Original Research

Effect of Environmental Values on Ecotourism Visit Intention: Evidence from a Sub-Saharan African Context

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Abstract

Human activities are causing great damage to the climate and the consequences are projected to be dire in the future. Tourism alone contributes about 8% to greenhouse emissions necessitating the call for sustainable tourism as a way to promote environmental conservation. This study examines the effect of environmental values on ecotourism visit intentions. The specific objectives were to ascertain the effects of biospheric, altruistic and egoistic values on ecotourism visit intention. Three hypotheses were stated and data was collected from 196 intending tourists out of which 163 were returned valid and used for the analysis. The data were collected through social media and the hypotheses were tested using multiple regression analysis via SPSS version 22 and descriptive statistics used to describe respondents' demographics. The result showed that biospheric and altruistic values both have a positive and significant effect on ecotourism visit intention. While egoistic values negatively predict ecotourism visit intentions. Based on the findings, this study recommends that tourist destination marketers should strongly communicate the environmental benefits of travel and tourism on ecotourism destinations.

Keywords: Ecotourism, environmental values, sustainable consumption, tourism, visit intention.

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Introduction

Man's activities – in production, distribution, and consumption – as advanced by technology and the industrial revolution results in natural resource depletion and climate change. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2022 assessment depicts an unfavourable picture of the prospect of life on our planet, with ecosystem collapse, the loss of species, and climate threats such as heatwaves and floods (Hussein et al., 2023). As a result, political and social debates, such as the COP27, are now centred on achieving climate resilience and zero-carbon emissions by 2050 (Hussein et al., 2023; World Health Organization, 2021). In a recent report, the UN warned that human contribution to climate change and global warming is on the rise and alarmed about the consequences of future catastrophic consequences (Agoston et al., 2022). Despite its contribution to economic development, tourism contributes about 8% to greenhouse emissions and it is significantly more carbon-intensive than other potential areas of economic development (Lenzen et al., 2018). In Nigeria, the tourism sector has enormous economic potential but is largely underdeveloped (BusinessDay, 2021). The sector contributed 3.6 per cent (about USD 16 billion) to Nigeria's GDP in 2021 and it is projected to grow annually at an average rate of 5.4% between 2022-2032, outperforming the overall economy estimate of 3% growth (Statistica, 2022; WTTC, 2022). Nigeria is an eco-tourism haven for beautiful mountain sceneries, waterfalls, intriguing forests, exotic birds and animals, exquisite cuisines, as well as intriguing game reserves and conservation centres (Nwokorie & Adeniyi, 2021). Some of the ecotourism sites are Yankari Game Reserve, Borgu Game Reserve, Kainji Lake National Park, Lekki conservation centre, Bar Beach, Eleko Beach, Alpha Beach, Badagry Beach, Obudu Mountain Resort, Ikogosi Warm Springs, Zuma Rock, Gurara waterfalls etc (Jemirade, 2021; Tour Nigeria, 2021). Suffice it to say therefore that Nigeria has the potential to be a major destination for sustainable or eco-tourism.

Sustainable tourist choices require that people hold general pro-environmental values (Passafaro et al., 2015). Generally, Values guide behaviour and are a significant predictor of sustainable lifestyle, such as sustainable clothing consumption (Nkamnebe & Ojiaku, 2023), sustainable waste disposal (Sneddon, Evers, & Gruner, 2022), and sustainable food choices (Claessens, Gillebaart, & de Ridder, 2023). Personal values are commonly defined as prescriptive beliefs and guiding principles oriented toward desirable end-states of existence (e.g., security) or modes of conduct (e.g., justice) that transcend specific situations or objects (Shin, Riper, Stedman, & Suski, 2022). These values influence the extent to which people become more conscious of the impact of their consumption choices (Kaur & Luchs, 2022).

