

Factors Influencing Residents' Empowerment at Tourist Destinations in Ghana

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Abstract There are increasing studies on residents' empowerment in tourism however, few authors have looked at factors influencing empowerment of residents and particularly have not linked human empowerment as a separate aspect of empowerment to the study of tourism. This study addresses this knowledge gap by examining the socio-demographic factors influencing resident's empowerment in tourism by looking at six aspects of empowerment that is human, social, political, economic, environmental, and psychological. The study found age and length of stay influence the human disempowerment of residents and that the youth are likely to be humanly disempowered than the adult and the aged. This suggests that when conditions remain the same and there is no deliberate effort to educate and build the capacity of the youth it could have series of implications on the attainment of sustainable tourism. The study recommends that any intervention to build the human empowerment of residents at tourism destinations should consider the youth.

Keywords Sustainable tourism, Ecotourism, Human empowerment, Environment, Sustainable development

1. Introduction

Tourism is one of the industries that can stabilize a country's economy. [1] assert that tourism provides economic benefits to deprived communities, preserves their environment and local cultures. Tourism contributed about \$8.8 trillion to the global economy in 2018 and added about 10% of global jobs [2]. To ensure the continuity of such benefits, sustainable forms of tourism have been embraced by most nations. One form of sustainable tourism is ecotourism. TIES (2015) defines ecotourism as *responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education*. [4] emphasize that ecotourism is one of the critical strategies for providing socio-economic development outcomes to host communities. Most of the literature on ecotourism point out that ecotourism can provide livelihoods support to host communities. [5] assert that ecotourism can provide rural communities with socio-economic gains and conserve the environment at the same time, encourages tourists as well as residents to be environmentally conscious, abide by local regulations and put up responsible behavior to prevent damage to the natural environment [6,7]. Furthermore, ecotourism can provide rural communities with socio-economic benefits and conserve the environment at the same time [4,5,8,9].

COVID -19 has brought devastating effects on most tourism sites which have implications on the benefits associated with it to host communities. [10] barometer reports indicate that there was about a 73% reduction in international tourism arrivals even though looking into the future, there is hope for the sector. With limited movements through international borders, countries need to promote the development of their domestic tourism. For decades, Ghana has depended on its domestic tourism as the main source of tourism arrivals at destinations and this has been consistent up to 2019 [11]. COVID-19 restrictions including lockdowns and restrictions to movement reduced the number of domestic tourists to destinations. To revamp the tourism sector, improving domestic tourism is critical. Most tourism destinations in Ghana are ecotourism sites and one tenet of ecotourism is to empower residents to ensure sustainable ecotourism. Some authors posit that community empowerment and the attainment of sustainable tourism should be linked [1,12]. [1] believe that when community members are highly empowered, they can contribute to the achievement of sustainable ecotourism at destinations.

To help devise strategies to assist community members to be empowered, it is crucial to understand the socio-demographic characteristics that empower or disempower residents. However, few authors have looked at factors influencing the empowerment of residents [12,13]. Different aspects of empowerment have been outlined in the literature. These include social, political, psychological, environmental, and economic [14-17]. Psychological empowerment is where residents feel proud, confident, and happy about tourism in their communities. Economic

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empowerment is where residents enjoy economic benefits from ecotourism. Social empowerment includes connectedness, social cohesion, and provision of social infrastructure from tourism esteem and political empowerment is where residents can participate in the decision concerning tourism development [16,18-20]. Environmental empowerment is where residents can access environmental resources and protect them [17].

Most authors have not linked human empowerment as a separate aspect of empowerment to the study of ecotourism and tourism in general. However, fundamental to the various aspects of empowerment is human empowerment which [21] share that human empowerment requires human services to apply different techniques such as increasing skills and self-efficacy, enhancing consciousness about the connections between individual struggles and bigger public issues, forming a coalition with others and taking steps to build personal, interpersonal or social change. [22] connects human empowerment to self-power and asserts that it is the "first face" of empowerment. It is an important personal efficacy factor that could be defined as "personal power" and that efficacy can be increased when people gain control over their destiny.

