

## **Environmental And Behavioural Values of Tourists Towards the Ecological Sustainability of Osun Oshogbo Sacred Grove, Oshogbo, Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The fast paced growth of tourism is accompanied by the people's increasing awareness on environmental problems associated with the industry. The sustainable development of natural heritage sites does not only depend on the measures taken by the government and administrative units, but is also based on the environmental attitudes and behaviour of tourists during their visits. Therefore, this study was carried out to assess the various environmental and behavioural values of tourists in Osun Oshogbo sacred grove. One hundred respondents (tourists) were randomly selected for this study. Data on tourists' environmental and behavioural values were collected using a well structured questionnaire. A 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the perception about the environmental and behavioural values. This was later categorized into high and low level based on the mean score. Data on the impact of tourists on wild animals were also collected. The results indicated that about 60% of the respondents were males, while 40% were females. The results also showed that the majority (61%) of the respondents is within 20-29 years of age and 65% of them are single. About 51% of the respondents have secondary school education, while 21% have primary school education and 17% have tertiary education. Mean criterion was used to categorize respondents' perception into 2 levels: concerned (55%) and unconcerned (45%). No significant difference was observed on the impact of tourism on air quality around the grove. The relationship between age ( $\chi^2=0.21$ ,  $P=0.19$ ), gender ( $\chi^2=0.50$ ,  $P=0.62$ ), ethnic group ( $\chi^2=0.08$ ,  $P=0.72$ ) and environmental values was not significant while educational qualification ( $\chi^2=0.20$ ,  $P=0.05$ ), employment status ( $\chi^2=0.19$ ,  $P=0.05$ ) and environmental and behavioural values was significant. There was no significant relationship between age ( $\chi^2=75.04$ ,  $P=0.65$ ) and behavioural values, likewise, there was no significant relationship between importance attached to the environment ( $\chi^2=28.39$ ,  $P=0.47$ ) and behavioural values. More awareness should be raised by the government about the importance of the natural environment, so as to prevent unsustainable actions and activities.

**Key words:** environmental values, behavioural values, sacred grove, tourism

### **Introduction**

Tourism, as a concept of travelling from one destination to another by a person or group of persons for the purpose of leisure, social interaction and trade (Falade, 2000), is not alien to Nigerians. Nigerians are good travelers within and outside their traditional homes, and even outside the country in pursuit of leisure and trade as well as for purposes of cultural obligations and ceremonies. This could be dated back to the early empires of West Africa (Karibo, 1991). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Statistical Commission described tourism as the activities of people traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environments for more than one consecutive day for leisure, business, and other purposes.

Nigeria's prospect for tourism subsists on its diversity in people, culture, nature, and untapped investment opportunities. Natural diversity which includes rivers and ocean beaches, wildlife, vast tracts of natural vegetation, waterfalls, and varied climatic conditions are some major attractions while traveling through the Nigerian landscape. The major cultural attractions include traditional ways of life often preserved in local customs, fascinating history



and lifestyles, handicrafts and other creative products of the people. Some of these adorn the museums, art galleries, cultural, religious and national festivals, historical monuments, buildings, arts and crafts.

Sacred groves are small natural forested areas that are protected due to their local cultural or spiritual meaning. Sacred groves are established for a number of purposes. Often, they are considered to be the residence of local deities, or contain an object or body of water that houses the deities. (Castro,1990; Dorm-Adzobu *et al.*, 1991; Lebbie and Freudenberger,1996; Tiwari *et al.*,1998; Chouin,2002; Malhotra *et al.*,2007; Sheridan & Nyamweru, 2007; Ormsby and Bhagwat, 2010). Groves of these kinds are commonly referred to as fetish groves (Dorn-Adzobu *et al.*, 1991). Some sites are burial ground or the formal location of a village or the site of an important event, and therefore thought to be the domain of ancestral spirit. Hunting and collection of wood for fuel or other purposes are prohibited in most cases. Access to the grove is limited for the general population, while one or several religious priests or members of a sect have greater access and authority over the grove.