Although sustainable behaviour is often considered to be the appropriate thing to do, in many cases, tourists are least likely to engage in sustainable behaviour (Dolnicar & Grun, 2009). Hence, the value–action gap or the green gap (Steg, Bolderdijk, Keizer, & Perlaviciute, 2014). In the context of sustainable consumption, biospheric (caring about the environment), altruistic (caring about others), egoistic (caring about personal resources) and hedonic (caring about pleasure and comfort) values are relevant in understanding behaviour (Bouman, Werff, Perlaviciute, & Steg, 2021). Biospheric and altruistic values are a strong determinant of sustainable behaviour (de Groot & Steg, 2008; Tolppanen & Kang, 2020) but consumers with strong biospheric values do not always

choose sustainable options. Nkamnebe and Ojiaku (2023) found a negative effect of surrogates of biospheric values on sustainable clothing lifestyles. The egoistic and hedonic values are negative predictors of sustainable behaviour. However, in the context of tourism, prior studies showed that tourists also practice sustainable tourism for fun and showing off (Tolppanen & Kang, 2020). Therefore, it is not clear how these personal values affect sustainable behaviour. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the effect of personal values on sustainable tourism consumption among ecotourism destination visitors in Nigeria. In particular, the study will examine the biospheric, altruistic, and egoistic values of sustainable tourism consumption among ecotourism destination visitors in Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Sustainable Consumption Behaviour

Sustainable consumption has been defined as "consumption that simultaneously optimizes the environmental, social, and economic consequences of acquisition, use, and disposition to meet the needs of both current and future generations (Kaur & Luchs, 2022, p. 990). According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; 2004), sustainability consumption refers to "the consumption of goods and services that meet basic needs and quality of life without jeopardizing the needs of future generations". More recently, Phipps et al. (2013) defined sustainable consumption as "consumption that simultaneously optimizes the environmental, social, and economic consequences of acquisition, use, and disposition to meet the needs of both current and future generations". Kaur and Luchs (2022) categorized sustainable behaviours into sustainable socially conscious consumption (what consumers buy) and frugal consumption (how much consumers buy). Sustainable consumption aims to enable a good present and future quality of life on Earth through the wise use of resources (Loy, Wieber, Gollwitzer, Oettingen, & Loy, 2016).

Generally, sustainable consumption includes buying and using fair trade and environmentally friendly goods, purchasing goods made from recycled materials, recycling household waste, embracing a simplified lifestyle, using energy-efficient appliances, and so forth.

Although the number of people willing to embrace sustainable consumption has increased in recent times (Joshi & Rahman, 2017), the practice is often considered in many cases to be less profitable, less pleasurable, more time- consuming or more effortful than environmentally-harmful actions. Organic products, for instance, are often more expensive than regular products, and using public transport is perceived as less convenient, slower and less pleasurable than travelling by car environment (Steg, Bolderdijk, et al., 2014). In other words, increased willingness to consume sustainably has not translated into real sustainable purchase activities (Young et al., 2010). Many of the past studies have observed a weak relationship between consumers' intention to buy and use sustainable products and behaviour. There is therefore a gap between consumers' thinking and actual actions and people generally overlook the environmental and social

impacts of their purchases. This discrepancy or gap is referred to as 'sustainable purchasing inconsistency' or 'sustainable intention–behaviour gap' (Joshi & Rahman, 2017).

Sustainable tourism consumption and Ecotourism

The World Tourism Organization (1993) defined Sustainable tourism as "tourism which meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future". Mackenzie and Gannon (2019) posit that sustainable tourism encompasses accountability for the future and current environmental, economic, and social impacts, as well as tourism that addresses environmental, host community, visitor, or industry needs.

