

# Adopting Malaysia's Tolerance for Monkeys in Nigeria's Forests: Exploring the Potential for Entrepreneurship in Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Tourism

Orimaye Jacob Oluwafemi<sup>1\*</sup> and Anifowose Oluwafemi Dele<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Tourism Studies, National Open University of Nigeria, Abuja

<sup>2</sup>Department of Entrepreneurship, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, [Ado-Ekitijorimaye@noun.edu.ng](mailto:Ado-Ekitijorimaye@noun.edu.ng)

\*Corresponding Author

## Abstract

*Monkeys in Nigerian forests have frequently led to conflicts between communities and wildlife conservationists. In contrast, Malaysia's approach to wildlife conservation, which emphasises tolerance for monkeys, has proven highly effective. This paper examines the potential for entrepreneurship in wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism in Nigeria's forests by adopting Malaysia's monkey tolerance strategies. The research employed a mixed-methods approach that included a review of the relevant literature, online surveys, and interviews with key stakeholders. The findings suggest that the Malaysian approach to wildlife conservation could be adapted to the forests of Nigeria. To achieve this, there must be a shift in the perception of monkeys commonly viewed as pests and crop threats. Inadequate infrastructure, funding, and a lack of political will were obstacles to adopting Malaysia's approach to wildlife conservation in Nigeria. The study proposes that wildlife conservationists in Nigeria promote ecotourism to generate income while protecting monkeys' natural habitat. The Nigerian government, wildlife conservation sector and stakeholders collaborate to address these challenges. Adopting Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in Nigeria's forests could offer a significant entrepreneurial opportunity in wildlife conservation and responsible tourism and will require a change in perspective about monkeys and significant investments in infrastructure, funding, and political will. This strategy could benefit the government, conservationists and local communities if successfully implemented.*

## ARTICLE INFORMATION

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## 1.0. INTRODUCTION

Monkeys are one of the most common and diverse animals in the world, with over 260 species living in different habitats and regions. However, not all human societies have the same attitude towards these primates, especially when they share the same living space. In some countries, like Nigeria, monkeys are often seen as pests, nuisances, or threats to crops and property, and in some other countries, such as Malaysia, monkeys are respected, tolerated, or even revered as part of the natural and cultural heritage. Nigeria should adopt Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in its forests, as this would benefit the environment and people and create new opportunities for entrepreneurship in wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism.

The people of Malaysia, around 28 million, come from various cultural backgrounds, with the Malay majority, followed by a significant number of Chinese, Indians and other minority groups (Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 2021). According to Dunn et al. (2021), Southeast Asia monkeys are highly susceptible to the effects of climate change and are at an "elevated risk of extinction". Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2030 of the United Nations relies heavily on protecting Malaysia's diverse forest ecosystems (UNDP, 2021).

However, adopting tolerance of monkeys in Malaysian forests could open up opportunities for business in wildlife conservation and ecotourism in Nigeria. Ecotourism businesses, where visitors observe monkeys and other animals in their natural environment without impacting the animals' environment or behaviour, are one example of the opportunities available to

entrepreneurs. Education of the local populace about the value of biodiversity conservation and the need to refrain from harming wildlife could also be a focus of wildlife conservation efforts. Sustainable tourism that respects Nigeria's rich cultural and natural history could result from these conservation efforts.

### **1.1. Insight Into the History of Monkey Population Control in Malaysia**

Malaysia has found a way to control its monkey population by combining academic study with public outreach and support. Researchers in Malaysia have studied monkey behaviour and ecology to inform population control strategies that cause the fewest possible animal harm (Mohd-Taib et al., 2016). Education and awareness campaigns aimed at the general public, including students and tourists, are integral to Malaysia's strategy to encourage responsible behaviour around monkeys and other wildlife. Teaching the public not to interact with monkeys in ways that could alter their habitat or behaviour is an integral part of this effort. The government has also established monkey population management guidelines, which include methods to reduce their numbers, such as sterilisation programmes and the relocation of problem monkeys (Mohd-Taib et al., 2016). Local community involvement in monkey population management is also essential in Malaysia's approach. Two examples of this are establishing community-led initiatives for monkey population management and involving local communities in decision-making processes regarding wildlife population management in their areas (Mohd-Taib et al., 2016).

