

# **WORLD ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION CONFERENCE 2023**

## **CLIMATE CHANGE PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AND RESTORING LIFE ON EARTH**

*Proceedings of the 6th edition of World Environmental Conservation Conference*

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## PREFACE

There is a growing concern on the adverse impacts of climate on biodiversity. This phenomenon is greatly manifested in form of shifting weather patterns threatening global food security, health and species existence. Humanity is at the receiving end of the consequences of climate change hence there is a need to step up actions on all fronts- overtime, everywhere all at once.

This calls for collaboration, partnership and networking to strengthening synergy among relevant stakeholders in a bid to tackling climate change menace. This forms the basis for the theme of this year world Environmental conservation conference: **CLIMATE CHANGE PARTNERSHIP ACTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AND RESTORING LIFE ON EARTH**. The theme is conceived with a view to create an interface for information sharing and offer opportunities for participants to refine their commitments and pledges in the quest to achieving Sustainability in the face of climate change.

This year World Environmental Conservation Conference is memorable in the sense that it received overwhelming funding from the host - West African Science Service on Climate Change and Adapted Land use). WASCAL is posed to provide information and knowledge at the local, national and regional level to cope with the adverse impacts of climate change. Thus, this conference will offer opportunities for participants to learn from good practices demonstrated and showcase by WASCAL during the course of the conference. It will also strengthen staff-student exchange and provide prospect for Doctorate Research Doctoral Research in West Africa Climate System Programme (DRP WACS) – WASCAL among others.

Special appreciation goes to the management of The Federal University of Technology, Akure the host institution, National Park Service and African Regional Center for Space Science and Technology Education-English (ARCSSTE-E) that co-host this conference. We equally acknowledge other private, individual and corporate organizations that have contributed towards the success recorded in this event.

All the submitted articles were subjected to strict double blind peer-review process by the reviewers that are experts in the area of the particular submitted manuscript. The accepted manuscripts are published in WECC 2023 proceedings and also available for download on the organization website ([www.necorn.org](http://www.necorn.org)).

The accepted manuscripts fall within the underlisted subthemes:

- Climate change adaptation strategies in Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU)
- Climate smart city and architectural landscape design
- Retrofitting and decarbonization in tourism and hospitality industry
- Indigenous knowledge and local innovation in climate change adaptation
- Climate risk management, health, safety and hygiene
- Carbon credit-offset marketing/circular economy
- ICT development in environmental conservation (image processing and acquisition, computer vision, graphics, speed, interface technology, HMD devices, GIS: Body Tracking, AI and IOT, VRT, IVE).

We commend our keynote speaker Prof. Douda Kone Director Capacity Building Department, WASCAL Headquarter, Ghana and other guest speakers Prof. Babatunde Rabi, Director General, Chief Executive Office, African Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education-English (ARCSSTE-E) and Dr. Goni I. M., Conservator General National Park Service.

*It is hoped that researchers, students and policy makers will find the papers in this book very useful. Even though all the papers were reviewed and edited, the content and option expressed remain essentially that of the authors and not necessarily that of Netlink Environmental Conservation Organization.*

**Dr. Oladeji S. O.**

*President Netlink Environmental Conservation Organization*

*Convener World Environmental Conservation Conference*

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# POTENTIAL RESOURCES AND PERCEPTION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES TOWARDS MOUNTAIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF IYAMOPO MOUNTAIN IN IGBETI, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Mountain tourism development has a complex character of being in direct connection with the economic, social and cultural life of the community it takes place. This form the basis for the assessment of potential attractions and perception of local communities towards mountain tourism development in Igbeti, Oyo State, Nigeria between January and June, 2022. Data was collected by administering questionnaire to the local residents. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics ( $\chi^2$ ). The results revealed that majority of the respondents were male (66.2%), aged group 40-49 years was highest (37.4%), 87.7% of the respondents were married and 44.8% had tertiary education. Iyamopo mountain have many attractions including cultural site, the old settlements, grinding stone, python cafe etc., Also, 53.3% of the respondent said the major significance of the mountain is traditional festival. The mountain carrying capacity is >500 people. There is no restriction on climbing the mountain. The overall weighted mean scores of all the perception items are: Conservation of Natural Resources (mean = 3.57), preservation of cultural tradition (mean = 3.52), sustainable community development (mean= 3.36) and participation in ecotourism planning and management (mean = 3.73). Learning and preserving the site natural heritage and increasing ecotourism-related employment opportunities among others are considered to be effective means of conserving the natural resources of the location and can facilitate participation in ecotourism planning and management. Demographic variables (age, gender, education, religion, occupation) influences the perception of respondents on mountain tourism development differently. For instance, level of education had significant influence on all the perception items while length of stay does not have any significant influence on all the perception items. Focus group discussion should be conducted for community leaders and residents in future research to provide objective validation and supplement the residents' perception done through questionnaire in this study.*

