



Environmental Attitudes of Visitors to Nature Based Tourism Destinations; Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta Zoological Park in Perspective

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Abstract

Zoos Have Been Proven to Be Nature Based Tourism Destinations Consistently Capable of Attracting Large Numbers of Visitors For Longer Periods Of Time. The Environmental Attitudes of These Visitors Are However Rarely Studied. This Study Therefore Assessed The Environmental Attitudes Of Visitors To The Federal University Of Agriculture Abeokuta Zoological Park. Three Hundred and Seventy-Nine Copies of Pre-Tested Structured Questionnaire Was Administered to Visitors (18 Years And Above) Using Systematic Random Sampling Technique. Visitors Showed High Percentage Agreement with The Environmental Attitude Factors; Humans Have the Right to Modify the Natural Environment To Suit Their Needs, Mankind Was Created To Rule Over The Rest Of Nature And Plants And Animals Exist Primarily To Be Used By Humans Which Is Reflected In Mean Scores Of 1.510.66, 1.730.88 And 1.890.94 Respectively. Visitors to The Zoo Displayed Anthropocentric Beliefs.

Keywords: Environmental attitude, nature- based tourism, visitor, Zoo

Introduction

Nature-Based Tourism (Nbt) Or Purposeful Travel To Natural Areas And Attractions Has Shown Tremendous Growth Over The Past Two Decades (Kuuder *Et Al.*, 2013; Balmford *Et Al.*, 2009) Both Globally And Locally. It Encompasses The Terms Wildlife Tourism, Beach Tourism, Mountaineering, Etc. Such Areas Include National Parks, Zoological Gardens, Game Reserves, Etc. Zoological Gardens Have Been Proven To Be Nature Based Tourism Destinations Consistently Capable Of Attracting Large Numbers Of Visitors For (Akosim And Irokanulo, 2008). Zoo, At Inception Were Either Associated With Royalties For The Purpose Of Protecting Their Sports, Thereby Excluding People Outside Their Immediate Circles (Yager *Et Al.*, 2015; Adams And Salome, 2014). With The Increase In Science And Public Interest In Natural History In The 18th Century, Zoos Served As Places For Scientific Research, Providing Real And Closed-Up Visual And Sensual Opportunities For The General Populace To Appreciate Nature (Yager *Et Al.*, 2015). Today, Visiting Zoos And Wildlife

Attractions Is A Popular Nature Based Leisure Activity As They Attract Over 600 Million Visitors A Year Worldwide (Waza, 2006). Nature Based Tourism Destinations Places Emphasis On Sustainability. The Paradigm Of Sustainable Tourism Is Based On The Idea That Tourist Attitudes, Choices And Behaviour About The Environment Critically Influence Sustainability And Should Therefore Be Taken Into Consideration (Weaver And Lawton 2004; Swarbrooke 1999). The Type Of Tourists And Tourist Activities In Natural Areas Play An Important Role In Determining Environmental Impacts (Trn *Et Al.*, 2009). The Sustainable Development Of Natural And Cultural Heritage Sites, Wildlife Attractions In And Outside Protected Areas 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 Visit (Junquera *Et Al.*, 2001; Honey, 2008). Milfont And Duckitt (2010) Describe Environmental Attitude As A Psychological Disposition Expressed By Evaluative Responses



To The Natural Environment With Some Level Of Favour Or Disfavour.

Many Research Works On Tourist Environmental Attitudes And The Antecedent Factors Exist Such As Ewert *Et Al.* (2005), Hashimoto (2005), Lee And Moscardo (2005), Bjerke *Et Al.* (2006), Swanagan (2010) And Mensah And Mensah (2013). Worthy Of Note Is The Fact None Of These Examined Environmental Attitudes Of Visitors In Zoological Gardens. Leonidou *Et Al.* (2014) Identified Three Factors Which Influence Environmental Attitudes. They Are Deontological Action, Law Obedience And Political Status. The Factors Are Based On The Premise That An Individuals Daily Activities Such As Morals, Obedience To Laws Of The Land And Participation In Social Political Issues Go A Long Way In Influencing The Environmental Attitude Of Such Individual. For Example, A Law Abiding Individual, As A Visitor In A Nature Based Tourism Destination Will Obey The Laws Of The Environment And Would Not Litter The Environment. This Study Therefore Assessed The Environmental Attitudes Of Visitors In Federal University Of Agriculture Abeokuta Zoological Park, The Antecedent Factors As Well As The Influence Of Socioeconomic Characteristics.