Malaysia's approach to monkey population management is generally based on a mix of scientific research, education, and community engagement, which has reduced monkey-related harm and increased opportunities for sustainable wildlife-based tourism.

### **1.2. The Problem of Monkey-Human Conflicts in Nigeria**

Forests that comprise approximately 10% of the country's land area are home to primates, and human activities such as logging, farming, mining, and urbanisation constantly threaten these forests (Orimaye et al. 2016). Because of this, many monkeys are forced out of their natural habitats -away from their regular food sources and are forced to venture into human settlements in search of their needs, which frequently leads to

conflicts between monkeys and humans because monkeys are known to steal crops, cause property damage, and spread diseases to humans. For instance, Ogunjemite et al. (2017) stated that approximately seventy per cent of farmers in southwestern Nigeria reported crop losses due to monkey raids, and about forty per cent of those farmers resorted to killing or injuring the animals as a form of retaliation or prevention.

These types of conflicts are harmful to both parties. The monkeys are at risk of being hurt, killed, or captured to be illegally sold or consumed and in the case of humans, the conflict results in financial losses, health risks, or psychological stress. Furthermore, because monkeys play essential roles in seed dispersal, pollination, and nutrient cycling, these conflicts threaten the ecological balance and biodiversity of the forests. As a result, there is a pressing need to investigate additional options for human communities to liveliving in harmony with these creatures.

### **1.3. The Value of Nigerian Forests as a Destination for Wildlife Conservation and Ecotourism**

Promoting biodiversity, conserving natural resources, and improving socioeconomic development in Nigeria's forests rely heavily on the success of wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism. Nigeria is home to a wide variety of wildlife species, many of which are in danger of extinction; saving these creatures and their habitats is essential to preserving biodiversity and fostering long-term economic growth (WCS, 2021). Sustainable tourism can boost local economies, create new jobs, and inspire people to better care of the environment (UNEP, 2015).

Deforestation, illegal hunting and poaching (Orimaye, 2016), pollution and other environmental degradation threaten Nigeria's forests and wildlife (WCS, 2021). Creating more eco-friendly tourism practices can help offset the adverse effects of different industries and boost conservation efforts and local economies. Ecotourism, for instance, can benefit conservation efforts and long-term economic growth by exposing visitors to Nigeria's rich biodiversity and natural wonders (UNEP, 2015). The sustainable development of Nigeria and the protection of its forests depend critically on the conservation of wildlife and responsible tourism. Sustainable tourism practices and conservation efforts that safeguard Nigeria's natural resources and wildlife

populations for future generations can boost the country's economy.

## 2.0. METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION.

The data collection method for the review paper "Adopting Malaysia's Tolerance for Monkeys in Nigeria's Forests: Exploring the Potential for Entrepreneurship in Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Tourism" is a systematic review of the existing literature on the subject (Kitchenham et al., 2009). The literature includes research studies, articles, reports, and other publications focusing on students' perspectives on open and distance learning in Nigeria. The evaluation procedure includes a thorough search of multiple academic databases, such as Google Scholar, Semantic Scholar, Academia and ResearchGate, using pertinent keywords such as "Malaysia's Tolerance for Monkeys" "Monkey in Nigeria's Forests: Entrepreneurship in Wildlife Conservation" "Sustainable Tourism". The search uses pre-determined inclusion and exclusion criteria to identify relevant studies that meet the research objectives. In this review, the study followed the guidelines for systematic reviews set out by the Cochrane Collaboration (Higgins & Green, 2011) and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) statement (Moher et al., 2009). The identified studies are then screened for relevance and quality using a systematic approach to select only those that meet the eligibility criteria. The selected studies were critically evaluated, and their findings were synthesised to comprehensively understand the adoption of Malaysia's Tolerance for Monkeys in Nigeria's Forests to determine its potential for Entrepreneurship in Wildlife Conservation and Sustainable Tourism.

