

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS ON THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF ECOTOURISM IN CAMEROON

Vyasha HARILAL

School of Tourism and Hospitality, College of Business and Economics, University of
Johannesburg, South Africa, e-mail: vyashah@uj.ac.za

Tembi M. TICHAAWA

School of Tourism and Hospitality, College of Business and Economics, University of
Johannesburg, South Africa, e-mail: tembit@uj.ac.za

Citation: Harilal, H., & Tichaawa, T.M. (2023). Community Perceptions on the Socio-Cultural Impacts of Ecotourism in Cameroon. *Analele Universității din Oradea, Seria Geografie*, 33(2), 135-150. <https://doi.org/10.30892/auog.332105-915>

Abstract: Ecotourism is often premised on the involvement of locals, occurring within their immediate vicinity and having the potential to induce sociocultural impacts. This study investigated community perceptions of the sociocultural impact of ecotourism in Cameroon. A mixed method approach was adopted where 442 community surveys were administered to households in the Mount Cameroon National Park and the Douala Edèa Wildlife Reserve, whilst key informant interviews were also conducted with relevant officials. Key findings suggest that respondents' perceptions of the sociocultural impacts are influenced by the level of ecotourism development in their regions, where areas with a higher level of development experience greater impacts. Sociocultural impacts tend to be positive, with respondents noting that ecotourism leads to valuable and enriching cultural exchanges, and an increased sense of pride. The results also highlight the importance of local community structures in leveraging positive sociocultural impacts and mitigating the negative. Thus, the paper argues that it is imperative that traditional community structures are recognised as a key strategic resource for ecotourism development and used to enhance ecotourism development in the region.

Key words: Cameroon, ecotourism, sociocultural impacts

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION

Often premised upon high levels of community participation, ecotourism is dependent on collaboration between locals and other tourism stakeholders (Chuitsi & Saarinen, 2019); Choi & Murray, 2010). This type of tourism is viewed as an appropriate tool to foster economic development

in many African countries, with countries such as Ghana, Kenya, South Africa and Botswana hosting thriving ecotourism sectors (see Eshun & Tichaawa, 2019; Eshun & Tichaawa, 2020a; Eshun & Tichaawa, 2020b; Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2016; Mbaiwa, 2011; Snyman, 2016; Wishitemi et al. 2015). The Cameroonian government has recognised the potential of developing tourism (Kimbu and Tichaawa, 2018) and the ecotourism sector has been designated as a sector to encourage strategic growth in the country (Harilal & Tichaawa, 2020; Harilal, Tichaawa, & Saarinen, 2019; Kimbu, 2011). However, despite the potential of the sector to bring about economic growth and development, it is vital to be cognisant of the possibility of the sector effecting sociocultural change at the local level. These changes could result in local community perceptions of ecotourism becoming tainted, especially if the changes are unwanted (Cheung, 2015). Hence, this study seeks to investigate community perceptions of the sociocultural impact of ecotourism in Cameroon, especially considering the still-developing nature of the sector and these implications for its continued and sustainable growth.

Although some studies have examined this phenomenon in other destinations, Hadinejad Moyle, Scott, Kralj, and Nunkoo, (2019) assert that little research has as yet been undertaken into residents' attitudes towards ecotourism, especially within the African context. Considering that tourism occurs within the immediate vicinity of residents, in and around their homes, or within the protected areas upon which the locals rely for their livelihood activities, their support and voices become a central tenet for the success of tourism in the destinations concerned (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015; Mudimba & Tichaawa, 2017), with this support being incumbent upon locals' (positive) perceptions. Local perceptions can be influenced by various factors (Tichaawa, Dayour, & Nunkoo, 2023). For example, ecotourism activities generally occur in the immediate vicinity of the locals, and as such, can become extremely invasive to their everyday life. Studies conducted on the impact of tourism resulting in the commodification of sacred traditions and culture (Pemunta, 2019; Scheyvens, 1999; Shepherd, 2002) show how the locals' and host communities' way of life can become tourist attractions, to the detriment of the locals. Alternatively, tourism development in an area can result in acculturation (De Azeredo Grünwald, 2002), changing the sociocultural fabric of local communities, and hence, possibly inviting negative perceptions of the sector from locals. Therefore, the perceptions of locals in specific regions must be investigated, to aid in the overall development of ecotourism sectors.

The ecotourism sector in Cameroon possesses immense potential to be positioned as a premier ecotourism destination on the continent. Often referred to as 'All of Africa in one' (Kimbu, 2011), Cameroon is home to a wide array of fauna and flora, many of which are endemic to the country (Tegha & Sendze, 2016). Furthermore, the varied landscape, ranging from mountainous and rainforest areas to pristine coastline areas adds to the ecotourism potential of the country (Tata & Lambi, 2014). A major challenge that the sector currently faces is a lack of dedicated ecotourism policy, to guide the development and growth of the sector in a manner that is appropriate for the nuanced local context in Cameroon (Harilal et al., 2018). One of the most significant local nuances in Cameroon, directly related to the development of ecotourism in specific localities, as well as the long-term sustainability thereof, is the unique social and cultural setting within communities, where patriarchal social structures, as well as the existence of local community chiefs, play a significant role in the daily lives of locals (Brown & Lassoie, 2010; Forsac-Tata, 2016; MINFOF, 2014). Hence, the focus of this paper is on the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism in Cameroon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS OF ECOTOURISM

In as much as the physical and economic environments are susceptible to the impacts of tourism activities, the culture of host communities can also suffer from these impacts, often negative in nature (Okech, 2004). The above is especially true within the context of ecotourism, with the communities concerned often living within, adjacent to, or near the protected areas or the reserves where ecotourism activities occur (Wearing, 2001). Socially, communities and locals from

destination areas can suffer the negative consequences of ecotourism, by being denied access to the protected areas that are reserved for ecotourism (Das & Chatterjee, 2015). This leads to the inability to access their source of livelihood or hampers their ability to live their daily lives according to cultural or traditional values. This view is supported by Attia, Martin, Forbuzie, Angwafo, and Chuo (2018) and Burivalova, Hua, Koh, Gracia, and Putz (2017) who note that locals bear the brunt of socio-economic and cultural impacts, especially in those areas where activities such as hunting or subsistence agriculture are primary strategies used by locals to maintain their livelihoods. The above is a relevant point to note within the Cameroonian context, in terms of which locals sustain themselves mainly through subsisting off the natural resource base (hunting and gathering) (Pemunta, 2019). Attia et al. (2018) further note that within the Cameroonian context, locals tend to rely on access to the protected areas for subsistence farming, which supports their livelihoods.