Sustainable tourism consumption behaviour has been largely studied within the context of nature-based tourism and ecotourism (Miller et al., 2015). Both the terms "ecotourist" and "nature-based tourist" encompass a diversity of tourists with varying attitudes, and subsequent care for, the natural environment (Miller et al., 2015). Ecotourism is the most suitable form of tourism which promotes green activities (Mary, Zaal, & Pour, 2022). Ecotourism concerns natural environments and participates in the protection of the environment. It also incorporates the social and solidarity dimensions (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). Ecotourism can be defined as the act of "travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these areas" (Orams, 1995, p. 4). Ecotourism is defined as travel to relatively undeveloped natural destinations with the specific goal of acquiring knowledge of, appreciating, and enjoying natural settings and diverse wildlife in the ecosystem and learning the culture and history provided by the environmental settings, all of which can contribute to environmental conservation (Lee & Jan, 2017). Ecotourism's appeal resides in its integral ability to cater for economic development while catering for the environment (Teeroovengadum, 2019). Ecotourism would include tourists' visitation to wildlife parks, forest settings, ecological reserves, caves, and waterfalls among others. Eco-tourists are motivated to visit tourist sites to learn about nature in their natural habitat and to enjoy and appreciate the scenes, natural features and related cultural artefacts (Ballantine & Eagles 1994). Adam, Adongo, and Amuquandoh (2019) assert that eco-tourists travel to relax and rest from the hustle and bustles of work and home, meet people with similar interests and learn about nature and cultures.

Environmental Values

Environmental values are defined as affective environmental concerns (Schultz et al., 2005). They are beliefs about the significance of the well-being of the natural environment and how the natural environment is regarded by humans (Reser & Bentrupperbäumer, 2005). People that have strong environmental values consider protecting the environment an important personal goal in their life and they are motivated to do so (Nkamnebe & Ojiaku, 2023). These values reflect the extent people are aware of the consequences of their behaviour on the environment.

Within the context of environmental issues, four values appear most relevant: biospheric, altruistic, egoistic and hedonic values. The biospheric and altruistic values are grouped under the self-transcendent values while the egoistic and hedonic values are grouped under the self-enhancement values (Bouman, Steg, & Kiers, 2018).

Biospheric values are considered to be more analogous to an ecocentric or biospheric view of the value of nature that recognises the importance of the wellbeing of nature for its own sake. In other words, biospheric values reflect a concern for the environment in itself, without a clear link to human beings (Bouman et al., 2018). Ninh and Lobo (2016) found that consumers' biospheric values positively influence their attitudes towards environmental protection, which in turn translates into positive purchase behaviour of energy-efficient appliances. Similarly, Bouman et al., (2020) showed that perceived biospheric group values are associated with individuals' pro-environmental engagement. Specifically, the more individuals perceived their group to endorse biospheric values, the stronger their pro-environmental engagement was. Hence, it is expected that biospheric values will affect ecotourism visit intention.

H$_1$: There is a positive and significant effect of biospheric value on ecotourism visit intention in Nigeria

Altruistic values are reflected in the individual's prioritization of the protection and enhancement of the well-being of people, other species, and the environment (Stern et al., 1993). Altruistic values reflect goals to care about others, social welfare and society. Stronger endorsement of altruistic values also often encourages people to support pro-environmental behaviour, as many of such sustainable behaviour benefit the wider society. As pro-environmental beliefs and behaviours oftentimes relate to positive outcomes for human beings (e.g., health benefits) or are seen as a requirement to preserve our planet for future generations, altruistic values are typically also positively related to pro-environmental beliefs and behaviours when such behaviours also benefit other people (Bouman et al., 2018). Kim and Stepchenkova (2019) reported that tourists' altruistic values impact their attitude formation of eco-travel by making the tourists pleasant and enjoyable.

H$_2$: There is a positive and significant effect of altruistic value on ecotourism visit intention in Nigeria

Self-enhancement values, on the other hand, include egoistic and hedonic values (Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz et al., 2012; Steg et al., 2014). Egoistic values reflect goals to care about possessions, money and status. Egoistic values make individuals highly self-centred and orient them towards wealth, power, and authority, instead of helping other people, and society (Kaur & Luchs, 2022). It reflects a focus on the costs and benefits a choice has on someone's resources, and power or achievement. Hedonic values make people focus on attaining pleasure, positive feelings and reducing effort (Bouman et al., 2018). Hedonic values are strongly linked to a leisurely experience such as travelling and are therefore of particular interest when studying a tourism experience (Cavagnaro, Staffieri, & Postma, 2018).

