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# Women's Participation in Ecotourism Development Within the Kakum Conservation Area, Ghana: Implications for Community Planning

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## ABSTRACT

The paper assessed the level of participation of women in the management of the Kakum Conservation Area in Ghana focusing on selected communities. Using a multi-stage sampling technique, 169 women were selected. Questionnaire was the main research instrument relied on whilst inferential statistical tools such as independent sample t-test, and One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed. The paper revealed that although to some extent the participation of women was spontaneous but induced and coercive levels of participation were also found operating simultaneously in the study area. This limits the effective operation of spontaneous participation which supports bottom-up planning, and active and direct participation of women in ecotourism development activities in the area. It is therefore recommended that District Assemblies in the study area and environmental related organisations should make concerted efforts to empower women through effective communication or education (workshops, fora and radio programmes) on ecotourism development activities.

## KEYWORDS

Women; participation; ecotourism; community planning; Kakum; Ghana

## Introduction

Involving community members in the decision-making process is vital in development planning. The UN Agenda 21 (blueprint for action from the Rio Earth Summit in 1992) emphasised this as key in achieving sustainable development. This is because community participation helps to address a wide range of social, economic and environmental problems more effectively (UN, 1993). In ecotourism, Drumm (1998) defines community participation as the active involvement of people who inhabit or own a natural attraction in decision-making and management activities of that natural attraction. Such participation by host communities provides several benefits such as generating support for conservation of natural attractions as it makes host communities feel part of the management body and as such recognised as important stakeholders (Kiss, 2004). Engagement of host communities in decision-making on projects in their area has been observed to

make the planning process effective, equitable and legitimate as it enhances the collective interest of such communities (Buanes et al., 2005). Other benefits highlighted by Scheyvens (2007) include the provision of employment opportunities, as small business operators take advantage of abundant natural and cultural assets available in communities to produce ecotourism products and services for tourists.

Apart from the overall participation of community members in the decision-making process on ecotourism projects, the World Tourism Organisation [WTO] (2011) recommends active participation of women in decision-making on tourism activities such as ecotourism projects because women constitute a large proportion of tourism workforce and also depend on tourism for their survival and to take care of their families. Although the patriarchal nature of many African communities has resulted in women often relegated to the background with men playing dominant roles in many development projects, environmental conservation efforts are bound to fail if the participation of women is neglected. This is due to the role of women which is critical and important when it comes to matters relating to the natural environment (such as securing sources of fuel, getting food and fodder, and managing land—forest, agricultural lands) which enriches their experience in managing natural resources, biodiversity and ecosystems (Bureau of International Information Programs, 2012). Hence involving women will help provide the necessary support to sustain ecotourism in their respective areas. In view of this, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which ended in 2015 had five of its eight main goals directly or indirectly supporting women participation in development activities (Jucan & Jucan, 2013). The current Sustainable Development Goals being pursued by the United Nations to achieve sustainable development in various countries in the world by 2030 also has goal five dedicated specifically to gender equality and empowering women and girls, in effect, supporting equal participation of men and women in development projects without discrimination.

Notwithstanding the various calls for women's participation in the decision-making process, studies show that there is still little attention given to women's participation in ecotourism development activities in the global south (Honey, 2008; Stronza & Durham, 2008; Zeppel, 2006). In Ghana, although some studies have been conducted on community participation in ecotourism activities to find out the extent to which local communities participate in the decision-making process and the benefits they derive from ecotourism in general, such studies have failed to touch on the participation of women. For instance, studies by Afenyo (2012), and Mensah and Adofo (2013) focused on community participation in ecotourism at Tafi Atome (Volta Region) and Bobiri Forest Reserve (Ashanti Region) respectively but broadly covered the views of residents in both communities without much emphasis on women. Similarly, a work by Mensah (2017) also looked at community-based ecotourism in park-fringe communities around Kakum Conservation Area (Central Region) but did not concentrate on women's participation. This has therefore created a knowledge gap on women's participation in the management of ecotourism projects and how their level of participation is impacting on their wellbeing. Furthermore, the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) has launched the *Women in Tourism Empowerment Programme (WITEP)* which aims at using tourism as a tool for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment to tackle inequality and gender-based discrimination in the tourism industry. The overall goal of the project focusing on promoting women's economic empowerment in tourism through partnerships

with various development stakeholders, provide additional bases for the current study to be undertaken to contribute to the success of WITEP. The objective of the current study is to assess the level of participation of women in the management of the Kakum Conservation Area in Ghana focusing on selected communities surrounding the conserved area.

The Kakum Conservation Area is one of the largest conserved areas in Ghana covering about 375 km<sup>2</sup> with the Kakum National Park (KNP) being one of the major sites visited by thousands of tourists every year (Mensah, 2017). The findings of the study will help reveal the nature of participation of women in the management of the above conserved area and the ecotourism related activities in the study area. This will help the Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, Ghana Tourism Authority, Ghana Heritage and Conservation Trust (GHCT), and other relevant authorities to put in place the necessary strategies to strengthen women activities in ecotourism development and in the long run contribute to strengthening women's participation in the tourism sector of Ghana.