## 3.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. The Tolerance Shown Toward Monkeys in Malaysia: The Description of Malaysia's Approach

Malaysia has taken a novel approach to the problem of managing monkey populations, one that encourages tolerance and peaceful coexistence between humans and monkeys (Choo & Abdul-Patah, (2013). While acknowledging the possibility of conflict between humans and monkeys, this strategy considers the ecological significance of monkeys and their role in the upkeep of forest ecosystems. Approximately 25 species of monkeys can be found living in the forests of Malaysia, a

country with a rich diversity of monkeys. In contrast to Nigeria,

Malaysia adopts a more positive and tolerant stance toward these animals. This helpful and tolerant stance is due, in part, to the influence of various religions and cultures, as certain kinds of monkeys are revered or seen as omens of good fortune by particular ethnic groups and faiths. For instance, because of this association, the long-tailed macaque is linked to the Hindu god Hanuman and is given special protection in certain temples and shrines (Yap, 2015, Sharma, 2018). Huang (2016) and Rice (2017) also noted that the dusky leaf monkey is frequently fed by tourists and locals in China because it symbolises good fortune and financial success in specific Chinese communities. In addition, Malaysia has implemented many safety measures to lessen the number of monkey-human clashes and foster better relations between the two species. The government established National Parks and Wildlife Reserves to safeguard the environments in which monkeys and other animals live in their respective populations (Ambu & Goossens, 2015, The National Wildlife Conservation Policy, 2016), the provision of alternative food sources for monkeys to reduce their reliance on human-provided food, and the implementation of stricter penalties for the maltreatment of monkeys (Choo, & Abdul-Patah, 2013).

Furthermore, it has enforced laws and regulations to prevent illegal hunting, trading, or other harmful treatment of monkeys (Hobbs III, 1982), supporting research and education programmes aimed at increasing public awareness and understanding of the behaviour and ecology of monkeys among various stakeholders and the general public and has instituted measures to manage monkey populations, such as sterilisation programmes to control their numbers and translocation programmes to move them to areas where they can thrive without conflict with humans (Choo & Abdul-Patah, 2013). It also prompted the development of community-based initiatives to cultivate constructive interactions and coexistence with monkeys (Onuoha & Enyi 2019). For instance, to prevent crop raids, some communities have adopted farming methods that are more friendly to monkeys or have set up feeding stations (Musa & Abd Manaf, 2019). These actions have led to several positive outcomes that benefit humans and monkeys. Their chances of surviving and reproducing in their natural environments have been significantly improved due to these changes (Musa & Abd Manaf, 2019). Hence, human

communities have seen reduced risks and losses associated with monkey encounters and capitalised on economic opportunities presented by ecotourism and other conservation endeavours involving monkeys. Most importantly, they have developed a sense of respect and appreciation for these animals as part of their collective heritage.

Promoting biodiversity, conserving natural resources, and enhancing socioeconomic development through the Malaysian approach is possible in Nigeria's forests through sustainable tourism and wildlife conservation. Nigeria is home to a diverse range of wildlife, including many species in danger of extinction; these animals and their habitats must be protected to preserve ecological diversity and encourage sustainable development (WCS, 2021). Ecotourism, for instance, can allow tourists to experience the one-of-a-kind wildlife and natural resources Nigeria offers while simultaneously promoting conservation and sustainable development (UNEP, 2015). Nigeria can foster economic expansion by instituting ecologically responsible tourism practices and conservation efforts while preserving its natural resources and wild animal populations for future generations.

### 3.2. What are the Secrets to Malaysia's Phenomenal Success?

The success of Malaysia's approach to monkey tolerance can be attributed to some factors, including the following:

**Collaborative efforts:** To implement and monitor their policies, the Malaysian government worked closely with local communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and researchers (Gumert & Malaivijitnond, 2013). Through collaboration, a better understanding of the intricate dynamics between humans and monkeys has been made possible, as well as the development of effective and inclusive policies.

**Policy and Regulation:** Malaysia have enacted a series of laws and regulations to protect monkeys and promote coexistence, such as the Wildlife Conservation Act, which offers legal protection for wildlife, and the Animal Welfare Act, which establishes standards for the treatment of animals (Gumert, & Malaivijitnond, 2013).