**Key words:** Iyamopo Mountain, attractions, perception, tourism development, Igbeti.

## INTRODUCTION

Mountains are very popular tourism destinations in the world, second only to coast and island resorts (UNEP, 2014) accounting for about 15-20% of worldwide tourism and with an economic impact between 70 and 90 billion U.S. Dollars per year (Richins *et al*, 2016). Mountains are all over the world, covering 24% of the land surface (Duglioand Beltramo, 2019). Their characteristics vary widely based on climate and vegetation as well as animal species and human activities in terms of biodiversity, natural constraints and opportunities as well as culture, traditions and economic activities (UNEP, 2014). Mountains are attractive as places of escape from our stressful, urban world and they are a magnet for many tourists (Dimeska, 2013).

Mountain tourism refers to any type of tourism activity taking place in mountain areas in a sustainable way, and includes all tourism activities for which mountains manifest a comparative advantage, such as trekking, mountaineering, white water rafting, cultural tourism, and pilgrimage tourism (Kruk *et al.*, 2007; Slusariuc, 2015). Tourists are attracted to mountain destinations for many reasons, including the climate, clean air, unique landscapes and wildlife, scenic beauty, local culture, history and heritage, and the opportunity to experience snow and participate in snow-based or nature-related activities and sports (UNEP, 2007). In recent decades, mountainous tourism is increasingly associated with green tourism or ecotourism (Slusariuc, 2015).

The mountainous tourism has a complex character, being in direct connection with the other activities from the area. It cannot be dissociated from the economic, social and cultural life of the community it takes place. According to Simpson (2008), the importance of mountain tourism can be very positive and progressive for development in areas of employment opportunities, development of enterprises and local economies, increases land values, as well as infrastructure development. It can also improve environment awareness by the community and tourists, enhances management and stewardship of natural resources, and promotes cultural understanding and creates a sense of well-being. However, Mills (2017) opined that , major challenges mountains are facing include exceeding carrying capacity, no efficient Destination Management Organizations to oversee the strategic development, lack of cooperation and communication between the private and public sector on planning and implementation of mountain tourism, poor infrastructure and access to good roads to mountainous sites.

Travel to mountain areas, which already attracts up to 20% of global tourism (UNEP, 2007), is increasing rapidly as a growing number of tourists are attracted to mountain attractions. However, mountain destination communities are under pressure not only from macro-environmental drivers such as climate change but also from human-driven factors such as population growth/decline, economic development and urbanization and any extreme influence of these drivers can cause unique vulnerabilities to its development (MSEON, 2017).

One way for ensuring environmental and community stability of mountain areas is to take into consideration local residents' perceptions towards tourism impact on their community. It is well known that tourism development relies on the goodwill of the local residents (Vargas-Sánchez *et al.*, 2011) so destination managers should provide community's support. It is also important to discover the emotive relations between residents and their places and what they want to protect and preserve. Also, meeting the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards in the short and long term is one of the objectives of sustainable tourism in mountain areas (Vargas-Sánchez *et al.*, 2011).