### Theoretical perspective

The paper is underpinned by the Tosun's (1999) community participation model. It was preferably selected out of the many other community participation models such as the Arnstein's Ladder of Participation (Arnstein, 1969), Pretty's Community Participation Model (Pretty, 1995) and Davidson's (1998) Wheel of Participation Framework due to its specific focus on tourism by linking different levels of community participation to developments in the tourism industry (Tosun, 2006). The other models tend to generally cover development issues which make their application in the tourism sector challenging and not well-focused to adequately deal with tourism development projects. Tosun's (1999) community participation model considers community participation as a form of participation whereby people, citizens or a host community participate in development projects that affect them at different levels (local, regional or national) (Mensah & Adofo, 2013).

According to Tosun's (1999) community participation model, community participation can be categorised under three main levels: spontaneous, induced, and coercive (Table 1). The spontaneous participation which is the highest level of community participation represents an ideal form of participation and hence provides full managerial responsibility and authority over a community project to a host community. It is voluntary in nature

**Table 1.** Tosun's community participation model.

Type of community participation	Defining characteristics
Spontaneous	Bottom-up; active participation; direct participation; participation in whole process of development including decision-making, implementation, sharing benefit and evaluating; authentic participation; coproduction; self-planning; wide participation; social participation.
Induced	Top down; passive; formal; mostly indirect; represents degree of tokenism, manipulation and pseudo-participation; participation in implementation and sharing benefits; choice between proposed alternatives and feedback
Coercive	Top-down, passive; mostly indirect, formal; participation in implementation, but not necessarily sharing benefits; choice between proposed limited alternatives or no choice; represent paternalism, nonparticipation, high degree of tokenism and manipulation.

Source: Tosun (1999).

and characterised by bottom-up form of participation where members of the host community actively and directly participate in the whole development process including decision-making, implementation, sharing of benefits and evaluation of projects. The spontaneous participation is therefore synonymous to the degree of citizen power in Arnstein's ladder of participation where citizens have delegated power or full managerial control over community projects.

The induced community participation in tourism development, on the other hand, allows the host community to hear and be heard. That is, at this level they have a voice about development projects in their community but do not have the necessary power to ensure that their views are factored into final decisions by more powerful actors such as government bodies and multinational companies. To Tosun (1999), this kind of participation can take different forms such as passive participation (where people take part in the implementation of decisions but were not consulted [UN, 1975]), indirect participation (no face to face interaction with official spokespeople of projects [Richardson, 1983]), and formal participation (rules and content of participation are determined by the government without any input by community members [Sherraden, 1991]). Under the induced form of participation, community members are often promised material rewards such as financial remuneration (Beritelli & Laesser, 2011; Bussy & Kelly, 2010) before they participate. This usually results from the fact that residents or community members see so much to gain from a community project, thus, until they are "induced", they are not willing to get themselves involved.

Coercive participation which is the lowest level of participation in the Tosun's (1999) model, although helps to get community members to participate in development activities, but its main motive is to get those who possess power to educate host communities to turn away from possible threats to the future of tourism development (Tosun, 2006). Ideally, community priorities must influence tourism development but under the coercive participation this is not the case, rather the development of tourism is undertaken to satisfy the needs and desires of decision makers, tourism operators and tourists.

Although the Tosun's (1999) model generally serves as a useful framework to assess the level of community participation in tourism development projects, it has been criticised for not being specific on the number of people that have to be included in the decision-making process, and challenges that have to be addressed to make the participation process a successful one (Tosun, 2006). Despite some shortfalls identified with the model, it is still recognised and used by many as a major framework to assess the level of participation of community members in ecotourism projects in both developed and developing countries. Applying this model in the context of women fits very well in the liberal feminism theory which argues that both men and women possess the capacity of reasoning and should be treated equally in various socio-economic issues including decision-making processes (Lorber, 1997). The above model therefore provides a useful framework to assess women participation in ecotourism development in the study area.

## **Women, tourism development and community participation**

A report by the UNED-UK (1999) entitled *Gender and Tourism* showed that women can have much voice in the tourism industry through getting involved in tourism activities

by becoming part of the decision-making processes and carving out new roles in their families, communities and within local power structures. Another report by Vargas and Aguilar (2004) which centred on *Gender Makes the Difference*, found that women's participation in tourism enterprises helps in reducing their level of poverty and supports the gendered structure of work and decision-making within the wider community. Hence participation of women in the decision-making process makes them have high status and self-esteem in their communities. The 2010 global report on women in tourism (WTO, 2011) indicated that participation of women in decision-making and problem-solving activities on tourism projects in their communities helps women to lose their initial inhibitions and discover the enormous capacity they have in supporting the development of their communities. The report further showed that the integration of women into the planning and implementation process can be used as a vehicle to promote equality and women's empowerment at the household, community, national and global levels.