Egoistic values focus on goals that primarily benefit oneself. Individuals who strongly endorse these two values are typically less likely to engage in pro-environmental action because such actions often have some individual costs (e.g. financial or effortful; Bouman et al., 2020). However, recent findings suggest that even individuals who have hedonic or materialistic values may also act in environmentally friendly ways in certain circumstances. That is, they may seek status and want to part-take in green trends (Tolppanen & Kang, 2020). In the tourism context, hedonic values are strongly linked to a leisurely experience such as travelling (Kim, Ritchie & McCormick, 2012), and enhancing egoistic values (such as status) may be a reason for travelling sustainably (Cavagnaro et al., 2021). Steg, Perlaviciute, Werff, and Lurvink, (2014) argued that interventions aimed to promote pro-environmental actions should carefully take into account possible hedonic consequences of the relevant actions, as these may be important barriers to behaviour change. Fig. 1 shows the relationship between environmental values and ecotourism visit intention.

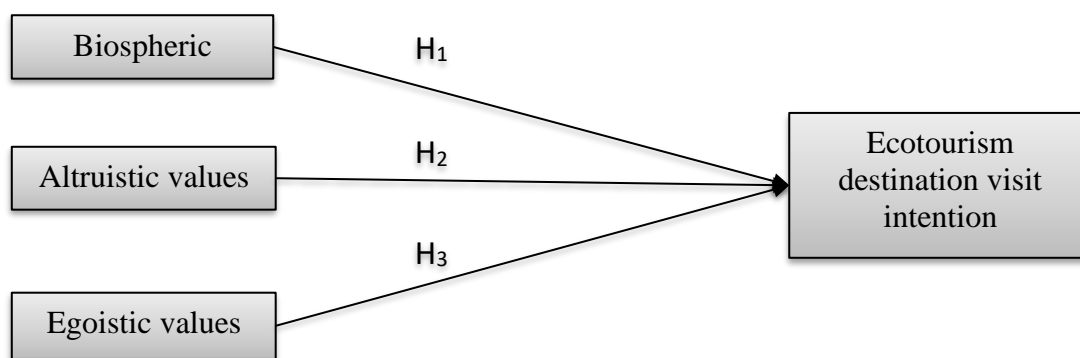**H₃:** There is a negative and significant effect of egoistic values on ecotourism visit intention in Nigeria

Fig. 1. Conceptual Model

Theoretical Framework

Schwartz's theory of basic values

Schwartz's theory of human values proposes that individuals have a set of values that convey what is important to them (Schwartz, 1992). According to this theory, values can be classified into ten distinct types, including power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity, and security (Schwartz, 1992; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004). Through examining the relationships between these individual value types, four higher-order value clusters have emerged, namely self-transcendence, self-enhancement, openness to change, and conservatism (Schwartz, 1992, 2007; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004).

The self-transcendence values cluster includes values that are concerned with issues beyond mere self-interest, such as equality, social justice, and protection of the environment (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). Conversely, the self-enhancement values cluster includes values focused primarily on self-interest, such as power and achievement

(Schwartz, 1992, 1994). The openness to change values cluster is characterized by values of self-direction, stimulation, and hedonism, which emphasize novelty and independent thought (Schwartz, 1992, 1994). In contrast, the conservatism values cluster includes values of tradition, conformity, and security, which emphasize respect, stability, and resistance to change (Schwartz, 1992, 1994).

Schwartz's model for classifying the dimensions of values is based on four dimensions: self-enhancement versus self-transcendence, openness to change versus conservatism, self-direction and stimulation versus security, conformity, and tradition (Vecchione, 2022). The dimension of self-enhancement versus self-transcendence reflects the conflict between values that prioritize self-interest and those that prioritize concern for others' interests and welfare (Sagiv & Roccas, 2021). The dimension of openness to change versus conservatism reflects the conflict between values that emphasize independent thought and novelty and those that emphasize social order and tradition (Vecchione, 2022). Finally, the dimension of self-direction and stimulation versus security, conformity, and tradition reflects the conflict between values that emphasize individuality, creativity, and personal growth, and values that emphasize social order, stability, and tradition (Schwartz et al., 2012).