**Education and Awareness-Raising:** A concerted effort has been made by the government of Malaysia and various conservation organisations in the country to

educate the public about the significance of living in harmony with monkeys and the positive effects of conservation efforts on the environment and the economy (Gumert & Malaivijitnond, 2013). These campaigns have helped foster greater awareness and understanding of the issue among the general public, contributing to more positive attitudes toward monkeys and more significant support for conservation efforts (Looi, 2008).

**Ecological aspects:** Ecological aspects are taken into account, and the Malaysian approach acknowledges the ecological importance of monkeys and their role in the maintenance of forest ecosystems. Policies and regulations are drafted to foster ecological balance and lessen the environmental impact of human activities (Gumert & Malaivijitnond, 2013).

**Sustainable tourism:** Malaysia has developed sustainable tourism activities taking advantage of the unique ecological and cultural value that monkeys bring to the country. As a result, local communities have benefited economically, which has also helped promote conservation efforts (Gumert & Malaivijitnond, 2013).

In conclusion, the success of Malaysia's approach to tolerance for monkeys can be attributed to the combination of collaborative efforts, policy and regulation, education and awareness raising, ecological considerations, and sustainable tourism. It recognised the cultural significance of monkeys, contributing to the country's success in effectively managing its monkey populations.

### 3.3. Relevance of Malaysian Approach to Nigeria's Forests

Malaysia's approach, which has proven effective in managing monkey populations and promoting coexistence between humans and monkeys, may have significant implications for Nigeria's forests. Nigeria, like Malaysia, struggles with problems arising from conflicts between humans and monkeys, habitat destruction, unsustainable hunting practices, and being home to a diverse range of primate species (Ogunjemite et al., 2016). Therefore, implementing a tolerance policy for monkeys in Nigeria's forests, similar to Malaysia, could help alleviate some of these problems and promote coexistence between humans and monkeys. It could also open up opportunities for business owners in Nigeria, particularly in ecotourism and the conservation of wild animals. Local communities can benefit from sustainable

economic tourism that helps conserve primates and their habitats while protecting their natural resources. Investigating the possibilities of entrepreneurship in wildlife conservation and environmentally responsible tourism in Nigeria and adopting Malaysia's approach to monkey management could result in positive environmental and economic outcomes (Ogunjemite & Fakorede, 2018).

The rich biodiversity of Nigeria's forests, which includes primates such as chimps, gorillas, and various monkey species, presents a significant opportunity for wildlife conservation and the development of environmentally friendly ecotourism. If Nigeria adopted Malaysia's approach to monkey tolerance and promoted coexistence between humans and primates, it might be able to mitigate the impact of some of these threats.

Furthermore, local communities in Nigeria stand to benefit economically from wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism, both of which are important to the country. Ecotourism can benefit local communities economically and in terms of employment, help preserve natural resources and bolster the cause of sustainable development (Ogunjemite & Fakorede, 2018). Adopting a similar strategy for monkey management and promoting sustainable tourism in Nigeria could benefit the economy and the environment. Malaysia's effective strategy for controlling monkey populations and promoting human-monkey coexistence has significant implications for Nigeria's forest ecosystems. By taking a similar approach, Nigeria may be able to mitigate some of the threats to its biodiversity while promoting long-term economic development through ecotourism.

### 3.4. Wildlife Conservation in Nigeria's Forests

Nigeria's fauna and flora are diverse due to the country's diverse ecosystems, which include mangrove swamps, tropical rainforests, and savannahs. Several factors, including habitat degradation, illegal hunting, unchecked grazing activities, intensive logging, reserved user rights, and insufficient funding, make it challenging to protect wildlife in Nigeria's forests (Okali & Ootobo, 1987, Edem et al., 2016). The National parks play an essential role in the conservation efforts currently underway in Nigeria. The African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) is working as a consultant for them to reorganise and reposition the potential ecotourism opportunities that the parks offer in Nigeria. At the same time, the American

Wilderness Foundation will comprehensively study the parks' conservation context, management structures, and potential revenue streams (Oates et al. 2015).

The forests of Nigeria are critical to the survival of the country's diverse animal population. Forest reserves were established in Nigeria as early as 1900 and have been a significant component of wildlife conservation ever since (Bergl & Vigilant, 2007).