Participation of women in community development projects in the context of Africa have been found by Wema (2010) to be influenced by both pull and push factors with the pull factors serving as those elements that encourage women's participation while push factors, on the other hand, hinders women's participation. Pull factors such as women's empowerment through the provision of skills, leadership positions and social interaction (such as platforms for meetings) help to enhance their abilities and skills to participate in different development programmes. Poverty, socio-cultural norms and values, lack of external support and willingness by women themselves to act upon available resources serve as push factors that can also result in disempowerment and low participation. Wema (2010) further indicated that religion, culture and gender roles also combine to hinder women's participation. This is because the norms and values underlying some religions and cultures emphasise much on women's submissiveness and male dominance in the society and many development activities.

In Ghana, a study on women's participation in the country's local government system revealed that few women are involved and even those few women are motivated by the need to participate to correct development problems in their communities (Baah-Annumh et al., 2005). The main obstacles identified by the study to hinder women's participation were financial burdens, cultural reasons such as the perception of male superiority and female inferiority in the society, multiple roles of women, poor attitude of women towards governance process and low confidence on the part of women. To empower women and protect their rights in the tourism industry, the WTO (2011) recommends providing equal opportunities for women working in tourism, advancing the capacities of women through education and training, and encouraging women to lead tourism activities.

## Study area

As a country touting tourism as a potential growth pole, tourism in Ghana has been growing over the years. Currently, it is the fourth foreign exchange earner behind cocoa, mineral resources and remittances. Its gross contribution of foreign exchange to GDP rose from 4.3% in 2010 to 4.7% in 2013 (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts, [MoTCCA], 2014). In 2015 and 2017 it contributed 4.8% and 6.2% to Ghana's GDP respectively. Ghana is blessed with varying tourism resources—pristine beaches;

ecological, cultural and historic heritage; and conference/convention facilities (Akyeampong, 2009).

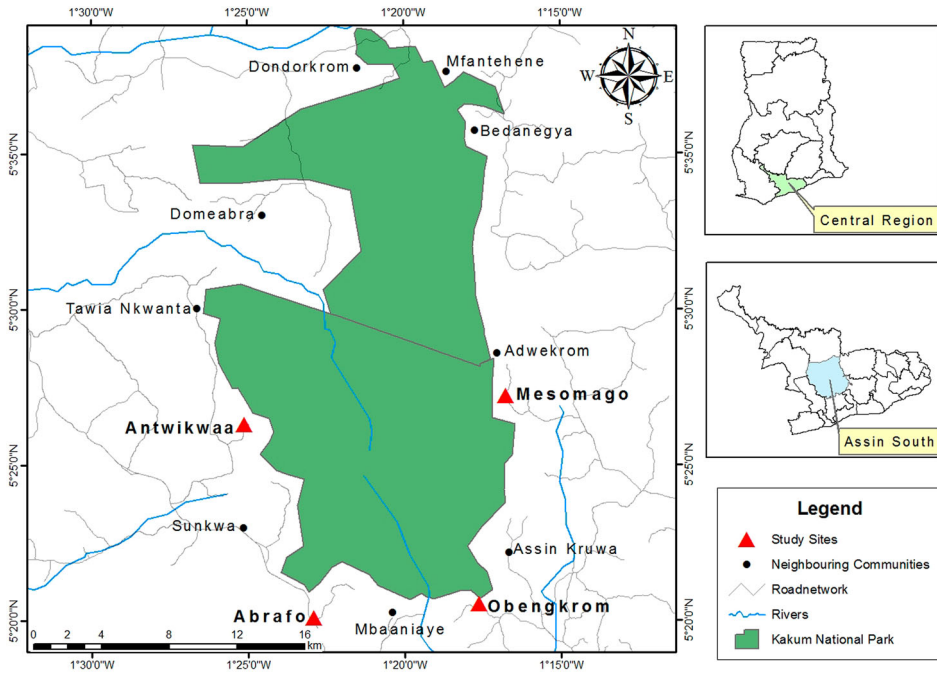
The concentration of Ghana's tourism is within the Central, Ashanti, Western, Volta and Savannah Regions due to the pristine beaches, ecological, cultural, historic and hospitality facilities within these areas. The KNP is found in the Central Region of Ghana and it is one of the most visited sites within the country. The park, named after the Kakum River, covers approximately 375 km<sup>2</sup>. It was established in 1931 as a forest reserve and in 1992, it was gazetted as a national park by the Wildlife Department under the Wildlife Reserves Regulations (LI 1525). The park's uniqueness is premised on the contribution of the local people in its establishment. The major attraction within the park is the Canopy Walkway (350 metres above sea level) and the Tree House. The park is also rich in diverse flora (consisting of trees, shrubs, climbers, herbs and grasses) and fauna (Diana monkey, Giant bongo antelope, Yellow-backed duiker, African elephant among others) (International Union for Conservation of Nature/Programme Afrique Centrale et Occidentale [UCN/PACO], 2010). Facilities within the park include a car park, a visitors' centre, a restaurant, lodge, picnic area, camping area and a wildlife education centre.

