

An Assessment of the Impact of Kainji Lake National Park in Ecotourism Development in Niger State

Maryam Abdullahi¹, Ahmad Balarabe Sa'id², Lantana Abiodun Nnaji³

Tourism Department, College of Science and Technology, Kaduna Polytechnic.

Department of Mass Communications, Kaduna Polytechnic

Abstract: *Ecotourism is known to be environmentally friendly and sustainable tourism which benefits the local communities, but many parks are destroying the very ecosystem through poor planning which in turn has no benefits for the locals. This makes ecotourism end up providing social tension and environmental degradation while leaving tourists feeling dissatisfied and cheated. The objectives of this research is to assess the contribution of Kainji National Park in ecotourism development, to measure the impact of the park on the environmental and economic development, to assess the level of community participation in protected area of Kainji and also to analyze the trends of visitors to the park. A questionnaire method in conducting the research work where a total of 200 questionnaires was distributed to target respondents and for each item on the questionnaire using descriptive statistics of frequency, percentages for nominal and ordinal while mean, standard deviations and reliability test. The study shows that Kainji Lake National Park has contributed positively to the growth and development of ecotourism in Niger State and has also helped in the conservation and preservation of flora and fauna in the park. The study further revealed that an ecotourism activity has contributed economically in the area of job creation and also revenue generation to the government of Niger State.*

Keywords: Development, environment, ecotourism, Kainji Lake, national park, sustainable

1. Introduction

The world is endowed with diverse attractive resources. However, some attractive resources are of more national, regional and global attention than others. Marketing of attractive resources has been a major challenge world over. Tourism is the only social avenue that is large enough for efficient and effective marketing of global resources irrespective of where these virtues are located. (Ijeomah, 2012).

African tourism potentials are seen as untapped opportunities towards the development of their communities and nations at large (Ishii, 2009). In the contrary, poverty amidst plenty is the centre stage in development debates on the continent (Hays, 2006). In the development literature, poverty is conceived as a negative term denoting a state of short or long term deprivation and insecurity in basic human needs (Narayan, 2000). More than half of the region's populations earned below one US Dollar per day (Adegunde, 2007). They are haunted by negative effects of poverty such as inadequate infrastructure, urban slum, low industrialization and conflicts over scarce resources (Gakunzi, 2005). These have made the search for 'pro - poor growth', that is the growth that will benefit the poor people and speed community development with little investments very urgent.

Tourism industry, the present largest industry in the world holds the key to this in the new millennium (Naude and Saayman 2004; World Tourism Organization, 2003). First, in recent years, tourism has been increasingly recognized for its economic potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty in African Countries (Awaritefe, 2004; Afolabi, 2001). Specifically in Nigeria, tourism performance and statistics

have been on the rise in recent years. It is ranked third in the Country's export after Petroleum and Cocoa (Bankole, 2001). The Country is said to be more endowed with natural and historical resource centers than any other nation in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ekpenyong, 2001; Adelaja, 1997).

According to Smith (1997) tourism can be classified into five categories such as ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, environmental tourism (ecotourism) and recreational tourism. Ecotourism activities in Kainji National Park belong to the last two categories.

In Africa, the first set of game reserves and national parks were created in remote areas that were unsuitable for agriculture, primary for the protection of large mammals whose populations were in decline due to hunting and diseases (Lockwood, 2006). Overtime this purpose has widened to embrace from the 1930s the provision of environmental, aesthetic and recreational benefits. From the 1970s, the purpose was further extended to include biodiversity conservation; and most recently a focus on economic and social benefits. National parks were created as pristine wilderness reserves, and yet at the same time were designed for the use and enjoyment of visitors. The former involves isolating parks from adverse human impacts, while the latter has to do with making parks accessible to the public (Lockwood, 2006). This is the thrust of ecotourism.

Ecotourism is a type of tourism that involves traveling to relatively undisturbed natural areas with the objective of admiring, studying and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals as well as any cultural features found therein (Boo, 1991). The idea of wildlife tourism is closely

associated with conservation on one hand and travel on the other hand. It is one of the fastest growing tourism sectors worldwide. Additionally, tourism based upon wildlife has become the leading foreign exchange earner in several countries (Reynolds and Braithwait, 2001). Across the world, the number of tourists seeking interactions with wildlife in their natural environment is increasing and there is a significant body of literature describing the revenues generated from wildlife tourism to sustainably finance conservation and economic development has been widely promoted (Meduna, 2005).

2. Methodology

The methodology is the instrument that is used in collecting all the relevant information from the people concern for the purpose of achieving reliable data. A number of approaches were adopted for collection of data and information which include questionnaires, collection of data, analysis and validation of the data collected. It also comprises of the research design, area of the study, population of the study, sample size, sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, validity of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method for data collection and method for data analysis.

