

**INDIGENOUS EDUCATION SYSTEMS AND RURAL DWELLERS' ATTITUDE
TOWARDS TROPICAL RAINFOREST RESOURCES CONSERVATION IN IKOM
EDUCATION ZONE OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between indigenous education systems and attitudes of rural dwellers' attitude towards tropical rainforest resource conservation in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. The investigated variables were indigenous folk media and indigenous educational entertainment. A correlational survey design was used for the study. The study's population comprised of 1,089,053 (estimated census of the Education Zone) people while purposive proportionate sampling approach was employed to select a sample of 555 respondents from 4 communities. A data collection instrument titled "Indigenous Education Systems and Rural dwellers' Attitude towards Tropical Rainforest Resources Conservation Questionnaire" (IESRATRRCQ) was used to elicit data for the study. Cronbach Alpha was applied to estimate the instrument's reliability. The data collected for the study were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and tested at .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that indigenous folk media and indigenous educational entertainment were significant correlates of rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation. Among others, it was recommended that Tenets of indigenous knowledge and belief systems which favour appropriate conservation of tropical rainforest resources should be ceaselessly encouraged amongst the locals through non-formal education awareness forums even in the face of seeming westernization within the areas.

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KEY WORDS: indigenous education systems, indigenous folk media, indigenous educational entertainment, rural dwellers' attitude, tropical rainforest resource conservation

Introduction

Tropical rainforests and its resources are an integral part of the Earth's life support system as they perform a wide range of unique ecological and socio-economic functions which are of high value to the continuous existence of life on earth. Aside the usual forest functions of climate mitigation through carbon sequestration, water and soil conservation through erosion prevention and control, air and water purification, flood regulation, veritable source of natural oxygen, and provision of natural habitats for exotic flora and fauna species, its ecological uniqueness is in the following - it is home to half of all the world's biodiversity, two-thirds of all species (flora and fauna) in the world, half of the world's terrestrial carbon, and, an average tropical rainforest tree can store a minimum of 1.5 tonnes of terrestrial carbon (United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2000). Socio-economically, its functions include providing - wood for a wide range of domestic and industrial activities; a wide range of non-timber forest

products (NTFPs) (edibles, craft-making resources, chemicals, medicines/herbs, fodder, etc.); opportunities for employment, revenue generation, ecotourism, aesthetics, academic activities, recreation, spiritual fulfilment, etc., and, domestic/industrial energy for those living in close proximity.

Conservation of tropical rainforest resources' is a concept which is concerned with the process of controlling and ensuring a rational utilization of the tropical rainforest and its resources in a manner which depicts continuous benefit to posterity (Eyo & Ogo, 2013). Thus, the process is supposed to involve the planning, executing and monitoring of all actions geared towards ensuring the perpetuity of the forests' unique ecological and socio-economic functions to both the environment and man's continuous existence. The basic essence of conserving tropical rainforest resources is due to its unique and highly valuable role which it plays in the continuous existence of both the environment and man. Another essence of conserving tropical rainforest resources is that it influences all relevant stakeholders' efforts towards the success of the process (Takon & Amalu, 2013). Without a tropical rainforest resource conservation process in place, there is bound to be disparity in the perceptions and subsequent attitude of the relevant stakeholders who should partake in the process.

One of the most fundamental indicators which serves to influence an individual's action in an event, a given situation or circumstance is the individual's attitude (Odebiyi, Ayeni, Umunna & Johnson, 2015). Attitude refers to an individual's evaluation of developing a favourable (positive) or unfavourable (negative) disposition to perform a given behaviour. Consequently, when an individual has a positive attitude towards an event, a given situation or circumstance which he or she faces, the person would be prone to acting positively. On the other hand, when an individual has developed a negative disposition, he or she would be more prone to acting negatively or destructively. This is corroborated by Oji (2009) who asserted that an individual who is more prone to environmental conservation suggests a positive and friendly attitude towards the environment while an unsustainable and careless utilization of the environment and its resources depicts a negative attitude towards the environment. The outcome of a conservation process is mainly concerned with how people will develop and inculcate positive attitudes about environmental resource conservation (Margolius, Stem, Salafsky & Brown, 2009). Within the study area, the following has been the attitude on display by the state government and the rural dwellers towards conservation of tropical rainforest resources.