Politically, the park bestrides the Twifo-Heman-Lower Denkyira and Assin South Districts (Akyeampong, 2011). It is surrounded by almost 60 communities (Hens, 2006), with the popular ones being Abrafo, Antwikwaa, Mesomagor, Obengkrom, Mfoum, Briscoe, among others. The dominant economic activity of the communities is agriculture (farming). Other economic activities undertaken within the communities include livestock rearing, local gin distilling, palm oil production and small-scale trade (Amoah & Wiafe, 2012). Hunting was also a major agrarian activity prior to the establishment of the KNP. Since the inception of the KNP, some of the indigenous people have been engaged as permanent staff of the park, whereas others are also employed on a temporal basis as casual staff. The temporal staffs are usually trained as tour guides to augment the activities of their permanent staff colleagues during the peak season and national holidays.

## Material and methods

Recognition survey was conducted in February 2017 during the initial stages of the conceptualisation of the paper by one of the authors at KNP to ascertain the ecotourism projects within the study area. Thereafter, upon receiving official permission from the authorities of the study area, a survey was conducted between April and May 2017.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the individual respondents for the survey. The first stage involved the purposive selection of four (4) communities; Abrafo, Antwikwaa, Mesomagor and Obengkrom (Figure 1). Abrafo was selected since it is the gateway community to the KNP, having a handicraft village and serves as home to the International Stingless Bee Centre, established by the University of Cape Coast as a research centre that attracts hundreds of visitors. Antwikwaa was selected based on its bird watching activities of which the community intends to package it for visitor consumption. Mesomagor was also selected because of its tree platform houses that attract visitors and the popular Bamboo Orchestra cultural troupe that entertains visitors. Finally, Obengkrom was chosen because it has also benefited from conservation activities in the study area in a form of pepper fencing project being undertaking



**Figure 1.** A map of the study area showing selected communities for the study.

Source: Department of Geography and Regional Planning of University of Cape Coast (2018).

by the management of KNP at Obengkrom to help the community prevent stray elephants from raiding their crops.

The second stage involved the calculation and distribution of the sample. Based on the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the estimated population of females in the two main districts surrounding the study area were 59,250 and 53,308 summing up to 112,558 females. Out of the total population in these two districts, it is estimated that about a quarter (28,140) live in the catchment of the KNP (Akyeampong, 2011; Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). In furtherance to the above, since there was no sampling frame available, the researchers calculated the population of the women in the four communities using the formula:

$$n = \frac{n.select}{n.com} \times N$$

where  $n$  = the calculated sample;  $n.select$  = number of communities selected;  $n.com$  = total number of communities surrounding the park;  $N$  = Estimated number of women leaving in the catchment area of the park.

In effect the calculated sample was:

$$\frac{4}{60} \times 28,140 = 1,876.$$

Using the Raosoft Sample Size Calculator and estimating that the total number of women in the four communities is 1,876 and the response distribution set at 80%, a



sample size of 218 was calculated. The sample size was equally distributed for the four selected communities. The next stage saw the application of the systematic sampling technique and this involved identifying, listing and numbering all the households in the study area. This together with the sample size assigned to each of the selected communities helped in the calculation of a sample fraction for each community which enabled the selection of the respondents (20 years and above) from their respective households. Some women declined to participate in the survey and were subsequently replaced. In all, 169 women participated in the survey accounting for 77.5% response rate. This figure was as a result of some questionnaires were not properly answered whereas others were also incomplete, thus, deemed unusable.

Questionnaire was the main research instrument used to collect data from the respondents. It was pre-tested at the Mfoum and Briscoe communities in March 2017 using 30 respondents. The aim was to ascertain the content validity of the questionnaire and to ensure the clarity and flow of the questions. After the pre-testing, questions found to be irrelevant or repetitive were deleted whilst others were rephrased.

The final questionnaire had two sections. The first section dealt with socio-demographic characteristics by requesting for information pertaining to respondents' community, number of years in the community, age, level of education attained, marital status, income levels and occupation. The second section probed the current level of participation and forms of participation using the model propounded by Tosun (1999) and measured on a 5-point Likert Scale (1=Strongly Agree; 2 = Agree; 3 = Uncertain; 4 = Disagree; 5 = Strongly Disagree). The respondents' level of participation was measured using 3-key constructs; Spontaneous, Induced and Coercive participation. The low literacy level in the selected communities compelled the researchers to administer some of the questionnaires in the local language (Fanti) of the area. Ethical practices such as informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and right to privacy of the respondents were assured and respected.

The Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) version 21 was used to process the data. The study employed descriptive statistics to analyse the socio-demographic characteristics of the women. It also used inferential statistical tools such as independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine whether significant differences exist between the various forms of participation and respondent's bio-data.