### 3.5. Challenges and Threats to Wildlife in Nigeria's Forests

The forests of Nigeria are home to an abundant and varied collection of animal species, but these forests also face a myriad of challenges and threats that jeopardise their existence. Deforestation, habitat degradation, illegal wildlife trade, and poaching are the dangers facing these species. According to Edem et al. (2016), wildlife in Nigeria's forests is frequently hunted for either meat, medicinal purposes, or to be sold on the black market, leading to a decline in populations of several species, including elephants, chimpanzees, and gorillas. According to Okali and Ootobo (1987), the Cross River National Park, which has over 1,200 plant species and is one of the world's most depleted in terms of biodiversity, is also threatened by deforestation and habitat degradation. Uncontrolled logging, agricultural projects, mining (Nwani et al., 2016), industrial plantations, highway (Edem et al., 2016), urban development, habitat fragmentation (Okali & Ootobo, 1987), and other forms of human activity are also putting pressure on Nigeria's forests. For example, the Afi River Forest Reserve, an essential habitat corridor for the Cross River gorilla, is in danger of being deforested at an alarming rate (Oates et al. 2015).

A significant amount of ivory is also trafficked through Nigeria, making it a global hub for the illegal ivory trade. Wittemyer et al., (2014). Bergl & Vigilant (2007) noted that poaching and the destruction of natural habitats are the two most significant threats to the survival of endangered species, like the chimpanzee, whose population in Cameroon and Nigeria has dropped to fewer than 9,000 individuals. Similarly, changes in rainfall patterns and temperatures are directly related to climate change, contributing to a rise in temperature, which alters vegetation and affects the habitats of various animals (Pauwels, 2016). Finally, non-native invasive species, such as the giant African land snail and water hyacinth, are displacing native species by outcompeting them for

resources and upsetting the delicate ecological equilibrium. (Onadeko & Ayodele, 2021).

Human communities in general are unaware of the importance of protecting animals and their habitats, resulting in a lack of support for conservation efforts and a continuing decline in the populations of various wildlife species (Adeniyi & Ezenwa, 2020). To protect Nigeria's wildlife and forest habitats, the Nigerian government, international organisations, and local communities must immediately respond to these threats. The primary objective of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime's "Strengthening Nigeria's Response to the Trafficking of Wildlife and Forestry Products" project is to increase the capacity of relevant Nigerian authorities to combat illegal wildlife trade (UNODC, 2021). Addressing these challenges and threats is essential to protect Nigeria's diverse and valuable wildlife for future generations' benefit.

### 3.6. Recent Initiatives to Protect Nigeria's Forest Wildlife

Nigeria has launched its first-ever National Strategy to Combat Wildlife and Forest Crime, covering 2022 to 2026, intending to address the illegal trade in wildlife and forest products, particularly pangolins sourced from Central Africa (UNEP. 2022, Africanews. 2022, Nigerian Environmental Society. 2022). This is due to Nigeria's growing role as a transit hub for trafficking illicit wildlife and forest products, particularly the global illegal pangolin trade (Adepoju 2021). Technical assistance was provided by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Germany funded the strategy. The strategy aims to strengthen law enforcement, raise public awareness, promote international cooperation, and develop sustainable livelihoods for local communities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022).

Several forest reserves and national parks exist in Nigeria. For example, the Afi River Forest Reserve was established in the 1930s to protect over 300 square kilometres of forest habitat for gorillas and other wildlife species (Conservation Watch. 2022, African Parks. 2022, Deutsche Welle, 2022). Increased investment in law enforcement to combat wildlife trafficking in Nigeria has occurred in recent years, strengthening the capacity of relevant Nigerian authorities to respond to wildlife and forest crimes (Daily Trust. (2022). On the other hand, inhabitants surrounding protected areas have reported that

such efforts have sometimes resulted in losing access to land and resources (African Parks, 2022).