A sacred place therefore preserves the ecosystem, species and geo diversity features since there is no disturbance by recent human activities (Ormsby,2012). It is a place to secure different types of the natural environment for scientific studies, environmental monitoring and education which includes baseline areas from which all avoidable access is excluded. It is meant to conserve the cultural and spiritual values associated with nature. Sacred places have been found to enhance sustainability in diverse fields such as biodiversity conservation and maintenance of ecosystem services, tropical and bio-cultural restoration, sustainable water management, genetic resource conservation and management of other natural resources. It has been found useful for ecosystem restoration and often has ingredient of adaptive management Campbell (2005).

Osun Oshogbo sacred grove is located in Osun state on latitude 7°30'N and longitude 4°30'E in Nigeria. It is a sacred grove which has organically evolved cultural landscape related to the Yoruba culture which, by nature, has itself evolved within time. The dense forest of the Osun sacred grove, on the outskirts of the city of Oshogbo is one of the relics of primary high forest in southern Nigeria. Regarded as the abode of the goddess of fertility (Osun), the grove and its meandering river is dotted with sanctuaries and shrine, sculpture and art work in honour of Osun and other deities.

People's values and attitudes have changed a lot in a few decades and especially towards ecology and environment. Tourism is one of the actions that have a great influence on the environment, many tourism enterprises have taken already ecological responsibility as a part of their business and strategic planning. The fast paced growth of tourism is accompanied by people's increasing awareness on environmental problems associated with the tourism industry. The sustainable development of natural heritage sites does not only depend on the measures taken by the government and administrative units, but is also based on the environmental attitude and behavior of tourists during their visits (Honey *et al.*, 2009).

Tourists have been known to exhibit different types of values and attitude towards the environment. However, most people, across all demographic lines, value a range of features and benefits from a site of attraction. Moreover, the presence of nature within a natural park, and visitor appreciation for all other park aspects or activities is often contingent on the natural setting. It is therefore important to know how tourists view the environment, and the respect accorded to both living and non living component of the natural environment. This will benefit tourist and park manager on the concern of environmental issues. Understanding tourists environmental and behavioral values would help to manage ecological issues in the natural site.

This project focused on the environmental and behavioural values of tourists which are believed to be essential for tourism development of natural heritage sites. Ogundiran (2011) investigated the archeological and surveyed the sacred landscape of Osun Oshogbo grove. But additional information is required on the environmental and behavioural values of tourists in the grove. This work aims to assess the various environmental and behavioural values of tourists and to assess the correlation between tourist values, and some other variables.

## Materials and Methodology

### Study site

Osun Oshogbo sacred grove is located in Osun state on latitude 7°30'N and longitude 4°30'E in Nigeria. The Grove is a large area of undisturbed primary forest along the banks of Osun River. It is located in Osogbo. It consists of an exceptionally rich floral and faunal life. The number of floral species (400) and families (63) encountered in Osun grove is high (Soladoye and Oni, 1996). Osun Osogbo Sacred Grove today has a number of values attached to it. It remains the symbol of the development of Osogbo society from its prehistoric beginning to the present. Thus, the grove is like a matrix from which Osogbo was incubated, giving birth to the child in the form of Osogbo society. Several footpaths lead to various shrines numbering over forty (40); and to the sacred and interpretative architectural works in the grove. Among them is the ritual route which is a parallel narrow footpath to the main pilgrimage public path. The votary maid (Arugba) uses this ritual path during the grand final of the Osun-Osogbo Festival on her way to the paramount Osun Shrine situated within the first palace in the Osun courtyard.

### Method of Data Collection

#### Reconnaissance Survey

Reconnaissance survey is a preliminary survey to gain information, which is usually executed rapidly and at relatively low cost prior to a detailed work. This was done to familiarize myself with the grove.

