

## PERCEIVED CONSERVATION APPROACHES AND CONSERVATION CHALLENGES OF OSUN-OSOGBO SACRED GROVE, OSOGBO, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

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The capacity to see, hear or get mindful of something through the faculties offers significance to an individual's current circumstance and figures out the world. The study contributes to providing insights into the perceived conservation approaches and conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria. A multistage sampling procedure was used in selecting the 147 respondents. Primary data were obtained on respondents' characteristics and their perception of the conservation approaches and conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria through the use of a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics and linear regression were used for data analysis. The results showed that a majority of the respondents were male (66.7%), married (59.18%), educated (60.54%), migrants (55.10%), engaged in agricultural-related jobs (28.57%) and are between the ages of 36 years and 45 years (45.58%), while the mean age of the respondents was 43.62 years old. The respondents positively perceived the conservation approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria ( $\bar{x} = 4.06$ ) as very good measures in the conservation of the grove. They also perceived the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria ( $\bar{x} = 4.12$ ) as major constraints in the conservation of the grove. Linear Regression analysis showed that respondents perceived conservation approaches ( $\beta_1 = -0.547$ ) significantly influenced their perceived

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conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria. It was therefore recommended that the perceived identified conservation approaches should be strengthened as this will translate to the mitigation and the action of reducing the severity and/or seriousness of the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Conservation, Approaches, Challenges, Sacred Grove, Nigeria

## INTRODUCTION

The critical of traveler locales to any country can't be overestimated in light of their special jobs in friendly, social, and monetary turn of events. Today, there are more than 30,000 vacationer locales throughout the planet covering about 12.8 million kilometres which outstanding balance for 9.5% of the planet's scene. Those vacationer locales as ensured zones and they are normally spaces of land or ocean particularly devoted to the assurance of natural variety and characteristic and related social assets. The requirement for the assurance and protection of biodiversity and the climate in Nigeria is fundamental and age long. As per Usman and Adefalu (2010) referred to by Oladipo (2017) the colonial government since quite a while ago predicted such requirements for the protection of backwoods to forestall soil dilapidation, deforestation and make places of interest. They responded by authorizing ecological insurance laws that filled in as the beginning of the National Policy on Environment of 1999.

Moreover, antiquities and landmarks of massive social and chronicled esteem are being secured by-laws to forestall their obliteration, bringing to centre the formation of the National Commission for Museum and Monuments (NCMM) by Decree No. 77 of 1979, set up to make and oversee historical centres, landmarks and legacy destinations including the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove.

### Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to examine perceived conservation approaches and conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria.

The specific objectives are to:

- (i) describe the socio-economic characteristics of respondents in the study area;
- (ii) examine the perception of respondents on the conservation approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove; and
- (iii) examine the perception of respondents on the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove.

## hypothesis of the study

H01: There is no significant relationship between the respondents' perceived conservation approaches and their perceived conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

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This investigation was led in the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria. It is situated along the banks of the Osun River in Osogbo town, Osun State, Nigeria. The forest has a woods space of 75 hectares, limited by a 47 hectares cushion zone (Onyekwelu and Olusola, 2014). In 2005, it was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site during the 29th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Durban, South Africa (Probst, 2009).

The woods asylum of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove contains 40 sanctuaries, two antiquated royal residences, and numerous models and craftsmanship out of appreciation for the Osun goddess and different gods (Osegale et al., 2014). Osun, the waterway goddess revered in the forest, is accepted to give magnificence, abundance, and ripeness to followers (Yusuf, 2016). The woods stays one of the last sacrosanct timberlands which previously lined the edges of most Yoruba towns and urban areas, framing a critical piece of Yoruba social practice before the boundless urbanization (Osegale et al., 2014; Yusuf, 2016). Hunting, farming, and fishing are disallowed in the forest just as inside the cushion zone (Probst, 2013). Even though, notwithstanding the nearness of the backwoods to the human residence, the forest has been generally kept up and secured utilizing fantasies and the conviction arrangement of the native individuals (Yusuf, 2016).