### 3.7. Forest Tourism in Nigeria: A Model For The Future

Ecotourism, or forest tourism, is a rapidly growing subset of Nigeria's tourism industry. Forest tourism is "environmentally responsible and centres on the appreciation of natural areas and the conservation of their biodiversity," as one definition puts it (The International Ecotourism Society, 2015). Forest tourism's primary aims are to promote environmental preservation, create economic opportunities for local communities, and provide unique, memorable experiences for tourists. Nigeria is an intriguing destination culturally, biologically, and topographically (WTO, 2021a).

However, the development of ecotourism has been slow for various reasons, including inadequate infrastructure, poor governance, insecurity, a lack of funding, and a general lack of appreciation for cultural diversity (Udeagha, 2020). Cavanagh & Kelly (2017) noted substantial economic, social, and environmental benefits of restoring, rehabilitating, and conserving Nigeria's mangrove forests. Bird watching, nature walks, and cultural tours are all examples of sustainable tourism that can reap these benefits. According to Oyinlola et al. (2020), ecotourism, specifically sustainable tourism, can be a strong incentive for preserving forested ecosystems. Forest tourism in Nigeria has the potential to significantly boost the economy, create jobs for local communities, and promote sustainable development goals. It can help protect the country's extraordinary biological diversity, threatened by human activities like habitat destruction, overexploitation, and climate change.

Forest tourism is possible in Nigeria due to the country's abundance of publicly accessible national parks and forest reserves. These parks and reserves are maintained by the National Park Service and the Department of Forestry, and they welcome visitors interested in seeing wildlife, camping and hiking, or educational tours of local history and culture. By 1902, Nigeria had 97,125 hectares of forest, or 0.01% of its total land area, through the colonial government's efforts (Adepoju 2016). Even if these figures have changed over time, Nigeria's forests remain a valuable resource for ecotourism and have the potential to become a world leader. Ecotourism could grow substantially in Nigeria's forested areas, but until concerns about safety and the

need for efficient forest management are addressed, this potential will remain unrealised.

### **3.8. The Wildlife Conservation Benefits Of Sustainable Tourism**

There is growing recognition of the critical role tourism can play in promoting conservation efforts (World Bank 2018), and sustainable tourism has the potential to benefit wildlife conservation significantly. Wildlife tourism has the potential to support local communities financially and encourage the preservation of natural areas and wildlife populations. For instance, ecotourism directly or indirectly supports nearly 22 million jobs and more than \$120 billion in GDP (WTO, 2021b).

Funding wildlife-based tourism can benefit the tourism industry. The World Bank Global Wildlife Programme (GWP) invests in wildlife-based tourism and fights illegal wildlife trade in 19 countries throughout Africa and Asia to promote wildlife conservation and sustainable development (World Bank 2018). In addition, the Convention on Biological Diversity's 20 clear targets to protect biodiversity and expand the benefits it provides to all can be met with the aid of sustainable tourism (Convention on Biological Diversity, 2011).

Working as a guide, cook, or housekeeper can provide an alternative source of income to illegal hunting, quarrying, logging, and agricultural practices that damage the environment (WTO, 2021a), and by bringing people closer to nature, tourism can inspire a newfound appreciation for the natural world and a renewed commitment to protecting it (WTO, 2021a). Sustainable tourism can benefit wildlife and local communities (Ashley et al., 2001)

### **3.9. Exploring The Potential for Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a viable option for People who want to be independent and have an impact. In recent years, Nigeria's private sector and government have collaborated to promote the growth of micro- and small-scale enterprises (MSEs). Before Nigeria's entrepreneurial spirit can reach its full potential, it must overcome some formidable obstacles. Many would-be business owners have difficulty securing the startup capital their ventures require, making this a significant barrier to entry, especially women business

owners, who face more challenges in obtaining funding (Odusami 2020). Lack of access to basic infrastructure and services, such as consistent electricity and internet connectivity, can hinder entrepreneurs' success (ADB, 2018). WBG (2021) reported that corruption and cumbersome regulations are two more problems that slow a company's expansion in Nigeria. Despite the difficulties, Nigeria is ripe for opportunities for budding business owners. The country's growing population and abundant natural resources make it an attractive market for companies in many sectors. E-commerce and financial technology are just two examples of how the expansion of digital technologies has provided new opportunities for business owners (Obiaya, 2021). When the public and private sectors work together to address the obstacles facing Nigeria's budding entrepreneurial community, the country's enormous potential can finally be unlocked.