Materials and Methods

Study Area

Funab Zoological Park Is Located In A Conserved Forest About 200 Metres Away From The Main Gate Of The Institution. It Was Established In 2008 And Occupies 62 Hectares Of Land On Latitude 7^o 13' And Longitude 003^o 26'. The Zoo Was Established For Education/Research And Recreational Purposes. The Zoo Serves As A Resource For Research For Students Who Offer Courses In Forestry, Wildlife, Zoology, Veterinary And Botanical Fields. It Also Serves The General Public As Leisure Garden To Appreciate Nature And See Different Animals In Their Natural Habitat.

Research Design And Methods

The Target Respondents Were Visitors To The Zoo. Three Hundred And Seventy Nine (379) Copies Of Pre-Tested Structured Questionnaire Was Administered To Visitors (18 Years And Above) Using Systematic Random Sampling Technique (Every Second Visitor To The Zoo). The Sample Size Was Determined From The Yearly Adult Visitors Estimate Of 7380, Using Yamane Formula Of Sample Size Determination For A Known Population.

Scale Development For The Constructs Used In This Study Was Based On Prior Research Works In This Field. Environmental Attitude Was Assessed Using The New Environmental Paradigm (Nep) As Developed By Dunlap *Et Al.* (2000), Which Is The Most Commonly Used Measure Of Environmental Attitude In Tourism Studies. The Nep Is Divided Into Three Subscales Namely Human Over Nature (Hon), Limits Of Growth (Log) And Ecocrisis (Ec). The Antecedents Of Environmental Attitudes (Influential Factors) Were Adopted From Leonidou *Et Al.* (2014). This Is Divided Into Three Subscales: Deontological Status (Des), Law Obedience (Lob) And Political Action (Pac). Both Scales Were Measured On A Five Point Likert Scale. In Order To Determine The Reliability Of The Scales, The Cronbachs Alpha Was Determined For Each Scale. The Various Cronbachs Alpha (Included On The Result Tables) Showed Internal Consistency For All The Scales.

Two Statistical Tools Were Used In The Analysis Of Quantitative Data From The Field Survey: Statistical Package For Social Sciences (Spss) Version 20 And R (Programming Language) Version 3.5.0. The Data Were Subjected To:

1. Descriptive Statistics (Frequencies, Percentage, Means And Standard Deviation)
2. Inferential Statistics Which Include Pearson Chi-Square; And Structural Equation Modelling. Statistical Significance Was Set At A0.05.



Results

Environmental Attitudes Of Funaab Zoo Park Visitors

This Is Presented On Table 1. The Subscales Were Human Over Nature (Hon), Limits Of Growth (Log) And Ecocrisis (Ec). Respondents Showed The Highest Level Of Agreement With The Hon Factors (Composite Mean (Cm) = 1.76) Such As Humans Have The Right To Modify The Natural Environment To Suit Their Needs At A Mean Score Of 1.51 Which Was The Lowest. Others Were Mankind Was Created To Rule Over The Rest Of Nature (1.73); Plants And Animals Exist Primarily To Be Used By Humans (1.89); And Humans Must Live In Harmony With Nature In Order To Survive (1.92). The Log Scale (Cm = 2.39) Had The Second Highest Level Of Agreement Among Respondents. 29.8% And 34.3% Indicated Strongly Agree And Agree Respectively For The Factor To Maintain A Healthy Economy We Will Have To Develop A "Steady-State Economy Where Industrial Growth Is Controlled At An Associated Mean Score Of 2.07. This Was Followed By Other Factors: The Balance Of Nature Is Very Delicate And Easily Upset, The Earth Is Like A Spaceship With Only Limited Room And Resources, And There Are Limits To Growth Beyond Which Our Industrialized Society Cannot Expand With Mean Scores Of 2.21, 2.53, And 2.74 Respectively.