Many mountain communities have been developing ecotourism in order to avoid or solve problems of environmental degradation and underdevelopment (Keller, 2017). Sinclair-Maragh *et al.*, (2015) emphasized the need for more precise information on local community's perception and attitude of mountain tourism development as this would legitimize the planning process and facilitate the community based approach to mountain tourism development. The analysis of residents' perception and attitude of mountain destination will fill the gap in mountain tourism development. Given the call for this, there is clear need for carrying out a survey in Iyamopo Igbeti to explore the potential resources and assess the perception of local communities on the values and benefits of mountains in the area.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### The Study Area

Igbeti community is the administrative headquarter of Olorunsogo Local Government Area, in the northern part of Oyo State, Nigeria. The geographical coordinates of Igbeti are longitudes 4°00' and 4°30'E and latitudes 8°30' and 9°00'N with an average elevation of 366m above sea level (Figure 1) (Layade, *et al.*, 2016). The area is mainly characterized by rocks with dynamic structure and impeccable display such as Isherge rock for tourism attraction. It experiences an equatorial climatic with dry (from November to March) and wet (from April to October seasons with the average daily temperature of  $27.50C \pm 7.50C$ , a maximum annual rainfall of 1790-1850 mm and high humidity. The town's population was approximately 81,000 at the 2006 census (NPC, 2006). Igbeti is also known as "Marble City" for its rich marble deposits (Nigeria Geological Survey Agency, 2009). Iya Mopo and Agbele Rock are the two most visited rocks in the town. Farming is the major occupation of the people while Yoruba is their major language.

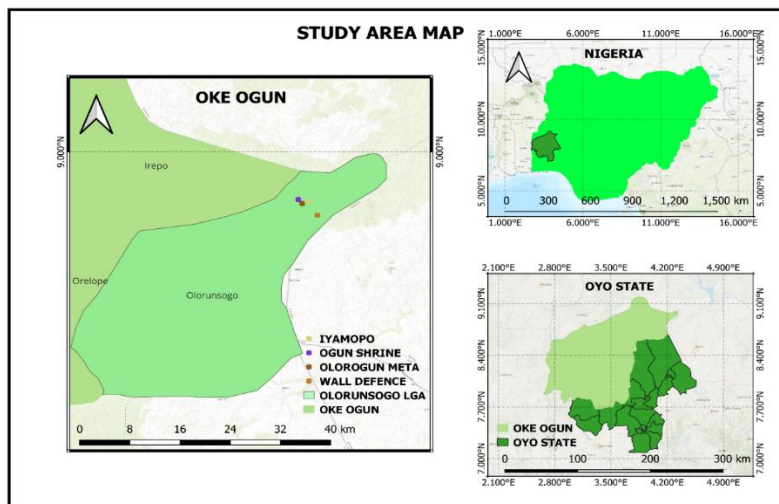


Figure 1: Map showing the location of Igbeti community in Oke-Ogun

## METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

### Questionnaire Administration

A preliminary survey was conducted to familiarize with the settings of the only host community (Igbeti) to Iyamopo Mountain and ascertain the right choice of research sampling technique. A semi-structured questionnaire was prepared and subjected to pre-test using 30 respondents at Ibudo Alhaji, community close to the study area to determine the instrument's Cronbach's alpha reliability index. The questionnaire

consisted of three sections (Section A – Demographic characteristics of the respondents, Section B - Knowledge on the present use of the mountain Section C: Perception and Attitude towards Ecotourism Development) with a total of twenty-six items. The Independent variables used were gender, age, marital status, born in the village, education level, religion, household size, occupation and income,. Dependent variables are the four indicators for residents’ perception and attitude towards mountain tourism development - willingness to conserve natural resources, to preserve cultural tradition, to participate in sustainable community development and to participate in mountain tourism planning (Lai & Nepal, 2006; Olaniyi *et al*, 2020).

### Oral Interview

Informal interview was conducted community leaders and traditionalist, (a total of 8 interviewees) using a targeted opportunistic sampling strategy (Nash *et al.*, 2016). Questions were asked based on their knowledge on mountains and their importance to the local community. The ethical guidelines of the Social Research Association (2003) was followed. The language of communication was local language (Yoruba) to ensure effectiveness and accuracy of data. The interview was recorded where allowed, otherwise, notes were taken and immediately transcribed thereafter.

### Data Analysis

Data collected on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the four indicators of residents’ perception and attitude on mountain tourism development were coded and stored in Excel, then transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21) software and subjected to descriptive statistics. The socio-demographic predictors of residents’ perception on mountain tourism development were determined by analyzing the dependent and independent variables using Chi square.