Schwartz values have been successfully applied in determining consumers' pro-environmental behaviours in various contexts. For instance, Agissova and Sautkina, (2020) showed that Security values predict environmental concern and New Environmental Paradigm (NEP). Similarly, Ye, Soutar, Sneddon, and Lee, (2017) reported that the effects of self-enhancement versus self-transcendence were larger than that of subjective norm and perceived behavioural control; and the total effect of openness-to-change versus conservation on intentions was larger than that of the subjective norm.

Research Method

Sample and Design

A Judgmental sampling method was used to collect the data from 196 prospective tourists on social media. The Judgmental sampling method was used because it is based on the judgment of the researcher in selecting respondents that meet the criteria of inclusion for the research. In this study, the researchers used prospective tourists based on the respondents' social media activity such as following and active engagement with tourist destination handles on social media. In particular, data were collected from intending tourists who engaged with tourist organizations and campaigns on social media such as #TourNigeria. These people who followed or commented on ecotourism destinations on social media and Google Places were contacted to participate in the study. The profile of the respondents showed that a majority of them are between the ages of 26 to 30 years (53%) and between 18 and 25 years (38%). More than half of the respondents are male (57%) and about 63 per cent are single. The respondents are mostly educated with more than half of them having a bachelor's degree (54.7) or postgraduate degree (16.0). About 40 per cent of the respondents are civil servants, while 20 per cent are self-employed (see Table 1 below).

Measure Instrument

The survey instrument was a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two versions – online and offline version. The online version was prepared with Google Forms and distributed through social media and e-mail. The questionnaire was in two sections, section A elicited responses regarding demographic information while Section B collected data relating to the study variables as discussed below: Environmental Values: environmental values are deconstructed and measured with biospheric, altruistic, and egoistic. Biospheric values are measured with 4 items e.g., "It is important to me to prevent environmental pollution". Altruistic values are measured with 5 items such as "it is important to me to be helpful to others". Egoistic values are measured with 4 –items e.g.," It is important to me to have money and possessions". The scale is anchored on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The scale items were adapted from (De Groot & Steg 2008; Bouman et al., 2018). Ecotourism intentions: Ecotourism visit intention will be measured with 6 items. The items are adapted from Cheng et al., (2021). The questions pertained to the "likelihood to visit ecotourism interest such as Tropic forests and indigenous bush, and National parks". The scale was anchored on a 7-point semantic scale from 7 = very likely to 1 = not at all.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Scale	Items	Frequency	Valid Percent	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age	18 - 25 years	62	38.3		
	26 to 30 years	86	52.6		
	31 to 35 years	14	8.3		
	35 - 50 years	1	.8		
	Total	163	100.0	1.72	.48
Gender	Female	67	42.8		
	Male	91	56.1		
	Prefer not to say	5	1.1		
	Total	163	100.0	.57	.50
Marital Status	Single	103	63.1		
	Married	58	35.8		
	Separated	2	1.1		
	Total	163	100.0	.38	.51
Educational Qualification	FSLC	14	8.7		
	OND/NCE	17	10.6		
	HND/B.Sc	105	64.7		
	Postgraduate	43	16.0		
	Total	163	100.0	2.48	1.07
Occupation	Students	30	18.2		
	Govt. employee	64	39.5		
	Priv. Sect. employ	36	22.2		
	Self-Employed	33	20.2		
	Total	163	100.0	1.99	.88

Data Presentation and Analysis

Out of the 196 copies of the questionnaire used for the study, a total of hundred and sixty-three (163) were returned valid and used for the analysis, representing an eighty-three per cent response rate. In other words, about 17 per cent of the responses were either not returned or were invalid. To test the hypotheses, report the findings from the study. Data collected were analysed using SPSS version 22 to generate needed information and findings using descriptive statistics; Principal component analysis was also performed to reduce the data and test for commonality while Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test the proposed hypotheses. For this study, the alternate hypothesis is accepted if the p-value is less than 0.05, otherwise, it is rejected.