As at the year 1960, Cross River State had 17 Forest Reserves with a total land mass of 6101 km² (Enuoh & Bisong, 2014). Out of the 17 reserves, 10 are within the confines of the present study area (Cross River State Government (CRSG), 1994). A forest inventory report carried out by the state government in 1994 revealed the following issues concerning the forest

reserves; Okwangwo Forest Reserve (now part of the Cross River National Park); Afi River Forest Reserve (31% cleared); Cross River South Forest Reserve (21% cleared); Ukpon River Forest Reserve (16% cleared); Cross River North Forest Reserve (61% cleared); Boshi Extension Forest Reserve (35% cleared); the Agoi Forest Reserve (33% cleared); Boshi Forest Reserve (51% cleared); Ikrigon Forest Reserve (100% cleared) and the Ikom Fuelwood Plantation (100% cleared) (CRSG, 1994). Another report in 2006 by the Cross River Environmental Capacity Development (CRE) indicated that more forests within the area were being lost. Issues like establishment of large scale agricultural farms, illegal logging, crude and unchecked farming practices, etc., were pointed as major drivers of deforestation while additional issues of illegal poaching and use of chemicals for both fishing and hunting contributed to wide scale biodiversity loss.

Assessing the attitudes of the rural dwellers towards conservation of tropical rainforest resources is an essential requirement due to the influence in which attitude has on a person's behaviour. Aside the area under study having most of the state's remaining tropical rainforest, it is presently a Global Biodiversity Hotspot. According to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) (2005), a protected or collection of protected areas within a given area qualify as a Global Biodiversity Hotspot when the area has less than 25% of its original vegetation left. In addition, a Directorate for International Development (DFID) assisted Cross River State Forestry project prepared in 2003 indicated that based on the rate at which the forests were being decimated, they will be extinct by 2033. Assessing the attitudes of the locals is also necessary because despite government's efforts towards conservation within the area based on the number of forest reserves therein, the extent of deforestation of the tropical rainforests seemingly implies that the locals appear not to have positive attitudes towards the conservation of the reserves. Lastly, research has almost always revealed that an assessment of attitudes is critical in predicting environmental resource conservation behaviours (Digun-Aweto, Fawole & Ayodele, 2016).

From research reports, there are numerous determinants which could possibly be related with rural dwellers' attitudes towards conservation of tropical rainforest resources. Inclusive among them is the indigenous education systems employed to create awareness among them concerning positive attitudes towards conserving the resources. According to Jan (2019), indigenous education systems refer to the knowledge systems developed by a community as opposed to the scientific knowledge that is generally conceptualized as modern knowledge, and it serves as the basis for decision-making in local levels in rural communities. They include the indigenous folk media and indigenous educational entertainment. Indigenous folk media is a variable that depicts the various community-based cultural associations that not only accumulate its indigenous knowledge, traditions, experiences, customs, etc., but also transfer same down

from generation to generation within the community. According to Idris and Umar (2016), this variable has been found to serve as a significant correlate of awareness creation among rural dwellers. Indigenous educational entertainment refers to the various media through which indigenous peoples engage in awareness creation on issues using traditional plays. From Uzuegbu and Naga (2016), this variable is a highly appreciated way of creating awareness among rural dwellers.

From the above stated evidences from researchers, the indigenous education systems of indigenous folk media and indigenous entertainment education could be assumed to serve as significant determinants of rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resources conservation in the area under investigation. Thus, in line with the assumption stated above, this study ascertained the relationship between indigenous education systems and rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resources conservation in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.

Statement of the problem

Poor attitude of rural dwellers towards conservation of tropical rainforests resources is depicted by their interactions with the forests. This is occasioned by their continuous and unsustainable harvesting of both timber and non-timber products, illegal logging and firewood exploitation which not only clears large tracts of trees but also ensures the removal of tree canopies that provide a protection and shade for a wide range of NTFPs, causing them to be damaged and distorting their roles in tropical rainforest ecosystem functioning. Their negative attitudes also include non-selective harvesting and hunting of wild flora and fauna, while crude hunting practices like poisoning of fruits on the forest floor and waterways within the forest are ensuring that more fauna species not only lose their natural habitats but also accelerate their extinction rates.