## RESULTS

### Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents’ revealed that higher percentage of the respondents were males (66.2%) with 33.8% females, the age group 40-49 years had the highest percentage, (37.4%) and the lowest was age group 18-29 years (9.7%). In addition, highest percentage of the respondents were married (87.7%), 9.7% were single, while 2.5% are widowed. Furthermore, 44.8% had tertiary education, 31.8% had secondary education, and 23.4% had primary education (Table 1). It further revealed that most of them were Islam (54.5%), 23.4% were Christians while 22.1% were traditional worshippers. Most of the respondent are Farmers (54.5%), Artisans (28.6%), Students (11.0%), Transporters (4.5%), and Civil servants (1.3%). Majority of the respondents were indigenes (94.2%) and non-indigenes constitute 5.8%. Majority of the respondents (78.6%) have lived in the community above 30years.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency (N = 254)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18-29	25	9.7%
30-39	53	20.87%
40-49	95	37.4%
50 and above	81	31.8%
<b>SEX</b>		
Male	168	66.2%
Female	86	33.8%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	25	9.7%
Married	223	87.7%
Widow/ Divorced	6	2.5%
<b>Education</b>		
Primary	59	23.4%
Secondary	81	31.8%
Tertiary	114	44.8%
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	59	23.4%
Islamic	139	54.5%
Traditionalist	56	22.1%

### Occupation

Artisan	73	28.6%
Transporters	12	4.5%
Civil servants	3	1.3%
Student	28	11.0%
Farmer	139	54.5%

### Indigene

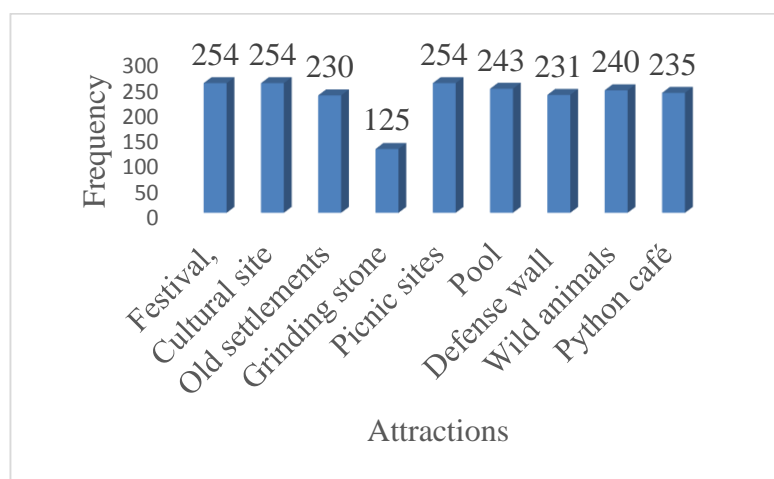
Yes	239	94.2%
No	15	5.8%

### Length of Stay in the Community

1-10yrs	5	1.9%
11-20yrs	31	12.3%
21-30yrs	18	7.1%
Above 30 years	200	78.6%

### Local community knowledge of the Attractions at Iyamopo Mountains and other mountains of ecotourism significance in Igbeti

The respondents were able to identify nine (9) attractions at Iyamopo Mountain (Figure 2). This includes Festival, Cultural site, Old settlements, Grinding stone, Picnic sites, Pool, Defense wall, Wild animals, Python café. The result further revealed that a total of eight (8) mountains apart from Iyamopo Mountain are present in Igbeti area (Table 2). These mountains have cultural festivals as their main attractions. All the mountains have a link with the history of the community and each has traditional worshipers. Majority of the respondents (79.9%) have climbed the Iyamopo Mountain while 20.1% have not. Majority of the respondents (135; 53.3%) believed that Iyamopo mountain have Significance in traditional worships/ festivals, 84 (33.1%) went for tourism/recreational significance while few respondents went for religious (Christian and Muslim) festivals (Table 3). Majority of the respondents (79.9%) have climbed the Iyamopo Mountain before while 20.1% have not. Higher percentage of respondents climbs the Iyamopo Mountain once a year (77.3%) with the least climbing twice a year (1.9%). Also, 65.35% climb Iyamopo Mountain during Traditional worship/festival while 11.02% climb anytime they feel like. Additionally, 62.6% of the respondents stated that Iyamopo Mountain have capacity for more than 500 people at a time. There are no restrictions to who climb the Iyamopo Mountain.