The Ec Scale (Cm = 2.58) Had The Least Level Of Agreement Among Respondents With The Factors Humans Need Not Adapt To The Natural Environment Because They Can Remake It To Suit Their Needs At An Associated Mean Score Of 2.41. This Is Followed By Other Factors: When Humans Interfere With Nature It Often Produces Disastrous; Mankind Is Severely Abusing The Environment; And We Are Approaching The Limit Of The Number Of People The Earth Can Support With Mean Scores Of 2.45, 2.46 And 3.00. The Cronbach Alpha (A) Was 0.549. The Rank Order Showed the Hon Factor Humans Have The Right To Modify The Natural Environment To Suit Their Needs As The Factor With The Highest

Level Of Agreement While The Ec Factor We Are Approaching The Limit Of The Number Of People The Earth Can Support As That With The Lowest Level Of Agreement.

Antecedents of Environmental Attitudes Of Funaab Zoo Park Visitors

This Was Under Three Subscales: Deontological Status (Des), Law Obedience (Lob) And Political Action (Pac) As Presented On Table 2. Under The Des Scale (Cm = 2.08), The Factor I Try To Create And Provide A Better Living Environment For Future Generations Had The Highest Percentage Agreement At A Mean Score Of 1.96. This Was Followed By The Factors: I Am Interested In Conserving Natural Resources, And I Am Concerned About The Environment For My Future Personal Convenience At Mean Scores Of 2.05 Each, The Least Was I Reduce Unnecessary Waste Factor (M = 2.25).

Under The Lob Scale (Cm = 1.89), The Factor I Try To Avoid Committing Briberies In My Transactions Had The Highest Percentage Agreement At A Mean Score Of 1.75. This Was Followed By The Factors I Show Respect To The Laws And Especially Those For The Environment (M = 1.81); I Try To Avoid Companies That Use Misleading Environmental Practices (M = 1.93); And I Abide By The Safety Law For The Protection Of The Environment (M = 2.09). The Factor I Lobby Political Representatives To Support Green Issues Had The Highest Percentage Agreement Under The Pac Scale (Sa = 10.3%, A = 46.4%) And A Mean Score Of 2.53. Other Factors: I Support Environmental Pressure Groups In Order To Combat Environmental Degradation, I Boycott Companies That Are Not Environmentally Responsible, And I Often Intervene With The Media In Order To Combat Environmental Degradation Had Mean Scores Of 2.57, 2.71 And 2.77 Respectively. Cm Was 2.64. The Rank Order Showed The Lob Factor I Try To Avoid Committing Briberies In My Transactions As The Factor With The Highest Level Of Agreement While The Pac Factor I Often Intervene With The Media In Order To



Combat Environmental Degradation As That With The Lowest Level Of Agreement.

Table 1: Environmental Attitudes Of Funaab Zoo Park Visitors

Factors	Mean	Sd	Order*
Human Over Nature (A=0.661)	1.76	0.63	1
Humans Have The Right To Modify The Natural Environment To Suit Their Needs.	1.51	0.66	1
Mankind Was Created To Rule Over The Rest Of Nature.	1.73	0.88	2
Plants And Animals Exist Primarily To Be Used By Humans	1.89	0.94	3
Humans Must Live In Harmony With Nature In Order To Survive	1.92	1.04	4
Limits Of Growth(A=0.502)	2.39	0.65	2
The Balance Of Nature Is Very Delicate And Easily Upset.	2.21	0.89	6
To Maintain A Healthy Economy We Will Have To Develop A "Steady-State" Economy Where Industrial Growth Is Controlled.	2.07	0.83	5
The Earth Is Like A Spaceship With Only Limited Room And Resources	2.53	1.13	10
There Are Limits To Growth Beyond Which Our Industrialized Society Cannot Expand	2.74	1.19	11
Ecocrisis (A=0.549)	2.58	0.75	3
When Humans Interfere With Nature It Often Produces Disastrous Consequences.	2.45	1.15	8
Humans Need Not Adapt To The Natural Environment Because They Can Remake It To Suit Their Needs.	2.41	1.15	7
Mankind Is Severely Abusing The Environment.	2.46	1.00	9
We Are Approaching The Limit Of The Number Of People The Earth Can Support	3.00	1.29	12

