

ADAN J. Agric. 2026, 7 (1): 168-182
© Association of Deans of Agriculture in Nigerian Universities (ADAN)
ISSN 2736-0385
DOI: 10.36108/adanja/6202.70.0181

Awareness of Agro-tourism and livelihood of the communities' opportunities and perceived impacts in South West, Nigeria

¹Akintade, E. A, ²Amos, T.T. and ³Odusanya M. D.

¹Department of Ecotourism and Wildlife Management, School of Agriculture and Agricultural Technology;

²Department of Agricultural Resource Economics,

The Federal University of Technology, P.M.B 704, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria.

³Department of Hospitality Management, School Of Social Management, Rufus Giwa Polytechnic, Owo.

Corresponding Author: eaakintade@futa.edu.ng, **Phone Number:** +2348060343029

Abstract

This paper assessed rural dwellers' awareness of agro-tourism and livelihood as well as the perceived impacts on their socioeconomic well-being in selected states in southwest Nigeria. The objective was to gain insight and assess awareness of agro-tourism and rural dwellers livelihoods and community opportunities as well as the palpable disparity between the perceived negative impacts of agro-tourism development in the neighboring communities to the selected states in southwest Nigeria. Strategic management, such as recreational facilities, can help to integrate earning sources and, as a result, increase farm productivity. These would rely on the efficient flow and utilization of farm resources in different events and value addition to farm output. The primary data were gathered from respondents by using personal in-depth interviews with the aid of the semi structured questionnaires. The choices of the selected states indicate convenience (cluster) not spread that could have captured the SW as a whole. The states selected were not randomly done. Data collection was carried out on a purposive sample of those initiated as were selected to represent the most central aspects of the agritourism scene of the region. The questionnaire method of data collection was employed to collect the needed empirical data. A purposive sampling and simple random sampling were used to select the respondents in the study area. To achieve this even distribution of the questionnaires across the three locations, 200 questionnaires were distributed to each state in Ekiti, Ondo and Osun making a total of 600 questionnaires that were administered evenly across the three selected states. Of all those instruments administered, 549 valid copies were retrieved and used in the final analysis of the study. The collected data were analyzed by descriptive and Inferential statistics. The results revealed agro-tourism facilities and only 65% of the potential were functional. The study also revealed that the visitors visited the places three times a week. The results also showed that 94% and 88% of the respondents kept up the green environment and the facilities, respectively. Social and economic values were found to be very strongly correlated with the sites. The foreign exchange revenues, job creation, popularity of the state, education of the locals and saving the green environment for a better living were these. The agro-tourism Centres were found to have immense potential of creating employment and income stability in the study area.

Key words: Awareness, Agro-tourism, Livelihood, Opportunities, Perception and South West.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the most dynamic sectors of the global economy that is creating employment, generating income and promoting regional development in developed and developing economies alike. Over the past decade, the tourism industry has experienced significant changes in its

production over the years, with tourists more interested in experiences that are authentic, nature-based and community-oriented than traditional mass tourism products (UNWTO, 2022; Akintade et al., 2022). This change has spurred the development of alternative touristic products like eco-tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism and agro-tourism.

Agro-tourism, or agritourism, is a sub-segment of tourism that combines agriculture and tourism to enable tourists to gain firsthand knowledge of agricultural activities, rural life, local food systems, and provide additional income for host communities.

Agro-tourism is well established as a sustainable economic development and diversification tool and an effective strategy for sustainable agriculture in rural areas, especially in areas under economic and environmental stress, at the global level. Globally, agro-tourism has become a prominent feature in the form of a solution to the agricultural income downturn, rural out-migration, and climate change and market instability affecting smallholder farmers. Research in Europe, North America and parts of Asia shows that agro-tourism can be a tool for better farm viability and yield by generating extra income from tourism and fostering relationships between the agro and tourism sectors (Flanigan, et al., 2020; Streifeneder, 2021). The European Union (EU) has included agro-tourism in its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and its rural development policies. Agro-tourism is both a feature of the European Union (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and of the EU rural development policies. Likewise, agro-tourism programs have resulted in job creation, empowerment of women and youth, cultural heritage maintenance, and raising environmental awareness in such countries as Italy, Spain, China, and India (Tew & Barbieri, 2022; Yang et al., 2023).

In addition to the economic benefits, agro-tourism has also been associated to the wider livelihood outcomes of the host communities. The sustainable livelihoods framework highlights that access to assets, institutional arrangements and vulnerability contexts are key factors that affect the sustainability of a livelihood, and that agro-tourism can have a positive or negative

impact on these. Empirical research over the past year has shown that agro-tourism can help boost the livelihood resilience of rural communities by diversifying incomes, connecting people to markets, and increasing social capital in rural communities (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2020; Kline et al., 2021). The benefits, however, are not automatic and are contingent on how aware, involved and fair the community is of the benefits and how they are distributed. In areas of limited awareness or unequal participation, agro-tourism could reinforce social inequalities or lead to resistance of host populations.