**Figure 2:** Attractions at Iyamopo Mountain, Igbeti

**Table 2:** Names of other mountains in Igbeti and the major attractions according to the respondents

S/N	Name of mountains	Attractions	Frequency of mention	Percentage frequency	Have a link with the community history	Have traditional worshipers
1	Obadimo	Festival, cultural site, picnic site	156	22.1%	Yes	Yes
2	AboyunOgun	Festival, cultural site, picnic site	135	13.6%	Yes	Yes
3	Bata Erugba	Festival, cultural site, picnic site	130	11.7%	Yes	Yes
4	Agbele	Festival, cultural site	235	92.5%	Yes	Yes

5	Okin	Festival, cultural site, picnic site	185	7.1%	Yes	Yes
6	Santu	Festival, cultural site, picnic site	141	4.5%	Yes	Yes
7	OkutaOpo	Festival, cultural site, picnic site	130	1.3%	Yes	Yes
8	Abosanto	Festival, cultural site, picnic site	108	1.3%	Yes	Yes

**Table 3:** Importance/Uses/Significance of Iyamopo Mountain

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Of what significance is Iyamopo mountain		
Traditional worship	135	53.3
Christian religion festivals	30	11.7
Muslim religion festivals	5	1.9
Tourism/Recreation	84	33.1
Have you climb Iyamopo mountain before		
Yes	203	79.9
No	51	20.1
How often do you climb Iyamopo mountain		
Weekly	13	5.2
Fortnightly	11	4.5
Monthly	28	11.0
Twice a year	5	1.9
Yearly	197	77.4
When do you normally climb the mountain		
During Traditional worship/festival	166	65.35
During Christian religion festivals	32	12.6
During Muslim religion festivals	28	11.02
Anytime I feel like	28	11.02
What is the carrying capacity of Iyamopo mountain		
Less than 50 people	0	0
50 – 200 people	44	17.32
201 – 500 people	51	20.08
More than 500 people	159	62.6
Is there any restriction on the mountain climbing		
Yes	0	0
No	254	100

### Local community Perception and Attitude towards Mountain tourism Development in Igbeti

#### Conservation of Natural Resources

The weighted mean scores on perception ranged from 4.00 (“Learning about the natural heritage in the site) to 3.00 (“Resources should not be harvested from the site) with an overall mean of **3.57** which shows a weak agreement with the perception statements (Table 4). Specifying carrying capacity for tourist activities in the site” will conserve the natural resources of the mountain site had a weighted mean of 3.5, “Completely open access to the site for tourist activities” has a mean of 3.71, while Relaxing the sites regulations to facilitate tourism development” can conserve the natural resources, had a mean of 3.65.

#### Preservation of Cultural Tradition

The respondents have a weak perceived level of agreement on development having potentials in preservation of cultural tradition with an overall weighted mean of 3.52 and weighted sum of 894 (Table 5). The perception mean scores ranged from 3.98 to 2.76. That tourists should learn about the cultural heritage of the area” had highest mean value of 3.97 while “The original economic activities should be replaced by tourism” had the lowest mean value of 2.76. Also that the cultural/traditional tribal site should be preserved had a mean value of 3.71 while the traditional rites and ceremonies of the sites should be preserved from any change induced by tourism development had a mean value of 3.64.

**Table 4:** Level of Perception and Attitude towards Conservation of Natural Resources

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Weighted Sum	Mean Std Dev	Decision
Specifying carrying capacity for tourist activities in the site	13 5.19%	126 49.21%	91 35.83%	23 9.06%	1 0.39%	889	3.5 ± 0.76	WPP
Completely open access to the site for tourist activities	228.66%	14456.69%	8332.67%	3 1.2%	2 0.79%	943	3.71 ± 0.70	WPP
Relaxing the sites regulations to facilitate tourism development	17 6.69%	153 60.24%	6425.2%	18 7.1%	2 0.79%	927	3.65 ± 0.74	WPP
Stop harvesting the resources from the site	10 3.94%	83 32.67%	61 24.02%	96 37.8%	4 1.57%	761	3.00 ± 0.97	Neutral
Learning about the natural heritage in the site	69 27.17%	132 51.97%	3614.17%	17 6.69%	0 0%	1015	4.00±0.82	WPP
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>907</b>	<b>3.57</b>	<b>WPP</b>

