PRINT MEDIA UTILIZATION AND COMMUNITY SENSIBILIZATION: TOWARDS AN EFFICIENT WILDLIFE SUSTAINABILITY AMONG COMMUNITIES AROUND THE NATIONAL PARK IN AKAMKPA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

BY

Ogre Gabriel Ogre
Department of Environmental Education
University of Calabar, Calabar
Gabrielogre114@gmail.com 08032735696

&

Ekpo Obal Otu
Department of Environmental Education
University of Calabar, Calabar
ekpoobalotu@gmail.com 07089294163

Abstract
The study duels on the influence of print media and community sensitization on efficient wildlife sustainability among communities around the Cross River National Park in Akamkpa Local Government area of Cross River State. To achieve the purpose of the study, two research questions were posed and two null hypotheses formulated and analysed at 0.05 level of significance. The population for the study consists of all the inhabitants of communities around the cross River National Park in Akamkpa LGA. The sample of the study comprised 231 rural indigenes around Cross River National Park in Akamkpa LGA. From the administered questionnaire, data was analyzed using one way analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for both hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the use of print media and proper community sensitization about wildlife sustainability significantly influences wildlife sustainability among rural indigenes around Cross River National Park in Akamkpa Local Government area of Cross River State. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendation was made by the researcher that there should be a proper enlightenment campaign against overexploitation of wildlife through the use of print media such as posters, flyers, hand bills and open billboard. It was equally recommended that there is need for the community to intensify their participation in wildlife conservation by imposing a traditional fine on defaulters.

Keywords: Print media, utilization, wildlife, sustainability, National Park, Cross River State

Introduction

Ensuring the effectiveness of wildlife sustainability depends upon the development of community understanding of the relationship between plant and animal species, the environment and people's actions interacting with the environment using appropriate community education strategies. Other traditional conservation programmes strategies such as conservation management of captive population, reintroduction of extinct plant and animal species, and habitat protection depend on education initiative to change the practices of the community (Igwebuike, Kujoh & Ayuk, 2021). Africa's wildlife is remarkable for its abundance and diversity. The variety of wildlife and the unique habitats attract tourists and wildlife enthusiasts to the continent. African's wildlife has traditionally been regarded as a valuable community asset and has been protected by customs and taboo. Contemporary valuing of wildlife occurs for economic, ecological, medical, educational scientific, recreational, and intrinsic reasons.

Akamkpa local government area of Cross River state is known because of her unique environmental qualities harboring enormous forest that extends from the Cross River National Park (Ambe & Onnoghen, 2019). The area houses many important wildlife that are endemic to the area. Wildlife provides employment and contributes to the national incomes of many countries through earnings from wildlife tourism and the sale of wildlife products. It plays an essential role on African savannahs, contributing to diversification of ecosystems, reduction of bush land and expansion of grasslands. In efforts to conserve the diversity of free-ranging animals, the dominant colonial's strategy for wildlife management was the creation of protected areas.

In terms of this strategy, several approaches were used to conserve wildlife by separating humans and wildlife. They entailed the creation of protected areas, the prevention of consumptive use and the minimization of other forms of human impacts (Adams and Hulme, 2012). According to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) a protected area is a clearly geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed through legal or other effective means to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values (Dudley, 2018). Protected areas aimed at wildlife management include national (or game) parks, game reserves and ranches. The creation of protected areas was seen as an ethical obligation to future generations to prevent non-human species loss through human action (Dudley, Hoggins-Zogih and Mansourian, 2018).

Based on the, the researcher decided to evaluate the influence of print media utilization and community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst the communities around Cross River National Park in Akamkpa LGA of Cross River State.

The concept of wildlife sustainability

Sustainable use of wildlife refers to the long-term stability or persistence of a population, often on a scale of years, decades, or longer. Sustainability occurs when natural systems are diverse, productive, and capable of supporting healthy wildlife. Sustainable wildlife management is defined as "the sound management of wildlife species to sustain their populations and habitats over time, taking into account the socioeconomic needs of human populations (Adams & Hulme, 2012).

The development of the industrial economy affects the survival and development of wildlife, while wildlife resources and the industrial economy interact with each other (Wilkinson 2023), and the protection of wildlife resources is an important link in promoting the sustainable development of the industrial economy and can provide a new impetus to the industrial economy (Dong and Lyu 2022). With the com- prehensive implementation of the sustainable development strategy and the deepening of the concept of sustainable development, wildlife protection has attracted widespread attention. The development of wildlife protection is one of the important symbols of the degree of scientific culture and spiritual civilization worldwide at present. Wildlife is a very valuable natural resource, an important part of biodiversity and natural ecosystem, a mountain, water, forest, lake, and grass.