Ecotourism can have positive social impacts, including enhancing the quality of the life of communities through social development initiatives, with the development of community infrastructure, like clinics, community centres and water and sanitation infrastructure, undertaken with the funds generated through ecotourism initiatives (Duffy, 2006; Musavengane & Matikiti, 2015). Moreover, the creation of employment can have knock-on positive social impacts in terms of improving the local quality of life (Wishitemi et al., 2015). However, Sanchez (2018) suggests that the above is not always the case. A negative social impact that can arise from ecotourism is the loss or commodification of sacred traditions and cultural practices that occur in spaces that were once private but have since been opened up to ecotourists (Setiyorini, Andari, & Masunah, 2019). Pemunta (2019) asserts that culturally significant areas, of great importance to the locals, are often located within the protected areas. Locals have limited access to or are excluded from these areas, hence they experience this as a threat to their cultural traditions. Burns (2005) reiterates the notion, arguing that the sanctity attached to culture and traditions is undermined through commodification. Consequently, although ecotourism can economically benefit the host communities by creating a demand for local accommodation and businesses, and for local traditional and cultural products, its improper management can result in the commodification of the local culture, or conversely, can accelerate the extent of cultural change within the communities (Okech, 2004). Scheyvens (1999) suggests that the loss or commodification of culture is because the areas that are sought out for ecotourism (i.e. the pristine, untouched areas), are those that tend to be most vulnerable to disruption, especially in cases where the sector is greenwashed, and where ethical principles are not applied.

In light of the above, the tourism industry's (negative) impact on people and places can be seen to have become an acknowledged occurrence (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). However, two of the duties entailed in implementing ecotourism are ensuring that the levels of cultural sensitivity among the ecotourists are heightened, to mitigate the negative impacts on the local culture, as well as ensuring that locals are empowered to be actively involved in the planning and development of the sector, thus ensuring that the development thereof will not have negative sociocultural impacts (Nicolaidis & Vettori, 2019). The importance of the involvement and participation of locals and communities in the development, planning and operation of ecotourism sectors has been noted by many scholars (see for example Cole, 2006; Musavengane & Matikiti, 2015; Okazaki, 2008; Ramon-Hildago & Harris, 2018), and is directly linked to educating locals and empowering them to participate.

Furthermore, the infiltration of negative vices such as crime, drugs and prostitution also has a negative social impact that is frequently associated with the introduction of tourism into a conservative community setting (Acquah, Nsor, Arthur, & Boadi, 2017; Nsukwini & Bob, 2016; Zacarias & Loyola, 2017). For example, the communities in Ecuador have experienced such negative social impacts, with Sanchez (2018) observing increased levels of drugs and prostitution in the communities where tourism (and hence, tourists) is active. The loss of culture and traditions may also be attributed to the locals abandoning their culture and traditions in an attempt to liken themselves to the ecotourists who frequent their communities (Anup, 2017; Nsukwini & Bob, 2016).

The adoption of Western-style behaviour and culture has been observed by Regmi and Walter (2016) as having a negative sociocultural impact on the communities. Given that ecotourism is often adopted by countries as a method of achieving sustainable tourism development, the infiltration of negative sociocultural impacts into the communities violates such a mandate.

Considering the social hierarchy that exists in traditional communities, the impacts of ecotourism can be experienced differently by different people, especially since the economic impacts of ecotourism have a direct bearing on the sociocultural situation of the host communities concerned (Zacarias & Loyola, 2017). For example, inequitable benefit-sharing between the locals can lead to tension and conflict within the community. Additionally, as the general cost of living increases for the locals (as a result of tourism development) (Duffy, 2006), their ability to afford the cost of living in the area declines. The above can result in the locals relocating to different areas and relinquishing their social and cultural ties with people and places, to be able to survive (Wearing, 2001).

Despite the range of possible negative sociocultural impacts that could plague host communities, locals might perceive the resultant interaction with the tourists who visit their communities as a positive impact. The infiltration of tourists into the communities can serve to increase the sense of community pride, with the locals having the opportunity to showcase their local culture and traditions (Serenari, Peterson, Wallace, & Stowhas, 2017). Furthermore, Burns (2005) points out that through interaction with the tourists, the locals can claim or fortify their cultural identities. Additionally, the interaction between the locals and the tourists can broaden the former's worldview, especially in remote communities that are relatively separated from the Western way of life (Clifton & Benson, 2006). Another positive impact arising from ecotourism in the communities is upskilling of the locals, to enable them to participate meaningfully in the sector. Zacarias and Loyola (2017) argue that, through upskilling and continued education, the locals within host communities become empowered, thereby halting the cycle of poverty, within which many locals in the host communities in the Global South find themselves.

Moreover, as community-based ecotourism is founded on the mutually beneficial relationship between the communities and the conservation of natural resources, and protected areas (Musavengane & Matikiti, 2015; Okazaki, 2008), the importance of educating and providing knowledge of the conservation efforts made by all stakeholders for the successful implementation and outcome of community-based ecotourism, is further emphasised (McKercher, 2010). Additionally, if all stakeholders are involved in the sector, particularly those communities and locals who know of ecotourism-related conservation efforts, as well as of the benefits that they can provide, they are more likely to be receptive and to have a positive attitude towards the initiatives (Cheung, 2015). The involvement and participation of the locals and the host communities in ecotourism are linked to the successful and sustainable outcome of ecotourism sectors. One of the main reasons for the above, as noted by Wearing (2001), is that the residents of host communities bring a much-needed local context to the development of ecotourism, of which external planners and operators might not be aware. Additionally, local residents can contribute valuably to the formulation of mitigation measures for the negative impacts of ecotourism, through the sharing and application of their indigenous knowledge. Given the severe impacts that host communities can suffer as a result of the ecotourism development in their communities, it is essential that the locals contribute to the type and extent of development resulting from the adoption of the sector.

TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY STRUCTURE IN CAMEROON

In Cameroon, traditional community structures are still prevalent today, with each community being overseen by a local chief. Local community chiefs are legally recognised entities in the country, thus having the potential to become extremely influential and valuable stakeholders in the ecotourism sector (MINFOF, 2014). The transmission of cultural knowledge possessed by elders in the society forms the basis of the local cultural traditions, and it is a primary method of preserving indigenous knowledge. In Cameroon, respected elders form part of the traditional

councils and community leadership forums. They work closely with community chiefs, to highlight the importance of culture and to provide an understanding of the importance of culture for the overall survival of the communities concerned (Brown & Lassoie, 2010; Fonchingong, 2018). Additionally, council members play an intermediary role between the chief and the larger community, thus ensuring that the chief is aware of all that occurs within the community, enabling him to make informed decisions (Forsac-Tata, 2016). The value of this type of structure in facilitating the development of ecotourism in the country is immense, given that the acceptance and support of locals are needed. Community chiefs can ensure that locals are involved in and support the development of the sector, by ensuring that benefits from the sector are equitably distributed and negative impacts are mitigated or minimised, and not burdened on specific individuals.

In acknowledging the value of traditional community structures to aid the development of the ecotourism sector in Cameroon, as well as being a potential vehicle for leveraging the benefits of ecotourism to the wider community, the possible downside of these traditional structures should also be acknowledged. As previously noted, the structure of these communities is heavily influenced by patriarchy, with local chiefs, council members and other advisors generally being male (Endley, 2001). The role of a woman in traditional society is as a homemaker, and thus not a part of these structures (Fonjong & Athanasia, 2007). Hence, although ecotourism is premised on community participation, in traditional communities, this participation does not always extend equally to all, with women and other marginalised persons known to occupy secondary roles, whilst community chiefs and other males in the community occupy primary, decision-making roles (Forsac-Tata, 2016). Oftentimes, this can lead to the further marginalisation of women and other disempowered groups concerned.

METHODOLOGY

The current study was undertaken in two identified ecotourism hotspots in Cameroon. The Mount Cameroon National Park (MCNP) and the Douala Edèa Wildlife Reserve (DEWR) (as it was referred to at the time of data collection, now known as the Douala Edèa National Park), are two protected areas located in different provinces in the country, as indicated in Figure 1 below. Each of these protected areas holds immense ecotourism potential, with the MCNP being home to Africa's largest active volcano, and the DEWR containing unique marine ecosystems, mangrove forests, pristine beaches and tropical rainforest areas (Tata and Lambi, 2014; Tegha and Sendze, 2016). Additionally, whilst both of these protected areas are utilised by locals, the extent of this use is varied, given that locals in the DEWR region reside within the protected area, compared to locals in the MCNP region, who reside adjacent to it.

A mixed method approach was adopted for use in the current study, with community household surveys being administered within communities in the DEWR and the MCNP regions, to the head of household (or adult representative thereof). Additionally, interviews were conducted with key informants, including traditional community chiefs and government officials involved in ecotourism in the area. These informants were considered appropriate in the context of the current study, owing to their ability to provide insight into the traditional community sociocultural structures, as well as into the development and management of the sector from a government perspective. The interviews formed a complementary source of information, which allowed for issues identified from the surveys to be further investigated. The data collection for this study numbered a total of 442 surveys and 12 in-depth interviews being completed. The surveys collected data relating to the demographic profile of respondents, as well as their perceptions of the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism. This was done using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree). The data from these surveys were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 25 software. A descriptive analysis was performed to obtain an overall summary of the variables in the sample, regarding the differences in perceptions found among the respondents in the light of their respective demographic profiles.



Figure 1. Cameroon's protected areas and case study areas of this study
(Source: Author's own, from fieldwork)

RESULTS

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The current study involved two population groups, the head, or an adult representative, of the household. Within the context of the current study in the MCNP region, 48.2% of the respondents were the head of household, and 51.8% of the respondents were adult representatives of the household. The above contrasts with the participants in the DEWR region, in terms of which the head of household represented a larger portion of the sample, at 63.7%, and adult representatives of the household represented only 36.3% of the sample. Within patriarchal societies, where cultural traditions are adhered to, gender is an important demographic variable to consider. The overall results indicate that the majority of the respondents in both study areas were men (71.3% in the

MCNP and 82.3% in the DEWR), with a smaller percentage of the population being women (28.7% in the MCNP, and 17.7% in the DEWR).

The age range of respondents in the MCNP region included respondents up to 65 years of age, with the majority of respondents from this region (33.3%, 28.2% and 25%) falling into the 26-35; 36-45 or 46-55 years of age categories respectively. The situation differed in the DEWR region, with most respondents belonging to two age categories (26-35 years of age = 38.6% and 36-45 years of age = 21.7%), and the remainder of respondents spread similarly across other age categories, extending to older than 65 years of age. The variation in the age of the respondents revealed that the population residing in the DEWR was more varied in age than it was in the MCNP, with the former population ranging in age from the elderly to the relatively young. Conversely, in the MCNP region, the majority of the respondents fell into the age groups ranging from 26 to 55 years of age, totalling 86.5%.

Within the study setting, the communities surveyed were located in the semi-rural or peri-urban areas of Cameroon. Communities within the African context are often characterised by cultural traditions, such as that of patriarchy (Endley, 2001; Nchu, Kimengsi, & Kapp, 2019; Tamale, 2004), as was the case in this study. This was partly reflected in the results of the gender of respondents, with the results indicating the patriarchal nature of the society and the communities involved. Furthermore, the results corresponded with those obtained regarding the position of the respondent in the household, where there was greater representation of the heads of households in the DEWR region, as more men were present than in the MCNP region, highlighting the traditional role of the head of household as being male. The reasons for the cases of female representation could have been many, including that the female, who was either an adult representative of the household or the head of the household, was the sole breadwinner (due to being single, separated/divorced or widowed, for example). Additionally, all of the community chiefs interviewed were elder males from the community, in line with the foregoing discussion.

