	0	0.0	4	2.4	4	1.2
Level of visit						
First visit	46	66.7	121	73.3	129	37.8
Repeat visit	23	33.3	44	26.7	212	62.2

Visitors' Perceived Value of the Destinations

Table 3 reveals the visitors' perceived value at the destinations. The visitors' mean perceived intrinsic value was 3.17 at CBNP, GGNP (3.66), and YGR (3.62). Mean non-use value was 4.28 at CBNP, GGNP (4.46), and YGR (4.45). Mean recreational value was 4.69 at CBNP, GGNP (4.28), and YGR (4.36). Mean use value was 3.76 at CBNP, GGNP (3.63), and YGR (3.76). At CBNP, the perceived intrinsic value by the respondents revealed the statement with the highest mean was "the value of ecosystem only depends on what it does for humans" with a mean value of (3.77). The perception of the respondents on non-use values reveals that "natural areas are valuable to keep for future generation of humans" had the highest means with 4.61. For recreational values of eco-destination, it reveals the highest mean was "natural areas are important to me because I use them for recreation" with mean value of (4.74). The highest mean on use values was "forests are valuable because they produce wood products, job and income for people" with 4.62. At Gashaka Gumti National Park, the perceived intrinsic value by the respondents was "the value of nature exits only in the human mind, without people nature has no value" with a mean value of 4.29. For non-use value, the highest mean was "natural areas are valuable to keep for future generation of humans" with a mean of 4.64. The perception on recreational values reveals that the highest mean value was "natural areas are important to me because I use them for recreation" with a mean of 4.48. The respondents use values reveals that the highest mean was "to say that natural areas have values just for themselves is a nice idea but we just cannot afford to think that way: the welfare of people has to come first" with 4.67. At Yankari Game Reserve, the perceived intrinsic value by the respondents reveals that the highest mean was "the value of nature exits only in the human mind, without people nature has no value" with a mean value of 4.09. The perceived non-use values reveals that the highest mean was "natural areas are valuable to keep for future generation of humans" with a mean of 4.73. For the perceived recreational values, the statement with the highest mean was "natural areas are important to me because I use them for recreation" with 4.47 while the perceived use values reveals that the highest mean value was "it is better to test new drug on animal than humans" with a mean 4.40.

Table 3: Visitors' perceived value of the selected ecotourism destinations

Variables	CBNP		GGNP		YGR	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Intrinsic values						
Only humans have intrinsic value that is value for their own sake	3.35	1.012	3.87	1.105	3.94	1.053
The value of ecosystem only depends on what it does for humans	3.77	1.073	2.82	1.220	3.14	1.275
Ugliness in nature indicates that an area has no value	2.54	1.195	3.25	1.222	2.99	1.244
Places like swamps have no value and should be cleaned up	2.88	1.243	3.80	1.072	3.31	1.204
The only value that natural places has is what human can make from it	3.55	1.092	4.14	.993	3.76	1.244
The value of nature exits only in the human mind without people nature has no value	2.94	1.392	4.29	.634	4.09	1.074
Mean	3.17	1.199	3.66	1.028	3.62	1.204
Non use values						
There are plenty of natural places that are not very nice to visit but I am glad they exist	4.22	.764	4.41	.653	4.33	.754
Even if I don't go to natural areas I can enjoy them by looking at books or seeing films	4.22	.968	4.21	.991	4.26	.894
I am seeing natural areas the next generation of children may not see, and that concerns me	4.09	.836	4.57	.607	4.50	2.890
Natural areas are valuable to keep for future generation of humans	4.61	.548	4.64	.594	4.73	2.836
Mean	4.28	.779	4.46	.711	4.45	1.843
Recreational values						
Natural areas are important to me because I use them for recreation	4.74	.442	4.48	.704	4.47	.810
Natural areas must be protected because I might want them for recreation in the future	4.64	.664	4.09	.942	4.26	2.366
Mean	4.69	.553	4.28	.823	4.36	1.588
Use values						
I don't industries such as mining destroying parts of nature, but it necessary for human survival	3.72	.820	4.41	.930	4.21	.992
It is better to test new drugs on animal than on humans	3.90	1.319	4.37	1.055	4.40	.972
All plants and animals lives are precious and worth preserving but human needs are more important than all beings	3.99	1.194	3.45	1.368	3.65	1.432
Our children will be better off if we spend money on industry rather than on the natural environment	2.61	1.416	4.18	.975	3.78	1.288
To say that natural areas have values just for themselves is a nice idea but we just cannot afford to think that way: the welfare of people has to come first	3.75	1.181	4.67	.608	4.32	.980
Forest are valuable because they produce wood products, job and income for people	4.62	.893	0.7	.554	2.23	2.319
Mean	3.76	1.137	3.63	.915	3.76	1.330