Information is a key component in influencing the attitudes and reactions of a community to agro-tourism development. Awareness in this context is defined as how much the community members realize what is meant by agro-tourism, what benefits it can bring, what risks are involved, and what opportunities exist for them to participate. Studies have shown that “awareness” seems to be linked with more positive attitudes towards tourism development and greater support for the development of tourism, while low awareness tends to be linked to negative perceptions, fear of cultural change, and scepticism. Negative aspects of agro-tourism can encompass environmental degradation, the strain on local resources, upset to traditional farming practices, land-use conflicts, increased lifestyles costs, and social conflicts between hosts and visitors. A clear understanding of the influence of awareness on the perception of these negative impacts is a basis for the development of agro-tourism in a sustainable way.

Agro-tourism is now seen as an emerging opportunity for rural transformation and inclusive growth in Africa. Agro-tourism has a good base in the continent because of its rich agricultural heritage, ecosystems and cultural landscapes.

However, agro-tourism is not well developed in many African nations because of lack of policy support, weak infrastructure, lack of marketing and low community awareness levels. In Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania, empirical research indicates that agro-tourism can enhance household incomes and boost rural–urban linkages, but these are largely dependent on the information and institutional support that is available, as well as on the perception of the impacts of tourism within the community.

Agro-tourism is now more recognised in Nigeria in the overall context of economic diversification and sustainable development. Nigeria's economy continues to be oil-driven, and agricultural activities continue to have a significant share of the workforce, especially in rural areas. Agro-tourism provides a chance to connect agriculture and tourism and to improve the wellbeing of rural communities and boost rural development. Although agro-tourism is still underdeveloped in Nigeria, and has got little empirical studies that have investigated community awareness, livelihood implications and perceived impacts, agro-tourism offers Nigeria a considerable potential to maximize its agricultural and cultural resources. Current research indicates that lack of infrastructure, institutional coordination and information dissemination are limitations on agro-tourism development throughout the country.

The study was conducted in South West Nigeria, which has relatively well established tourism infrastructure, several forms of agriculture, and is close to large urban markets, making it an ideal setting for the agro-tourism awareness and livelihood impacts to be studied. There are agriculture farms with good potential for tourism integration, like cocoa farms, oil palm plantation, fish farms, and others in the states of Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Osun, Ekiti, and Lagos (South-West, Nigeria). But the extent to

which communities nearby these agricultural locations are aware of agro-tourism opportunities, the negative impacts they perceive and the livelihood opportunities they gain from them is not well understood. Recent research in Nigeria has shown that community level awareness and information sources play an important role in participation in tourism-related activities and perceptions of the sustainability outcomes. Furthermore, the information sources that communities use to become aware of agro-tourism activities, including extension services, media, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and social networks are important in influencing awareness and perceptions. Research on developing countries shows that poor or incomplete information is frequently responsible for misunderstandings about the impacts of tourism and/or restricts community participation. It is thus crucial to grasp these information flows to develop policies and interventions that support inclusive and sustainable agro-tourism development.

In this background, the study looks at the awareness of agro-tourism and linkages with perceived negative impacts, livelihood opportunities and sources of information among host communities in selected states in South West Nigeria. The study is set in the current concerns of sustainable tourism and rural livelihoods, hence contributing empirical evidence in an under-researched area in the Nigerian context. The challenges that this study seeks to address stem from the lack of empirical knowledge of the impact of awareness creation on community perception of adverse effects of agro-tourism and the role agro-tourism plays in livelihood generation in South West Nigeria. Although policy-makers have been interested in agro-tourism, little is known of perceptions of the adjacent communities in developing AT, the level of

knowledge regarding opportunities and threats from AT, or how those perceptions influence participation and livelihoods.

The rationale for this study is based on its possible contribution to knowledge, policy and practice. Academically, it is a missing link in the literature on tourism and rural development which links agro-tourism awareness, perceived impacts, and livelihoods opportunities by employing an empirical approach in a developing country context. In practice, the results will feed into policy and planning processes of tourism and development agencies, to provide guidance on the design of agro-tourism strategies that are awareness-raising and community-inclusive. The study contributes to the improvement of rural livelihoods, poverty alleviation, and sustainable community development in the study area (South West Nigeria) socially.

The purpose of the research are to:

1. investigate the relationship between the level of awareness agro-tourism and perceived negative impacts of agro-tourism for host communities in selected states of South West Nigeria;

2. evaluate the role of agro-tourism in livelihood opportunities in these communities; and
3. determine and examine the main sources of agro-tourism awareness and information among the community members.