[23] asserts that human empowerment denotes the provision of education, skills, and training to community members. According to [24], human empowerment is mostly about the self-empowerment of the individual to the social group. He continues that human empowerment includes providing the necessary structures for individuals to obtain an education, employment and obtain access to greater social control and use of resources. Therefore, to provide a holistic form of empowerment to residents their human capacities cannot be left behind. This study addresses this knowledge gap by examining the socio-demographic factors that influence resident's empowerment in tourism by looking at six aspects of empowerment that is human, social, political, economic, environmental, and psychological. This can inform policy and help institutions to devise strategies to help empower residents to advance the attainment of the sustainable tourism agenda.

2. Empowerment: Definitions and Related Issues

The idea of empowerment draws from series of theories, particularly the educational and feminist theories that advocate for bottom-up methodological approaches [25]. [26] link the idea of empowerment to the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who believed that the educational curricula did not benefit the marginalized group since it did not address barriers to discrimination which they faced and argued for personal empowerment which is important in creating awareness on the effects of social and political discrimination. The overall objective of empowerment is to offer families, communities, and groups what they need and also liberate marginalized societies socially and politically

[27]. [28] asserts that empowerment originated from the struggles of social movements which were advanced by civic and political actors seeking collective responses.

The idea of community empowerment has gained much attention in many disciplines and has been researched across various disciplines [17,18]. However, its definition remains problematic [18]. It is also a procedure by which people gain authority, access to resources, and power over their lives [17]. They support the opinion that empowerment is the capability of residents to be in authority, exercise choice of their action, and have power over decisions and resources [27] believe that empowerment is a multidimensional concept and is linked to personal and social empowerment. [29] support that empowerment is granting power to employees and helping them to realize their importance. Empowerment in ecotourism is where the majority of residents benefit from various aspects of ecotourism including human, social, physical, environmental, psychological and political [30].

[17] sees empowerment "as a process that helps communities to gain control over ecotourism initiatives in their area". Furthermore, [22] views empowerment as giving power to another person or group of people or when people exert power as part of their behavior. Others believe empowerment results when people are given training [31]. It must be noted that what the various definitions share in common is that, empowerment denotes a sense of control and authority over issues that concern community members or an individual. Sustainable ecotourism requires residents to improve their livelihoods and this can be achieved when residents participate in the tourism development process [32,33]. However, participating at the highest level when people have a sense of control and benefit from all aspects of the tourism process is crucial for pursuing the sustainable tourism agenda.

2.1. Factors Influencing Residents' Empowerment

Communities' empowerment could be influenced by series of factors. A study conducted in Bangladesh on factors affecting women empowerment uncovered that the educational status and age of respondents were significant in their status of empowerment [34]. Other authors investigated the factors influencing employees empowerment in Zimbabwe and found that factors contributing to their disempowerment include organizational culture, availability of resources, managers' leadership styles, and quality of training among others [35]. In addition, a study conducted by [36], revealed that prior knowledge contributed to students' empowerment. Other studies found that education does not affect residents' opportunities to work within the tourism sector [12].

[37] asserts that some of the factors affecting community participation include community interest and support from institutions. Furthermore, [38] established that the age of respondents does not influence their perception of empowerment but established that gender, position, and tenure do have a strong influence on empowerment. Their

research also revealed that the education, gender, tenure, and job position of respondents related significantly to empowerment. Again, [29] conducted a study on factors affecting employees' attitude to empowerment and found that the age of respondents related significantly to their perception of empowerment whilst gender and nationality were not significant. They added that respondents with higher levels of education-related positively to empowerment.

Moreover, [39] investigated the factors affecting Korean nursing student empowerment in clinical practice and established that their empowerment would be increased with education. They continue that when they are treated as valued learners their self-esteem would be enhanced. In addition, [40] assert that some of the factors influencing community-based sustainability include a sense of belongingness. Not all but also [41] investigated socio-demographic characteristics and community participation in tourism at Mesomagor and found that gender and income were related to community participation. Again, [42] researched tourism involvement and perceived benefits in Tanzania and found sex, age, and education to be significantly related to participation in tourism. Other authors found that psychological empowerment influences place identity and place dependence of residents [13]. As destinations try to pursue sustainable development goals, it is important to understand the factors that could contribute to

or hinder resident's empowerment process to inform policy.

