



Research Article

Awareness of Wildlife Conservation Practices in Host Communities of Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria is endowed with diverse ecosystems that support a wide range of flora and fauna, making biodiversity a vital component of the nation's natural heritage and environmental resources. However, the conservation of wildlife in protected areas remains a major challenge due to limited awareness and understanding of conservation practices among host communities. This study examines the level of awareness of wildlife conservation practices among host communities surrounding Old Oyo National Park and investigates the challenges affecting the implementation of support zone programmes designed to promote wildlife conservation and sustainable resource management. The study adopts a descriptive research design and utilizes quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. Primary data were obtained through 398 structured questionnaires administered to residents of selected host communities located within the park's support zones. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques to determine the level of awareness, community perceptions, and the factors influencing participation in conservation initiatives. The findings reveal that awareness of wildlife conservation practices among many community members remains relatively low, which contributes to activities that threaten biodiversity, including illegal resource exploitation. The study also identifies several challenges affecting the effectiveness of support zone programmes, such as inadequate environmental education, weak community participation, insufficient funding, and limited collaboration between park authorities and local communities. The study concludes that strengthening community awareness and participation is essential for effective biodiversity conservation. It recommends inclusive conservation strategies, improved environmental education, and stronger collaboration between policymakers, conservation agencies, and community leaders to ensure sustainable wildlife management and improved environmental quality.

Keywords

Wildlife, Conservation, Practices, Host Communities, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Tourism is the world's largest growing industry with no signs of slowing down in the years ahead and is an important

economic industry in the world. Tourism activities accounted for US\$7.6 trillion or 10.2% of total global gross domestic

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product (GDP), and 292 million jobs representing one out of every ten jobs in 2017. Tourism exports during the same period were estimated to be more than US\$1.5trillion while international tourist arrivals is over 1.2 billion [1]. Wildlife represents biodiversity, essential for our health and the well-being of the whole planet. We live in an interconnected ecological system, where each macro- and microorganism, whether animal, plant or fish affects the other [2]. In the same vein, literature revealed that wildlife viewing, and other related ecotourism are the key drivers of tourist visit to Africa. According to the UNWTO Report 'Towards Measuring the Economic Value of Wildlife Watching Tourism in Africa,' indicated that 7% of world tourism relates to wildlife tourism grows at about 3%, annually. The same document shows that a total of 14 countries in Africa are generating an estimated US\$ 142 million in entrance fees for protected areas [3].

Consequently, Alteration of the natural habitat of any organism will trigger a dynamo effect, so non-equilibrium in the ecological system as a whole endangers the life cycle of many species. Wildlife remains a major concern for the international, regional and local communities. Among the multiple risks that menace wildlife are: diseases, climate change and actions of human nature, such as poaching and illegal trafficking [4-6]. Similarly, Community-Based Conservation (CBC) is a strategy used throughout the world to save wildlife, which has its modern roots in the experience of conservationists working in poorer countries during the 1960s and 1970s. Conservationists came to realize that local people, who commonly are hostile to wildlife conservation, had to be won over as supporters of their efforts [7-9]; they saw that without the cooperation of rural people, wildlife conservation efforts would be doomed. This is certainly true in Nigeria, where rural inhabitants often view wildlife conservation as misguided because it puts the needs of wildlife above those of people [10].

Wildlife conservation to enhance tourism development has been a herculean task for most countries in sub-Sahara Africa largely due to funding, and international support programmes. In Nigeria, these requirements constitute challenges for the country towards the sustainable tourism development for the country economic transformation. Despite the significant contribution of CBC scheme to wildlife conservation in developed world and other developing nations such as Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and South Africa among others, the approach failed to reduce poaching activities and illegal lumbering of natural resources in Old Oyo National Park (OONP) Nigeria. A recent study by [11] on knowledge of Nigeria wildlife conservation law in OONP indicates that despite the awareness of conservation law among the locals, there is still heavy poaching and violation of conservation law at the parks. In the same vein, [12] argued that increase in population of large mammals in OONP has largely been associated with increased enforcement efforts and not provision of incentives, the locals were not genuinely supporting the project. The failure of SZCP according to him is as a result of various face-off emanating from community desire to meet their various needs

and aspirations such as needs to provide pasture for animal, lumbering, poaching amongst others [12].

Goal 15 of the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aims to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. From the foregoing, it is clear, that this goal 15 and its various targets are of utmost relevance to the problem of wildlife conservation and its management in the study areas and by extension the Nigeria protected areas, reserve zones and national parks at large.