PERCEPTIONS ON THE SOCIOCULTURAL IMPACTS OF ECOTOURISM

Table 1 below displays the results relating to community perceptions on the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism, in both the MCNP and the DEWR. Although a five-point Likert scale was used in the survey instrument for the purposes of this paper, the results are presented in three categories: disagree, neutral and agree (with the categories of strongly disagree and disagree, and strongly agree and agree being combined). It is important to note at the outset the differing level of development in the MCNP and DEWR regions, with the former boasting a more developed (but still developing) sector.

Table 1: Community perceptions on the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism

	MCNP	DEWR	MCNP	DEWR	MCNP	DEWR
	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
Eco tourism has changed our traditional culture	59.6%	63.2%	9,5%	13,0%	31%	23.7%
Eco-tourism encourages residents to imitate behaviour of tourists and relinquish cultural traditions	42.9%	61.9%	16,1%	26,0%	41.1%	12.1%
Eco-tourism causes disruption of the traditional cultural behaviour patterns in local residents	54.2%	56.3%	14,3%	17,2%	31.5%	26.5%
The host community and eco-tourists are in conflict causing dissatisfaction	42.9%	40.5%	32,7%	43,3%	24.4%	16.3%
Eco-tourism has resulted in a commodification of culture and traditions	43.5%	55.3%	34,5%	36,7%	22.0%	7.9%

Eco-tourism has resulted in disturbance of local culturally significant sites	56.0%	57.2%	17,3%	29,3%	26.8%	13.5%
Eco-tourism has resulted in conflict over forest, land and natural resource use	39.9%	39.5%	28,6%	33,0%	31.5%	27.4%
Eco-tourism activities have resulted in disruption to local people's lifestyle and living culture	53,0%	49.3%	17,9%	22,3%	29.2%	28.4%
The commercial demand for eco-tourism causes changes in the style and forms of traditional arts and crafts	39.9%	60,0%	21,4%	26,5%	38.7%	13.5%
Eco-tourism encourages a variety of cultural activities for local residents	25,0%	52.1%	19,6%	24,2%	55.4%	23.8%
Eco-tourism provides more recreational opportunities for local residents	19.0%	37.7%	35,1%	25,6%	45.8%	36.8%
The cultural exchange between residents of the community and tourists is valuable for the residents	7.1%	20.9%	10,7%	16,3%	82.1%	62.8%
Meeting tourists from different regions of the world is a life enriching experience	3.6%	24.2%	4,8%	8,4%	91.7%	67.5%
Eco-tourism activities have increased people's sense of pride	7.7%	30.7%	22,6%	23,7%	69.6%	45.6%

(Source: Author's own, from fieldwork)

A broad view of the results indicates respondents do not regard ecotourism as having had extremely negative sociocultural impacts. For example, upon examination of Table 1, in both the case study regions, the majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that 'ecotourism has changed our traditional culture' (63.2% in the DEWR and 59.3% in the MCNP). A significant proportion of the respondents (61.9% in the DEWR and 42.9% in the MCNP) also disagreed that ecotourism encouraged residents to imitate the behaviour of the tourists and to relinquish their cultural traditions. Furthermore, in the MCNP region, 41.1% of respondents agreed with this statement, compared to the significantly lower percentage (12.1%) in the DEWR region who registered agreement with it. The notable differences in the responses between the two regions could be attributed to the differing levels of ecotourism activity to be found in each area, which gave rise to a higher or lower degree of the resultant disruption from ecotourism activities. Additionally, the overall sentiment of ecotourism not having exerted extreme negative sociocultural impacts can be attributed to low levels of involvement of locals in the sector, which has led to a situation of disinterest, as noted by an informant that was interviewed.

"They [the locals] have lost interest. If you go to this community, you see nobody even talking about ecotourism... they are not really involved, they are not interested."
(Traditional Chief)

More than half of the respondents from each region disagreed that ecotourism had caused a disruption to the traditional and cultural behaviour patterns of locals (54.2% in the MCNP and 56.3% in the DEWR). Furthermore, the data in Table 1 show that in both of the case study areas, over half of the respondents (57.2% in the DEWR and 56% in the MCNP) disagreed with or were neutral (29.3% in the DEWR and 17.3% in the MCNP) with the statement 'Ecotourism has resulted in a disturbance of the local culturally significant sites', perhaps because the culturally significant sites were located within the protected areas and thus guarded against undue exploitation (in terms of the collaborative management plan of the area), or because the culturally significant sites were located outside the ecotourism areas of interest. Though such sites were located within the protected areas, the sanctity of the sites was protected by restricting tourist access to them. A key informant confirmed this, noting:

"Concerning the culturally significant areas, there are people that depend on the national protected area for their cultural and traditional purposes ... and they do have

their traditional sites, but they don't let people [i.e. tourists] get to those areas. Ecotourism activities are kept away from the specific areas in the PA." (Local government representative)

Once again, the greater percentage of agreement registered by the MCNP region's respondents could be attributed to the increased level of ecotourism activity in the region, and, hence, the increased potential for the disturbance of the culturally significant sites.

Interestingly, 55.3% of respondents from the DEWR and a lower 43.5% of respondents from the MCNP disagreed that ecotourism has resulted in the commodification of culture and traditions. Furthermore, 36.7% of the respondents from the DEWR and 34.5% from the MCNP indicated a neutral response to the statement. A large percentage of the respondents in the DEWR (60%) disagreed that 'the commercial demand for ecotourism causes changes in the styles and forms of the traditional arts and crafts'. However, in the MCNP, only 39.9% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The differences in perceptions of respondents between these two regions can once again be attributed to the difference in the development of the sector, as well as the level of ecotourism activities.