Therefore, we can say that it is the key to the community of life. The existence of wild animals is of great importance to stabilize the ecological chain and maintain the ecological balance. On the contrary, when the balance of species is destroyed, the human living environment will deteriorate drastically, and various natural disasters will come (Tian et al. 2022). Strengthening the protection of wildlife resources, maintaining ecological security, and biosecurity, promoting sustainable economic and social development, and promoting the construction of ecological civilization is of great significance. At present, due to the change and destruction of the living environment. Population growth and economic development, more and more demand for natural resources, excessive deforestation, grassland reclamation, overgrazing of grasslands, and the construction of lakes, etc., destroying the living environment of wildlife, thus making much wild- life on the verge of extinction Now, on average, there is a wildlife extinction on earth in less than two years, and many animals are on the verge of extinction, according to the latest report of the World Wide Fund for Nature The latest WWF report shows that in the past 50 years, the global wildlife population has been reduced by more than two-thirds (Yu, 2020).

Print media and wildlife sustainability

The print media can aid in achieving biodiversity conservation goals by encouraging awareness and encouraging acceptance through public discourse which are key factors in recovery of populations of various species (Jacobson, Langin, Carlton & Kaid,, 2012). Print media such as newspapers can also inform on local constituencies, reflect urban and rural, as well as regional differences; they can track, in a relatively undistorted way, historical changes and can reflect

the experiences and concerns of a large fraction of the general public (Kellert & Westervelt, 2009).

Print media content analysis is a reliable source of determining trends in public perceptions and plays a powerful role in presenting wildlife as either to further its conservation or leave it as a neglected element of our natural heritage (Lunney & Moon, 2008).

Print media is used in this campaign as it helps to connect to people living without electricity and create awareness among them about the security conditions of Nigeria. It also helps highlight the actions taken by the government on wildlife exploitation. Through this media, people can communicate to other people and provide news. However, in some cases, it can also act as two-way system as many print media asks for questions and reviews through letters from its audience, which are published in the same print media.

Ejim (2015) stated that increasing demand for recreation and aesthetic values of wildlife are one cannel through which foresters can gain public co-operation and recognition of private forest management. Private forest landowners and holders of long-term tenures on forested lands have no objections to public use of their lands for sport hunting, fishing, or camping. What they do object to is destruction of their equipment or carelessness with fire. In areas where deer browsing is a problem, forest owners would like to see increased deer hunting, but many are not willing to risk the increased fire hazard or vandalism. Wildlife managers would like to extend hunting seasons and bag limits on areas which are overstocked with game species, but often the general public feels, mistakenly, that more liberalized hunting regulations would deplete their source of recreation. What is needed is closer communication between foresters, wildlife managers and users of the wildlife re- source in order that maximum economic returns can be realized from forested lands. Better mutual understanding and co-operation is therefore the first step towards multiple use and the maximization of economic returns. Wildlife values on good forest sites may be comparable with the value of timber, but if wildlife interests clash with timber interests, the latter must take priority. However, these clashes are seldom insoluble, and the economic returns from any forested land can be increased by also utilizing the wildlife crops (Bright, 2017).

Asuquo (2015) conducted a study on people's perception on print media and wildlife exploitation in Cross River State. The researcher used a sample of two hundred and forty-six (246) respondents selected from the study area using stratified random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. In testing the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of marital status on attitude of residents towards solid waste disposal, one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for data analysis. The result obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis revealed that, the calculated F-value of 1.962 was less the critical F- value of 2.119 at .05 level of significance

with 245 degrees of freedom. This implied that, there is no significant relationship between print media and wildlife exploitation in Cross River State.

Eisfield (2019) investigated personal factors of residents' perception about wildlife exploitation in Srilanka. The study sample constituted four hundred and thirty-three (433) respondents. 58 percent of the respondents were married, 24 percent were single, 11 percent were separated while 7 percent were widows/widowers. The attitude scores for the various groups used in the study revealed that married people had a mean score (mean = 16.463) which represents positive attitude towards solid waste management. Single respondents had a lower mean score (mean = 13.849) represent a less positive attitude with regards to solid waste management. Respondents who indicated to be separated had a low mean score (mean =10.628) represents a negative attitude with regards to print media. Respondents who indicated to be widows/widowers had mean score (9.385) which represents a more negative attitude towards solid waste management. This implies that print media play significant role in wildlife exploitation.

Print media include magazines, books, newspapers, and even T-shirts, as a form of 'one-way communication' (Biagi, 2013). In other words, the message is from sender to receiver only. The Bring Back Our Girls campaigners used both online and offline communication strategies to reach their target audiences. Print media has a huge influence on the characteristics of society as it can reach people who are lacking facilities to connect to digital media or electricity through newspapers and posters (Mozorov, 2019). It has the ability to provide a detailed analysis of the incident and can create a bias toward a particular side. However, print media can create a negative impact towards any incident by serving distorted news that can affect the reputation of individuals or organisations and generate negative sentiments among people.