Research Design

To carry out this research successfully, the researcher adopted the survey research method. Structured questionnaires relevant to the research objectives and questions were administered randomly on tourist, staff of kainji National Park, students who visited the park on excursion without gender discrimination. Data were collated, tabulated and analyzed statistically using the descriptive statistics of frequency, percentages mean, standard deviations, etcetera and inferential analysis of the data in order to achieve the objectives of this research.

Descriptive Statistics

This section is concerned with data presentation for each item on the questionnaire using descriptive statistics of frequency, percentages for nominal and ordinal while mean, standard deviations and reliability test.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Sections	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Remark
Contribution of kainji National park in ecotourism development	810	5	significant
Contribution of Kainji lake National Park to economic and environmental Development of Niger State	721	5	significant
Level of Community Participation in the Park	713	5	significant
Trend of Visitors to the Park	709	5	significant

From Table 1 it can be seen the analysis carried out for reliability test, shows that the cronbach's alpha values are all significant in other word the instrument or tools used in the achievement of the various objective are all reliable.

Table 2: Contribution of Kainji National Park in Ecotourism Development

Contribution	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Kainji Lake National Park is used to preserve wild animals in their natural state	4.5389	.5861	Agree
National Park system helps in the development of ecotourism in Niger State	4.2435	.61047	Agree
Kainji Lake National park is used to enhance sustainability of tourism resources	4.2953	.72946	Agree
Ecotourism development in Kainji National Park helps to ensure ecological balance	4.2124	.76475	Agree
Kainji Lake National Park is an important contributor to the primary function of tourism in the area of conservation and propagation of important natural heritage for posterity	4.2591	.69615	Agree

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis on Objective One.

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of Item
To determine the contribution of Kainji National Park in Ecotourism Development in Niger State	4.310	0.677	5

Base on the analysis carried out it, the result of the respondents' responses revealed a mean of 4.310 with a standard deviation of 0.677, this implies that the contribution of Kainji National Park in Ecotourism Development in Niger State is significant due to the park usage in enhancing sustainability of tourism resources, ensuring ecological balance and being an important contributor to the primary function of tourism and propagation of important natural heritage for prosperity

Table 4: Contribution of Kainji lake Park to Economic and Environmental Development of Niger State

	Mean	Standard Deviation	NO.
Kainji National Park has increase the revenue of the government of Niger State	4.5829	0.77987	187
Funds generated form the influx of visitors to the park is used to maintain the park	3.0321	0.33965	187
Kainji Lake National Park has helped to alleviate poverty in the host community	4.2086	.81934	187
Ecotourism activities in Kainji National Park help to counter environmentally destructive mass tourism	4.0000	.87375	187
Kainji Nationl Park supports the preservation of biodiversity	4.1604	.85253	187

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis on Objective Two.

Objective	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of items
To investigate the contribution of Kainji lake Park to Economic and Environmental Development of Niger State	3.997	0.733	5

From the result obtain it was revealed that the mean response of the respondents' was 3.997 with a standard deviation of 0.733 this indicate that there is high contribution of Kainji lake Park to Economic and Environmental Development of Niger State as it helps in increasing the government revenue and help to counter environmentally destructive mass tourism in the state.

Table 6: Level of Community Participation in the Park

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean
The standard of living of the host community has improved tremendously due to the presence of Kainji Lake National Park	4.7732	.68860	194
Community participation in the park has reduced conflict between park management and host community	4.2113	.7138	194
Kainji Lake National Park has boosted commercial activities within the host community	4.4948	.71360	194
Kainji Lake National Park improve the quality of lives of the host community through education and empowering the community to manage their resources effectively	4.2216	.74621	194
Ecotourism development in the park has minimized negative impact on the host community	4.0000	.77337	194

Table 7: Descriptive Analysis on Objective Three.

Obective	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of Item
To determine the level of Community Participation in the Park	4.340	0.728	5

The result of the analysis obtain in Table 7 revealed a mean response of 4.340 with a standard deviation of 0.728 which depict that the community participation to the park was is significant. The community participation was significant due to the Park's ability to boost commercial activities within the host community, standard of living of the host community has improved tremendously due to the presence of the Park. Also, the Park improve the quality of lives of the host community through education and empowering the community to manage their resources effectively

Table 8: Trend of Visitors to the Park

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of Item
Kainji Lake Nationa Park has witnessed a steady increase in the number of toursits or visitors in recent years	4.0656	1.04622	183
Kainji National Park is a good tourist destination for local tourist only	3.2842	1.42046	183
Both local and international tourists visit Kainji National Park	4.2186	.93543	183
Kainji Lake National Park has increased the number of tourist visiting Niger State	4.1694	.85082	183
Kainji National Park is not a good tourist destination	3.5792	4.09677	183

Table 9: Descriptive Analysis on Objective One

Objectives	Mean	Standard Deviation	N of Items
To determine the trend of Visitors to the Park	3.865	1.66994	5

From the result obtain it was revealed that the mean response of the respondents is 3.865 with a standard deviation of 1.6694 this depict that the visitors trend to the park was significant base on the items stated in Table 8.