Methodology

The study was conducted in three contiguous States of southwest Nigeria namely: Ekiti, Ondo and Osun States with Akure as the capital of Ondo State, which was created from Western State on 3 February 1976 and also include which is now Ekiti State which was carved out in 1996, the inhabitants of these chosen states are predominantly agrarian, with agriculture accounting for about 75 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the region, the host communities are mainly smallholder farmers, who grow various arable crops such as yam, maize, cassava, pepper and also cash crops like cocoa and oil palm and are also actively involved in animal production, which include piggery, goat rearing, poultry and also fishes.

Figure 1 presents the map of the study area.

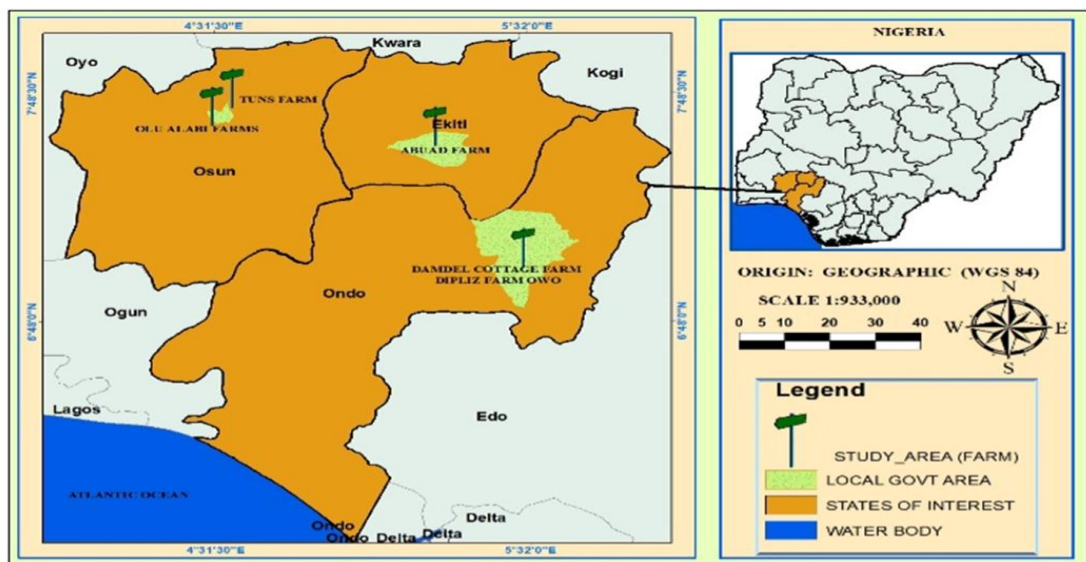


Figure 1: Map of Nigeria showing the study area
Source: Author field survey (2023)

Quantitative and qualitative techniques involving more than one data collection method were used to obtain answers to the research questions. (Yin, 2017; Cátia & Pedro, 2020) note that multiple sources of evidence enhance the quality of a study by ensuring multiple sources of the same phenomenon, thus increasing the level of validity. The quantitative technique adopted was questionnaires and data analysis procedures (descriptive and inferential

statistics) which generated quantitative data. The technique used in this study was a qualitative method, which was carried out by conducting interviews and analyzing the data collected, resulting in non-numerical data. This approach was used because it provided a better opportunity for the researcher to answer the research questions as well as evaluate the extent to which the research findings could be trusted and inferences be made from the findings.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents on Socio-Demographic characteristics

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	320	58.3
	Female	229	41.7
	Total	549	100
Ethnic group	Yoruba	215	39.1
	Igbo	144	26.2
	Hausa	115	21.0
	Others	75	13.7
	Total	549	100
Age group	Less than 25	83	15.0
	25–34 years	117	21.0
	35–44 years	219	40.0
	45–54 years	130	24.0
	Total	549	100
Marital status	Married	214	39.0
	Single	183	33.0
	Separated	152	28.0
	Total	549	100
Qualification	SSCE/GCE/O'Level	127	23.0
	OND/Diploma	142	26.0
	HND/First Degree	133	24.0
	Master and Above	147	27.0
	Total	549	100
Occupation Status	Unemployed	28	5.1
	Self-employed	317	57.7
	Employed	204	37.2
	Total	549	100

Source: Field survey (2023)

The questionnaire method of data collection was employed to collect the needed empirical data. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques in the agrarian communities within the study area.

An even geographic distribution and equal representation across the locations was ensured by establishing a sampling frame, which involved administering 600 questionnaires evenly across the three states with the target of 200 questionnaires each;

Ekiti State, Ondo State and Osun State. Of this total population of instruments distributed, 549 valid instruments were successfully retrieved and were found suitable for final data analysis; this gave an overall response rate of 91.5%.

Results and Discussion

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 reveals the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the study area who completely filled the questionnaire.

The table 1, reveals that 320 of the respondents (58.3%) were male while 229 (41.7%) were female. It implies that the main pillar of the agro-tourism is mostly occupied by male. This is supported by Nnena (2011) which says that male farmers were more than their female counterparts. The majority (39%) of the respondents were married, 33% were single, and 28% were separated. According to age, 15% of the respondents' age group is less than 25, 21% is between 25 – 34 years, 40% is between 35 – 44 years and 24% of the respondents' age group is from 45 – 54 years.