The city of Osogbo hosts a significant celebration toward the finish of July and toward the start of August consistently. This is to respect the god by denoting the day when the current customary ruler is rededicated to the Osun goddess, and the ties between individuals of Osogbo and the divinities are restored (Denyer, 2007). The fourteen days in length celebration is normally closed with a parade of individuals of Osogbo from the city to the woods, driven by the votary servant called Arugba, and headed by the Oba and ministers, all joined by drumming, singing, and moving. From that point onward, mutual penances and petitions are made to the Osun goddess at the waterway bank inside the woods for the flourishing of the local area (Denyer, 2007; Osegale et al., 2014; Probst, 2013, 2016).

Over the past years, the Osun-Osogbo celebration had gotten one of Nigeria's greatest vacation spots, because of the engraving of Osun-Osogbo Hallowed Forest as a World Legacy site in 2005 (Denyer, 2007; Probst, 2013, 2016; Yusuf, 2016). The worldwide celebration draws in great many Osun admirers, observers, and sightseers from varying backgrounds. Even though Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove was engraved under the social class, its natural and profound importance remains immovably joined to the rainforest (Denyer, 2007).

Due to the heterogeneous nature of the study population, multistage sampling was used in selecting the 147 participants. Primary data were collected for the research. Personal observations and a structured questionnaire were used for data collection in this study.

Respondents were requested to agree on a 5-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they perceived the conservation approaches and the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria. Investigative statements in the research instrument used (questionnaire) were worded to tap the level of respondents' perception. Little statements were undesirably worded and later reverse-scored to check response predisposition.

Linear Regression Model was used to analyse the collected data on the relationship between respondents' perceived conservation approaches and the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria.

The linear model is thus specified as:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + e \quad \dots\text{Eq. 1}$$

Y = Perception of respondents on the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Nigeria

X<sub>1</sub> = Perception of respondents on the conservation approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Nigeria

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the personal characteristics of the respondents. In the progress of the research work, it observed that a majority of male respondents constituted a response percentage of 66.7% while the female respondents' response percentage was 33.33%. Although the male respondents had a higher participation level in this study, thus, this may not be unconnected with the popular Yoruba traditional belief that women are under specified limitations to participate in matters of this nature. A majority (45.58%) of the respondents were between the ages of 36 years and 45 years while the mean age of the respondents was 43.62 years old. This could be attributed to the vigour of people within the ages of 18-50 years as compared with people of older ages. Notably, a majority of the respondents are married (59.18%), are educated (60.54%), are mostly migrants (55.10%) and engaged in agricultural-related jobs (28.57%).

**Table 1: Personal characteristics of the respondents**

Demographic	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	98	66.67
	Female	49	33.33

<b>Age (Years)</b> [ $\bar{x}$ = 43.62]	≤35	44	29.93
	36-45	67	45.58
	≥46	36	24.49
<b>Marital status</b>	Married	87	59.18
	Not Married	60	40.82
<b>Level of education</b>	No formal education	58	39.46
	Formal education	89	60.54
<b>Nativity</b>	Indigene	66	44.90
	Migrant	81	55.10
<b>Occupation</b>	Agric. related job	42	28.57
	Private job	33	22.45
	Government job	37	25.17
	Unemployed	35	23.81

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 2 presents the respondents perceived conservation approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove situated in Osogbo, Nigeria. Remarkably, the respondents' perceived conservation approaches include protection through the local taboos ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.48), punitive measures by the local judicial system ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.26), the common consensus among Osogbo indigenes to protect the site as a community heritage ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.17), provision of local vigilante to enhance conservation ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.14), daily surveillance at the forest by traditional worshipers ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.02), periodic sensitization campaigns in Osogbo on the conservation need of Osun-Osogbo sacred forest ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.01), compliance of the national law on the conservation protected areas ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.99), proper demarcation of forest boundary ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.98), regulate the commercial use of forest products ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.94) and strict prohibitions of unlawful acts by museum personnel and residents ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.59).