3. Study Areas and Methods

3.1. Study Areas

This was conducted at KNP and BFRBS in Ghana. KNP was gazetted as a National Park and Resource Reserve by the Wildlife Reserves Regulation (LI 1525) in 1992 to protect the watersheds of the Kakum River, other rivers around the communities surrounding the Park [4], and reduce biodiversity loss [43]. KNP is the most visited ecotourism destination in Ghana [44]. The rich biodiversity resources provided by KNP offer opportunities for ecotourism development. Ecotourism was developed in KNP in 1995 to assist with the development of the communities and the construction of a 333m canopy walkway in the western part of the Park by Conservation International and the Government of Ghana (GoG) greatly enhanced visitation to the park [4,45]. The BFRBS falls within the Ejisu Juaben Municipality and was created in 1939 when it was an unexploited primary forest [5]. The size of the reserve is about 54.6 sq. Km and is about 35 km South-east of Kumasi, the Ashanti Regional capital. It has about 340 butterfly species and 120 birds which are the main attractions to the sanctuary.

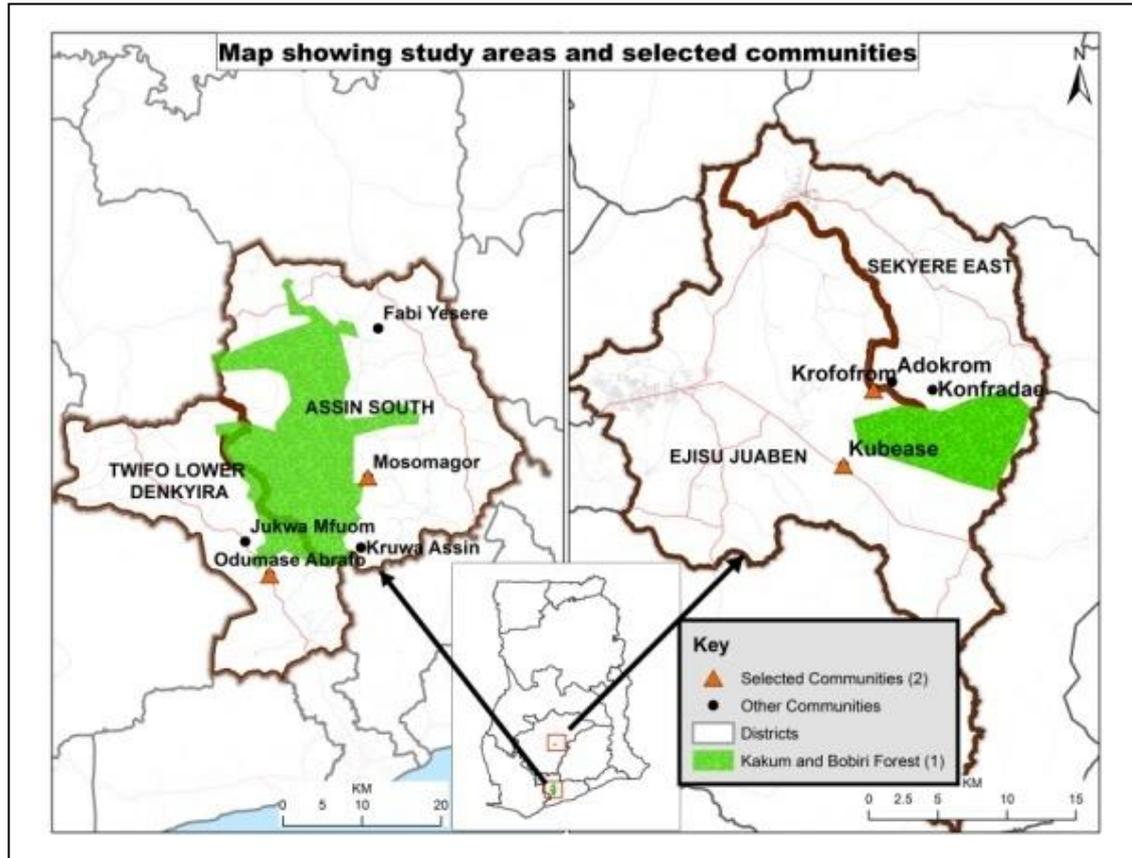


Figure 1. Map of study areas

Two communities around each destination were selected for the study. From KNP Mesomagor and Abrafo were selected. Abrafo is a gateway to the forest and it is located along a major road. Mesomagor is at the remote side of the tourism destination with no regular transportation to the area. It used to have a tree platform as a community-based tourism attraction but this has collapsed. The economic activities undertaken by residents are farming and they depend on this for survival. At BFRBS Kubease and Krofofrom were selected. Kubease is a gateway to the forest and is along a major road with a toll where some of the residents sell food items to passengers who stop to engage in tourism or other activities. The major economic activity is farming. Krofofrom is at the remote side of the attraction without regular transport and most community members engage in farming as their primary economic activity. These study sites are important because they helped to understand the various background characteristics of residents at the major tourism road and those that are at the remote side of the attraction. Furthermore, [2,5] assert that residents' participation in decision-making regarding forest management at BFRBS is low. [4,43] observed that the economic goals of residents at KNP were not met. The map for the study areas is shown in figure 1.

3.2. Methodology

The study employed quantitative approaches to investigate the phenomenon. Questionnaires were used to sample a cross-section of the population. The population of the communities that were selected based on the 2010 population census [46] is Kubease 1,798, Krofofrom has 316, Mesomagor 406, and Abrafo 833. Proportional sampling was applied to select a percentage of respondents for the survey. Ten percent (10%) was applied to select the sample size from each of the communities. Kubease was (180), Krofofrom was (32), Abrafo (83) and Mesomagor (41). An extra 10% was calculated on the sample size to cover those who the researcher is not able to reach [47]. The total sample size was 373, thus Kubease 199, Mesomagor 45, Abrafo 93, and Krofofrom 36.