Conservation Attitudes of the Visitors to the Selected Ecotourism Destinations

Table 4 shows the conservation attitude of the visitors at the sites. At CBNP, the highest mean was "sustainability of wildlife lies in conservation" with a mean of 4.55, followed by "protected areas make significant contribution to the planets natural and cultural resources conservation" (4.46) and "wildlife should be valued as natural and cultural relics" (4.46). At GGNP the perception on conservation attitude; the statement with the highest mean is "wildlife should be valued as natural and cultural relics" (6.20), followed by human activities are the main cause of wildlife habitat destruction and population decline" (4.67). At YGR, the highest conservation attitude was "wildlife should be valued as natural and cultural relics" (5.33), followed by human activities are the main cause of wildlife habitat destruction and population decline" (4.57).

Differences in Visitors' Perceived Value and Conservation Attitude among the Destinations

The result from the analysis (Table 5) reveals that conservation attitude ($F=16.754$, $p<0.01$) of the visitors differ significantly by the selected ecotourism destinations while perceived value is not statistically different ($p>0.05$).

Relationship between the Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics, Perceived Value and Conservation Attitude

Table 6 reveals the relationship between the selected socio-economic characteristics and conservation attitude of the visitors. Education ($\chi^2=322.968$, $p<0.01$), and Occupation ($\chi^2=331.520$, $P<0.01$) have significant relationship with conservation attitude of the visitors. Table 7 reveals the relationship between selected socio-economic characteristics, perceived values and conservation attitudes of the visitors using Pearson correlation. There is significant association between conservation attitude and monthly income ($r=0.085$, $p<0.05$), intrinsic value($r=0.442$, $p<0.01$), use value ($r=0.140$, $p<0.01$) as well as conservation attitude and overall perceived value ($r=0.289$, $p<0.01$).

Determinants of Visitors' Conservation Attitude

Table 8 reveals the determinants of conservation attitude through multiple linear regression analysis using conservation attitude as dependent variable and socio-economic characteristics and perceived values as explanatory variables fitted into the data. The resulting model produced R^2 of 0.259 showing that the explanatory or independent variables did not explain the visitors' conservation attitude entirely but contributed marginally. Also, monthly income ($\beta=-0.586$, $p<0.05$), education ($\beta=-1.203$, $p<0.01$), occupation ($\beta=-1.324$, $p<0.05$), intrinsic value ($\beta=0.676$, $p<0.01$), non-use value ($\beta=-0.267$, $p<0.01$), and use value ($\beta=0.475$, $p<0.051$) were the determinants of conservation attitude of the visitors.