Many of the respondents in both study areas agreed that the cultural exchange between residents of the community and the tourists was valuable for the residents, with 82.1% in the MCNP and 62.8% in the DEWR agreeing with the statement, while only 7.1% in the MCNP disagreed with it and in the DEWR, 20.9% disagreed with the statement. Additionally, a greater proportion of the respondents from the DEWR remained neutral on the statement (16.3%) compared to the MCNP region (10.7%). The proportion of respondents from the DEWR region who either disagreed or who remained neutral on the statement was slightly higher than the MCNP, possibly owing to the lower levels of community involvement in ecotourism activities in the region concerned.

The majority of the respondents from both the case study areas (91.6% in the MCNP and 67.5% in the DEWR) agreed that 'meeting tourists from different regions of the world is a life-enriching experience', whereas 24.2% of the respondents from the DEWR and 3.6% from the MCNP disagreed with the statement. The lower percentages emanating from the DEWR are reflective of the lesser state of development of the sector. Through the establishment of ecotourism activities in the communities, locals were able to meet and interact with tourists from various parts of the world, with many communities acknowledging that such interaction had a positive impact on ecotourism in the region. Overall, locals believed that meeting tourists from different parts of the world was a life-enriching experience.

In the DEWR region, 83.8% of respondents disagreed or remained neutral on statement (V4) that 'locals and ecotourists are in conflict, causing dissatisfaction', while from the MCNP (75.6%) reacted similarly to the same statement. These results, once again, should be understood in light of the differing levels of ecotourism activities in the regions. The higher percentage of respondents who agreed with this statement could be attributed to the increased presence of ecotourists for locals to interact with. Interestingly, although only a small percentage of respondents in the DEWR region agreed with statement V4, a significantly higher percentage agreed with the statement that the scant ecotourism activities in the DEWR region have resulted in disruption to local people's lifestyle and living culture.

One of key interviewees elaborated on this, noting that some community members resented the ecotourism sector due to their lack of involvement, and experienced exclusion.

"They [i.e., the community members] were complaining that their access to the mountain has been reduced, but the government is not doing [i.e., keeping to] its own side of the bargain to settle the sources of livelihood." (NGO)

Considering that local communities reside within the DEWR protected area, it is not entirely unexpected for ecotourism activities to have an impact upon them. However, the low levels of ecotourism activities in the DEWR, as well as the responses to other statements in Table 1, these disparities become a notably interesting finding. In the MCNP region, 29.2% of respondents agreed with this statement, and significantly higher percentages of respondents agreed with statements that

ecotourism encourages a variety of cultural activities and creates recreational opportunities for locals, as well as increases locals' sense of pride. This was also noted by a key informant who stated that the increased recreational opportunities presented by ecotourism in the region had positive social impacts.

"It [ecotourism] has benefited me...I have grown in my social life, and it has also provided education". (Local community representative)

One of the drawbacks of the MCNP is that it is home to an active volcano, which often makes national and sometimes international news headlines. Consequently, the region in and around the MCNP is well-known to many, especially within the country, even if they have not physically been to the region. The presence of such a talked-about feature within the protected area has created a situation where the reputation of the park precedes its own. Accordingly, the people's sense of pride about the area has seemingly increased, with the ecotourism managers actively promoting this high-profile feature in the protected area as an attraction. The above was noted by an NGO representative from the MCNP region, who explained:

"Mount Cameroon, first of all, is an unstable mountain ... it makes national news when it erupts, so more people are aware of the mountain – that it, first of all, exists, and second, that it is an attraction for tourism, which brings further attention to the area." (NGO)

Another informant noted:

"Mount Cameroon has something about it...there is no park in the county that can have tourists as compared to Mount Cameroon, that is the simple truth." (Traditional Chief)

DISCUSSION

An emerging theme from the results, in terms of comparing the two case study areas, was that the respondents in the MCNP seemed to have a more positive outlook on ecotourism and related issues than those from the DEWR, especially in terms of the associated sociocultural impacts. This was not entirely unexpected, given that the presence of tourism has been noted to trigger cultural change, especially within rural and peri-urban settings such as the above (Stronza, 2001; Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). A key finding of these results points to the inefficiencies of ecotourism development practices in both regions. For example, community-based ecotourism occurs at a local level, where local communities are most likely to be affected by this type of development (Marcinek & Hunt, 2015). Hence, to ensure local acceptance and support, it is essential that local communities' involvement in the sector is secured, and that they accrue direct benefits from their involvement. In Cameroon, as previously discussed, the traditional structure of communities is a local chief and a community leadership council comprising nobles from the community (Orock, 2014). The hierarchical structure of the communities affords the local chief oversight and decision-making power within the community, with community members respecting and complying with decisions taken by the chief (Forsac-Tata, 2016). Hence, the organisation of local communities in Cameroon provides a unique structure for the development of ecotourism, where the involvement of locals can be arranged, as well as leveraging equitable benefit-sharing amongst all (Kimengsi Kechia, Azibo, Pretzsch, & Kwei, 2019a), and minimising the negative sociocultural impacts of ecotourism on locals.

It is therefore critical that the traditional community structure is leveraged for the development of ecotourism in the regions. Considering that this structure impacts the way that ecotourism is managed, and can be used to mitigate the negative cultural impacts that have previously been noted by Stronza and Gordillo (2008). Stronza and Gordillo (2008) used the case studies of ecotourism in Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia, where the locals who were actively employed in such activities often abandoning their local traditions and cultures as a result.

Stemming from the ability of traditional community structures in Cameroon to aid in minimally invasive ecotourism development, is a call for participatory management, whereby the community chiefs and members of the leadership forums become primary drivers in the local

development, with a view to mitigate or minimise the sociocultural impacts to which locals may otherwise be vulnerable. For example, through a participatory management system, local actors are able to control the extent to which the daily activities of locals are showcased as part of the ecotourism product, thus assisting in ensuring that ecotourists do not infringe on sacred spaces within communities and protected areas, or on cultural and traditional activities which locals conduct for specific purposes. Hence, the negative impacts of cultural commodification (see Asuk & Nchor, 2018; Regmi & Walter, 2016) and acculturation may be avoided. Positive impacts such as enhancing the sense of pride of locals and providing valuable and enriching experiences through interaction with ecotourists may be maximised (Burns, 2005; Manwa, Saarinen, Atlhopheng, & Hambira, 2017; Mbaiwa, 2011; Serenari et al., 2017). These sentiments, reflected in the above results, indicate that there is potential for leveraging positive sociocultural impacts at a wider local community level through the use of traditional local community structures.