(*Rank Order By Descending Mean In Total Sample)
Source: Field Survey (2017)

Table 2: Influential Factors Of Environmental Attitude (Funaab Zoo Park)

Factors	Mean	Sd	Order*
Deontological Status (Des) (A=0.681)	2.08	0.62	2
I Am Interested In Conserving Natural Resources	2.05	0.88	5
I Reduce Unnecessary Waste	2.25	0.86	8
I Try To Create And Provide A Better Living Environment For Future Generations	1.96	0.72	4
I Am Concerned About The Environment For My Future Personal Convenience	2.05	0.99	5
Law Obedience (Lob) (A=0.908)	1.89	0.73	1
I Try To Avoid Committing Briberies In My Transactions	1.75	0.76	1
I Show Respect To The Laws And Especially Those For The Environment	1.81	0.67	2
I Abide By The Safety Law For The Protection Of The Environment	2.09	0.94	7
I Try To Avoid Companies That Use Misleading Environmental Practices	1.93	0.91	3
Political Action (A=0.841)	2.64	0.75	3
I Often Intervene With The Media In Order To Combat Environmental Degradation	2.77	0.93	12
I Support Environmental Pressure Groups In Order To Combat Environmental Degradation	2.57	0.87	10
I Lobby Political Representatives To Support Green Issues	2.53	0.97	9
I Boycott Companies That Are Not Environmentally Responsible	2.71	0.86	11

(*Rank Order By Descending Mean In Total Sample)



Source: Field Survey (2017)

Test Of Hypothesis

There Is No Significant Relationship Between Visitors Environmental Attitude And The Antecedent Factors. The Result Of The Structural Equation Modelling (Sem) Is Presented Below:

This Is Presented On Table 3. The Model Fit Was Acceptable With A Gfi Of 0.8829, Rmse Of 0.1892 And Srmr Of 0.1451.

The Full Two Factor Model Fit The Data Significantly With An Associated Chi Square Of 3657.081 (P = 0.000). There Was A Significant Relationship Between Visitors Environmental Attitude And Their Antecedent Factors (Z = 4.0587, P = 0.000, $\lambda < 0.05$). The Null Hypothesis Is Therefore Rejected.

Table 3: Test Of Hypothesis

Variables	Estimate	Se	Z Value	P Value
Environmental Attitude * Antecedent Factors	0.3898	0.0960	4.0587	0.0000*
Goodness Of Fit Test ((Chi Square (X ²) = 3657.008, Df = 251, P = 0.0000), Rmse = 0.1892 (95% Ci, P = 0.000), Srmr = 0.1451, Gfi = 0.8829)				

(*=Statistically Significant)

Source: Field Survey (2017)

Discussion

The New Environmental Paradigm (Nep), Which Is The Most Frequently Used Measure Of Environmental Concern And Is Generally Acknowledged As A Reliable Multiple-Item Scale For Environmental Attitudes (Dunlap, 2008; Filby, 2015; Kostova Et Al., 2011; Ogunbode, 2013) Was Used For The Study. The Nep Features Four Factors That Depicts Anthropocentric Beliefs, They Are Humans Have The Right To Modify The Natural Environment To Suit Their Needs, Mankind Was Created To Rule Over The Rest Of Nature, Plants And Animals Exist Primarily To Be Used By Humans And Humans Need Not Adapt To The Natural Environment Because They Can Remake It To Suit Their Needs. It Is Otherwise Called The Dominant Social Paradigm. Agreement To These Factors Therefore Portrays Human Dominance. Other Factors Reflect Ecocentrism (Dunlap Et Al., 2000), And Agreement With Them Favours The Environment. For These Two Groups, It Is Relected In Low Mean Values In This Study.