#### Sampling method

Simple random sampling method was adopted in administering one hundred structured questionnaire to the respondents. The dependent variable of this study were environmental and behavioural values of respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate how behaviour affects the environment. A five likert scale type was used to measure the environmental and behavioural values, which were later categorized into high and low level based on the mean score. Respondents that fell below the mean score were categorized into low level of impact on the environment and not concerned about the environment respectively, while those between the mean score and above the mean were categorized into high level of impact and also concerned respectively.

#### Oral interview

This method was used for people who cannot read and write and also those who had no time to fill the questionnaire. Questions were directed to them in their preferred language and their responses were used to fill the questionnaire.

#### Data Analysis

Data for this study were subjected to analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and percentages were used to describe the data collected while chi-square were used to test the hypotheses.

## RESULTS

### Demographic characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. These include gender, age, marital status, level of literacy (ability to read and write), educational qualification and employment status.

**TABLE 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=100)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		



Male	60	60
Female	40	40
<b>Age group</b>		
20-29	61	61
30-39	24	24
40-49	11	11
50-59	4	4
60-69	0	0
>69	0	0
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	65	65
Married	33	33
Divorced	2	2
Widowed	0	0
<b>Literacy level</b>		
<b>(readability to read)</b>		
Yes	96	96
No	4	4
<b>(ability to write)</b>		
Yes	95	95
No	5	5
<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>		
Primary	21	21
High school	51	51
College	17	17
Professional	8	8
Postgraduate	3	3
<b>Employment status</b>		
Employed full time	50	50
Employed part time	32	32
Student	10	10
Homemaker	4	4
Students	4	4
Retired	0	0

#### **Tourist Environmental and behavioural Values**

Table 2 shows that 55% of the respondents strongly agreed that their views regarding the quality of environment align with their values, 36% of the respondents also strongly agreed that age determines one's attitude to the environment while 44% of the respondents are satisfied with their trip to the grove. Out of all the respondents, 36% agreed that the environment affected their level of satisfaction, 35% strongly agreed that culture affects their belief about the environment while 47% of them are very concerned about the environment. The percentage of those who believes and agrees that plants and animals have as much right as human to exist is 37%, 57% strongly agreed that the earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to use them while 46% strongly agreed that they enjoy the peace and quietness experienced in nature. Thirty percent of the respondents came to the grove to spend time with friends, 37% disagree about not paying attention when people dispose rubbish in the environment, 28% strongly agree to have contributed time and money to organizations that are protecting the environment and are also equally indifferent about the environment, 41% of the respondents disagree with the issue of not attaching any importance to keeping the environment clean, 40% disagree with the act of indiscriminately disposing rubbish at the sacred grove and 30% of the respondents strongly agrees that all the sites of attraction were of equal importance.

In summary, the mean criterion was used to categorize the respondents based on their environmental values into two; concerned and not concerned about the environment. Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents (55%) are concerned about the environment while those who are not concerned about the environment was about 45%.