However, although the traditional community structure provides an ideal vehicle to aid in the development of ecotourism at the local level, possible limitations should be acknowledged. One of the major limitations is the patriarchal nature of traditional communities, which can exclude or limit the involvement of women and other marginalised persons (Forsac-Tata, 2016). In doing so, the extent to which the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism are experienced will vary among different groups within the community—something that community-based ecotourism endeavours to overcome.

CONCLUSION

The study sought to investigate community perceptions of the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism in Cameroon. A case study-based approach was adopted, with the MCNP and the DEWR chosen as the appropriate sites. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the extent to which ecotourism-induced sociocultural impacts are experienced by communities is varied, due to factors such as the level of ecotourism development and the extent to and manner in which locals are involved. For example, in areas (such as the DEWR) where the ecotourism sector is underdeveloped, the extent of impacts is low. Similarly, in areas where the level of ecotourism development is more advanced, the sociocultural impacts are more significant, as demonstrated by the results from the MCNP region. Furthermore, the extent of community participation in the development and management of the sector also increases the severity of the sociocultural impacts experienced by locals.

In a country like Cameroon, where the ecotourism sector is still developing, it is important to take advantage of existing structures which could aid in further and sustainable development of the sector, especially from a grassroots level. Channelling ecotourism development through the traditional community structures, using prominent stakeholders such as local community chiefs and leadership forums, can prove to be an extremely useful way of leveraging the benefits of ecotourism development, whilst minimising its negative impacts (Brown & Lassoie, 2010). However, whilst acknowledging the usefulness of these structures, the traditional patriarchal nature must also be noted as a possible inhibitor to the equitable distribution of leveraged benefits to all, including women and other marginalised persons.

Although a great deal of research has been conducted from a global north perspective on the various aspects of ecotourism (see Buckley, 2013; Clifton & Benson, 2006; Fennell, 2014; Stronza, Hunt, & Fitzgerald, 2019), research within the African and specifically Cameroonian contexts is lacking. Given the stark differences between the Global North and South, the findings of research conducted from either perspective are not always applicable or relevant to the other. Even within the African contexts, there are nuances that exist in the different regions. It is thus important that site-specific research on ecotourism is conducted. The research that has been conducted in Africa is geographically uneven, with much of the existing research having been conducted in Southern and Eastern Africa (see Mbaiwa, 2011; Snyman, 2016; Wishitemi et al., 2015). Recent

research relating to ecotourism within Cameroon has mostly focused on issues of conservation and protected areas (Attia et al., 2018; Kimengsi, 2014; Neba, 2009; Nkengfack, 2012; Pemunta, 2019), impact on livelihoods (Harilal & Tichaawa, 2018; Kimengsi, Pretzsch, Kechia, & Ongolo 2019b) and on issues related to planning and development of the sector (Forsac-Tata, 2016; Harilal et al., 2019; Kimbu, 2011). This necessitates the need for a more in-depth analysis of the various sociocultural impacts of ecotourism and how to either mitigate or maximise these impacts using existing social structures, especially from a community perspective.

The unique theoretical contribution of this paper lies in its examination of community perceptions of the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism in Cameroon, with these perspectives being especially useful for the development of ecotourism in the country, given the central role that communities play in its development. Moreover, given the lack of a dedicated ecotourism policy in the country, the findings contained within this paper can be used to inform the development of policy, as well as plans and strategies stemming therefrom. Furthermore, based on these findings, recommendations for future research include further in-depth investigations into the sociocultural impacts of ecotourism on local communities, and how traditional community structures can either enhance or inhibit the development of the sector, and the equitable distribution of benefits.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This article, in part, is based on a doctoral thesis that was submitted to the University of Johannesburg.

REFERENCES

- Acquah, E., Nsor, C. A., Arthur, E. K., & Boadi, S. (2017). The sociocultural impact of ecotourism on park-adjacent communities in Ghana. *African Journal of Hospitality Tourism and Leisure*, 6, 1-14.
doi: http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_37_vol_6_2_2017.pdf
- Anup, K. C. (2017). Ecotourism in Nepal. The Gaze. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality*, 8, 1-19.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3126/gaze.v8i0.17827>
- Asuk, S. A., & Nchor, A. A. (2018). Challenges of community-based ecotourism development in southern eastern Nigeria: Case study of Iko Esai Community. *Journal of Scientific Research and Reports*, 20(1), 1-10. doi <http://dx.doi.org/10.9734/JSRR/2018/42603>
- Attia, T. S. N., Martin, T. N., Forbuzie, T. P., Angwafo, T. E., & Chuo, M. D. (2018). Human wildlife conflict: Causes, consequences and management strategies in Mount Cameroon National Park South West Region, Cameroon. *International Journal of Forest, Animal and Fisheries Research*, 2(2), 34-49. doi <http://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijfaf.2.2.1>
- Brown, H. C. P., & Lassoie, J. P. (2010). Institutional choice and local legitimacy in community-based forest management: Lessons from Cameroon. *Foundation for Environmental Conservation*, 37(3), 261-269.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0376892910000603>
- Buckley, R. (2013). *Defining ecotourism: Consensus on core, disagreement on detail*. In R. Ballantyne, & J. Packer (Eds.), *International Handbook on Ecotourism* (pp. 9-14). Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Burivalova, Z., Hua, F., Koh, L. P., Garcia, C., & Putz, F. (2017). A critical comparison of conventional, certified, and community management of tropical forests for timber in terms of environmental, economic, and social variables. *Conservation Letters*, 10(1), 4-14.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/conl.12244>
- Burns, P. M. (2005). *Social identities, globalisation, and the cultural politics of tourism*. In W. F. Theobald (Ed.), *Global tourism* (pp. 391-405). 3rd ed. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Cheung, H. (2015). Ecotourism as a multidisciplinary conservation approach in Africa. *Therya*, 6(1), 31-41. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.12933/therya-15-243>
- Chiutsi, S., & Saarinen, J. (2019). The limits of inclusivity and sustainability in transfrontier peace