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree (4.20 - 5.00), A- Agree (3.40 – 4.19), N-Neutral (2.60 – 3.39), D-Disagree (1.80 – 2.59), SD-Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.79). WPP = Weak Positive Perception

**Table 5:** Level of Perception and Attitude towards Preservation of Cultural Tradition

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Weighted Sum	Mean Std Dev.	Decision
The cultural/traditional site should be preserved	23 9.06%	137 53.94%	92 36.21%	2 0.79%	0 0%	943	3.71 ±0.63	WPP
The traditional rites and ceremonies of the sites should be preserved from any change induced by tourism development	10 3.94%	152 59.84%	83 32.68%	8 3.15%	1 0.6%	924	3.64 ±0.65	WPP
The original traditional activities should be replaced by tourism	8 3.15%	58 22.83%	61 24.02%	119 46.85%	8 3.15%	701	2.76 ±0.95	Neutral
The tourists should learn about the cultural heritage of the area	59 23.23%	148 58.27%	33 12.99%	8 3.15%	6 2.36%	1008	3.97 ±0.82	WPP
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>894</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>WPP</b>

Keys: SA-Strongly Agree (4.20 - 5.00), A- Agree (3.40 – 4.19), N-Neutral (2.60 – 3.39), D-Disagree (1.80 – 2.59), SD-Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.79). WPP = Weak Positive Perception

### Sustainable Community Development

The overall weighted mean on the level of perception and attitude of the local community on mountain tourism development towards sustainable community development was 3.36 with a weighted sum of 852 (Table 6). The weighted mean score of all the variables ranged from 2.75 (Tourist litters the place) to 3.65 (Leads to crowd of tourists in the area). Increasing ecotourism-related employment opportunities

had a weighted mean score of 3.63 while Taking negative tourism impacts as necessary for local tourism investment had a weighted mean of 2.91.

### Participation in Ecotourism Planning and Management

The weighted mean score for the level of perception and attitude of local community on development of mountain tourism as a means of participation in ecotourism planning and management ranged from 3.54 to 3.93 with an overall mean of 3.73 and weighted sum of 947 (Table 7). The perception statement that ecotourism-related employment opportunity will increase” had the highest mean value of 3.93 while the perception statement that local community will be communicating with the local government for ecotourism planning had the lowest mean value of 3.54.

**Table 6:** Level of Perception and Attitude towards Sustainable Community Development

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Weighted Sum	Mean Std Dev.	Decision
Tourist litters the place	2 0.79%	58 22.83%	81 31.89%	101 39.76%	12 4.72%	699	2.75 ±0.89	Neutral
Reducing waste	8 3.15%	132 51.97%	107 42.13%	7 2.76%	0 0%	903	3.56 ±0.61	WPP
Taking negative tourism impacts as necessary for local tourism investment	5 1.97%	74 29.13%	79 31.1%	84 33.07%	12 4.75%	738	2.91 ±0.94	Neutral
Maximizing non-local tourism investment	25 9.84%	126 49.61%	83 32.68%	18 7.09%	2 0.79%	916	3.61 ±0.81	WPP
Crowds of tourists in the area	25 9.84%	125 49.21%	96 37.8%	5 1.97%	3 1.18%	926	3.65 ±0.74	WPP
Preventing negative tourism impacts	72 7.76%	147 57.87%	40 15.75%	56 22.05%	4 1.57%	859	3.38 ±0.92	WPP
Increasing ecotourism-related employment opportunities	71 27.95%	84 33.07%	46 18.11%	41 16.14%	12 4.72%	923	3.63 ±1.18	WPP
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>852</b>	<b>3.36</b>	<b>WPP</b>

**Keys:** SA-Strongly Agree (4.20 - 5.00), A- Agree (3.40 – 4.19), N-Neutral (2.60 – 3.39), D-Disagree (1.80 – 2.59), SD-Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.79). WPP = Weak Positive Perception