Community sensitization and wildlife sustainability

Historically, forest monitoring has been performed by external professionals who use strict scientific approaches (Angelsen *et al.,* 2009). However, in recent times these responsibilities have been successfully implemented by local community members through participatory and locally appropriate techniques (Palmer Fry, 2011). With the right training on appropriate methods of data acquisition, local people can collect reliable, accurate and precise information on a range of indicators including carbon (Danielsen *et al*., 2013), deforestation (Danielsen *et al*., 2011) and biodiversity (Brashares & Sam, 2005)

Community participation in environmental programs has been proven to enable more effective decision making in protecting the environment and its natural resources. More importantly, this process gives an opportunity to the community to have a say over aspects that affect their lives. According to Steg (2013) sustainable development concept place emphasis on the wellbeing of the environment through community involvement, the literature states that to have awareness about environmental issues may or may not influence an individual to participate actively in

environmental programs. However, various studies also show that having awareness alone does not necessarily result in pro-environmental behaviour (Steg, 2013). An environmentally responsible citizen and community in addition to having awareness should possess basic understanding of the environment and its problems, feelings of concern for the environment, skills and motivations to solve and eventually participate in environmental improvement programs (Ostrom, 2014).

Abe and Didham (2013) asserted that an outcome to measure public environmental awareness level is by assessing their extent of participation or involvement in the environmental programs. Feeney (2016) argued that the local people have been over looked completely in the local community which are supposed to be involved in resource management through the process of gradually handling of harvesting and management activities of their natural resources government focus on the role in natural resources management whereby it should be directed on the evaluation of the initiatives of local people, state and the institution involved in the promotion of extension services that is of immense benefits to the community and the future posterity. Furthermore, he categorized three (3) different ways in which communities can participate in forest management such as community-based management, collaborative management and non-governmental organization.

The contribution of local communities in the conservation of forest has been recognized by the international community. Agarwal (2016) argued that any effort to rehabilitate the environment must rely on village members and not the government officials to do the job, because rural people already have the knowledge. Not only does this knowledge include information about different species of animals and plants, their behaviour and uses, as well as information about the way in which different aspects of the forest ecosystem inter-relate. Local people play an important role in the maintenance of forest resources. Depending on a number of historical, social and ecological factors, indigenous communities amass an extraordinary core of knowledge about how to manage the forest and utilize it sustainably. Agarwal (2016) therefore, maintained that community participation will enable the government and nongovernmental organizations to explore and exploit these local wisdom and initiatives to better conserve and manage the forest According to him, when local people participate, they will contribute their wealth of knowledge about nature to the conservation process, but where they are excluded from the forestry development process, then their contributions and experiences are either lost or left unharnessed.

Etefia (2007) opines that National Park have become the most widely used category of protected areas in developing countries including Akamkpa Local Government Area. However, conservation with development has emerged as the theme of the new strategy for protected area management approach to the conservation of wildlife and ecosystem.

Statement of research problems

The rate at which forest resources are depleted in Cross River State today is so alarming and is of grave concern to the stakeholders. For instance, forest loss in Nigeria is put at a "normal of 400,000 hectares (ha) per annum, while afforestation has just 32,000 hectares (ha) yearly, the combined impact of this is that the nation has lost 50 million hectares of woodland in under 100 years**.** As the health of planet continues to deteriorate, it is critical to develop environmentally literate citizens. The sustainability of wildlife resources has been threatened by over harvest worldwide, especially in sub-tropical and tropical forest. It is difficult to think of any wildlife that is unaffected by humans or their actions. Humans exploit animals big and small, mainly for subsistence or profit, but also for sport and entertainment. If animals are not exploited directly, they many still be affected by human activities either gaining or losing in terms of protection, food and available habits. The human population is steadily increasing, requiring more space and demanding more resources. It is apparent that more extensive wildlife management is required to slow the inevitable loss of biodiversity, and that to be effective it must confine any exploitation within sustainable limits.

The uncontrolled destruction of wildlife continues to increase despite the enlightenment campaign against unsustainable use of ecological resources. The animals are attacked through hunting, indiscriminate shooting of different species and sizes of wild animal. Thus, reducing the number of animals drastically. The world is now so tied together by flows of energy, information and commodities, that action in one part of it, is likely to have implications for many other parts. Numerous biological resources, particularly wildlife and forests, are being depleted more by foreign demand than by direct local consumption. Money earned by depleting resources in them is often invested in imported industrial products, which themselves may have had a negative environmental impact in the country of their production. Solutions to conservation problems must address both overt symptoms such as disappearing forests, and the more fundamental issues underlying the symptoms such as human overpopulations and profligacy. Whether conservation action is aimed overall strategies are required to establish a common base of information to define the problems in ways that will lead to their solutions.