The results reveal that 23% of the respondents had SSCE/GCE/O'Level, 26%

had OND/Diploma, 24% had HND/First Degree while the 27% had Master's degree and above. In addition, most of the respondents (39.1%) were Yoruba, 26.2% were Igbo and 21% were Hausa. As per the occupational data, 5.1% were unemployed, 57.7% self employed and 37.2% were employed.

The extent of awareness and perceived impacts of Agro-Tourism.

Table 2 shows that majority of the communities that share the same boundary with agro-tourism development in the Southwest Nigeria have very low awareness of the negative impacts of agro-tourism. Table 2 indicates the relationship between the perceived negative impacts of agro-tourism development and the level of awareness of the communities and adjacent communities located in Southwest Nigeria. It shows that majority of the adjacent communities have very low awareness of the negative impacts of agro-tourism.

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by the perceived negative impacts of agro-tourism development on the adjacent communities, and their awareness in the selected States of Southwest of Nigeria.

Table 2: Agro-Tourism Awareness and Perceived Impacts

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD
1	Agro-tourism is known to everyone	182 (33.20%)	171 (31.14%)	100 (18.21%)	96 (17.50%)
2	Agro-tourism needs competent educationists	265 (48.27%)	155 (28.23%)	70 (12.80%)	59 (10.80%)
3	Agro-tourism involves production information	250 (45.54%)	180 (32.79%)	41 (7.47%)	78 (14.21%)
4	Agro-tourism development will improve pride of the state	240 (43.72%)	220 (40.07%)	50 (9.12%)	39 (7.10%)
5	Agro-tourism will bring about increased recreation for communities	198 (36.07%)	189 (34.43%)	99 (18.03%)	63 (11.48%)

The results show that a considerable percentage of the respondents agreed with the fact of the “agro-tourism is known to everyone” (64.34%). This corroborates previous findings in Nigeria where general awareness of agro-tourism is rising, but not necessarily accompanied by a deeper understanding. Some of the rural residents in South-Western Nigeria were aware of agro-tourism but their understanding of its working principles was not uniform and also not in-depth (Oladeji et al., 2020; Ariyo; Alabi, 2020). Nearly 79% of the respondents also strongly agreed that “agro-tourism is based on production information”. This perception aligns with the educational aspect of agro-tourism that has been revealed by several recent studies. According to Obinna (2023), agro-tourism is considered by the general population of Nigeria to be tourism activities that bring together agricultural education with leisure, such as farm demonstrations, guided farm visits and hands-on learning. Agri-tourism was similarly correlated with knowledge-sharing functions and agricultural innovation by orchard residents in the study conducted by Francis (2024) in Ogun State and its agritourism analysis of orchard systems. This implies that people in the Southwest region of Nigeria are aware of the potential of agro-tourism, something which has been deeply entrenched in the farming traditions in the region.

Agro-tourism is believed by the respondents to have “Improved the state tourism potential and outlook” and this also confirms the socio-cultural value of agro-tourism. 83% of the respondents shared this view, showing their belief that agro-tourism is a tool to generate cultural visibility and build community identity. Ikuemonisan et al., (2024) noted that in the rural areas, tourists tend to boost local pride by promoting and elevating traditional food systems, indigenous practices, and cultural

heritage to outsiders. This feeling of pride is often linked to the greater sense of local assets and community self-assurance. Moreover, the perception that AT would result in “more recreation for communities” (70.5% agreement) is consistent with other literature on the leisure impacts of AT. The IJOEAR 2024 also emphasizes that agritourism can often open new spaces for recreation of residents and tourists, facilitating the activities of relaxation, family outings and culture.

There is also a high level of consensus (76.5%) with the statement: 'agro-tourism requires competent educationists'. This perception points to some community perceptions that to carry out agro-tourism successfully, the community needs professional skills, formal training, and technical knowledge. Such a belief is based on the actual constraints that exist in the Nigerian agribusiness and agritourism environment. According to Ikuemonisan et al. (2024), the lack of training, digital skills, management capacity, and institutional support are still some of the critical challenges that hinder the development of agritourism. Similarly, Obinna (2023) claims that even agricultural extension officers who are supposed to be the first line of defence of agro-tourism have restricted understanding of what is agro-tourism. In this sense, the importance given to the “educationists” in the community is due to the fact that technical, managerial and competence in the hospitality sector are necessary in the process of turning awareness into a functional agro-tourism business.

Structural and geographical features of Southwest Nigeria may also contribute in influencing these patterns. The region has better infrastructure, relatively high literacy rate, and is close to the urban centres (Lagos, Ibadan, Akure) which provide more opportunities for agritourism than many other regions in Nigeria. Francis (2024)

mentioned that the regions of Southwest are appealing to visitors, in part, for their suitable transportation facilities and the availability of an urban middle-class interested in weekend recreational experiences. These structural benefits have implications not only for the viability of agro-tourism but also for their awareness of its recreational and economic values.