**Table 7: Level of Perception and Attitude towards Participation in Ecotourism Planning and Management**

	SA	A	N	D	SD	Weighted Sum	Mean Std Dev.	Decision
Communicating with the local government for ecotourism planning	10 3.94%	142 55.91%	79 31.1%	20 7.87%	3 1.18%	898	3.54 ±0.75	WPP
Participating in ecotourism planning	8 3.15%	170 66.93%	73 28.74%	3 1.18%	0 0%	945	3.72 ±0.54	WPP
Participation increases	74 29.13%	114 44.88%	48 18.9%	10 3.94%	8 3.15%	998	3.93 ±0.96	WPP
Ecotourism-related employment opportunities								
<b>Overall mean</b>						<b>947</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>WPP</b>

**Keys:** SA-Strongly Agree (4.20 - 5.00), A- Agree (3.40 – 4.19), N-Neutral (2.60 – 3.39), D-Disagree (1.80 – 2.59), SD-Strongly Disagree (1.00 – 1.79). WPP = Weak Positive Perception

### Hypothesis Testing

Test of hypothesis showed that age (P = 0.000), education (P = 0.000), religion (P = 0.000) and monthly occupation had significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards conservation of natural resources (Table 8). However, gender (P = 0.062), and Length of stay (p = 0.215) does not have a significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards conservation of natural resources.

The level of education (p = 0.00) and religion (p = 0.001) of the respondents had significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards Preservation of cultural tradition (Table 8). Gender (p=0.251), occupation (p=0.648), age (p=0.087) and length of stay (p = 0.153) does not have any significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards Preservation of cultural tradition.

Age (p=0.040), education level (p=0.00), religion (p=0.002) and occupation (p = 0.005) of the respondents had significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards Sustainable community development (Table 8) while gender (p=0.086) and length of stay (p = 0.079) does not have any significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards Sustainable community development.

Age (p=0.001), education level (p=0.00), genders (p=0.032) and occupation (p=0.005) of the respondents had significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards Participation in ecotourism planning (Table 8) while religion (p=0.231) and length of stay (p=0.128) does not have any significant influence on the level of perception and attitude of residents on the mountain tourism development towards Participation in ecotourism planning.

**Table 8: Relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and Perception and Attitude statements**

Demographic variables	Preservation of natural resources		Preservation of cultural tradition		Sustainable community development		Participation in ecotourism planning	
	$\chi^2$	Sig. Value	$\chi^2$	Sig. Value	$\chi^2$	Sig. Value	$\chi^2$	Sig. Value
Age	93.825	0.000 *	92.068	0.087	91.092	0.040 *	95.438	0.001 *
Gender	18.974	0.062	19.320	0.251	18.345	0.086	18.653	0.032 *
Education	81.452	0.000 *	85.207	0.000 *	83.215	0.000 *	82.452	0.000 *
Religion	53.956	0.000 *	51.881	0.001 *	52.935	0.002 *	53.658	0.231
Occupation	38.989	0.022 *	36.305	0.648	37.241	0.005 *	39.358	0.005 *
Length of stay	76.583	0.215	74.652	0.153	71.865	0.079	76.895	0.128

Decision rule: \* Significant (P<0.05); Not significant (p>0.05)

## DISCUSSION

The sex frequency of the respondents (mostly males) agrees with the findings of Olaniyi *et al.* (2020) and Farinloye *et al.* (2021) who reported that the frequency of male respondent in the host community of Ado-Awaye suspended lake and Okomu national park were more than that of females. The highest percentage of the respondents were in the age group 40years and above. This discovery above corroborated what Ajayi (2002) said concerning age distribution of active people around tourist centers in Nigeria. Majority of the respondent had tertiary education which can be used to enhance their understanding of the importance of mountain tourism development in the area. This slightly agrees with Andereck *et al.* (2005) who revealed that the most significant proportion of the household had secondary education which to some extent helps to assess their understanding of the preservation of the site. It also agrees with the statement of Almeida-Gacia, *et al.* (2016) that the perception of residents to positive socio-cultural and economic impacts of tourism could be subjective to the residents' education.