The problem of this study is presumably borne out of the assumption that some indigenous education systems such as indigenous folk media and indigenous educational entertainment are not properly used to create the necessary awareness needed for the education of rural dwellers or are in themselves not able to measure up with the dependent variable which is attitude towards tropical rainforest resource conservation. The government of Cross River State in collaboration with other stakeholders and non-governmental agencies have in their effort, organised several seminars and workshops to educate the rural dwellers on different measures that should be put in place in their attempt to conserve their environment effectively but all these efforts have proven abortive. Government has also inaugurated various enforcement agencies to bring defaulters to book but to no avail. This is why the researcher was poised to find solution to

the following problem - what is the relationship between indigenous education systems and rural dwellers' attitude towards tropical rainforest resource conservation in the study area?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between indigenous education systems and attitudes of rural dwellers towards tropical rainforest resource conservation in Ikom Education Zone of Cross River State.

Research questions

1. To what extent do indigenous folk media relate with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation?
2. How does indigenous educational entertainment relate with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation?

Statement of hypotheses

1. Indigenous folk media have no significant relationship with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation
2. Indigenous educational entertainment has no significant relationship with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation

Literature review

Conceptually, the collection of cultural associations which accumulate a given society's indigenous knowledge, norms, beliefs, customs, experiences, expressions and tradition, and pass same down from generation to generation is what is referred to as indigenous folk media. There are four fundamental criteria which usually appear when indigenous folk media is defined and they are; (i) being tradition-based; (ii) being culture related; (iii) being trans-generational, and; (iv) being shared by community-based groups (Galadima & Lawal, 2017). According to Uzochukwu and Ekwugha (2015), the community-based groups include local market women groups, age grades, local student union body, cultural men/women associations, local market groups (based on commodity sold), and local political groups.

Indigenous folk media are presumed to be a very effective way for not only community-based learning but also, preservation and/or conservation, and dissemination of the culture, past wisdom/experiences, and tradition of a given society (Idris & Umar, 2016). This is usually evidential in the various forms of carvings on stones, walls and buildings in some societies, and

these have enabled subsequent generations learn about the development of their culture. From research works, the impact of indigenous folk media in community development in rural areas has certain advantages which include; (i) enhancing the clarity and distinctness of indigenous communication; (ii) being flexible to accommodate novel themes, issues, and ideas, and (iii) bringing about some form of satisfaction to an individual's inner desire for self-expression thereby giving room for everyone to participate (Sharma & Singh, 2015).

Galadima and Lawal (2017) verified local farmers' climate change perspectives and adaptation in Nigeria. Farmers in Sokoto State constituted the population. Inquiries included information sources on climate change and its impacts. Data analysis revealed farmers' cooperatives as an appreciable source of climate change information to the farmers. Applying a survey research design, Akeweta, Tata and Nandi (2018) determined information needs of Nigerian farmers. Adamawa State farmers composed the population and a verification of the farmers' agricultural information sources was part of the study's enquiries. The analysis of obtained data showed the farmers' most preferred information source as being that of traditional folk media groups (farmers' cooperatives, age grades and cultural associations). Onwuemele (2018) examined farmers' information communication strategies and effective usage of climate research and forecast in Nigeria. Farmers in the Niger Delta region composed the population. An assessment of information and communication sources among the farmers was conducted. Result revealed indigenous folk media groups as the farmers' leading source of information concerning climate research and forecasting.

Economic benefits, local participation and conservation ethics in management of game reserve areas in Zambia was investigated by Umar and Kapembwa (2020). The population was sourced from the adjoining communities to a game management area in the country's Mambwe District. The study's purpose included ascertaining the participants' responses on their source of information towards participation in conserving wildlife in the game management area. Analysis with percentage scores revealed that 51% of them indicated that they were informed through local political groups within their communities. Socio-economic dimensions and support zone communities' activities in Nigerian national parks were evaluated by Yaduma, Adaeze, Oluwole and Zacharia (2020). All members of adjoining communities to a national park in located both in Adamawa and Taraba States formed the population. One of the study's posers was to ascertain strategies designed by the park's management to curb issues facing wildlife conservation. The finding revealed that one of the park management's main strategies to curb the issues was to periodically hold interactive sessions with the communities' cultural associations (age grades, cultural men/women associations, local political groups, etc.,) so that they in turn relay the message to their fellow community members on the need to checkmate their hunting/bush burning activities.