Although communities have positive perceptions, the literature indicates that they may have underestimated negative effects at an early stage of the tourism development process. In areas where communities are initially enthusiastic about agritourism, it can affect farm labour management, add to the workload of the farming household, impact family life and generate social tensions, as documented by Grillini (2024). These subtle negative influences are not yet evident to the respondents in Southwest Nigeria and thus, greatly positive attitudes are experienced. Risks that can occur at a later stage, if not managed, are also revealed by research, such as land use conflicts, environmental deterioration, and benefit-sharing issues, as outlined in the Research Gate report on agritourism and rural development for 2024.

The positive responses in the data set also may be influenced by aspirational expectations. Agro-tourism seems to be a potential path to livelihood diversification for rural households in Nigeria, especially as those households are increasingly under economic stress from the changing production and income potential of agriculture, the jobless rate and the impact of climate change on production. This is in line with the findings of the research that indicates that communities are more likely to show high levels of support and optimism when they feel tourism can be a good economic opportunity.

The local farming industry encourages tourism and provides opportunities for income generation.

The distribution of respondents according to agro-tourism, livelihood and opportunities are shown in Table 3. The findings suggest that agro-tourism has great economic potential for communities in Southwest Nigeria as shown by the number of respondents that agreed and strongly agreed that agro-tourism was of great economic value to them.

Table 3: The distribution of respondents based on Agro-tourism, Livelihood and Opportunities

S/N	Variables	SA	A	D	SD	Total
1	Agro-tourism has economic value	250 (45.55%)	230 (41.89%)	30 (5.46%)	39 (7.10%)	549
2	Agro-tourism improves the use of land	149 (27.14%)	139 (25.32%)	133 (24.23%)	128 (23.31%)	549
3	Agro-tourism improves livelihood opportunities	239 (43.53%)	228 (41.53%)	30 (5.47%)	52 (9.47%)	549
4	Investors can collaborate with Agro-tourism organizations	156 (28.41%)	148 (26.96%)	125 (22.77%)	120 (21.86%)	549
5	Agro-tourism serves as food safety support	230 (41.89%)	210 (38.25%)	54 (9.84%)	55 (10.02%)	549

In the last 10 years, the world has turned towards multi-functional agriculture which is not only about crop and livestock production but also about agriculture activities that contribute to tourism and its additional

income streams. Research in sub-Saharan Africa has highlighted the potential to help increase rural incomes, local entrepreneurialism and alleviate overreliance on primary agriculture through agro-tourism.

In Nigeria, the economic instability and erraticity in agricultural production has made agriculture less attractive, thus making agro-tourism a preferred alternative for farmers and rural communities. This may be the reason why a high consensus was found in the answers about the economic value of agro-tourism.

The results also show that there was a dual attitude towards the benefits of agro-tourism with respect to land use improvement. While some respondents did agree, a large number disagreed or strongly disagreed. This difference could be attributed to the different contexts, specifically in land use patterns, tenure insecurity and the different levels of exposure of respondents to successful agro-tourism projects. The efficiency of land use in agro-tourism relies generally on proper planning, financing, training and favorable policies which foster the synergies between tourism and agriculture. Land fragmentation, customary land ownership and inadequate government support are some of the factors that limit the best use of land resources in many rural communities in Nigeria. Such structural restrictions might make some respondents feel that agro-tourism is not adequate to solve land utilization problems. Moreover, those who have not experienced agro-tourism personally may view it as an abstract concept that has an uncertain value in terms of land use. This is consistent with other African studies that indicate that awareness and direct participation are significant factors in the perception of benefits from agro-tourism.

A hefty majority of respondents expressed their consent that agro-tourism benefits the livelihoods. This perception is supported by growing evidence that agro-tourism helps to reduce poverty, create jobs and enhance the quality of life in rural areas. Agro-tourism allows farmers to diversify their income while providing formal and

informal employment opportunities to host communities in activities like farm visits, harvesting experiences, educational visits and processing demonstrations, (Adeola & Adetoro, 2023). Women, especially, and youth are given access to new economic opportunities like food vending, sale of handicrafts, guiding services, and cultural performances. Respondents' appreciation of the positive livelihood impacts of agro-tourism can also be linked with the informal social capital created by the activity. Visitors and host communities interact and often result in the sharing of knowledge, skills and values, thereby reinforcing local identity and cohesion. The results therefore demonstrate that the idea of agro-tourism is not just an economic empowerment, but also a social change.