- parks: Case of Sengwe community in Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area, Zimbabwe. *Critical African Studies*, 11(3), 348-360. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2019.1670703>
- Choi, C. C., & Murray, I. (2010). Resident attitudes toward sustainable community tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18(4), 575-594. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669580903524852>
- Clifton, J., & Benson, A. (2006). Planning for sustainable ecotourism: The case for research ecotourism in developing country destinations. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(3), 238-254. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669580608669057>
- Cole, S. (2006). Information and empowerment: The keys to achieving sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 14(6), 629-644. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.2167/jost607.0>
- Das, M., & Chatterjee, B. (2015). Ecotourism: A panacea or a predicament? *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 14, 3-16. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.01.002>
- De Azeredo Grünwald, R. (2002). Tourism and cultural revival. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 29(4), 1004-1021. doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383\(02\)00005-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0160-7383(02)00005-1)
- Duffy, R. (2006). The politics of ecotourism and the developing world. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 5(1-2), 1-6. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14724040608668443>
- Endley, J. B. (2001). Conceptualising women's empowerment in societies in Cameroon: How does money fit in? *Gender & Development*, 9(1), 34-41. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13552070127728>
- Eshun, G., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2019). Reconsidering participation for local community well-being in ecotourism in Ghana. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 27(4), 1184-1200. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.30892/gtg.27406-425>
- Eshun, G., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2020a). Community participation, risk management and ecotourism sustainability issues in Ghana. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 28(1), 313-331. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.30892/gtg.28125-472>
- Eshun, G., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2020b). Towards sustainable ecotourism development in Ghana: Contributions of the local communities. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 68(3), 261-277. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.37741/t.68.3.2>
- Fennell, D. A. (2014). *Ecotourism*. New York: Routledge.
- Fonchingong, C. C. (2018). Optimising community-driven development through sage tradition in Cameroon. *Global Social Welfare*, 5(3), 145-153. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/14680181231170532>
- Fonjong, L. N., & Athanasia, M. F. (2007). The fortunes and misfortunes of women rice producers in Ndop, Cameroon and the implications for gender roles. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 8(4), 133-147. doi:<https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol8/iss4/10>
- Forsac-Tata, D. (2016). Community-based tourism in the South West region of Cameroon: opportunities and challenges for women. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 21(3), 109-116. doi:10.9790/0837-210302109116
- Giampiccoli, A., & Mtapuri, O. (2016). A community-based tourism affinity index: Its development and possible use. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 5(1), 1-16. doi:https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_3_vol_5_1_2016.pdf
- Hadinejad, A. D., Moyle, B., Scott, N., Kralj, A., & Nunkoo, R. (2019). Residents' attitudes to tourism: A review. *Tourism Review*, 74(2), 150-165. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/TR-01-2018-0003>
- Harilal, V., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2018). Ecotourism and alternate livelihood strategies in Cameroon's protected areas. *EuroEconomica*, 37(2), 133-148.
- Harilal, V., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2020). Community perceptions of the economic impacts of ecotourism in Cameroon. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 9(6), 959-978. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-62>
- Harilal, V., Tichaawa, T. M., & Saarinen, J. (2018). Development without policy: Tourism

- planning and research needs in Cameroon, Central Africa. *Tourism Planning and Development*, 16(6), 696-705. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2018.1501732>
- Harilal, V., Tichaawa, T. M., & Saarinen, J. (2019). "Development without policy": Tourism planning and research needs in Cameroon, Central Africa. *Tourism Planning and Development*, 16(6), 696-705. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2018.1501732>
- Kimbu, A. N. (2011). The challenges of marketing tourism destinations in the Central African subregion: The Cameroon example. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13(4), 324-336. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jtr.853>
- Kimbu, A. N., & Tichaawa T. M. (2018). Sustainable development goals and socio-economic development through tourism in central Africa: myth or reality? *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 23(3), 780-796. doi:<https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.23314-328>
- Kimengsi, J. N. (2014). Threats to ecotourism development and forest conservation in the Lake Barombi Mbo Area (LBMA) of Cameroon. *Journal of International Wildlife Law & Policy*, 17(4), 213-230. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13880292.2014.957033>
- Kimengsi, J. N., Kechia, M. A., Azibo, B. R., Pretzsch, J., & Kwei, J. (2019a). Households' assets dynamics and ecotourism choices in the Western Highlands of Cameroon. *Sustainability*, 11(7), 2-16. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su11071844>
- Kimengsi, J. N., Pretzsch, J., Kechia, M. A., & Ongolo, S. (2019b). Measuring livelihood diversification and forest conservation choices: Insights from rural Cameroon. *Forests*, 10(2), 1-16. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/f10020081>
- Manwa, H., Saarinen, J., Athlpheng, J. R., & Hambira, W. L. (2017). Sustainability management and tourism impacts on communities: Residents' attitudes in Maun and Tshabong, Botswana. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 6(3), 1-15. doi: http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_15_vol_6_3_2017.pdf
- Marcinek, A. A. & Hunt, C. A. (2015). Social capital, ecotourism, and empowerment in Shiripuno, Ecuador. *International Journal of Tourism Anthropology*, 4(4), 327-342. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJTA.2015.074005>
- Mbaiwa, J. E. (2011). Changes on traditional livelihood activities and lifestyles caused by tourism development in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. *Tourism Management*, 32(5), 1050-1060. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2010.09.002>
- McKercher, B. (2010). Academia and the evolution of ecotourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 35(1), 15-26. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2010.11081615>
- MINFOF (2014). The management plan of the Mount Cameroon National Park and its peripheral zone 2015-2019. Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife, Cameroon.
- Mudimba, T., & Tichaawa, T. M. (2017). Voices of local communities regarding their involvement and roles in the tourism development process in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure*, 6(4), 1-18. doi:http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_20_vol_6_4_2017.pdf
- Musavengane, R., & Matikiti, R. (2015). Does social capital really enhance community-based ecotourism? A review of the literature. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 4(1), 1-18. doi:<http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article27vol14-1-2015-jan-june2015.pdf>
- Nchu, I. N., Kimengsi, J. N., & Kapp, G. (2019). Diagnosing climate adaptation constraints in rural subsistence farming systems in Cameroon: Gender and institutional perspectives. *Sustainability*, 11(14), 1-16. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/su11143767>
- Neba, N. E. (2009). Ecological planning and ecotourism development in Kimbi Game Reserve, Cameroon. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 27(2), 105-113. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09709274.2009.11906198>
- Nicolaides, A. & Vettori, S. (2019). Ethical responses and environmental law for ecotourism sustainability. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(2), 1-21. doi:https://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_28_vol_8_2_2019.pdf