An evaluation of hunting activities in Nigerian rainforests was conducted by Layade, Layade, Kehinde, Alaye and Jayeoba (2021). The population was made up inhabitants of forested communities in Oyo State. One of the study's aims was to ascertain source of wildlife conservation information and its effect on the hunters' attitudes towards sustainable hunting activities. It was revealed that all of the respondents indicated their local hunting association as their source of information on wildlife conservation. Suleiman and Wasonga (2021) assessed community perceptions and attitudes towards protected area conservation approach in Nigeria. Inhabitants of communities in proximity of a Game Reserve in Kano State formed the study's population. Part of the study's objectives was to assess determinants of their attitudes towards the game reserve's conservation efforts. The result revealed that getting information from community based folks (cultural men/women associations, age grades, community meetings, etc.,) was a significant determinant of the peoples' attitudes towards conservation of the reserve.

Ogbonna and Anunobi (2022) examined agricultural information needs and seeking behaviour of farmers in Nigeria. Farmers across Enugu State served as the study's population. Inclusive in the study's aims were to ascertain the farmers' sources of information and reason(s) for accessing information. It was revealed that farmers' top five sources of information were during – (i) meetings of market groups; (ii) locally organized conferences, workshops and seminars by extension workers; (iii) meetings with government representatives; (iv) meetings of farmers' associations/groups, and; (v) meetings with friends/neighbours. Ominikari and Wasini (2022) evaluated rural farmers' attitude to indigenous knowledge sharing for selected livelihood activities in the south-south region of Nigeria. The study's population consisted of farmers from three states in the region. The study's posers included identifying the ways farmers share information. Data analysis revealed that meetings of farmers' groups, women associations, age grades, friends/family, village groups, etc, were the various ways in which the farmers shared information. Afolabi, Mephors and Oyerinde (2023) investigated resident perception of forest resource management in selected communities in Nigeria. Residents in proximity of forests in Osun State formed the population. One of the study's aims was to assess activities within their localities that impacted on the respondents' attitudes towards forest resource management. Data analysis with chi-square analysis revealed that a significant association existed between their attitudes (based on effect of the various meetings and information shared among local folks) and management of forest resources.

The theatrical displays indulged in by indigenous people that give insights and educate people of their age-old beliefs, customs or culture is usually referred to as indigenous educational entertainment. This is because from the perspective of indigenous peoples, indigenous educational entertainment is viewed as a strategy of transmitting age-long values, and the

contextual manifestation/interpretation of their immediate environment (Essien, 2014). In support of this, Mathiyazhagan, Kaur, Ravindhar and Devrani (2015) observed that indigenous peoples view the theatrical displays as not only being connected with their past, present and future but also, they see it as a source through which they are provided with a glimpse of awareness and reality that results in their being educated.

According to Obasi and Ebirim (2014), the view of indigenous peoples concerning the displays may not be far-fetched from the fact that the displays seem to serve as a form of traditional communication that not only educates them but also breeds a sense of togetherness, belongingness, and affinity among them. Examples of the displays include traditional dances, masquerade displays, story-telling, proverb-telling, games of local riddles and traditional drama and puppet displays. Based on the perspectives of how indigenous people view the displays, they are presumed to have a very strong influence on them because of their receptiveness towards the idioms, proverbs, and clichés, and each of its functional significance and entertainment components. This is because the traditional displays have been found to solve issues such as speech, word pronunciation, language difficulty, and certain communication-based barriers like perception, interest, attitude, interpretation, and understanding (Mohanty & Parhi, 2011).

Ekerete and Ufot (2017) ascertained farmers' perceived effectiveness of traditional media and sources of information dissemination in Nigeria. Farmers in Akwa Ibom State composed the study's population. Study's inquiries included an evaluation of the various traditional media utilized. It was revealed that a variety of traditional plays (songs, festivals, dances, proverbs, folk tales and riddles) served as the indigenous peoples' major sources of information. Kalu, Okidi, Chidi-Kalu and Unagha (2018) evaluated role of traditional communication media and information service delivery to rural areas in Nigeria. Population exclusively incorporated adolescents in Rivers State. Study's aim included verifying the extent which traditional plays were being employed to communicate messages to the people in modern times. The result showed that traditional plays were still of immense relevance when communicating information to people in rural areas. Oladeji, Osanyinleye and Lawal (2021) assessed the conservation values of sacred grooves in Nigeria. The study's population was sourced from rural dwellers in proximity of a renowned sacred groove in Osun State. An inquiry of the various ways in which the sacred groove employed to enhance conservation of forest-based natural resources was conducted. The result showed that 95% of them indicated that one of the ways which the sacred groove employed was through the celebration of numerous traditional festivals.