Most of the respondents are farmers. This is so because the community is an Agrarian community. This is in support of the statement by MSEON, (2017) that the majority of mountain communities economies depend on agriculture. Majority of the respondents (200; 78.6%) have been staying in the study area for more than 30 years. This will give them the advantage of having the information about the culture and tradition of the community.

The overall results of this study indicated that Igbeti residents tends to have a weak positive perception of mountain tourism development in their community. This was evidenced in the weighted mean scores of all the positive statement items: Conservation of Natural Resources (mean = 3.57), preservation of cultural tradition (mean = 3.52), sustainable community development (mean = 3.36) and participation in ecotourism planning and management (mean = 3.73). However, there are variations in the responses of residents to negative and positive perception statement variables. For instance, specifying carrying capacity for tourist activities in the site will conserve the natural resources of the mountain site had a weighted mean of 3.5 while completely open access to the site for tourist activities has a mean of 3.71. The culture and trait of the indigenous ethnic group (Yoruba) could have influenced the residence decision as they are known to be hospitable and accommodative naturally. This is in support of the findings of Hasani *et al.* (2016) in Malaysia where residents are proud and happy to welcome tourists from various countries.

The Level of Perception and Attitude towards Preservation of Cultural Tradition was strong as majority of the respondents agreed that the cultural tradition in the mountain should be preserved, this agrees with the findings of Olaniyi *et al.* (2020) which shows that residents demonstrated a strong will to preserve the cultural tradition of Ado-Awaye Suspended Lake, seeing it as a veritable tool to the sustainable development of a host community. This is also in agreement with the observation of Liao *et al.* (2019) that two indigenous villages of Nantou County in Taiwan were willing to preserve the culture of their associated tourism destinations.

Although, the weighted mean score on the preservation of cultural heritage is not strong, yet the local community of Igbeti preferred their cultural and traditional heritage to be preserved irrespective of the economic gains accruable through mountain tourism development in the area. However, they are also interested in the economic gain through mountain tourism development. This is in tandem with position of Long & Kayat, (2011) that residents in Vietnam value positive socio-cultural impact more than economic impacts of tourism development.

The results on taking negative tourism impacts as necessary for local tourism investment (mean = 2.91) and preventing negative tourism impacts (mean = 3.38) is an indication that the cost (direct negative impact)-benefit (direct positive impact) phenomenon influence Igbeti residents perception of the potential impact of tourism development. This is in line with the opinion of Gursoy *et al.*, (2010); Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, (2012); Prayag *et al.*, (2013) that cost-benefit approach provided a partial understanding of how perceived impacts influence residents support for marketing of new projects.

The residents will prefer to be actively participate in the planning and be involved in the decision making process as they see the resources as their heritage and can best be managed if they are actively involved at all levels of management. This was evidenced in the response of the respondents: Participating in ecotourism planning (mean=3.72), Communicating with the local government for ecotourism planning (3.54). This is in agreement with the statement of authors such as Wilson *et al.*, 2001; McKrecher, 2003; Olaniyi, *et al.* (2020) that residents of tourism destinations wanted the support and participation of local government and they as well wished to be part of the decision making rather than having them imposed upon by external forces.

The demographic variables (age, gender, education, religion, occupation) influences the perception of respondents on mountain tourism development differently. For instance, level of education had significant influence on all the perception items while length of stay does not have any significant influence on all the perception items. This is in support of the statement by Sharpley, (2014) that the attributes or factors

that may influence the manner in which mountain tourism development and its impacts are perceived are age, gender, education, type of tourism, and length of residents' stay in the destination or distance from the main touristic attraction.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study identified eight additional mountain with tourism potentials as well as the traditional festivals attached to them other than Iyamopo Mountain in the study area. However, Iyamopo festival is the major festival that occurs in the study area with no restriction on individuals who can climb the mountain. The perception also proves that, learning about the natural heritage in the site is considered to be effective means of conserving the natural resources of the location and increasing ecotourism-related employment opportunities among others can facilitate participation in ecotourism planning and management. Focus group discussion should be conducted for community leaders and residents in future research to provide objective validation and supplement the residents' perception done through questionnaire in this study.

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