**TABLE 2: Tourist Environmental and Behavioural Values**

Statement	SA	A	I	D	SD	MEAN
Your views regarding the quality of environment align with your values	55(55.0)	19(19.0)	7(7.0)	14(14.0)	5(5.0)	4.1
Age determines your attitude to the environment	36(36.0)	21(21.0)	7(7.0)	27(27.0)	9(9.0)	2.5
You are very satisfied with this trip.	44(44.0)	30(30.)	15(15.0)	9(9.0)	2(2.0)	4.1
Your environmental values affect your level of satisfaction	31(31.0)	36(36.0)	16(16.0)	12(12.0)	5(5.0)	3.8
Your culture affects your belief about the environment	35(35.0)	31(31.0)	15(15.0)	13(13.0)	6(6.0)	3.8
You are very concerned about the environment	47(47.0)	34(34.0)	12(12.0)	2(2.0)	5(5.0)	4.2
Plants and animals have as much right as humans to exist.	37(37.0)	37(37.0)	4(4.0)	18(18.0)	4(4.0)	3.9
The earth has plenty of natural resources if we just learn how to use them.	57(57.0)	36(36.0)	5(5.0)	1(1.0)	1(1.0)	4.5
Nature is spiritual and sacred	46(46.0)	44(44.0)	8(8.0)	2(2.0)	0(0.0)	4.3
I enjoy the peace and quiet experienced in nature.	53(53.0)	32(32.0)	8(8.0)	4(4.0)	3(3.0)	4.3
My main reason of coming here is to spend quality time with friends.	23(23.0)	30(30.0)	14(14.0)	28(28.0)	5(5.0)	3.4
I do not pay much attention when people dispose rubbish in the environment	13(13.0)	15(15.0)	25(25.0)	37(37.0)	10(10.0)	3.2
I have contributed time, money, or both to organizations that protect the environment.	28(28.0)	25(25.0)	28(28.0)	10(10.0)	9(9.0)	3.5
I never attach any importance to keeping the environment clean.	16(16.0)	10(10.0)	18(18.0)	41(41.0)	15(15.0)	3.3
I dispose rubbish at the site instead of keeping it for later disposal in a trash bin.	9(9.0)	11(11.0)	24(24.0)	40(40.0)	16(16.0)	3.4
Do you agree that all the site of attraction is of equal importance?	30(30.0)	25(25.0)	22(22.0)	13(13.0)	10(10.0)	3.5

[SA= strongly agree, A= Agree, I= Indifferent, D= Disagree, SD= Strongly Disagree]

**TABLE 3: Categorization of Tourists Based on their Environmental and Behavioural values**

Environmental values	Scores	Frequency	%	Mean
Concerned	60-72	55	55	59.5
Not concerned	44-59	45	45	

### Impact of Tourist on Wild Animals



Table 4 shows that 39% of the respondents are of the opinion that the impact of tourists on feral animals is on the average, 31% of the respondents believes that the impact of road development on wild animals in the grove is insignificant, 32% agreed that the collection of firewood by the tourist is on the average, 22% claimed that illegal wildlife feeding by tourist is significant, 38% of the respondents feels that littering of the site by tourists is completely insignificant, 21% believes that photographing by tourist is significant, 42% feels that the killing of wild animals is insignificant, 35% agrees that the reduction or fragmentation of wild animals' habitat is on the average, while 33% believes that the barriers to animal movement is completely insignificant. Fifty one percent of the respondents agreed that the impact of noise in the grove is on wild animals is completely insignificant and 32% of the respondents believes that increase in the density of feral animals is on the average.

In summary, the mean criterion was used to categorize respondents based on impact of tourist on wild animals into two; high and low impact. Table 5 shows that the majority (54%) of the respondents have a high impact.

**TABLE 4: Impacts of Tourists on Wild Animals**

Statements	CI	I	A	S	ES	MEAN
feral animals (rabbit, trout etc)	22(22.0)	21(21.0)	39(39.0)	5(5.0)	13(13.0)	2.7
Development of roads/rails	26(26.0)	31(31.0)	19(19.0)	13(13.0)	11(11.0)	2.5
Tourists collecting firewood	25(25.0)	7(7.0)	32(32.0)	27(27.0)	9(9.0)	2.9
Wildlife feeding by tourists	17(17.0)	18(18.0)	26(26.0)	29(29.0)	10(10.0)	3.0
Littering by tourists	38(38.0)	24(24.0)	5(5.0)	18(18.0)	15(15.0)	2.5
Photographing by tourists	14(14.0)	21(21.0)	23(23.0)	25(25.0)	17(17.0)	3.1
Road kills	29(29.0)	42(42.0)	18(18.0)	6(6.0)	5(5.0)	2.2
Reduced or fragmented habitat	19(19.0)	19(19.0)	35(35.0)	19(19.0)	8(8.0)	2.8
Barrier to native animal movement (dry and rainy season)	33(33.0)	23(23.0)	26(26.0)	15(15.0)	3(3.0)	2.3
Noise pollution	51(51.0)	16(16.0)	8(8.0)	15(15.0)	10(10.0)	2.2
Increased density of feral animals	23(23.0)	14(14.0)	32(32.0)	20(20.0)	11(11.0)	2.8