Table 4: Visitors' conservation attitude

Variables	CBNP		GGNP		YGR	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Human activities are the main cause of wildlife habitat destruction and population decline	4.62	.709	4.67	.522	4.57	.777
Uncontrolled economic development impact negatively on wildlife population status	4.36	.484	4.50	.816	4.55	.678
Sustainability of wildlife lies in conservation	4.55	.718	3.85	1.180	4.26	1.007
Wildlife resources have the ability to replenish themselves regardless of human pressures	3.35	1.096	3.37	1.620	3.73	1.400
Humans have unlimited right to exploit wildlife resources for their benefits	2.96	1.439	4.12	.893	3.84	1.251
Wildlife and the ecological systems that support them are intricately interwoven and the balance needs to be maintained	4.20	.815	4.12	.851	4.19	.873
Future global sustainable economic development depends on the viability of wildlife resources	3.80	.797	3.35	1.248	3.51	1.254
The contribution of wildlife resources to human well-being is over-rated	3.59	1.082	3.07	1.248	3.11	1.306
No human intervention is required to restored wildlife habitats and population	2.64	1.137	3.75	1.027	3.57	1.258
The rate of wildlife depletion is alarming	3.81	.862	3.53	1.039	3.71	1.090
Present human needs and well-being are more important than conserving wildlife for the future	3.12	1.345	4.05	1.055	3.83	1.175
IUCN Red list indicating the status of wildlife species is a scientific and ecological hoax	3.45	1.145	4.10	.871	4.06	1.029
Global governance pays less attention to conservation and protection of wildlife diversity	3.87	1.282	3.24	1.320	3.50	1.334
Protected areas (such as national parks and game reserve) do more harm to local human populations than the benefits derived.	2.46	1.251	3.90	.989	3.75	1.244
Humanity is a threat to the survival of wildlife species.	3.48	1.208	3.95	.977	4.13	.920
Enforcement of treaties on endangered species and trades in wildlife is locally and globally weak	3.38	1.177	4.22	.781	4.12	.908
Global effort is needed in combating wildlife crime	4.28	.906	4.28	.764	4.32	.831
Wildlife is a free gift of nature, prohibiting its use in any form is not appropriate	3.87	1.110	4.26	.680	4.21	.967
Protected areas make significant contributions to the planets natural and culture resources conservation	4.46	.797	4.38	.667	4.40	.694
Wildlife should be valued as natural and cultural relics	4.46	.797	6.20	.919	5.33	1.299
Total conservation attitude	74.58	8.234	80.91	7.778	80.65	8.548

Table 5: Differences in visitors' perceived value and conservation attitude by the destinations

Variables	Mean square	F	P value	Decision
Perceived value	147.118	1.918	0.148	**NS**
Conservation attitude	1153.383	16.754	0.000	**S**

**P<0.01. NS-Not significant, S-Significant

Table 6: Relationship between the selected socioeconomic characteristics and Conservation Attitude

Variable	χ^2 value
Sex	128.597
Education	322.968**
Occupation	331.520**
Level of visit	183.459

*P<0.01

Table 7: Relationship between perceived values and conservation attitude

Variable	r value
Age	0.005
Monthly income	0.085*
Intrinsic value	0.442**
Non-use value	0.035
Recreational value	-0.057
Use value	0.140**
Overall Perceived value	0.289**

*P< 0.05 **P< 0.01

Table 8: Determinants of conservation attitude

Independent Variable	β-value	t-value
Sex	0.182	0.302
Age	0.144	0.307
Monthly income	-0.586	-2.256*
Education	-1.203	-4.226**
Occupation	-1.324	-2.535*
Level of visit	0.105	0.257
Intrinsic value	0.676	8.904**
Non-use value	-0.267	-3.124**
Recreational value	-0.198	-1.303
Use value	0.475	4.515**
R	0.509	
R^2	0.259	
Adjusted R^2	0.245	
R^2 Change	0.259	
Standard Error	7.402	
F change	19.672	
DF	574	
Sig.	0.000	

*** P<0.05, ** P<0.01**

DISCUSSION

The dominant male figure in this study is in line with the estimated sex ratio of 1.04 male to 1 female in Nigeria (CIA, 2018). Majority of the visitors were educated at tertiary level as supported by Coghlan (2011) that the tourists of Australia's Great Barrier Reef were educated. Also, majority of the visitors were employed but earning low income and is inconsistent with Dolnicar, Crouch and Long (2008) who found that environmentally friendly visitors have high income levels. The visitors were mostly Nigerians indicating low level of international visits which could be attributed to insecurity incidences affecting the northern part of Nigeria. This low level of foreign visitors is inconsistent with findings by Oom do Valle, Silva, Mendes and Guerreiro (2006) who reported majority of foreign tourists.