2. Wildlife Practices Among Host Communities in Nigeria: Level of Awareness

The sustainability of national park conservation largely depends on securing meaningful support and participation from local communities [13]. Similarly, Reddy et al argued that sustainable management techniques are required to maintain and conserve biodiversity [14]. The study further added that conservation can only be achieved through accurate information about the status and distribution of biodiversity, which serves as the foundation for other life forms [13]. In the same vein, [15] conducted a study on the assessment of community awareness and participation in ecotourism in Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria. The study assessed the level of community awareness and participation in ecotourism in Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria. The research found out that 48% of the respondents were aware of ecotourism and 46% participated in ecotourism. The study showed that there exists a relationship between ecotourism awareness and participation. The study affirmed that awareness, active involvement of communities in stakeholder meetings, decision-making and provision of start-up capital are important for ecotourism development in the park.

Similarly, [16] in their study examine the local community perception and attitude towards the non-utilization of natural resources in Old-Oyo National Park, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Old Oyo National Park, Oyo State to assess the local community perception and reaction to the non-utilization of natural resources. Primary data were collected from five (5) local communities in support zone of Old Oyo National Park. The result shows that some of the respondents (41.5%) agreed that the rules and regulations of the park were strict. Majority of the respondents strongly disagreed to the non-utilization of natural resources in Old Oyo National Park. By restricting access to these park resources, the people feel denied and as such majority (54.3%) of the respondents are non-compliant to the rules and regulations of the park. The study concludes with an advocacy to integrate local people in the decision making of the park.

In a related study, [17] explored the level of community

participation in the conservation of natural resources in Akamkpa Local Government Area, Southern Cross River State, Nigeria. The study aimed at establishing the extent of community participation in natural resources conservation in the study area. Findings revealed that, the level of participation significantly influences forest resources conservation, and that community involvement has a significant influence on wildlife conservation. In a study conducted by [18] which critically examined the knowledge of Nigeria wildlife conservation laws among officials of Okomu and Old Oyo National Parks, Nigeria. The two parks had a total of 431 staff consisting of 281 in OONP and 150 in ONP as of September 2018, simple random sampling was used to administer structured questionnaire to 50 ONP and 130 OONP staff. The study indicates that 95.6% and 96.7% of respondents in both parks have heard of wildlife laws and affirmed the existence of wildlife laws in Nigeria respectively. The study concluded that Park officials of Okomu and Old Oyo National Parks were not adequately familiar with Nigerian wildlife conservation laws.

According to [19] that explores wildlife conservation challenges in Okomu national park, Nigeria. The study looked at the challenges of conserving the park's wildlife and other resources. A combination of primary and secondary data was used for the research. Findings reveal that farming had the highest value of record of offences followed by hunting and logging, entry, and collection of non-timber products. The study concluded that people encroached into the Okomu national park for farming, hunting (poaching), logging and collection of non-timber products despite the illegality of the actions. Thus, community people saw wildlife as nature's gift that could be used for subsistence and commercial purposes, hence, conservation of resources in the park could be enhanced if government laws on protection of the areas are enforced.

According to [20] that evaluated the benefits and challenges of living near a protected area in Nigeria; the case of Okomu National Park. The study assessed the benefits and challenges that accompanied living near Okomu National Park, Nigeria. Result reveals that Majority of the respondents (85%) indicated that they have benefited nothing by living near the park. (99.2%) of the respondents of the adjoining communities were aware of the existence of the National Park and (77.4%) of the respondents indicated that locals were not involved in Park management. The study identified some of the challenges of people living near the park which include inaccessibility to bush meat, inaccessibility to land for farming and wildlife disturbance.

Similarly, [21] examined the challenges of wildlife management in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria. The study assessed challenges of wildlife management in Kainji Lake National Park, Nigeria in order to determine the constraints to effective management. Findings revealed that the major causes of conflict in KLNP are hunting (95.4%), illegal grazing of cattle (95.4%), fishing (85.11%) and collection of non-timber forest product (71.96%). Insufficient infrastructure

(94.34%) and inadequate maintenance of equipment (94.34%) were ranked the most pressing challenges of staff respondents in KLNP. The consequences of these challenges include insecurity in the park (73.58%), reduction in management practices (62.26%) and inefficiency (28.30%).