To satisfy this objective, multinomial regressions were performed because the data consists of a nominal dependent variable and eight independent variables. According to McDonald (2014), multinomial regression is employed when there are nominal dependent variables and many independent variables. The respondents were asked to indicate what best describes them. For instance, in the case of human empowerment, they were asked to select whether they have had any alternative training, know ecotourism or have not had any training on alternative livelihoods, or have no knowledge about ecotourism. These were recoded into dummy variables for human empowerment and disempowerment. The same was done for the other types of empowerment. These were used as the dependent variables thus (economic, social, environmental, political,

psychological, and human empowerment) and the independent variables (age, years of stay, education, occupation, gender, marital status, family size, and religion) to run the multinomial regression. This was performed to ascertain the effects of two or more independent variables on the dependent variable [49]. The regression test is essential since it helped the researcher to know which factors influence community empowerment and to predict the effects of independent variables on the dependent variables [49,50]. Simple logistic regression was used to analyze the research hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1. Profile of Respondents

The characteristics of respondents are displayed in Table 1. The table portrays the sex, length of stay of respondents, primary occupation, age, religious affiliation, highest educational qualification, ethnicity, and marital status. The characteristics of respondents are important since it assists the researcher to know the background of those whose views are captured in the study.

Table 1 depicts that 61% of the sampled size in Abrafo are males whilst 39% are females. There are 41% males in the sample from Mesomagor and 59% females. Kubease has 48% males and 52% females whereas Krofofrom has 56% males and 44% females in the samples from Krofofrom. The majority of the respondents with basic education at Abrafo are 71% whilst 17% have not had any formal education, 2% have had Senior High School (SHS) education and 10% have been through Teacher Training College and Polytechnics. From Mesomagor, 63% have had basic education, 30% have not had any formal education, 4 have had SHS education, and 2% have been through tertiary education. From Kubease, 85% have had basic education, 6% have not had any formal education and the same percentage of respondents have SHS and tertiary education.