Adeyanju, Bulkan, Onyekwelu, St-Laurent, Kozak, Sunderland and Stimm (2022) investigated drivers of biodiversity conservation in sacred groves in Southwest Nigeria. The population was made up of inhabitants in proximity of sacred groves in each of Ondo and Osun States. Inclusive in the study's aims was a poser which verified the respondents' responses on the

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various ways which the sacred groves served to enhance biodiversity conservation. The result revealed that the sacred groves served to enhance biodiversity conservation as due to the activities engaged in there mainly as meeting point for a wide range of traditional associations to share information. Eighemhenrio (2022) investigated sustainable forest resources utilization in some rural communities in Nigeria. The population was made up of rural dwellers across Edo State. One of the study's research questions was concerned with verifying community approaches to sustainable forest resource utilization. The result showed that the foremost approach was that of numerous meetings of various community folks to share information concerning strategies to adopt towards utilizing the forest resources sustainably.

Alule, Nuwategeka, Oriangi and Lajul (2023) assessed the relevance of indigenous knowledge in sustainable management of forest resources in the 21st Century Uganda. Inhabitants of the country's north-western District of Yumbe served as the population. Inclusive in the study's aims was an evaluation of the relationship between indigenous knowledge (traditional dance/masquerade displays, indigenous songs, organized traditional drama displays, etc.,) and attitude towards sustainable management of forest resources. It was revealed that the indigenous knowledge was significantly related to attitude towards sustainable management of forest resources. Bempong, Adu-Gyamfi and Darkwa (2023) investigated indigenous systems of forest conservation as a tool for traditional medical practices in Ghana. The population comprised of inhabitants of the country's Akyem Abuakwa traditional area. Inquiries of indigenous ways of conserving forests and their attitude towards their usage were conducted. The result showed that the indigenous ways of conserving forests included the use of traditional proverbs, songs, myths and stories.

Foncha and Fouomene (2023) examined the role of community-based ecotourism in biodiversity conservation in the Mount Oku Area of Cameroon. The population was made up of inhabitants in proximity of the area under investigation. The study's aims included ascertaining the conservation practices which had significant effects on their attitudes to conserve the area's biodiversity. The result revealed that inclusive among the conservation practices which significantly affected their attitudes to conserve the area's biodiversity were traditional folk dances and variety of local festivals. IHEMEZIE, Albaladejo-García, Stringer and Dallimer (2023) investigated integrating biocultural conservation and sociocultural valuation in the management of sacred forests in Nigeria. All relevant stakeholders concerned with sacred forests across Enugu State formed the study's population. The study's objectives involved verifying the various media (activities) through which the management of sacred forests reinforced locals' attitudes towards biodiversity conservation. It was revealed that traditional festivals/plays and masquerade displays

were some of the media through which the management of sacred forests reinforced the attitudes of locals as it concerns biodiversity conservation.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational survey approach. The population of the study was made up of community dwellers [estimated at 1,089,053 (NPC, 2022)] in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State. From the population, a sample of 555 respondents was drawn using a multi-stage purposive sampling approach. The purposiveness was in line with selected LGAs and communities therein having large forest tracts within them. Four LGAs and one community each therein were sampled for the study. The data collection instrument was tagged the “Indigenous Education Systems and Rural dwellers’ Attitude towards Tropical Rainforest Resources Conservation Questionnaire” (IESRATRRCQ). It has sections A and B. Section A was designed to obtain data of the respondents’ demographics while Section B elicited responses concerning each of the study’s sub-independent variables [6 items each on a response rubric of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD)] and the dependent variable (12 items with a response rubric of always (A), often (O), sometimes (S) and rarely (R)].

The instrument was validated by two experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations and two experts in the Department of Environmental Education who ascertained the degree to which the items on the instrument measured what it is expected to measure. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained by conducting a trial test with 30 respondents from communities that were not part of the sample and the obtained data was analysed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The reliability coefficients for indigenous folk media and indigenous educational entertainment were .76 and .77, respectively while that for attitude towards tropical rainforest resources conservation was .79. The data collection for the study was done by the researchers in conjunction with 4 research assistants lasted about 8 weeks. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) technique and tested at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

(i) Hypothesis one

Indigenous folk media have no significant relationship with rural dwellers’ attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation. PPMC analytical technique was used to find the correlation between indigenous folk media and rural dwellers’ attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation which was tested at .05 level of significance as presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

PPMC analysis for the relationship between indigenous folk media and rural dwellers’ attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation (N=555)

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	r-ratio	p-level
Indigenous folk media	17.64	3.81	.353*	.000
Rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation	29.65	3.95		

*Significant at .05, $p < .05$; $df=553$.