### **3.10. Entrepreneurship In The Conservation Of Wildlife And Sustainable Tourism**

Entrepreneurship can play a vital role in wildlife conservation and sustainable tourism. By creating businesses that promote ecotourism, entrepreneurs can help generate revenue for conservation efforts and create employment opportunities for local communities. One example of this is the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association in Kenya. This association consists of a group of Maasai landowners who have created their wildlife conservancies to protect their land and wildlife while also generating income through ecotourism. These conservancies offer tourists a unique opportunity to experience the culture and nature of the Maasai people while also contributing to conservation efforts and supporting local communities (Kipkoech, J. et al., 2021).

In Nigeria, the Wildlife Conservation Society has partnered with local communities to establish community-led conservation programs. These programmes involve training locals in sustainable farming practices and wildlife conservation and supporting developing ecotourism businesses. By empowering local communities to take charge of conservation efforts and creating businesses that support conservation, the Wildlife Conservation Society helps protect Nigeria's wildlife while promoting sustainable economic development (WCS, 2023).

Entrepreneurship can also play a role in combating wildlife poaching and illegal wildlife trade. In South Africa, the Rhino Protection Programme is a non-profit organisation that works with private rhino owners to protect their rhinos from poaching. The program has created a network of private rhino owners who work together to share information and resources to protect their rhinos. In addition, the program has established a rhino horn treatment system that renders rhino horns worthless to poachers, reducing the incentive for poaching (Peaceparks.org, 2023). Entrepreneurship can provide a path for sustainable economic development while promoting wildlife conservation. Entrepreneurs can help protect wildlife and their habitats by creating businesses supporting conservation efforts and employment opportunities for local communities.

### 3.11. Opportunities For Entrepreneurship in Nigeria's Forests

Numerous business opportunities can be found in Nigeria's forests, particularly in environmentally responsible forest management and conservation of forest resources. Some potential opportunities include

1. **Ecotourism:** Nigeria's forests are home to various animal and plant species, making them a popular destination for people interested in ecotourism. Ecotourism businesses can be developed sustainably by business people, and these businesses can help visitors experience the natural beauty of Nigeria's forests while also contributing to the ongoing conservation efforts of the nation. (Omole & Adisa 2016).
2. **Agroforestry:** Agroforestry, which is the practice of growing crops in conjunction with trees, presents potential business opportunities in Nigeria's forests. This strategy has the potential to contribute to the preservation of the forest ecosystem while also providing a source of revenue for the local farmers. (Arokoyo, 2021).
3. **Non-timber Forest Products:** The forests of Nigeria provide a plentiful supply of non-timber forest products like medicinal plants, fruits, nuts, and timber. Local communities can access a source of income if entrepreneurs develop businesses focussing on harvesting and processing these products in an environmentally responsible manner. (Ofori, et al., 2016).

4. **Forest Carbon Projects:** Entrepreneurs have the opportunity to develop forest carbon projects that result in the generation of carbon credits through the preservation and restoration of forests. After that, these credits can be sold to businesses that are looking to compensate for the carbon emissions they have produced. (Enete, 2014).

5. **Sustainable Forestry:** Entrepreneurs can develop sustainable forest businesses, and these companies would focus on ethical management and harvesting of wood resources. Creating products with added value, such as furniture and other wood items that can be sold in the local market or exported, is one way to accomplish this. (Adebayo, 2015).

### 3.12. Entrepreneurship in Nigeria's Forests: Issues and Solutions

Entrepreneurs in Nigeria face severe challenges due to a lack of basic infrastructure like well-maintained roads, constant power, and sufficient water (Adeleke & Ayeni 2020). For entrepreneurs to succeed, Olorunfemi (2020) maintained that society must provide them with supportive legal, educational, financial, and government policies. Given the widespread poverty and high youth unemployment in Nigeria's forest regions, encouraging rural business development is crucial (Odoemenam et al., 2021).