The highest age group of respondents in Abrafo falls within 36-65 (55%) which is classified as the adult population. The next group is the youth population between 18-35 (17%). In Mesomagor, the highest age group of respondents recorded falls within the adult population (34%) followed by the youth (11%). The adult (60%) dominates the sampled population in Kubease followed by the youth (34%). The highest age group for respondents in Krofofrom is the adult population (52%) followed by the youth (33%) and the aged (14%). The data reveals that the greater proportion of respondents fall within the working population and are capable of making decisions that concern their lives. The distribution of the age group of respondents is also vital to ascertain whether the age of respondents can contribute to their empowerment or disempowerment in the various communities.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Variable	Percentage			
	Abrafo	Mesomagor	Kubease	Krofofrom
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	61	41	48	56
Female	39	59	52	44
<u>Religion</u>				
Christianity	82	96	82	89
Islam	10	4	15	8
Traditional	5		2	
N/A	2		0.5	3
Other	1		0.5	
<u>Highest educational attainment</u>				
None	17	30	6	
Basic	71	63	85	17
SHS	2	4	6	81
Tertiary	10	2	6	3
<u>Age</u>				
Youth (18-35)	17	11	34	33
Adult (36-65)	55	34	60	52
Aged (66-85)	8		6	14
<u>Length of stay</u>				
Not long (1-20)	35	57	40	44
Fairly long (21-40)	41	37	37	39
Very long (41-80)	24	7	24	18
<u>Marital status</u>				
Married	76	80	73	94
Not married	25	1	27	6
<u>Ethnic group</u>				
Akan	98	98	80	66
Other	2	2	21	34
<u>Primary occupation</u>				
Farmer	61	98	32	89
Trader	11		28	6
Public service	21	2	49	3
N/A	8		12	3
<u>Household size</u>				
N/A	14	9	16	42
Small (1-4)	53	50	58	39
Fairly large (5-8)	26	41	25	19
Large (9-13)	6		1	

4.2. Socio-demographic Characteristics Influencing Residents' Empowerment

The background characteristics of respondents were used as predictors to assess which of them influence the empowerment of community members. The factors that influence the empowerment of residents are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 illustrates the various socio-demographic characteristics of respondents that influence their extent of empowerment. The study reveals that the factor influencing environmental empowerment at Mesomagor is the length of stay. The results further indicate that residents at Mesomagor who have not stayed there for a longer time (between 1-20

years) are likely to be environmentally empowered than those who have stayed there moderately long (21-40 years) and very long (41 years and above). It further reveals that the odds of those who are environmentally empowered at Mesomagor are 3.232E-008 more for those who have not stayed there for a longer period than those who have stayed there moderately long and very long. The model is statistically significant at $p=0.000$ at a 95% confidence level. The data further explains 10% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance of environmental empowerment and it contributes to the model. This means that residents at Mesomagor who have not stayed there for a long time have an increased odds of becoming environmentally empowered.

On the other hand, age, gender, and religion influence the environmental empowerment of residents at Kubease. Residents at Kubease who are young (the youth – 18-35) are likely to be environmentally empowered than the Adult (36-65) and the aged (66 and above). Furthermore, the study found that the odds of those who are environmentally empowered at Kubease are 1.73 more for the youth than the adult and the aged. This is significant at $p=0.000$ with a 95% confidence level. However, age decreases the model. This illustrates that the youth at Kubease have a decreased odds of becoming environmentally empowered.

The study also found that the odds of those who are environmentally empowered at Kubease are 3.552 more for females than males which is significant at $p=0.05$ and contributes to the model. This denotes that females' residents at Kubease have increased odds of becoming environmentally empowered. Those who are not in religious groups are more likely to be environmentally empowered than those who are in a religious group at Kubease. The results show that the odds of those who are environmentally

empowered at Kubease is 0.032 more for those not in any religious groups than those who are in a religious group. This is significant at $p=0.044$ but decreases the model. Age, gender, and religion explain 22% of the variance of environmental empowerment at Kubease.

In addition, the length of stay influences the psychological empowerment of residents in Kubease. This was significant for those who have not lived there for long and those who have lived there moderately long at $p=0.02$ and 0.04 respectively. The odds of psychological empowerment for residents at Kubease are 3.826 more for those who have not stayed there for longer than those who have stayed there for very long. It is 3.611 more for those who have stayed there moderately long than those who have stayed there very long. The length of stay contributes to the model and explains 16% of the variance in psychological empowerment. This suggests that when conditions are permanent, a 1% increase in the length of stay for such groups of residents would result in a 3.611 and 3.826 increase in their psychological empowerment respectively.