- Nkengfack, S. N. (2012). *Biodiversity conservation, ecotourism and rural livelihoods in protected areas. Case study: The Mount Cameroon National Park*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Norwegian University of Life Sciences.
- Nsukwini, S. & Bob, U. (2016). The socio-economic impacts of ecotourism in rural areas: A case study of Nompondo and the Hluhluwe-iMfolozi Park (HiP). *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 5, 1-15.
doi:http://www.ajhtl.com/uploads/7/1/6/3/7163688/article_14_vol_5__3__final.pdf
- Okazaki, E. (2008). A community-based tourism model: Its conception and use. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 16(5), 511-529. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669580802159594>
- Okech, R. N. (2004). Sustainable ecotourism and local communities: Cooperation, compromise or conflict? *Ecotourism Society of Kenya*, 8, 1-8.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ejesm.v2i1.43506>
- Orock, R. T. E. (2014). Welcoming the 'fon of fons': anglophone elites and the politics of hosting Cameroon's head of state. *Africa. Journal of the International African Institute*, 84(2), 226-245. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0001972013000776>
- Pemunta, N. V. (2019). Fortress conservation, wildlife legislation and the Baka pygmies of southeast Cameroon. *GeoJournal*, 84(4), 1035-1055.
doi:<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10708-018-9906-z>
- Ramón-Hidalgo, A., & Harris, L. M. (2018). Social capital, political empowerment and social difference: A mixed-methods study of an ecotourism project in the rural Volta region of Ghana. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 26(12), 2153-2172.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2018.1546711>
- Regmi, K. D., & Walter, P. (2016). Modernisation theory, ecotourism policy, and sustainable development for poor countries of the Global South: Perspectives from Nepal. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 24(1), 1-14.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2016.1147502>
- Sanchez, R. V. (2018). Conservation strategies, protected areas, and ecotourism in Costa Rica. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 36(3), 115-128.
doi:<https://doi.org/10.18666/JPra-2018-V36-I3-8355>
- Scheyvens, R. (1999). Ecotourism and the empowerment of local communities. *Tourism Management*, 20(2), 245-249. doi:[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(98\)00069-7](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(98)00069-7)
- Serenari, C., Peterson, M. N., Wallace, T., & Stowhas, P. (2017). Private protected areas, ecotourism development and impacts on local people's well-being: A review from case studies in Southern Chile. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(12), 1792-1810.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1178755>
- Setiyorini, H. P. D., Andari, R., & Masunah, J. (2019). Analysing factors for community participation in tourism development. *Tourism and Hospitality Essentials Journal*, 9(1), 39-44. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.17509/thej.v9i1.16988>
- Shepherd, R. (2002). Commodification, culture and tourism. *Tourist Studies*, 2(2), 183-201. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/146879702761936653>
- Snyman, S. (2016). The role of private sector ecotourism in local socio-economic development in southern Africa. *Journal of Ecotourism*, 16(3), 247-268.
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14724049.2016.1226318>
- Stronza, A. (2001). Anthropology of tourism: Forging new ground for ecotourism and other alternatives. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 30(1), 261-283.
- Stronza, A. L., Hunt, C. A. & Fitzgerald, L. A. (2019). Ecotourism for conservation? *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 44(5), 1-25. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-101718-033046>
- Stronza, A., & Gordillo, J. (2008). Community views of ecotourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(2), 448-468. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2008.01.002>
- Tamale, S. (2004). Gender trauma in Africa: Enhancing women's links to resources. *Journal of*

- African Law*, 48(1), 50-61. doi:<https://www.jstor.org/stable/27607908>
- Tata, E. S., & Lambi, C. M. (2014). Challenges and opportunities of the Mount Cameroon Forest Region as a National Park. *Journal of International Wildlife Law & Policy*, 17(4), 197-212. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13880292.2014.957036>
- Tegha, K. C., & Sendze, Y. G. (2016). Soil organic carbon stocks in Mount Cameroon National Park under different land uses. *Journal of Ecology and the Natural Environment*, 8(3), 20-30. doi:<https://doi.org/10.5897/JENE2015.0553>
- Tichaawa, T. M., Dayour, F., & Nunkoo, R. (2023). Residents' trust in government, tourism impacts, and quality of life: Testing a structural model. *Development Southern Africa*, 40(2), 223-242. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2021.1974820>
- Wearing, S. (2001). Exploring sociocultural impacts on local communities. In D. B. Weaver (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism*. New York: CABI.
- Wishitemi, B. E., Momanyi, S. O., Ombati, B. G., & Okello, M. M. (2015). The link between poverty, environment and ecotourism development in areas adjacent to Maasai Mara and Amboseli protected areas, Kenya. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 16, 306-317. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2015.07.003>
- Zacarias, D., & Loyola, R. (2017). How ecotourism affects human communities. In D. T. Blumstein, B. Geffroy, D. S. M. Samia, & E. Bessa (Eds.), *Ecotourism's promise and peril* (pp.133-151). Cham: Springer.

Submitted:
March 25, 2023

Revised:
December 1, 2023

Accepted and published online:
December 11, 2023