The attitude is also fairly positive among respondents that investors can work with agro-tourism agencies, although less so than the other variables. Agro-tourism can offer some investment opportunities, as the commercialization of rural tourism continues and the growing attention of private actors towards sustainable tourism activities is growing. But there is some level of disagreement which means that institutional, financial and infrastructural challenges could inhibit some potential collaborations. The weak policy support, inadequate promotional frameworks, and limited accessibility of credit facilities identified in the literature have been seen to be serious constraints to the development of agro-tourism in Nigeria, (Oviasuyi & Ogunleye, 2022). The various responses can be attributed to the level of investor confidence in the stability of the governance structure, effectiveness of land policies, market demand, and the availability of skilled labour, which are typically needed for a successful collaboration.

Another variable on which most respondents indicated a high agreement score was regarding food safety and its

positive impact on safer food consumption as a result of visiting agro-tourism. This positive perception is due to the increased awareness of farm-to-table models and the use of organic production, which frequently are integrated inside agro-tourism enterprises. Agro-tourism encourages the openness and awareness associated with the food production, processing and distribution processes, the information of which is made available directly to the visitor or the consumer at farm level. With the outbreak of COVID-19 and recent food safety issues worldwide, consumers are seeking local and traceable food products more than ever. Food contamination problems, unhygienic handling and lack of adequate regulation in Nigeria have made consumers more aware of requirement for cleaner agricultural products. Farms engaged in agro-tourism that follow good agricultural practices, use ecological production methods, and have a hygienic processing plant can therefore, be seen as good sources of safe food. The results indicate a substantial consensus among respondents that the community is linked to better and more reliable food systems and agro-tourism.

The general findings support the view that agro-tourism has been broadly

accepted as a means of enhancing the livelihood situation, stimulating economic development and food security. The results also show that land tenure problems, insecurity, lack of capital investment and poor awareness have significant impacts on communities' perception of the benefits of agro-tourism, however, structural issues do play a role. The results of high levels of agreement on economic value and livelihood improvements, and food safety, suggest that the agro-tourism sector is likely to develop significantly in Southwest Nigeria if it can be supported by enabling policy and sustainable management practices. On the other hand, the diverse land use and investor collaboration perceptions indicate action areas in which government participation, PPP, community awareness and infrastructure development are required to build confidence and maximize the benefits of agro-tourism to rural communities.

Sources of Agro-Tourism Information

The distribution of sources through which respondents reported learning about agro-tourism shows a clear reliance on interpersonal networks and traditional mass media, with digital and formal institutional channels playing smaller roles.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to the sources of awareness about Agro-tourism information

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Friends and Neighbours	455	82.9	1st
Fellow Agro-tourism practitioners	440	80.1	2nd
Radio	425	77.4	3rd
Television	425	77.4	3rd
Cooperative societies	235	42.8	4th
Extension agents	95	17.3	5th
Mobile phone	95	17.3	5th
Newspaper	65	11.8	7th
Input Dealers	50	9.1	8th
Magazines & bulletins	10	1.8	9th
Internet	10	1.8	9th

Co-operatives, neighbours, fellow agro-tourism operators come next, followed by radio and television, and then newspapers, input dealers, mobile phone and internet, which although potent, are not yet as strong as first points of contact. This phenomenon is in line with a lot of recent evidence that indicates when formal extension systems are weak and/or uneven they are replaced by other channels that are trusted, close, oral and socially embedded, and through which knowledge about new ideas is initially spread by word of mouth and demonstration by peers (Adeyeye, 2024; Shitaye et al., 2024).

The social proof of having visitors or selling a farm product while staying in the same neighbourhood is still effective, as it offers immediate and low cost learning that is very persuasive for others who are considering participating.

Respondents' dominance as radio and television users also reflects recent research on the ongoing influence of radio and television in rural information systems. Radio still plays a vital role in agricultural communication in Nigeria, presenting information in local languages, which is appropriate to the area and accessible to audiences with low levels of literacy, and can be listened to while working on the farm (Shodiye, et al., 2024).

The role of television is indicative of the increasing electrification of households in some parts of the Southwest and of the visibility that television provides experiential attractions such as farm festivals or orchard tours. Interpersonal learning is often amplified by broadcast media; for example, a story in the media about a successful model agro-tourism farm can make the idea more salient, and can lead neighbours who take an interest to visit the farm and discuss it informally, thereby further promoting the diffusion process, (Shitaye et al., 2024).

Cooperative societies' comparatively strong position as a source of information may be a reflection of the institutional trust and routine connections that these societies offer. Cooperatives as a forum for gathering people around economic activity are natural forums for sharing ideas on diversifying livelihoods, and when cooperative leaders are in place to implement agro-tourism strategies, they can effectively disseminate practical information and make coordinated investments quickly. On the other hand, the low ranking of formal extension agents also indicates the limitations of the public advisory services: lack of specialists, lack of mobility and wide responsibilities have reduced the role of extension agents in providing farmers with specialised agro-tourism advice and guidance, leaving farmers less dependent on it for the purposes of new livelihood opportunities.