Table 2. Socio-demographic factors influencing residents' empowerment

Socio-demographic characteristics influencing residents' empowerment					95% CI for Odds Ratio	
	Variable Name	B (SE)	Wald	Odds Ratio Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Environmental Empowerment						
Mesomagor	Intercept	18.101 (0.818)*	489.181			
	Length of stay (Not long)	-17.247 (0.803)*	461.842	3.232E-008	6.705E-009	1.558E-007
Note: R2 = .103 (Nagelkerke); -2 Log Likelihood = 36.668; *p= 0.000						
Kubease	Intercept	20.586 (1.526)*	182.045			
	Age (Youth)	-17.872 (0.788)*	514.812	1.730E-008	3.695E-009	8.103E-008
	Gender (Females)	1.267 (0.644)***	3.873	3.552	1.005	12.549
	Religion (No)	-3.453 (1.715)**	4.055	0.032	0.001	0.912
Note: R2 = .223 (Nagelkerke); -2 Log Likelihood = 50.567; *p= 0.000; **p=0.044; ***p=0.05						
Psychological empowerment						
Kubease	Intercept	1.289 (1.209)	1.136			
	Length of stay (Not long)	1.342 (0.595)*	5.094	3.826	1.193	12.270
	Length of stay (Moderately long)	1.284 (0.611)**	4.423	3.611	1.091	11.950
Note: R2 = .163 (Nagelkerke); -2 Log Likelihood = 85.754; *p= 0.02; **p=0.04						

4.3. Socio-demographic Factors Influencing Residents' Disempowerment

Several socio-demographic factors influence residents' disempowerment. These are shown in Table 3.

From Table 3, age influences the human disempowerment of residents at Abrafo is influenced. The youth are likely to be humanly disempowered than the adult and the aged. The odds of human disempowerment for those at Abrafo are 2.87 more for the youth than the adult and the aged which is significant at $p=0.000$ and explains 25% of the variance in human disempowerment but decreases the model. This suggests that when conditions remain the same and there is

no deliberate effort to educate and build the capacity of residents at Abrafo, those who are young would be more humanly disempowered. On the other hand, the length of stay influences the human disempowerment status of residents at Mesomagor. The odds of human disempowerment for residents at Mesomagor are 4.074 more for those who have not stayed there for a longer period than those who have stayed there moderately long and very long. This is significant at $p=0.000$ and explains 26% of the variance in human disempowerment but decreases the model.

The age and family size of residents at Kubease influence their status of social disempowerment. The odds of social

disempowerment for residents at Kubease are 6.288 more for the youth than for the adult and the aged which is significant at $p=0.000$. This suggests that when conditions remain permanent, the youth who continue to stay at Kubease would become more humanly disempowered. The odds of human disempowerment of residents at Kubease are 5.066 more for those with smaller family sizes than those with larger family sizes. This is significant at $p=0.02$. The age and family size of residents explain 13% of the variance in social disempowerment, however, age decreases the model whilst family size contributes to the model.

The age and length of stay of residents at Kubease influence their status of economic disempowerment. The odds of economic disempowerment for residents at Kubease

are 16.314 and 30.850 more for the youth and adult respectively than for the aged. These are significant at $p=0.021$ and $p=0.043$ respectively. This suggests that when conditions are static, the youth and the adult who grow in the community are likely to be economically disempowered. In addition, the odds of economic disempowerment for residents at Kubease is 0.032 more for those who have lived there moderately long than those who have not lived there long and those who have lived there very long. This is also significant at 0.024. The age and length of stay of residents at Kubease explain 17% of the variance in economic disempowerment. However, age contributes to the model whilst length of stay decreases the model.