## Results

### *Respondents profile*

To understand the population dynamics, the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are discussed. In all, there was virtually an even distribution of respondents from the 4 selected communities (Abrafo and Mesomago—25.4% each, Antwikwaa—24.9%, Obengkrom—24.3%). The average length of stay of the respondents in their respective communities was 24 years and their length of stay ranged from 1 to 60 years. A total of 61% of the respondents were aged above 40 years and 78.1% of them were also married. A high number of the respondents (65%) had only basic education with 30% having no formal education. Majority of the respondents (98.8%) were Christians of varying faiths. Farming (59.6%) and petty trading (30.4%) were their dominant

occupations. About 22% (21.9%) of them had monthly incomes ranging between GH¢ 101.00–200.00 (exchange rate of US\$ 1.00 = GH¢ 4.30).

### **Current nature of participation**

The current nature of the respondent's participation in activities related to the KNP project is captured in Table 2. From the study, it was found out that about 29% of the women usually participate in communal labour activities. In addition to this, 22.8% and 22.1% of them indicated that to help sustain the park, they have stopped buying game from the park but engaged themselves in selling items to visitors (tourists) respectively. Furthermore, a paltry 0.6% of the respondents noted that they participate directly in the management of the park. These could be that, they either hold a position in the traditional council, or local committees that have representations on the management board of the park. Also, 3.4% and 2.8% of the women were involved in ecotourism activities because they are employed as guides at the park and serve as security for the visitors (tourists) respectively.

### **Level of participation**

Table 3 presents the various levels of participation expressed by the women as deduced from the study. The table shows the various constructs used by Tosun (1999) in his community participation model. In general, the women were of the view that their participation was spontaneous as indicated by the mean score of 2.25. Specifically, they agreed ( $m = 2.38$ ) to issues such as the community having total control over key management decisions, the entire community being consulted before decisions are made ( $m = 2.17$ ) and the community being directly involved in providing goods/services to visitors ( $m = 2.44$ ). The women were also of the view that all groups in the community were represented on the projects' management committee ( $m = 2.04$ ) and that major decisions concerning the development of ecotourism projects emanate from the community ( $m = 2.24$ ).

For induced participation, the women were indifferent ( $m = 2.70$ ). Concerning the specifics, except for the women agreeing ( $m = 2.17$ ) to the fact that only people from selected groups are on the board of the committees, they were ambivalent ( $m = 2.89$ ) on whether the information on the project is made available to the community. The women were also uncertain ( $m = 2.99$ ;  $m = 2.75$ ) that although they are informed about

**Table 2.** Current nature of Participation.

Current nature of Participation	Percentage
Engage in communal labour	29.0
Stopped buying game from the park	22.8
Engage in selling goods to visitors	22.1
Being friendly to visitors	6.9
Hosting visitors in your home	6.2
Providing entertainment to visitors	6.2
Providing tour guide services	3.4
Providing security to visitors	2.8
Involvement in management of attraction	0.6

Source: Fieldwork (2017).

**Table 3.** Level of participation.

Level of participation	N	Mean	SD
<b>Spontaneous</b>			
The community has total control over all key management decision on the project	169	2.38	0.893
Entire community is consulted before key decisions are made	169	2.17	0.919
The community is directly involved in providing services/goods to tourists	169	2.44	0.962
All groups in the community are represented on the management committee	169	2.04	0.654
All major decisions concerning the development of ecotourism projects within the community emanates from the community	169	2.24	0.967
<i>Overall score</i>	169	2.25	0.879
<b>Induced</b>			
Information on the project is made available to the community but avenues are not created for feedbacks	169	2.89	0.939
Only people from selected groups can be on the committee board	169	2.17	0.699
Although we are informed about the project, our views are rarely made use of	169	2.99	0.876
Decisions on the revenue generated from the park are always made by the stakeholders	169	2.75	0.993
<i>Overall score</i>	169	2.70	0.877
<b>Coercive</b>			
We are involved in implementation of decisions but do not take the decisions ourselves it is done by the authorities	169	2.96	0.428
Decisions on the revenue generated from the park and other issues are always made by the stakeholders	169	2.98	0.344
The stakeholders pretend to have our interest but, they do not	169	2.99	0.299
Outside business operators are leading in providing services and goods to tourists in the park/ community	169	2.36	0.934
The community does not have a choice in what form ecotourism development should take	169	2.80	0.923
<i>Overall score</i>	169	2.82	0.586

Source: Fieldwork (2017).

Scale: 1–1.49 = Strongly Agree; 1.50–2.49 = Agree; 2.50–3.49 = Indifferent; 3.50–4.49 = Disagree; 4.50–5.0 = Strongly Disagree.

the projects their views are rarely utilised, and that the decisions on revenue generated from the park are always made by the stakeholders respectively.