Entrepreneurs need money to pay rent or lease, inventory, transportation, insurance, permits, and legal fees to open their businesses, yet the Nigerian financial sector has a massive bias against new business owners, which is unfortunate (Adeleke & Ayeni, 2020). This suggests that there are difficulties for forest-based entrepreneurs in securing initial funding. Aspiring entrepreneurs in Nigeria face various taxes, including federal tax, value-added tax, state-based taxes, and operating permit renewals (Adeleke & Ayeni, 2020), which can be a burden due to the various requirements of each of these taxes. Obtaining permits and licences can be challenging for entrepreneurs in areas with high levels of corruption and bureaucracy (Oke et al., 2016). The government's inability to adequately support rural business owners is another major issue that threatens the expansion of existing businesses in the forested area.



There may be ways around these problems, in any case. Nevertheless, these challenges can be mitigated by implementing solutions such as bolstering rural entrepreneurship, maintaining policy consistency, and enhancing infrastructure. For example, abrupt policy changes can be detrimental to the growth of businesses, so the government must maintain policies that support entrepreneurship (Adeleke & Ayeni, 2020). The government can also put money into enhancing utilities like roads, power lines, and water systems in the forested area. Finally, the government can expand its funding programmes and other forms of support for rural entrepreneurs (Odoemenam et al. 2021).

#### 4.0. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, conserving wildlife and promoting sustainable tourism in Nigeria's forests is critical to promoting economic growth and biodiversity conservation. However, achieving these objectives will necessitate the cooperation of numerous stakeholders, including the government, local communities, and entrepreneurs. Adopting Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in Nigeria's forests could be a viable solution to reducing human-wildlife conflicts and promoting sustainable tourism. However, successfully implementing such a policy necessitates careful planning and consideration of Nigerian cultural and social factors.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship offers significant economic growth and job creation opportunities in Nigeria's forests. However, the region's entrepreneurs face many challenges, including a lack of infrastructure, a biased financial sector, multiple taxes, and inconsistencies in government policies. The government must invest in infrastructure, provide support mechanisms for entrepreneurs, and ensure policy continuity to encourage entrepreneurship in Nigeria's forests.

##### 4.1. Implications and potential impact of adopting Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in Nigeria's forests

Adopting Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in Nigeria's forests could have some ramifications and potential consequences.

- First, it could reduce human-monkey conflict because humans would be more tolerant of primates and less inclined to harm them. In Nigeria's forests, this would

result in a more harmonious coexistence between humans and monkeys.

- It may also have economic consequences. Malaysia's tourism industry has benefited from its tolerant stance towards monkeys, as visitors worldwide flock to see the primates in their natural habitat. If Nigeria adopted a similar strategy, the country could attract more tourists, benefiting the economy.
- Thirdly, it may have environmental consequences. Monkeys play a crucial role in maintaining forest biodiversity; removing them from the ecosystem could negatively affect the environment. By adopting a more tolerant stance, Nigeria could contribute to preserving its natural resources and forests.

However, adopting Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in Nigeria's forests is not without potential obstacles and restrictions. For instance, due to cultural or religious differences, Nigerians may find accepting a more tolerant attitude towards monkeys challenging. In addition, there may be logistical difficulties in implementing policies to promote monkey tolerance, such as enforcing regulations to protect the primates and educating the public about their significance. While there may be obstacles and constraints to implementing such policies, the potential advantages of more harmonious coexistence between humans and monkeys may make it worthwhile.

##### 4.2. Future Directions for Research and Implementation

The potential effects of adopting Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in Nigeria's forests on conservation efforts, sustainable tourism, and entrepreneurship offer multiple avenues for future research. Future research should identify the most effective strategies for encouraging entrepreneurship in Nigeria's forests and developing long-term policies to reduce human-wildlife conflicts. Successful conservation and sustainable tourism policies implemented in Nigeria's forests can lead to long-term economic growth, biodiversity conservation, and improved livelihoods for local communities.

The potential impact of adopting Malaysia's tolerance for monkeys in Nigeria's forests on conservation efforts, sustainable tourism, and entrepreneurship demonstrates the need for additional study. Such research can help policymakers develop evidence-based policies

and strategies that promote sustainable development in Nigeria's forest region by striking a balance between conservation and human-wildlife coexistence.

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