Findings from this study revealed the visitors affirmed that they enjoy the recreational benefits of natural areas. This is in line with McCormack and Rock (2010) that there are several factors associated to park visitation, and these are socioeconomic background, recreational opportunities and attributes of the park that attract people. The visitors also affirmed that the value of ecosystem depends on what it does for humans and that without people, nature has no value. This is in line with Sutton (2004) who stated that environmental sustainability is the ability to sustain the qualities (e.g., clean water and air, non-renewable resources) that are necessary to maintain the living conditions of human being and other species in the physical environment. Ecotourism destinations provides diverse use for the public such as medicine production as supported by Stolton and Dudley (2010) that medicinal herbs has reduced drastically in some regions and the only strategy available is to source for them in national parks. Dudley, Mansourian, Stolton and Suksuwan (2008) also recorded the use of nature-based areas for emergency food supplies in some parts of Africa. The visitors also affirmed that eco-destinations are valuable because they provide wood products, job and income for people and that welfare of people has to come first in the values of eco-destinations so that eco-destinations can be preserved for future generation. This is in line with Amogne (2014) that Ecotourism is credited with promoting the conservation of natural resources, provides local economic benefits (employment opportunities) while also maintaining ecological integrity through low-impact, non-consumptive use of local resources. Hunter and Heywood (2011) also posited that biodiversity provides more than aesthetic or ethical values; it also provides diverse raw materials for an array of products including the pharmaceuticals.

The visitors affirmed that sustainability of wildlife lies in conservation and that protected areas make significant contribution to the planet's natural and cultural resources conservation as supported by Kuuder, Bagson and Aalangdong (2013) that many National parks allow tourists an opportunity to enjoy and appreciate majestic parks rich in wildlife, sensitize tourists on the value and need for conservation of wildlife (Borokini, 2013). They also opined that wildlife should be valued as natural and cultural relic while also agreeing that human activities are the main cause of wildlife habitat destruction and population decline. Therefore, eco-destination management should intensify efforts in reducing the population decline and habitat destruction of wildlife as this might have a decrease in the revenue generated by the destinations and thus have a negative impact on wildlife tourism. This is consistent with UNWTO (2015) that the long-term effects of poaching on tourism may be devastating from an economic, social and ecological perspective and since tourists associate Africa with the Big Five, not being able to experience these animals would result in tourist decline with severe economic implications for profit, taxes

and contribution to Gross Domestic Product. Eco-destinations should also involve all stakeholders in the merits derived from conservation and not just the struggles involved in conservation alone. This will encourage, restore confidence in the stakeholders' minds and make them realize their efforts are yielding positive outcomes which is in line with Bennett (2016) that equal distribution of social costs and merits of conservation among stakeholders is capable of encouraging positive attitudes and support for conservation projects. This study further revealed that there is relationship between perceived value and conservation attitudes at the destinations. These perceived values were formed due to the visitors' experience at the destinations and thus developed positive conservation attitude as supported by Snyman (2012) that people who have perceived benefit from tourism have greater positive attitudes towards conservation.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the visitors perceived that natural areas are valuable to keep for future generation of humans and those natural areas are important to them because they are used for recreation. The visitors also agreed that forests are valuable because they provide wood products, job and income for people. They however opined that they are concerned that the future generation might not see the natural areas. This calls for strategic measures of conservation for sustainability of eco-destinations in order for them to retain their ascribed values. The visitors also opined that sustainability of wildlife lies in conservation and that wildlife should be valued as natural and cultural relics while also stating that human activities are the main cause of wildlife habitat destruction and population decline. Conservation education should be taken as top priority by the management of eco-destinations in order to imbibe core conservation values in the hearts of visitors.

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