Factor Analysis

To obtain the explanation for the measurement variance and reliability, Principal Component Analysis and Cronbach alpha were used. The Principal component analysis was computed with varimax rotation, set at an eigenvalue greater than one and factor loadings greater than 0.5. Table 2 shows that all the variance in the construct was more than 60% and all the reliability of the measurement items were above 0.70. Three items with loadings below 0.5 were deleted to enhance and improve the construct's reliability and to also obtain an optimal result. A summary of the factor analysis and reliability measurement is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Factor loading explained the variance and reliability of the construct

Component Label	Items	Factor Loadings	Explained Variance (%)	Cronbach alpha (α)
Biospheric values	It is important to me to prevent environmental pollution.	.863		
	It is important to me to protect the environment.	.843		
	It is important to me to respect nature.	.690		
	It is important to me to be in unity with nature.	.680	24.6	.86
Altruistic values	It is important to me that every person has equal opportunities.	.860		
	It is important to me to take care of those who are worse off.	.802		
	It is important to me that every person is treated justly.	.788		
	It is important to me that there is no war or conflict.	.777		
	It is important to me to be helpful to others.	.752	13.5	.87

Component Label	Items	Factor Loadings	Explained Variance (%)	Cronbach alpha (α)
Egoistic values	It is important to me to have control over others' actions.	.786		
	It is important to me to have authority over others.	.761		
	It is important to me to be influential.	.698		
	It is important to me to have money and possessions.	.882		
	It is important to me to work hard and be ambitious	.860	*11.3*	*.74*
Ecotourism Intention	There is a high likelihood that I will visit an ecotourism site in Southeast, Nigeria	.752		
	I want to visit an ecotourism site in Southeast, Nigeria	.789		
	I intend to visit an ecotourism site in Southeast, Nigeria	.758		
	I will visit an ecotourism site anytime soon in Southeast, Nigeria	.668	*5.5*	*.80*
Note: extraction method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Variance explained: 63.6%				

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses stated were tested using multiple regression analysis with the aid of SPSS version 22. The multiple regression results show that the multiple correlation coefficients (R) using all the predictors simultaneously is .42 and adjusted R^2 is 17%. In other words, 17 per cent of the variance in the dependent variable (ecotourism visit intention) can be predicted from all the independent variables combined (biospheric values, altruistic values and egoistic values). The F – statistics from the ANOVA table show a statistically significant relationship between ecotourism visit intentions and environmental values $F_{(5, 324)} = 13.52$, $p < 0.001$; and verifies the research model goodness of fit. Table 4.3 shows the regression coefficients of the constructs. Biospheric values ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < .001$) were found to be positive and statistically significant. Therefore, biospheric values increase the intention to visit ecotourism destinations confirming Hypothesis 1. Similarly, altruistic values ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < .05$) were found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on ecotourism visit intention. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported. The third hypothesis tested the negative effect of egoistic value ($\beta = -0.16$, $p < .05$) on ecotourism visit intention. The result showed that egoistic value has a negative and significant effect on ecotourism visit intention. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported.

Table 3. Regression Result and Hypotheses Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.059	.425		7.192	.000
Egoistic values	-.160	.065	-.142	-2.45	.015
Biospheric values	.221	.056	.209	3.950	.000
Altruistic values	.127	.055	.119	2.303	.022
Note: R = .42,	*R^2 = 17.3,*		*F = 13.52*		*p < 0.001*

a. Dependent Variable: Ecotourism visit Intention

Discussions, Conclusion and Recommendations

Discussions

Compared to other sectors, tourism contributes significantly to climate change (Lenzen et al., 2018). Therefore, tourists must reduce their carbon footprints and imbibe sustainable lifestyles by shifting their values towards concerns for the environment. This study examined the effect of environmental values on ecotourism visit intention. The result showed that biospheric values and altruistic values are positively related to ecotourism visit intentions while egoistic values have a negative effect on ecotourism visit intention.