The result in Table 1 showed that the mean score obtained by the subjects as regards indigenous folk media is 17.64 with an SD of 3.81 while the mean score obtained by the subjects as regards attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation is 29.65 with an SD of 3.95. Further examination of the results revealed that the obtained r-ratio of .353 with a p-value of .000 is said to be statistically significant since the p-value is less than .05. This indicated that the null hypothesis which stated that indigenous folk media have no significant relationship with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation was rejected. Thus, indigenous folk media had significant positive relationship with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation.

(ii) Hypothesis two

Indigenous educational entertainment has no significant relationship with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation. PPMC analysis was used to find the correlation between indigenous educational entertainment and rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation which was tested at .05 level of significance as presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
 PPMC for the relationship between indigenous educational entertainment and rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation (N=555)

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	r-ratio	p-level
Indigenous educational entertainment	18.60	2.71	.374*	.000
Rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation	29.65	3.95		

*Significant at .05, $p < .05$; $df=553$.

The result in Table 2 showed that the mean score obtained by the subjects as regards indigenous educational entertainment is 18.60 with an SD of 2.71 while the mean score obtained by the subjects as regards attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation is 29.65 with an SD of 3.95. Further examination of the results revealed that the obtained r-ratio of .374 with a p-value of .000 is said to be statistically significant since the p-value is less than .05.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that indigenous folk media is a significant correlate of rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation. This meant that the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternate was accepted. By implication, the finding is that indigenous folk media has a positive relationship with rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation. Thus, this appears to imply that the collection of cultural associations which accumulate a given society's indigenous knowledge, norms, beliefs, customs, experiences, expressions and tradition, and pass same down from generation to generation have a connection with the attitudes which rural dwellers harbour towards tropical rainforest resource conservation.

The finding is in consonance with that of Idris and Umar (2016) who observed that folk media served as the most utilized media of information dissemination to the farmers as it concerned sustainable animal production. Galadima and Lawal (2017) verified that local farmers mostly utilized their local cooperatives as a climate change information source. In their study, Akeweta *et al.*, (2018) observed that local farmers' most preferred information source as being that of traditional folk media groups (farmers' cooperatives, age grades and cultural associations). Lastly, Uwandu *et al.*, (2018) reported that community based folk media groups as an information source was the most accessible to locals in line with agro-based information.

The result of the study's second hypothesis revealed that indigenous educational entertainment is significantly related to rural dwellers' attitudes towards tropical rainforest resource conservation. This meant that the study's second alternate hypothesis was accepted while the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the finding indicates that indigenous educational entertainment is connected with the attitudes displayed by rural dwellers towards conserving tropical rainforest resources. By implication, the various theatrical displays indulged in by indigenous people that give insights and educate people of their age-old beliefs, customs or culture (traditional dances, masquerade displays, story-telling, proverb-telling, games of local riddles and traditional drama, puppet displays, etc.) are related with locals' attitudes towards conservation of tropical rainforest resources.

The finding is in consonance with that of Pwanshikai and Apuke (2016) who investigated and observed that festivals and story-telling (traditional plays) were one of the most employed information sources for mobilisation towards democratic activities. Ekerete and Ufot (2017) verified that a variety of traditional plays (songs, festivals, dances, proverbs, folk tales and riddles) served as indigenous peoples' major sources of information. Lastly, Kalu *et al.*, (2018)

observed that traditional plays were still of immense relevance when communicating information to people in rural areas.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In this era of environmental sustainability, conservation of tropical rainforest resources is an imperative for all and sundry. This is because of the way tropical rainforests and its resources have been treated in recent times both by those who are in close proximity and those far from them. Issues of over-exploitation and unsustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products, illegal poaching, unchecked logging, unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation, etc., are some of the ways the forests have been treated despite their benevolent sustenance of human beings and their invaluable contribution to the continuous existence of the earth. The need for conservation of the rainforests and its resources is also an imperative due to the loss of valuable biological species which have become extinct or are critically endangered as a result of rainforests exploitation and destruction.

Based on the finding, it is recommended that tenets of indigenous knowledge which favour appropriate conservation of tropical rainforest resources should be ceaselessly encouraged amongst the locals through non-formal education awareness forums even in the face of seeming westernization within the areas.

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