In addition, the women remained indifferent ( $m = 2.82$ ) on issues concerning coercive participation. This was the same for the individual statements on this form of participation. For instance, they remained indifferent ( $m = 2.96$ ) on their involvement in the implementation of decisions but not to take decisions by themselves, stakeholders pretending to have their interest but in reality they do not ( $m = 2.99$ ) and the community not having a choice in what form the ecotourism development should take ( $m = 2.80$ ). The women however agreed ( $m = 2.36$ ) that outside business operators led in the provision of goods and services to visitors either to the park or the community.

### **Forms of participation by respondents demographics**

The study applied the *t*-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) as the preferred statistical tool to ascertain whether there is/are significant difference(s) between forms of participation and respondents' profile. The result showed that there was no significant difference (Spontaneous:  $p = 0.718$ ; Induced:  $p = 0.942$ ; Coercive:  $p = 0.279$ ) between respondents who were married and unmarried concerning how they were involved in decision making at the park/communities across the various forms of participation (Table 4). With a low mean score (Spontaneous:  $m = 2.27$  and  $2.22$ ) the women agreed that their participation was spontaneous whereas they were uncertain (Induced:  $m = 2.70$  and  $2.71$ ; Coercive:  $m = 2.80$  and  $2.88$ ), as to whether their participation was induced or coercive.

**Table 4.** Forms of Participation by Socio-demographic characteristics.

Characteristics	N	Spontaneous		Induced		Coercive		Test-statistic
		Mean	P	Mean	P	Mean	P	
<i>Community</i>								
Abrafo	43	2.68*		2.98*		2.75		
Antwikwaa	42	1.91*	0.000*	2.49*	0.000*	2.81	0.075	ANOVA
Mesomago	43	2.01*		2.47*		2.91		
Obengkrom	41	2.41*		2.87*		2.79		
		F = 11.019		F = 8.005		F = 2.384		
<i>Number of years in the community</i>								
Less than 20	63	2.16		2.73		2.78		
20–29	45	2.20		2.58		2.92*		
30–39	30	2.44	0.434	2.83	0.427	2.83	0.016*	ANOVA
40–49	28	2.35		2.75		2.66*		
More than 50	3	2.33		2.33		3.20*		
		F = 0.955		F = 0.968		F = 3.156		
<i>Marital status</i>								
Married	132	2.27	0.718	2.70	0.942	2.80	0.279	
Unmarried	37	2.22		2.71		2.88		t-test
		t = 0.361		t = -0.073		t = -1.087		
<i>Age (years)</i>								
20–29	24	2.18		2.71		2.81		
30–39	42	2.18		2.79		2.85		
40–49	47	2.21	0.643	2.74	0.623	2.83	0.931	ANOVA
50–59	37	2.37		2.57		2.79		
Above 60	19	2.40		2.67		2.77		
		F = 0.628		F = 0.656		F = 0.212		
<i>Level of education</i>								
No formal education	51	2.30		2.61		2.77		
Basic	110	2.20	0.146	2.73	0.307	2.83	0.335	ANOVA
Sec./Voc./Tech.	8	2.70		2.94		2.98		
		F = 1.945		F = 1.191		F = 1.101		
<i>Monthly income</i>								
Less than GH¢ 100	12	2.53		2.56		2.70		
GH¢ 101–200	37	2.06		2.72		2.86		
GH¢ 201–300	8	2.16	0.371	2.56	0.050	2.95	0.459	ANOVA
Above GH¢ 300	9	2.27		3.33*		2.76		
		F = 1.064		F = 2.716		F = 0.875		

Source: Fieldwork (2017).

Scale: 1–1.49 = Strongly Agree; 1.50–2.49 = Agree; 2.50–3.49 = Indifferent; 3.50–4.49 = Disagree; 4.50–5.0 = Strongly Disagree.

\*Significant difference exists at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

Furthermore, the result also indicates that there were significant differences between community, number of years in the community, monthly income and forms of participation. Specifically, it was observed that significant differences exist in respondent's community of residence in the areas of spontaneous ( $p = 0.000$ ) and induced ( $p = 0.000$ ) participation. Whilst all the community cohorts agreed that they participated spontaneously; Antwikwaa ( $m = 1.91$ ), Mesomago ( $m = 2.01$ ) and Obengkrom ( $m = 2.41$ ); the mean rating for Abrafo ( $m = 2.68$ ) indicated that the women from those communities were uncertain as to whether their participation was spontaneous or not. On the other hand, women from Antwikwaa ( $m = 2.49$ ) and Mesomago ( $m = 2.47$ ) participated spontaneously, while those from Abrafo ( $m = 2.98$ ) and Obengkrom ( $m = 2.87$ ) were having conflicting feelings about their participation being induced.