In a study conducted by [22] that evaluates the biodiversity conservation in Nigeria: perception, challenges, and possible remedies. The study essentially seeks to highlight some of the unwholesome practices that endanger biodiversity and to sensitize the populace on the importance of biodiversity conservation practices in Nigeria. The study identified some major threats to biodiversity conservation in Nigeria include poverty, economic development, incomplete or non-implementation and non-ratification by government of international treaties and conventions on conservation issues, ambiguous governmental laws on biodiversity, climate change, pollution, amongst others.

According to [23] that evaluated the biodiversity conservation in Nigeria: contemporary challenges for ecologist. The study discusses biodiversity and its significance and looked at the status of Nigeria's biodiversity and why it is important to conserve it. The study relied on secondary sources of data collection. The study identifies poverty, population growth, deforestation and habitat degradation among several other factors that contribute to biodiversity loss in Nigeria. The study acknowledged that the methods of biodiversity conservation in Nigeria shows that protected area system is the main method of biodiversity conservation, although in some cases it is been supported by community-based conservation approach. The study concluded that Priorities for ecologist thus include understanding the causal relationships between people and biodiversity, placing economic value on biodiversity and prioritizing target outcomes and indicators.

According to [24] that investigated the challenges of buffer zone management in Cross River National Park, Southeastern Nigeria. The study assessed the challenges of buffer zone management in some (adjacent) support zone communities in Oban Division of Cross River National Park, Nigeria. Study reveals that (68.68%) of the respondents proved they were not aware of the existence of the buffer zone and the policies governing it. A small segment of the community (11.21%) accepted that the programme has tremendously enhanced their economic status while a very small proportion of the study population (23.28%) were reported for involvement buffer zone management. The study concluded that a large percentage of the members of the surrounding communities claimed ignorance of the existence of the buffer zone and the laws establishing it and recommended for an aggressive public enlightenment campaign programme to fully educate the people on the park's conservation projects.

3. Methodology

This study employed descriptive research design. The study was carried out in Old Oyo National Park, Oyo State Nigeria.

The sample were selected from the existing National Park in Nigeria due to her history and increasing challenges of poaching of wildlife animals. Primary and secondary data sources were used. Secondary data were sourced from related journal encyclopedia, books, and internet. The study population for this research is 65,320 comprised of the entire residents in the 120 adjoining communities, villages and settlements that surround the parks which fall within 0-10km in the Old-Oyo National Parks. Taro Yamane Formula Sample Size Determination was used to determine the sample size. Therefore, a total of 398 copies of the questionnaire were administered on the respondents. Afterwards the adjoining communities around the National Park were grouped into six ranges. In addition, systematic sampling techniques were used to select 10 communities in each of the ranges totaling 60 communities. In each community, questionnaires were distributed to the respondents (farmers, community leaders and hunters), through stratified sampling techniques disproportionately, totaling 398 respondents. The respondents were selected based on gender, occupation, and experience on wildlife conservation in Nigeria. Data were analyzed through descriptive analysis. Ethical considerations were considered during and after the study. Verbal consents were obtained from the respondents, and confidentiality and anonymity were considered in the study.

4. Findings and Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows the respondents' level of awareness on the conservation rules and regulation. The result showed that larger percentage of the respondents from Oyo-Ile range 25(62.5%) Sepeteri range 57(64.0%) and Yemoso range 38(53.5%) indicated yes which implies that they have high level of awareness on any conservation rules and regulation while more than half respondents from Tede range 58(53.7%), Marguba range 22(55.0%) and Tesi range 21(53.8%) indicated No which implies that the participants has a low of level of awareness on any conservation rules and regulation.

Out of the respondents who indicated yes that they were aware of the wildlife conservation laws, policy and regulation of National Park, majority of the participants from Tede range 27(54.0%), Oyo-Ile range 14(56.0%) and Marguba range 8(44.4%) indicated that they got to know about wildlife conservation laws, policy and regulation of National Park through the Public awareness by park management which implies that awareness were intensively carried out by the park management in some of the ranges of the Old Oyo national park. In the same vein, 25(43.9%) of the respondents from Sepeteri range reported that they got to know about wildlife conservation laws, policy and regulation through their Neighbour & friend also majority of the participants from Yemoso range 13(34.2%) got to know about wildlife conservation laws, policy and regulation through their community leaders while majority of the respondents from Tesi range got to know about wildlife conservation laws, policy and regulation through ra-

dio and television. This is similar to [25] on a study participatory approach to conservation and management of protected area in Nigeria: case study of Osse River Park project where majority of the respondents got to know about the park through the media.