This study therefore examined the extent to which print media utilization and community sensitization influences wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Methodology

A survey design was used in the study. This design was chosen because it is relatively quick and easy to conduct data on all variables is only make use of the questionnaire and interview to secure data from the respondents and it equally give room for a sample of the population to be used as a representative to the entire study population. The data collected during the study were analyzed with One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) using package IBM SPSS Version 22.

Hypotheses

3. Print media utilization does not significantly influence wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria
4. There is no significant influence of community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria

Results

Ho1:

Print media utilization does not significantly influence wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable is Print media utilization, while the dependent is wildlife sustainability. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test null hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level and 2 and 228 degrees of freedom (df). The result of the analysis is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analysis of the influence of Print media utilization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria (N=231)

Print media utilization	N	$\bar{x}$	SD
Low	60	34.1754	3.06422
Moderate	94	36.6016	3.18219
High	77	36.4094	2.87315
Total	231	36.1310	3.11749

Source of variance	SS	Df.	MS	Fratio	p-value
Between group	223.875	2	111.938	32..321*	.003
Within group	5481.041	228	10.318		
Total	5704.917	230			

* Sig. at .05 level, df= 2, 228..

The Table 1 result indicated that the F-calculated value of 32.321 is significant at .05 level of significance and 2 and 228 degrees of freedom. This result equally shows that the p<.003 is less than p<.05. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis stating that Print media utilization does not significantly influence wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria was rejected indicating that there is a significant influence of print media on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria

Ho2:
There is no significant influence of community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria. The independent variable is community sensitization, while the dependent is wildlife sustainability. One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA was used to test null hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significant level and 2 and 228 degrees of freedom (df). The result of the analysis is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analysis of the influence of community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria (N=231)

Community sensitization	N	$\bar{x}$	SD
Low	61	35.2044	3.06180
Moderate	82	36.6217	3.19529
High	88	36.4065	2.87307
Total	231	36.1377	3.11749

Source of variance	SS	df	MS	Fratio	p-value
Between group	223.875	2	111.078	28.323*	.000
Within group	5481.041	228	10.633		
Total	5704.917	230			

* Sig. at .05 level, df= 2, 228.

The finding in Table 2 indicated that the F-calculated value of 28.323 is significant at .05 level of significance and 2 and 228 degrees of freedom. The outcome also shows that the $p<.000$ is less than $p<.05$. Sequel to the present result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria was rejected indicating that there is a significant influence of community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria

Discussion of findings

Print media utilization and wildlife sustainability
The result of the second hypothesis indicated that indeed there is a significant influence of print media usage on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria. This conclusion is in line with the work Lunney and Moon (2008) who stated that Print media content analysis is a reliable source of

determining trends in public perceptions and plays a powerful role in presenting wildlife as either to further its conservation or leave it as a neglected element of our natural heritage.
Still in line with the preent work Jacobson, Langin, Carlton and Kaid (2012) stated that the print media can aid in achieving biodiversity conservation goals by encouraging awareness and encouraging acceptance through public discourse which are key factors in recovery of populations of various species. Print media such as newspapers can also inform on local constituencies, reflect urban and rural, as well as regional differences; they can track, in a relatively undistorted way, historical changes and can reflect the experiences and concerns of a large fraction of the general public (Kellert & Westervelt, 2009).

Community sensitization and wildlife sustainability

The first hypothesis result showed that indeed there is a significant influence of community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria This conclusion is in line with the work of Steg (2013) who stated that Community participation in environmental programs has been proven to enable more effective decision making in protecting the environment and its natural resources. More importantly, this process gives an opportunity to the community to have a say over aspects that affects their lives. According to sustainable development concept place emphasis on the wellbeing of the environment through community involvement, the literature states that to have awareness about environmental issues may or may not influence an individual to participate actively in environmental programs. However, various studies also show that having awareness along does not necessarily result in pro-environmental behaviour (Steg, 2013).
Also, in line with the present study, Ostrom (2014) stated that an environmentally responsible citizen and community in addition to having awareness should possess basic understanding of the environment and its problems, feelings of concern for the environment, skills and motivations to solve and eventually participate in environmental improvement programs.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of the study these conclusions was reached by the researcher that there is a significant influence of print media usage on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria. And there is a significant influence of community sensitization on wildlife sustainability amongst communities around Cross River State National Park in Akamkpa LGA, of Cross River State, Nigeria**.**

Reccomendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were afforded by the researcher that

1. There should be a proper enlightenment campaign against overexploitation of wildlife through the use of print media such as posters, flyers, hand bills and open bill board.

2. There is need for the community to intensify their participation in wildlife conservation and also by imposing a traditional fine on defaulters.

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