The Highest Level Of Agreement Were Among Respondents Were With Factors; Humans Have The Right To Modify The Natural Environment To Suit Their Needs, Mankind Was Created To Rule Over The Rest

Of Nature And Plants And Animals Exist Primarily To Be Used By Humans. All Of Which Are Measures Of Anthropocentrism. Those With The Least Agreement Percentages Were Ec Factors; We Are Approaching The Limit Of The Number Of People The Earth Can Support, Mankind Is Severely Abusing The Environment And When Humans Interfere With Nature It Often Produces Disastrous Consequences. This Simply Means That These Visitors Do Not See Rapid Increase In Human Population, The Abuse Of The Environment And The Interference Of Humans As Issues Of Concern. It Can Therefore Be Said That Visitors To The Zoo Park Largely Exhibit More Of Anthropocentrism Than Ecocentrism Who Favours The Dominance Of Man And The Use To Which Its Resources Can Be Used Above Care Of The Environment And Sustainability. This Is In Line With Touhino (2002).

Thompson (2013) Noted That While Ecotourists May Have High Level Of Environmental Awareness, Their Attitudes And Behaviour May Not Necessarily Be Environmentally Friendly. Likewise, This Research Also Reflects The Assertion Of Touhino (2002) Who Stated That Environmental Attitudes Can Be Said To Be



A Cultural Or Social Capital Rather Than As A Real Concern For Nature, That Is, There Is More Or Less An Intentional Or Unintentional Disregard For The Environment. For Example, Everyone Wants To Build Their Own House Or Own Their Own Car. With Respect To The Antecedent Factors, The Visitors Were Therefore Divided Into Three Groups With Respect To Their Mean Scores Associated With Attitudes: Pro-Ecological (1.7), Mid-Ecological (1.8 3.4), Anti-Ecological (3.5 - 5) As Adapted From Thompson (2013). The Composite Mean Values For Visitors Were 2.07, 1.89 And 2.64 For Des, Lob And Pac Respectively. With Respect To This, Funaab Zoo Park Visitors Can Be Described As Mid-Ecological. This Finding Is In Line With Santos Et Al. (2016).

Moreso, A Significant Relationship Was Established Between Visitors Environmental Attitude And Their Antecedent Factors (A) Deontological; (B) Law Obedience; And (C) Politically Active Statures. This Finding Is In Tandem With Leonidou Et Al. (2014), Dolnicar Et Al. (2008), Kilbourne And Pickett (2008), Barr (2007), Sparks And Merenski (2000). In Other Words, Environmental Attitudes Are Likely More Developed In Case Of Visitors Who Are More Deontological, Law Obedient And Politically Active. An Increase In One Or More Of The Three Statures Of A Visitor, The Better Developed The Environmental Attitude.

Conclusion And Recommendation

Visitors To Funaab Zoo Park Displayed Displayed Anthropocentric Beliefs And Human

Dominance Over The Rest Of Nature. The Environmental Attitudes Can Be Said To Be A Cultural Or Social Capital Rather Than As A Genuine Concern For Nature, That Is, There Is More Or Less An Intentional Or Unintentional Disregard For The Environment. Also, Visitors Had Mid Ecological Perspective With Respect To The Antecedent Factors. An Increase In Any Of The Antecedent Factors Translates To Better Developed Visitors Environmental Attitudes.

Given The Fact That Most Visitors Demonstrated Anthropocentric Beliefs Above Ecocentrism (Genuine Concern For The Environment And Acknowledgement Of The Need For Sustainable Development) With Respect To Their Environmental Attitudes Is A Pointer To The Fact That The Zoo Visitors And By Extension The Nigerian Populace Still Largely Believe That Environmental Resources Are Inexhaustible, And Management Is Hardly Needed. It Is Recommended That Active Environmental Awareness Be Carried Out Through Various Avenues Social Media, Print Media, Mass Media, Word Of Mouth, Etc By Environmentalists And Other Concerned Stakeholders. In The Face Of The Terrorizing Impacts Of Climate Change, Unrepentant Harvesting Of Forest Resources Without Planting And Replanting, Unsustainable Exploitation Of Wildlife Resources, Development Without Planning And An Ever Increasing Population, There Is An Urgent Need To Enlighten The Populace On The Need For Developing Real Concern For The Environment Upon Whom Human Existence Depends On.

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