CI=Completely Insignificant I=Insignificant A=Average S=Significant ES=Extremely Significant

**TABLE 5: Categorization of respondents Based on Impact of Tourists on Wild Animals**

Impact on Wild Animals	Scores	Frequency	%	Mean
High	29-49	54	54	28.9
Low	11-28	46	46	

**TABLE 6: Other Characteristics.**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Are you likely to come visit the site with potential change</b>		
Yes	88	88
No	12	12
<b>Attitude to the Environment</b>		
Friendly	33	33
Good	49	49
Concerned	17	17
Indifferent	1	1
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Yoruba	70	70
Igbo	28	28

**Table 7: Chi-Square Analyses for the relationship between Respondents Personal Characteristics and their Environmental and behavioural Values**

Variables	Df	X <sup>2</sup> - Values	P – Values	Remarks	Decisions
Gender	1	0.05	0.62	NS	Accept Ho
Age	3	0.21	0.19	NS	Accept Ho
Marital status	2	0.13	0.45	NS	Accept Ho
can you read	1	0.03	0.74	NS	Accept Ho
Literacy level	1	0.08	0.05	S	Reject Ho
Educational qualification	4	0.20	0.05	S	Reject Ho
Employment status	4	0.19	0.04	S	Reject Ho
Ethnic group	2	0.08	0.72	NS	Accept Ho
Hausa		2			2
<b>Environmental consciousness</b>					
Yes		92			92
No		8			8
<b>Purpose of visit</b>					
Tourism		55			55
Game viewing		8			8
Research		13			13
Relax with friends		24			24
<b>Is this your first time of visiting the grove</b>					
Yes		80			80
No		20			20

**Note: P≤ 0.05- Significant**  
**P> 0.05- Not Significant**

The Chi square analysis showed that no significant relationship existed between the respondents' gender, age, marital status and ethnic group with behavioural values. The results in table 7 show that there is a significant relationship between literacy level ( $\chi^2=0.08$ ,  $P=0.05$ ), educational qualification ( $\chi^2=0.20$ ,  $P=0.05$ ) and employment status ( $\chi^2=0.19$ ,  $P=0.05$ ) with their environmental and behavioural values.

This indicates that educational qualification, literacy level, employment status affected the behavioural and environmental values of the respondents at the grove.

## Discussion

The results of this study revealed that 60% of the respondents were males while 40% were females. Majority (61%) of those that participated in tourism are younger people within the age range of 20-29. This could be due to the fact that younger people experience more leisure time and participate in more outdoor recreational activities. Only 4% of the respondents fell between the age range of 50-59 while nobody fell within the age bracket above 60years. Compared with people in advanced countries like Europe and USA, people in all age brackets go on vacation and for recreation. Elderly people don't count it as taboo to go for recreation. The respondents also agreed that age determines one's attitude to the environment. Schreyer *et al.*, (1984) related the concept of age and



experience. Those with abundant experience are likely to value the environment more than those without experience in environmental issues. The environmental and behavioural values of the young ones towards the ecological sustainability of the grove are high. So, behaving well can commence at an early stage of life. Since younger people are the one actively involved in tourism travel, majority of the tourists are therefore not married. This implies that married people are not active in tourism. This could be attributed to their level of responsibilities, since they are the sole provider for their families.