Findings also reveal that more than one third of the respondents from all the six range in the study area indicated that the National Park rule help in preservation and conservation of wildlife in the park. This is supported by a study carried out by [15] researched on the assessment of community awareness and participation in ecotourism in Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria where 48% of the respondents were aware of ecotourism.

Furthermore, Table 1 shows majority of the respondents from Tede range 37(74.0%), Oyo-Ile range 21(84.0%), Sepeteri range 43(75.4%) and Tesi range 12(66.7%) reported that the wildlife conservation policy affects their live hood while Marguba range 8(44.4%) and Yemoso range 22(57.9%) indicated that the wildlife conservation policy did not affect their live hood in any away. The result support [26] investigated conservation strategies of wildlife resources in the Old Oyo National Park, Nigeria, in which the result shows that considerable degree of effectiveness of the strategies employed by the authority of the park, as majority of the respondents are aware of the status of the park as a protected area.

However out of the respondents of about 137(35.3%) who indicated that the wildlife conservation policy affect their li-vehood many of them from Tede range 27(67.6%), Oyo-Ile range 11(52.4%), Marguba range 4(50.0%) and Yemoso range 8(50.0%) indicated Insufficient land for farming as one of the way the rules and regulation of the conservation affect their life hood while Sepeteri range 22(51.2%) and Tesi range 7(58.3%) indicated Prohibition on illegal poaching of as one of the way the rules and regulation of the conservation affect their life hood. Also, the result on Table 1 shows that majority of about 253(65.2%) of the respondents from all the six ranges in the study area reported that they never intrude into the protected.

Also, Table 2 show the findings of the joint effect of the independent variables of awareness on the existence of national park in this communities [$\beta=0.577$, $t=2.552$ and $p=0.012$], awareness on conservation effort being made to protect wildlife [$\beta=0.470$, $t=2.657$ and $p=0.008$], awareness on any government policy or law for wildlife conservation in the national park [$\beta=0.620$, $t=3.034$ and ($p=0.003$)], and awareness on any guideline or rules given by NPS on how to conserve wildlife as influence or effect on the host communities [$\beta=-0.462$, $t=-2.077$ and $p=0.038$] had significant effect on the host communities at 0.05 level of significance since the p-value was less than 0.05 we therefore reject null hypothesis. Similarly, the result conforms to [27] that explored community-based organizations in environment conservation endeavors in Rwanda. Findings of the study indicate that respondents have a clear knowledge and understanding on environmental conservation and role played by CBOs in general and

SACOLA towards the efforts directed to environment protection and conservation; majority (38.03%) of the respondents were noted to have been members of the association for a pe-

riod between 6 and 10 years. SACOLA conducted mobilization activities, sensitization, training and educating communities in the selected study area and its environs on the importance of environment conservation.

Table 1. Awareness of Wildlife Conservation.

Variable	Tede Range (n=108)	Oyo-Ile Range (n=40)	Sepeteri Range (n=89)	Marguba Range (n=40)	Yemeso Range (n=71)	Tesi Range (n=40)
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Are you aware of any conservation rules and regulation						
Yes	50(46.3)	25(62.5)	57(64.0)	18(45.0)	38(53.5)	18(45.0)
No	58(53.7)	15(37.5)	32(36.0)	22(55.0)	33(46.5)	21(52.5)
How did you get to know about wildlife conservation laws, policy and regulation						
Public awareness by park management	27(54.0)	14(56.0)	10(17.5)	8(44.4)	10(26.3)	3(16.7)
Neighbour & friend	9(18.0)	4(16.0)	25(43.9)	3(16.7)	9(23.7)	5(27.8)
Television & radio	6(12.0)	2(8.0)	11(19.3)	3(16.7)	6(15.8)	6(33.3)
Community head	8(16.0)	5(20.0)	11(19.3)	4(22.2)	13(34.2)	4(22.2)
Did the rule help in preservation and conservation of wildlife in the park						
True	43(86.0)	18(72.0)	34(59.6)	16(88.9)	33(86.8)	17(94.4)
False	7(14.0)	7(28.0)	23(40.4)	2(11.1)	5(13.2)	1(5.6)
Did the wildlife conservation policy affect your live hood						
Yes	37(74.0)	21(84.0)	43(75.4)	8(44.4)	16(42.1)	12(66.7)
No	13(13.0)	4(16.0)	14(24.6)	10(55.6)	22(57.9)	6(33.3)
In what area did rules and regulation affect you						
Insufficient land for farming	27(67.6)	11(52.4)	14(32.6)	4(50.0)	8(50.0)	3(25.0)
Prohibition on illegal poaching	9(24.3)	6(28.6)	22(51.2)	2(25.0)	6(37.5)	7(58.3)
Lack of firewood	3(8.1)	4(19.0)	7(16.3)	2(25.0)	2(12.5)	2(16.7)
How often do you intrude into the protected						
Often	15(13.9)	2(50.0)	7(7.9)	6(15.0)	2(2.8)	1(2.5)
Sometimes	8(7.4)	6(15.0)	2(2.2)	3(7.5)	7(9.9)	5(12.5)
Once in a while	18(16.7)	12(30.)	12(13.5)	8(20.0)	13(18.3)	8(20.8)
Never	67(62.0)	20(50.0)	68(76.4)	23(57.5)	49(69.0)	26(65.0)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2. Level Awareness on Wildlife Conservation Practise and on the Host Communities.