Table 10: Model Summary

Model R	R	R square	Adusted R Std error of estimate	
1	.991a	.981	.924	.03614

a. Predictors: (Constant), MD, MC, MB

In the model summary table above, R-square is .981, meaning 98.1% of the variation from the dependent (Ecotourism Development) can be explained by variation in the independent variables (Economic and Environmental Development, Community Participation and Visitors Trend). The remaining 7.9% can be explained by other factors that were not in the model. With these results, it can be concluded that Kainji National park have strong predictive powers, as this variable accounts for about 98.1% of the variation in v Economic and Environmental Development, Community Participation and Visitors Trend.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus of this study has been to assess the impact of Kainji Lake National Park in ecotourism development, to measure the impact of Kainji National Park to the environmental and economic development of the state, assess community participation in Kainji and also analyze the trend of visitors to the park. The study shows that Kainji Lake National Park has contributed positively to the growth and development of ecotourism in Niger State and has also helped in the conservation and preservation of flora and fauna in the park. The study further revealed that ecotourism activities has contributed economically in the area of job creation and also revenue generation to the government of Niger State. Also, in the area of community participation, the park has stressed local participation, ownership and also business activities. The park has also witnessed on increase in the number of tourists who visit the park to view wild animals in their natural habitat.

Even though Kainji National Park has impacted positively to the growth and development of ecotourism in Niger State, it is necessary to recommend what needed to be covered by the researcher that was not covered due to limited time. The researcher therefore recommends that future research should be carried out on the effect of poaching on the development of ecotourism in Kainji National Park and also on assessment of the impact of ecotourism on the social and cultural well-being of the local residents.

References

- [1] Adegunde, A.A. (007). The Socio-economic impact of tourism Industries on residents; the case of Olumo Rock, Abeokuta, Nigeria. Coastal Areas and Land Administration – Building the capacity. 6th FIG Regional Conference. Sanjose, Costa Rica, Latin America.
- [2] Awaritefe, O.D. (2004). International Tourists, where do they visit and what do they want? International Journal of Social Sciences. Volume 3(1), page (15-35).
- [3] BOO, E. (200). The role of wildlife in the development of Tourism. Tourism Management, 21(2). Page 213-216.
- [4] Bansal, S.P. and Kumar, J. (2001) Ecotourism for Community Development: A stakeholder's perspective in Great Himalayan National Park. International Journal of Social Ecology and sustainable Development, Volume 2 (2). Page 31-40.
- [5] Ekpenyong A.J (2001). Recent development and future prospects in the Tourism industry in Nigeria. Workshop paper presentation, teachers training programme on tourism in schools, Calabar, June 15.
- [6] Gakunzi, D. (2005) why conflict recurs in Africa. Conference paper presented at the international Martin Luther King centre in Kingali, Rwanda, September 17.
- [7] Ijeomah, H.M. (2012). Reality of Tourism Management: Business viability and Tourists' behaviour in Plateau State, Nigeria 3rd Edition. Academic Publishers. Page 92-100.
- [8] Ishii, K. (2009). An overview of tourism of Africa, Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Regional Bureau for Africa Annals of Tourism Research. Volume 5(1). Page 157-181.
- [9] Lockwood, M. (2006) Managing protected Areas: A global guide, Earth Scan: London, page 802.
- [10] Meduna, A.J (2005). Environmental friendly Tourism in Nigeria: A case study of Nigerian National park service. Nigerian Journal of forestry. Volume 2 (1) page 36 – 43.
- [11] Narayan, D. (2000) poverty is powerlessness and voicelessness. Journal on IMF finance and Development, Volume 37(4) page 18 – 20.
- [12] Naude, W.A and Saayman, A. (2004). The determinant of tourist arrivals in Africa: A panel data regression analysis. Paper prepared for the international conference centre for the study of African Economics, St. Catherines College University of Oxford, 21 – 22 March
- [13] Reynolds, P.C and Braithwait, D. (2001), towards a conceptual framework for wild life Tourism. Journal on Tourism management. Volume 5(3). Page 31 – 42.