Except for coercive participation ( $p = 0.016$ ), no marked differences were observed across number of years in the community with respect to spontaneous and induced

forms of participation. Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) suggested that the mean difference of the year cohorts, 20–29 years ( $m = 2.92$ ), 40–49 years ( $m = 2.66$ ) and more than 50 years ( $m = 3.20$ ) caused the difference. Furthermore, whilst all the cohorts were uncertain on induced participation, the respondents who have stayed in their respective communities for more than 50 years agreed ( $m = 2.33$ ) that their participation was more of induced. In addition, aside spontaneous and coercive forms of participation, a significant difference was found for induced participation at  $p = 0.050$  even though the respondents were uncertain as to whether their participation is induced or not. Fisher's LSD observed that the significant difference occurred within the category of women who earned above GH¢ 300.00.

## Discussion

The study sought to explore women's participation in the ecotourism development process in communities surrounding the Kakum Conservation Area. From the literature (Afenyo, 2012; Afenyo & Amuquandoh, 2014; Nance & Ortolano, 2007) various forms of participation exist in ecotourism development projects. These include taking part in decision-making and the provision of support services geared towards the development of ecotourism in communities. From the study, it can be deduced that the participation of the women in the development of ecotourism within their communities depicts the form of service provision.

The women were seen to provide services such as communal labour, selling food to visitors, provision of entertainment and tour guiding services. Women engaging themselves in these services as a means of contributing to the development of ecotourism vis-à-vis the provision of sustenance for their families have been alluded to by Tran and Walter (2014). In their studies, Tran and Walter noted that community (communal) labour involving activities such as organising and running ecotourism cooperative, attending meetings as well as the production of food, shelter, handicrafts, teaching of language and engaging in entertainment activities such as dance are some of the activities women take part within their respective communities to promote ecotourism. Baah-Annumh et al.'s (2005) conclusion in their study in Ghana also corroborates the findings of this study by indicating that women participate in developmental projects in their communities to contribute their quota to correct developmental problems in their communities.

Looking at the participation model by Tosun (1999), and drawing inferences from the study, aspects of the spontaneous form of participation were evident in the study area (ref. Table 3). Studies have shown that people participating spontaneously in ecotourism development projects is essential for effective community development (Nance & Ortolano, 2007; Tosun, 1999, 2006). Dieke (2000) and Tosun (1999, 2006) have argued that spontaneous participation is voluntary, where community members actively and directly participate in decision-making and provide support services to the project. This assertion by Dieke and Tosun confirms the study's finding that "the entire community (including women) is consulted before key decisions are made" and also "all groups in the community are represented on the management committee" among other indicators. To Dieke and Tosun, consulting the members of the community and ensuring that every social grouping is represented during management meetings is an indication of active and direct participation. The activities engaged in by the women (ref. Table 2) were also an

indication of their active and direct participation in the ecotourism developmental process in their respective communities.

The study also showed that the women to some extent were undecided on whether their participation was induced or not. It has been found that induced participation is characterised by passive and indirect participation, coupled with formal and pseudo-participation (Tosun, 1999). According to a report published by the United Nations in 1975 and cited in Tosun (1999), passive participation occurs when people are merely involved in the implementation of decisions about which they were not consulted. This conceptualisation of passive participation conforms to findings of the study in which the women opined that “information on ecotourism project is made available to the community but avenues are not created for feedbacks” and that “though they are informed about the project, their views are rarely made use of”. This finding of the study was found to be also synonymous to Tosun’s (2000) finding that with induced participation, “individuals have a voice in the tourism development process, but they do not have power to ensure that their views will be taken into account by other powerful interest groups ...” (p. 495). To Tosun (1999, 2000, 2006) induced participation is likely to be seen in developing countries where the host community only endorses decisions regarding tourism development issues made for them rather than by them, and this was not different from the findings of the study area.

The coercive form of participation was also observed in the study (Table 4). The community members to some extent noted that they were coerced into getting themselves involved in the ecotourism projects since they were not interested. French and Raven (2001) are of the view that there is a likelihood for community members to be coerced since there are sanctions or punishments for people who do not get themselves involved. For instance, in Ghana’s traditional settings, there are consequences if an individual fails to participate in a community’s activity. This might have accounted for the reason why the women participated in communal labour, since there are repercussions for not participating.

The respondents’ views varied regarding the forms of participation. These differences point toward the multifaceted interconnections between respondents’ profile and their various forms of participation. This result buttresses the views held by researchers that many factors come to play to affect participation decisions (Afenyo & Amuquandoh, 2014). Specifically, the study revealed that significant differences exist in how the communities participate in ecotourism development. For instance, within the communities of Abrafo, Antwikwaa, Mesomago and Obengkrom, there were significant differences in how they participate in ecotourism development in terms of spontaneous and induced levels of participation.

In addition, the study identified significant differences among women who had stayed in their respective communities between 20–29 years, 40–49 years and above 50 years who get themselves involved in ecotourism development as a result of them being coerced. This observation could be attributed to the fact that these women have stayed in their respective communities long enough to know that they might not get any benefit from participating spontaneously, and until they know what benefits that lie therein, they will not be willing to get themselves involved.