While this doesn't imply that Internet and magazines are of less importance in respondents' awareness sources, it should be noted that there are still structural limitations to the extent to which these channels are currently reaching respondents in rural Southwest Nigeria. The figures on the use of the internet and similar technologies are also on the rise at the national level (Adeleke, 2021), but penetration is still not uniform, and is low among those who rely the most on direct contact (rural, older, and poorer groups). In areas where smartphones and mobile data are cheap and literacy is improving, web and social media are becoming important dissemination tools; but in many farming communities social media and websites are not yet as important as trusted human networks and radio. As much as mobile phones are found in the states, the use of sophisticated agricultural apps is not as common, and this is what explains the placement of "mobile phone" in the middle, as opposed to the upper part of the table; the result of studies undertaken in some of the

Nigerian states indicates high ownership of mobile phones, but the use of agricultural apps or internet-based advisory services varies.

Conclusion

Finally, this paper shows that the comprehension of the agro-tourism sector and the realization of its values is a difficult process, only tolerated by the majority of public and private authorities. Social and Economic values measured were found to be highly correlated with the sites. Those were foreign exchange revenues, job creation, popularization of the state, better education of its citizens and better conservation of the green environment for a better healthy life. The agro-tourism centers can play a major role in providing job creation and income security in the study area is settled.

Recommendation

The concept of agro-tourism recreation was conceived with the intent of providing the recreation needs of all individuals in the Southwest, regardless of their location in the Southwest and regardless of their physical, mental or social characteristics. The Agro-tourism has been recognized as a development aid in the Southwest region and more efforts should be made on it as being sustainable and contributing to quality of life.

References

- Adeleke, R. (2021). Digital divide in Nigeria: The role of regional differentials. *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 13(3), 333–346.
- Adeola, O., & Adetoro, A. (2023). Agro-tourism and rural livelihood diversification in Nigeria: Opportunities and challenges. *Journal of Tourism and Development Studies*, 15(2), 45–60.
- Adeola, O., & Evans, O. (2023). Community participation and sustainability outcomes of tourism development in Nigeria. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 31(4), 789–806. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2022.2041123>.
- Adeyeye, B. (2024). Nexus among indigenous languages, agricultural radio and farmer information flows in Nigeria. *Agricultural Communication Review*, 2024.
- AESON / Rivers State study. (2023). Assessment of Mobile Phone Usage for Agricultural Information Sharing Among Rural Farmers in Rivers State.
- Akinbola, O., Ajayi, O., & Yusuf, T. (2020). Land use dynamics and agricultural tourism potentials in rural Nigeria. *African Journal of Sustainable Agriculture*, 7(1), 22–34.
- Akintade, E. A., Oluwole, A., & Aina, O. C. (2022). Behavioural intention and customer satisfaction in hotels patronage in Ondo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Research in Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 4.
- Akinwale, A. A., & Adekunle, O. O. (2021). Agriculture, tourism and rural development in Nigeria: Prospects and challenges. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 10(2), 512–526.
- Barbieri, C. (2021). Agritourism research: A systematic review and future agenda. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 83, 247–259. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.02.012>.
- Bello, F. G., & Bello, O. A. (2022). Information dissemination and community perception of tourism development in rural Nigeria. *Tourism Review International*, 26(3), 297–312. <https://doi.org/10.3727/154427222X16430250427215>.
- Briedenhann, J., & Wickens, E. (2020). Tourism routes as a tool for local economic development of rural areas. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28(2), 196–215.