Some values are in-built and some of these youths may have parents who has high environmental and behavioural values, thereby rubbing off on them. Some parents teach while some impact their wards by practicing these values. The level of education of the respondents in the grove is low, as those with secondary school education were in the majority and this could affect their environmental values. The level of education is a consistent good indicator of environmental awareness according to Dunlap and Heffernam (1975). The results also revealed that half of the respondents are in full time employment. The majority(55%) of the tourists' view regarding the environment align with their values. This means that when the quality of the environment is good, there is the tendency to maintain it that way.

About 44% of the respondents were very satisfied with their trips to the grove. Study has shown that tourism (be it Nature, Cultural, Water, Business) is soothing and satisfying. This study also shows that tourist environmental values affect their level of satisfaction. According to Dunlap and Vanliere (1978), environmental values encourage participation in tourism and invariably affect the level of satisfaction of tourists. Pelletier *et al.*, (1998) believe that motivation is generated from an individual's desire for satisfaction; and that people are more likely to act positively to the environment if they are intrinsically motivated to nature. Out of the respondents, 35% strongly agreed that culture affects their belief about the environment. According to Mckenziemorph and Smith (1999), normative influence, social norm, culture traditions and family custom can influence and shapen people's environmental and behavioural values. For example, if a culture propagates an unsustainable lifestyle, ones environmental and behavioural values will be unsustainable. The motivation towards the environment examines environmental awareness, environmental attitudes, and their effects on environmental pro-action. Pelletier *et al.*, (1998) noted that the motivation towards the environment is unique because it takes/assesses environmental attitudes and examines whether or not their behaviours are reflective. There is common agreement that motivation is generated from an individual's need, want or desire for satisfaction These needs could generate an uncomfortable level of tension within individuals' minds and bodies thus causing actions designed to relieve tension and generate satisfaction (Fodness, 1994). Therefore, these needs are satisfied by action or behaviour. The idea that behaviour is directly related to individual values is well accepted and supported (Pizam and Calantone, 1987; Gnoth 1997; Crick-Furman and Prentice, 2000) and rarely disputed (Zanna *et al.*, 1980; Diekmann and Preisendorfer, 1998).

The majority of the respondents are very concerned about the environment. This implies that they place a strong respect for nature. O'Riordan (1976) classified such people with environmental concern as being ecocentric. Also, the most of the respondents strongly agreed that the earth has many natural resources we can learn how to use. This implies that the sustainable use of natural resources should be encouraged. Environmental sustainability is required in order to ensure that development is compatible with the maintenance of essential ecological processes, biological diversity and resources according to WTO (2006). The majority of the tourists claimed to always pay attention when rubbish is indiscriminately disposed in the environment. The respondents are therefore interested in keeping the environment clean. Respect is accorded to both the living and non-living components of the natural environment. Some of the respondents are equally indifferent about contributing time and money to organizations that protectthe environment.

Bush fire is recorded as one of the major anthropogenic activities within the grove. Others activities within the grove include agricultural encroachment. Bush fire is often caused by hunters while hunting.



The relationship between gender and the respondents' behaviour and environmental values is insignificant and so, does not affect the values they hold for the environment. This negates the study of Fliegenschne and Schelakovsky (1998) who reported that gender influences environmental and behavioural values, in the sense that women usually have a less extensive environmental knowledge than men, but they are more emotionally engaged, they show more concern about environment destruction and belief less in technological solutions.

There was significant relationship between not paying attention to the environment and their values.

There is significant relationship between the respondents' importance to the environment and their behavioural values. This implies that tourists attach more importance to the environment while in the grove and so do not behave in an unsustainable manner.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, a significant relationship between educational qualification, literacy level and employment status with environmental and behavioural values was established. The following recommendations are therefore made;

## **Recommendations**

1. More awareness should be raised about the importance of the natural environment and the impacts of negative actions on the environment. This could help to prevent unsustainable actions and activities
2. Programmes which would educate people who are involved in any form of anthropogenic activities such as bush burning, hunting, agriculture and encroachment on the forests or nature reserves should be organized.
3. There should be adequate waste management in every household

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