In all, it can be deduced from the results in the table that the respondents positively perceived the conservation approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria ( $\bar{x}$  = 4.06) as very good measures in the conservation of the grove.

**Table 2: Perceived Conservation Approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove**

Perceived Conservation Approaches	Mean
Protection through the local taboos	4.48
Punitive measures by the local judicial system	4.26
The common consensus among Osogbo indigenes to protect the site as a community heritage	4.17
Provision of local vigilante to enhance conservation	4.14

Daily surveillance at the forest by traditional worshippers	4.02
Periodic sensitisation campaigns in Osogbo on conservation need of Osun-Osogbo Sacred forest	4.01
Compliance with the National Law on the conservation protected areas	3.99
Proper demarcation of forest boundary	3.98
Regulate the commercial use of forest products	3.94
Strict prohibitions of unlawful acts by museum personnel and residents	3.59
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.06</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3 presents the respondents' perceived conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove located in Osogbo, Nigeria. Outstandingly, the respondents' perceived conservation challenges include poor conservation policies and implementation ( $\bar{x} = 4.89$ ), negative campaign from adherents of alien religions in the community ( $\bar{x} = 4.78$ ), influence of political crisis ( $\bar{x} = 4.75$ ), indiscriminate activities of tourists on the site ( $\bar{x} = 4.54$ ), undeveloped new techniques for conservation ( $\bar{x} = 3.98$ ), illegal entrants activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.73$ ), modernization factor ( $\bar{x} = 3.60$ ), inadequate funding ( $\bar{x} = 3.44$ ) and occasional conflicts with the museum management on the site ( $\bar{x} = 3.39$ ).

Overall, it can be inferred from the results in the table that the respondents' perceived conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria ( $\bar{x} = 4.12$ ) as major constraints in the conservation of the grove.

**Table 3: Perceived Conservation Challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove**

Perceived Challenges of Conservation	Mean
Poor conservation policies and implementation	4.89
Negative campaign from adherents of alien religion in the community	4.78
Influence of the political crisis	4.75
Indiscriminate activities of tourists on the site	4.54
Undeveloped new techniques for conservation	3.98
Illegal entrants activities	3.73
Modernization factor	3.60
Inadequate funding	3.44
Occasional conflicts with the museum management in the site	3.39
<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>4.12</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Then again, the study further sought out to establish a significant relationship with the respondents perceived conservation approaches vis-à-vis their perceived conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria. The linear equation which presented the multiple regression analysis is as shown below.

$$Y = 1.878 - 0.547X_1^{**} + e$$

$$R = 0.479; R \text{ Square} = 0.225; \text{Adjusted R Square} = 0.211; F = 16.437^{***}; \text{Note: } ** = (\alpha_{0.05})$$

The results in the specified model presented showed that the respondents perceived conservation approaches ( $\beta_1 = -0.547$ ) significantly influenced their perceived conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria.

The negative coefficient suggested that as the independent variable which is the respondents' perceived conservation approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria increases, the dependent variable which is the respondents' perceived conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria tends to decrease. The coefficient value signifies how much the mean of the dependent variable changes given a one-unit shift in the independent variable while holding other variables in the model constant.

## CONCLUSIONS

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Perception is the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. It is how something is regarded, understood, or interpreted. It is important because it gives meaning to a person's environment and makes sense of the world. However, this study has established that the conservation approaches play a major role in the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria.

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that the respondents positively perceived the identified conservation approaches of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria as very good measures in the conservation of the grove while they perceived the identified conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria as major constraints in the conservation of the grove.

It is therefore recommended that the perceived identified conservation approaches should be strengthened as this will translate to the mitigation and the action of reducing the severity and/or seriousness of the conservation challenges of Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, Osogbo, Nigeria.

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