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	44.883	4	11.221	3.887	.004
Residual	1105.663	383	2.887		
Total	1150.546	387			

Dependent Variable: The host communities

Table 3. ANOVA Analysis of Level Awareness on Wildlife Conservation Practise and on the Host Communities.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
Awareness on conservation effort being made to protect wildlife	0.577	.229	.142	2.522	.012
Awareness on the existence of national park in this community	0.470	.177	.137	2.657	.008
Awareness on any government policy or law for wildlife conservation in the national park	0.620	.204	.153	3.034	.003
Awareness on any guideline or rules given by NPSON on how to conserve wildlife	-0.462	.222	-.116	-2.077	.038

a. Dependent Variable: the host communities

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Findings showed that more than half of the respondent from all the six ranges in the study area indicated agreed for Prohibition/restriction to hunting area, reduction of land for farming activities, land for physical development is reduced due to park conserved areas, animal constantly escapes to the village from the park area and animal from the park destroys their farmland as the part of the challenges of the conservation practice communities. Similarly, in terms of restriction this study agreed with the findings carried out by [16] examined local community perception and attitude towards the non-utilization of natural resources in Old-Oyo National Park, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was conducted in Old Oyo National Park, Oyo State to assess the local community perception and reaction to the non-utilization of natural resources. The result shows that some of the respondents (41.5%) agreed that the rules and regulations of the park were strict. Majority of the

respondents strongly disagreed to the non-utilization of natural resources in Old Oyo National Park. By restricting access to these park resources, the people feel denied and as such majority (54.3%) of the respondents are non-compliant to the rules and regulations of the park.

Also, the hypothesis was tested using simple linear multiple regression as shown in Table 5 that [B=0.676, t=-5.520 and P=0.003], Poor implementation of (SZCP) policy [B= -0.441, t= -2.260 and P=0.038], Inconsistency of the donors/partners [B= 0.652, t= 3.821 and P=0.003], Inadequate environmental education [B= -2.017, t= -2.440 and P=0.027], Lack of involvement of the host community [B= -0.227, t= -8.858 and P=0.014], Bush burning/fire outbreak [B= -0.211 t= -19.062 and P=0.001] and Firewood /domestic fuel [B= -0.298, t=5.348 and P=0.025] have a significant effect on the wildlife conservation at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 4. Challenges of the Conservation Practices on the Host Communities based on each Range of Old Oyo National Park.