The positive effect for biospheric values (β = 0.21, p < .001) suggest that tourist that demonstrates concern for the environment – that is, respect nature, protect the environment and prevent pollution – are likely to visit ecotourism destinations. This finding corroborates Perkins and Brown (2012) who found that biospheric values are strongly associated with interest in ecotourism, and Steg et al. (2014) who also found that consumers with strong biospheric values were more likely to sacrifice their comfort or pleasure to reduce their energy consumption.

The result also showed a positive and significant effect of altruistic values on ecotourism visit intention (β = 0.13, p < .05). The result contradicts Shin et al. (2022) who found that altruistic values did not significantly predict behaviour to pro-environmental behaviour but confirms and Doorn and Verhoef (2015) who found that consumers' altruistic values are not significantly associated with their organic purchasing. But confirms Nguyen et al. (2017) who found that consumers' altruistic values are positively associated with their attitudes towards environmental protection and Becker-Leifhold (2018) who showed that consumers' altruistic values are positively associated with their behavioural intentions– willingness to rent fashion clothes. Tourists are likely to visit ecotourism destinations because they are concerned for the society and well-being of others.

Finally, the result showed that egoistic values negatively predict ecotourism visit intention (β = -0.16, p < .05). The finding suggests that tourists who value authority, influence and money and possession are less likely to visit ecotourism destinations. This confirms Doorn and Verhoef (2015) who found that consumers' egoistic values are

negatively associated with their organic purchasing and Perkins and Brown (2012) who found that egoistic values are negatively associated with commitment towards environmental protection. But contradicts Becker-Leifhold (2018) who found that consumers' egoistic values are positively associated with willingness to rent fashion clothes and Verma (2019) who also found that consumers' egoistic values are positively associated with their attitudes towards green hotels and environmental concerns.
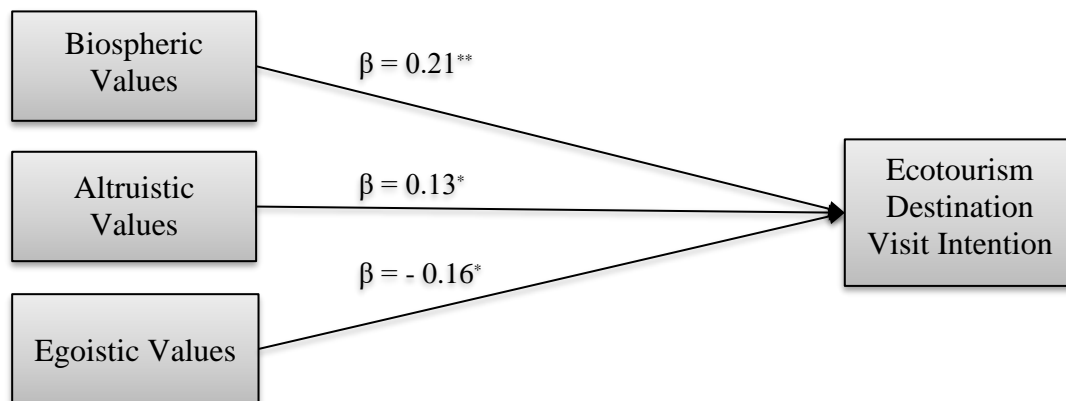
Fig. 2. Hypothesis Result

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are suggested for ecotourism destination managers and policymakers:

Tourist destination marketers should strongly communicate the environmental benefits of travel and tourism on ecotourism destinations. They can use such campaigns to appeal to people with strong biospheric environmental values. To promote ecotourism behaviours, these campaigns should clarify the negative consequences of conventional tourism, the advantages of behavioural alternatives and the consequences that adopting these alternatives has for society and the environment as well as how people can go about performing these behavioural alternatives. They should emphasize the importance of preventing environmental pollution, protecting the environment, and respecting nature. For example, videos and pictures showing the serenity of ecotourism destinations in contrast to conventional tourism and how activities within these destinations impact on the environment can be used online and in traditional media. Ecotourism planners can also hold a series of special ecotourism events and festivals to achieve greater visibility and promotion.