Significant differences were also observed among women of the various income cohorts. This is in line with the views of Beritelli and Laesser (2011) that induced

participation is characterised by material/financial rewards. In this regard, it could be deduced that those who earn less might be women whose participation comes in the form of selling food and being friendly to visitors to attract some rewards. On the other hand, those who earn more might also be those who provide services such as guiding, provision of security to visitors and those involved in the management of ecotourism projects within their respective communities. In this case, the rewards for the latter will be higher than that of the former.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the participation of women in ecotourism development activities around the KNP conservation area focuses mainly on taking part in communal labour, not buying game from the Kakum National Park and selling of goods to visitors. In addition, different levels of participation (spontaneous, induced and coercive) were found to operate simultaneously in the study area, with the respondents agreeing to some extent to have spontaneous participation. This limits the effective operation of spontaneous participation which supports bottom-up planning, and active and direct participation of women in ecotourism development activities in the area. The induced and coercive levels of participation found to exist alongside the spontaneous participation in the study area are low levels of community participation that do not support effective community planning process. They gave an indication of some level of top-down, passive participation, tokenism and manipulation still being associated with community participation of women in ecotourism development activities in the area.

To address the situation, it is recommended that the various development stakeholders of the area that have been entrusted with oversight planning and development responsibilities should empower women to participate actively in ecotourism developments. The empowerment can take the form of effective communication or education of ecotourism development activities through avenues such as workshops, fora and radio programmes. This will enable the women to have adequate knowledge on ecotourism initiatives in the area, the need for them to participate and how their participation can enhance ecotourism development of the area for them to participate actively. Such empowerment will also encourage the women to avail themselves to voluntarily participate and thus promotes their genuine participation in ecotourism development.

Furthermore, to encourage and achieve wider participation of women, the stakeholders should make concerted efforts to nominate many women to be part of the planning structures of their communities (unit committees and town councils). This will help to directly get many women on board in development planning activities on ecotourism and also motivate other women to voluntarily participate in ecotourism activities to promote spontaneous participation. Lastly, the KNP management, Wildlife Division of the Forestry Commission, Ghana Heritage and Conservation Trust [GHCT] and the development planning units of the various district assemblies of the area should from time to time inform community members (including women) of progress made on ecotourism development projects and recognise the contribution of key stakeholders. This will help women and other community members to have a fair idea of such activities, see themselves as relevant stakeholders, and develop trust in the planning process for them to continuously participate actively in such development projects.

## Implications for community planning

The mixture of spontaneous, induced and coercive levels of participation of women in the study area and their overall low level of satisfaction of eco-tourism development in their communities have strong implications for community planning in different ways. First, the glimpses of spontaneous level of participation in a form of the women being consulted and also have some representation in ecotourism development activities in the study area suggest some level of inclusion of the women in the decision-making process on ecotourism development. This inclusion is very paramount to community planning and development as it promotes bottom-up planning which helps to incorporate the needs of the local people and the most vulnerable such as women in development initiatives to improve their welfare. This gives an indication of the operation in the study area some of the principles of the decentralised planning system of Ghana which requires community members to be consulted and represented in the decision making process on development activities in their area. This is supported by Ghana's Local Government Law of 2016 (Act 936), and the National Development Planning System Act of 1994 (Act 480) which requires consultation of local communities to know the needs and problems affecting them to kick start the whole decentralised development planning process of Ghana.

Second, the induced and coercive levels of participation of women found in the study show that the participation of women in eco-tourism development to some extent is not genuine but rather influenced by material gains and other reasons. This defeats one of the main goals of community planning which calls for making community members to be genuinely engaged in decisions on development issues that affect them (Cowell, 2004). Such a level of genuineness involves either voluntary participation by community members or community representatives selected through legal means or well accepted laid down procedure. This will help community members to remain committed to the community planning process in the absence of material benefits and other reasons. The lack of genuineness also plays down the level of respect that the community planning process ought to give community members by recognising them as major stakeholders who ought to participate in the planning process because of their expertise or rich experience on issues affecting their community but not merely to participate for personal gains. This corroborates the observations of Mensah et al. (2017) and Healey (1998) that genuine participation of community members is essential due to rich local knowledge that such people possess on their communities which could only be provided by them than outsiders.

Furthermore, the existence of both the induced and coercive levels of participation of women on ecotourism development in the study area tend to negatively affect the inclusiveness principle of community planning which requires the participation of wider spectrum of people especially the marginalised group such as low income people and women to promote equity in planning (Davis et al., 2013). This is because the continuous existence of these low levels of community participation with manifestations of their characteristics such as top-down planning, manipulation, and tokenism will make the women lose trust in the planning process and subsequently deter them from contributing their quota to ecotourism development activities in their communities. The consequence of this problem is that it may hamper



sustained engagement of community members (especially women) in the planning process which is critical for successful community planning as the sustained engagement will make the community members develop strong sense of belongingness to their community and for that matter participate actively in ecotourism development activities accordingly.

## Disclosure statement

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