Variable	Tede Range (n=108) F(%)	Oyo-Ile Range (n=40) F(%)	Sepeteri Range (n=89) F (%)	Marguba Range (n=40) F (%)	Yemeso Range (n=71) F (%)	Tesi Range (n=40) F (%)
Prohibition/restriction to hunting area						
Agree	79(73.1)	36(90.0)	81(91.0)	31(77.5)	47(66.2)	26(65.0)
Undecided	10(9.3)	2(75.0)	1(1.1)	6(15.0)	6(8.5)	1(2.5)
Strongly disagree	19(17.6)	2(5.0)	3(7.5)	3(7.5)	18(25.4)	13(32.5)
Prohibition on certain animal hunting						
Agree	75(69.4)	36(90.0)	84(94.4)	29(72.5)	47(66.2)	28(70.0)
Undecided	7(6.5)	2(5.0)	2(2.2)	3(7.5)	4(5.6)	1(2.5)
Disagree	26(24.1)	2(50.0)	3(3.4)	8(20.0)	20(28.2)	11(27.5)
Reduction of land for farming activities						
Agree	75(69.4)	35(87.5)	83(93.3)	31(77.5)	52(73.2)	27(67.5)
Undecided	11(10.2)	3(7.5)	1(1.1)	1(2.5)	6(8.5)	1(2.5)
Disagree	22(20.4)	2(5.0)	5(5.6)	8(20.0)	13(18.3)	12(30.0)
Land for physical development is reduced due to park conserved areas						
Agree	71(65.7)	35(87.5)	84(94.4)	26(65.0)	50(70.4)	28(70.0)
Undecided	12(42.9)	3(7.5)	1(1.1)	4(10.0)	6(8.5)	2(5.0)
Disagree	25(23.1)	2(5.0)	4(4.5)	10(25.0)	5(21.1)	10(25.0)
Animal constantly escapes to the village from the park area						
Agree	72(66.7)	33(82.5)	83(94.3)	28(70.0)	48(67.6)	26(66.7)
Undecided	15(13.9)	4(10.0)	2(2.3)	7(17.5)	4(5.6)	1(2.6)
Disagree	21(19.4)	3(7.5)	3(3.4)	5(12.5)	19(26.8)	12(30.8)
Animal from the park destroys our farmland						
Agree	74(68.5)	34(85.0)	85(95.5)	30(75.0)	51(71.8)	28(70.0)
Undecided	7(6.5)	3(7.5)	1(1.1)	0(0)	5(7.0)	1(2.5)
Disagree	27(25.0)	3(7.5)	3(3.4)	10(25.0)	15(21.1)	11(27.5)

Source: Field Survey 2023

Table 5. Challenges Facing the Support Zone Community Programme and the Effect on Wildlife Conservation.

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	22.882	7	3.269	13.974	.000 ^b
Residual	3.743	16	0.234		
Total	26.655	23			

Dependent Variable: wildlife conservation

Table 6. ANOVA Analysis of Challenges Facing the Support Zone Community Programme and the Effect on Wildlife Conservation.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
Insufficient funds	.676	.122	.628	5.520	.003
Poor implementation of (SZCP) policy	-.441	.195	-.343	-2.260	.038
Inconsistency of the donors/partners	.652	.020	.638	3.821	.001
Inadequate environmental education	-2.017	.827	-1.746	-2.440	.027
Lack of involvement of the host community	-.227	.012	-.277	-8.858	.014
Bush burning/fire outbreak	-.211	.011	-.277	-19.062	.001
Firewood /domestic fuel	.298	.012	.375	5.348	.025
a. Dependent Variable: wildlife conservation					

Source: Field Survey 2023

5. Conclusion

The paper indicated that level of awareness of wildlife practices among host communities in Old Oyo National, Nigeria is relatively low but there are some communities that showed level of consideration for wildlife practices in the study area. The study identified some other challenges facing the host communities in Old Oyo National Park is due to the conservation practice which include Prohibition/restriction to hunting area, reduction of land for farming activities, land for physical development is reduced due to park conserved areas, animal constantly escapes to the village from the park area and animal from the park destroys their farmland.

More importantly, the findings indicated that insufficient fund as one of the major challenges facing the wildlife conservation /support zone community programme in all the six ranges while other challenges such as poaching, poor implementation of SZCP policy illegal lumbering, inadequate environmental education lack of involvement of the host community, the need of pasture for animal and bush burning/fire outbreak are facing the wildlife conservation /support zone community programme which is differs from one range to another. Consequently, challenges facing the support zone community programme has significant effect on wildlife conservation and some of the personnel in Nigeria were not adequately familiar with Nigerian wildlife conservation laws. The paper concluded that there is high level of awareness of wildlife conservation policies and practices in the host communities around the Old Oyo National Park, the study further recommends that policymakers, conservationists, and local

authorities in Nigeria should formulates inclusive and effective strategies for conserving biodiversity and ensure synergy with community leaders in terms of community dialogue to enhance the quality of life and environment in the host communities.

Abbreviations

CBC	Community Based Conservation
CBO	Community Based Organization
NPS	National Parks Service
OONP	Old Oyo National Park
SZCP	Support Zone Community Programme

Author Contributions

Olugbenga Mayowa Agboola: Conceptualization, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing

Olayinka Christopher Aina: Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing

Bisola Ifeoluwa Awoniyi: Funding acquisition, Investigation, Writing – review & editing

Emmanuella Jaram Kwon-Ndung: Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Writing – review & editing

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no Conflicts of Interest.

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