- <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2019.1654890>.
- Cátia, Q., & Pedro, A. (2020). How to Improve the Validity and Reliability of a Case Study Approach. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, 9(2), 264–275.
- De Rosa, M., McElwee, G., & Smith, R. (2019). Farm diversification strategies in response to rural policy: a case from rural Italy. *Land Use Policy*, 81, 291–301.
- European Commission. (2021). *The common agricultural policy and rural development: Supporting agritourism and diversification*. Publications Office of the European Union.
- FAO. (2021). *Food safety and sustainable food systems after COVID-19*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- Flanigan, S., Blackstock, K., & Hunter, C. (2020). Agritourism from the perspective of providers and visitors: A typology-based study. *Tourism Management*, 40, 394–405. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.09.004>.
- Francis, O. E. (2024). *Potentials of Orchards for Sustainable Agritourism: A Case Study of Ilaro Yewa Land, Southwestern Nigeria*. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*.
- Grillini, G. (2024). How tourists change farms: The impact of agritourism on farm households and social sustainability. *Journal of Rural Studies / Tourism Studies*.
- IJOEAR. (2024). *The Rise of Agritourism: An Overview of Trends, Impacts and Prospects*. *International Journal of Environmental Agriculture Research*.
- Ikuemonisan, E. S., et al. (2024). *Challenges and Strategies in Nigerian Agribusiness: Implications for Agritourism and Rural Livelihoods*. *CABI Agriculture and Bioscience*.
- Kline, C., Barbieri, C., & LaPan, C. (2021). The influence of agritourism on farm viability and rural community resilience. *Journal of Travel Research*, 60(6), 1129–1145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287520936980>.
- Látková, P., & Vogt, C. (2020). Residents' attitudes toward existing and future tourism development in rural communities. *Journal of Travel Research*, 59(3), 487–503. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287519834675>.
- Mensah, I. (2020). Community participation and sustainable tourism development in Africa. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 17(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568316.2019.1592060>.
- Mkhize, G., & Cele, N. (2023). Agritourism as a livelihood diversification strategy in rural South Africa. *African Journal of Tourism Research*, 11(1), 45–63.
- Mwangi, J., & Kamau, P. (2022). Community perceptions of agro-tourism impacts in East Africa. *International Journal of Agricultural Tourism*, 9(3), 112–128.
- Nunkoo, R., Thelwall, M., & Gursoy, D. (2020). Public trust in tourism institutions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 83, 102969. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2020.102969>.
- Nwangwu, K. N., Onyenekwe, C. S., Opat, P. I., Ume, C. O., & Ume, N. N. C. (2024). Can digital technology promote market participation among smallholder farmers?. *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 27(4), 706–728.
- Obinna, F. (2023). *An Appraisal of Agro-Tourism Knowledge Among Extension Officers in Abakaliki, South-Eastern Nigeria*. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*.
- Ohe, Y., & Kurihara, S. (2013). Evaluating the Complementary Relationship between Local Brand Farm Products and Rural Tourism: Evidence from Japan. *Tourism Management*, 35, 278–283. [doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2012.07.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2012.07.003).
- Ojo, S., & Adebayo, A. (2021). Multi-functional agriculture and the

- expansion of agro-tourism in West Africa. *Journal of Rural Development Research*, 19(4), 87–103.
- Okechukwu, W. I., & Iwuagwu, C. C. (2022). Tourism development and rural livelihoods in Nigeria: Issues and prospects. *International Journal of Tourism Policy*, 12(3), 241–256.
- Oladeji, S. O., Adeyemi, O. A., & Adebayo, A. A. (2024). Tourism awareness and host community support for sustainable development in southwestern Nigeria. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 44(1), 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.44110-927>.
- Oladeji, S. O., Ariyo, O. T., & Alabi, O. I. (2020). Potentials of Agrotourism on Social and Economic Development of Selected Agricultural Farms and Adjoining Communities in Southwestern Nigeria. *Czech Journal of Tourism*, 8(2), 119–142.
- Oviasuyi, P., & Ogunleye, K. (2022). Constraints to agro-tourism development in Nigeria: A policy and investment perspective. *Nigerian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 4(1), 71–84.
- Phillip, S., Hunter, C., & Blackstock, K. (2020). A typology for defining agritourism. *Tourism Management*, 40, 394–405. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2013.07.001>.
- Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Jaafar, M., Kock, N., & Ahmad, A. G. (2022). Community participation and perceived impacts of tourism development. *Tourism Management*, 82, 104178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104178>.
- ResearchGate Working Paper. (2024). *Assessing the Impact of Agrotourism Initiatives on Rural Development and Community-Based Agricultural Management*.
- Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2021). Tourism, local economic development and inclusion: Evidence from Africa. *Tourism Geographies*, 23(1–2), 132–152.
- <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2020.1758703>.
- Schilling, B. J., Sullivan, K. P., & Komar, S. J. (2016). Examining the economic benefits of agritourism: The case of New Jersey. *Journal of Agricultural Food Systems and Community Development*, 3, 199–214.
- Scoones, I. (2021). *Sustainable livelihoods and rural development* (2nd ed.). Practical Action Publishing.
- Shitaye, Z., et al. (2024). Sources and intensity of access to agricultural information: a comparative analysis. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 2024.
- Shodipe, O. A., Sanusi, B., Talabi, F. O., & Adelabu, O. (2024). Radio's role in agricultural development: A review of broadcasting strategies for farmer education in South-West Nigeria. *Global Knowledge, Memory and Communication*.
- Spenceley, A., Snyman, S., & Eagles, P. (2021). Guidelines for tourism partnerships and community engagement in Africa. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(5), 695–715. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1835935>.
- Stone, M. T., Rogerson, C. M., & Rogerson, J. M. (2022). Tourism, livelihoods and rural transformation in sub-Saharan Africa. *Development Southern Africa*, 39(3), 345–361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2021.1968732>.
- Streifeneder, T. (2021). Agriculture first? The resilience of agritourism in European rural areas. *Sustainability*, 13(8), 4191. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13084191>.
- Tew, C., & Barbieri, C. (2022). The perceived benefits of agritourism: The provider perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 41, 100942. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2022.100942>.
- UNWTO. (2022). *Tourism and rural development: A policy brief*. World Tourism Organization.

- Yang, L., Xu, H., & Wall, G. (2023). Agritourism development and rural revitalization in emerging economies. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 27, 100745. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2023.100745>.
- Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.