Ecotourism benefits both visitors and host communities with little or zero impact on the environment. Therefore, highlighting the benefit of ecotourism on host communities and in preserving natural heritages should inform campaigns to appeal to tourists with strong altruistic values. This is important in reducing dependency on non-sustainable tourism. To this end, ecotourism operators, tour operators, travel agents, and guides can cooperatively develop communication strategies and materials that emphasize the importance and benefits of ecotourism for the preservation of the environment and culture while generating positive benefits for residents and tourists. It is important to me that

every person has equal opportunities. It is also important that to emphasize altruism by showing commitment to care for those who are worse off among the locals, ensure that people are treated justly, promote no war or conflict campaigns and be helpful to others.

Ecotourism operators should spend a great amount of time and effort on communication and education strategies for those with strong egoistic values. This, of course, requires a long-term commitment since values are relatively stable and takes time to change once it is embedded. Perhaps an effective and efficient approach is that local and central authorities can develop consumer and production programs and policies aimed at changing consumers' behaviours about environmental and sociocultural issues. Such programs and policies should emphasize the importance of environmental protection as well as advocate making small lifestyle changes to help further the conservation of natural and sociocultural resources while increasing individuals' happiness in life and improving their quality of life overall.

Conclusion

The tourism potential of Nigeria, when developed and properly harnessed can satisfy the curiosity of every kind of tourist, including ecotourist. However, to fully develop and harness the ecotourism destinations in Nigeria, targeting consumers with strong environmental values is critical. This study provides an important contribution to sustainable tourism. The study empirically demonstrates that tourists with strong biospheric and altruistic values are likely to visit ecotourism destinations. Whereas, consumers' egoistic values will significantly decrease their intention to visit ecotourism destinations. Our findings shed light on the imperative of developing ecotourism destinations and showed that demonstrating environmental protection, respect for and unity with nature are important predictors of ecotourism behaviour. Also, the study suggests that providing opportunities equal opportunities for locals and tourists and stakeholders, caring for those worse off and treating people justly are important factors that could attract tourist to destination sites. Finally, tourists with egoistic tendencies and like to exercise authority and control over others' actions, that conspicuously display affluence and possession are not likely to visit ecotourism destinations.

Limitations and directions for future studies

This study has several limitations and suggested areas for future studies. An important limitation that is generalizing the finding to a wider population due to the sample. While the study used respondents that engaged with tourist and ecotourism destinations on the Internet, the sample size was small and not an adequate representation of the wider population of Nigeria or actual ecotourists. Therefore, further studies may be conducted to examine the with a larger and more representative sample size.

Another limitation of this study is the potential social desirability bias. The aim of the study was revealed to the respondents while collecting data, this may motivate respondents to answer affirmatively to questions bordering on environmental protection. Though respondents were assured of the confidentiality of responses it possibly could reduce social desirability bias following Chung and Monroe (2003). Further studies may

use other data collection methods such as experiments and observation rather than self-reports.

Finally, the present study investigated behaviour intentions that were of interest. However, while intentions are the end of an individual's conscious choice process (Bamburg & Schmidt 2003, Bamburg & Möser 2007) not everyone acts following their intentions (Conner and Armitage 1998). This may be because as Ajzen (1991) explains, intentions may change between the time of measurement and when actions are performed, while behaviour may also be influenced by factors which people may have limited control over. For example, factors such as available information, skills and abilities, willpower, time and opportunity could affect the extent to which intentions lead to behaviour (Ajzen 1991), while strong habits can also reduce the extent to which intentions lead to behaviour (Verplanken & Wood 2006). A longitudinal study could provide insight into the extent to which ecotourism intentions result in actual sustainable tourism behaviour and enable the investigation of the extent to which habits and a lack of control affect sustainable tourism.

Author Contributions

OOC developed the first draft, designed methodology and the research instrument, ran the analysis and drafted the discussions section.

CEE initiated the topic, outlined the body, wrote the second draft, collected data and entered, and cleaned data and wrote the concluding section

ICN wrote the final draft, contributed to the introduction and fine-tuning the research objective, co-wrote the method section and discussion.

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