Table 3. Socio-demographic Factors Influencing Residents' Disempowerment

Socio-demographic factors influencing residents' disempowerment					95% CI for Odds Ratio	
	Variable Name	B (SE)	Wald	Odds Ratio Exp(B)	Lower	Upper
Human disempowerment						
Abrafo	Constant	19.248 (1.059)	330.367			
	Age (youth)	-17.366 (1.247)*	194.093	2.870E-008	2.493E-009	3.303E-007
Note: R2=.250 (Nagelkerke); -2Log Likelihood =34.395; *p=0.000						
Mesomagor	Constant	219.778 (1.081)*	334.745			
	Length of stay (Not long)	-19.319 (1.015)	362.335	4.074E-009	5.573E-010	2.978E-008
Note: R2 =.255 (Nagelkerke); -2 Log Likelihood = 21.935; *p= 0.000						
Social disempowerment						
Kubease	Intercept	17.505 (0.811)*	466.324			
	Age (Youth)	-16.582 (0.736)*	508.168	6.288E-008	1.487E-008	2.659E-007
	Family size (Small)	1.623 (0.665)**	5.962	5.066	1.377	18.636
Note: R2 =.137 (Nagelkerke); -2 Log Likelihood = 52.115; *p= 0.000; **p=0.02						
Economic disempowerment						
Kubease	Intercept	1.749 (1.284)	1.855			
	Age (Youth)	2.792 (1.383)***	4.077	16.314	1.085	245.204
	Age (Adult)	3.037 (1.320)*	5.295	20.850	1.569	277.109
	Length of stay (Moderately long)	-3.444 (1.524)**	5.091	0.032	0.002	0.636
Note: R2 =.173 (Nagelkerke); -2 Log Likelihood = 65.704; *p= 0.021; **p=0.024; ***p=0.043						

5. Discussions

5.1. Socio-demographic Factors Influencing Residents' Empowerment and Disempowerment

The extent of residents' empowerment is influenced by series of factors that range from institutional, leadership skills, and demographic conditions (38). The study found various socio-demographic factors influencing residents' empowerment. At KNP, the factor affecting environmental empowerment is the length of stay which happens to be significant for those who have not lived at Mesomagor for a longer period. On the other hand, age, sex, and religion influence the environmental empowerment of residents at Kubease. Those who are environmentally empowered abide by environmental rules and regulations governing the

practices of ecotourism. Those who have not lived long at these destinations engage in environmental practices to preserve the forest than those who have lived there for a long time. This is important for stakeholders interested in promoting the environmental empowerment of residents to target those who have lived there for a long time. Besides, the age, sex, and religion of residents are important factors to also consider when promoting the environmental empowerment of residents. It further provides support to other studies that age and sex are significant in residents' participation in tourism [51,52].

The factor influencing the psychological empowerment of residents at Kubease is the length of stay. This was statistically significant for those who have stayed there for moderately long (21-40 years) and those who have not

stayed there for a long time (1-20 years). Other authors found that psychological empowerment influences place dependence and identity helping residents to place value on their places of residents [13]. However, this study reveals that although residents at psychologically empowered and that they are happy and confident about their places of residents and such feelings are important for ecotourism sustainability, this is true for those who have lived at the location for moderately long and not long. This has implications for sustainable tourism development as those who have lived there for a long time may not feel proud of living at the tourism destination. This could be attributed to the lack of economic benefits to residents as earlier studies have pointed out that the economic objectives of these destinations are not met [4,32]. When people live in their communities where they feel something special occurs, they are likely to become happy and proud about their communities.

The study findings that age influences the human disempowerment of residents in Abrafo is consistent with research from Pakistan where the age of women influenced their disempowerment [53]. Earlier studies pointed out that, residents are humanly empowered when they have the knowledge, they have their skills developed, and have been trained in alternative livelihoods [21-24,54]. Knowledge application is essential in the attainment of all other forms of empowerment and requires critical attention. When residents have the requisite knowledge about ecotourism activities, skills to improve their capacities, they can enhance their livelihoods and help progress the sustainable tourism agenda. When these are absent and the majority of residents lack education, skills, and knowledge then they are humanly disempowered [24,55-58]. The age at which people acquire knowledge is crucial for building their human capacities to be humanly empowered. Training the youth, providing them with knowledge about tourism, and building their capacities earlier in their lives can help them apply this knowledge and skills earlier in their lives and benefit from these capacities.

Length of stay influences the human disempowerment of residents in Mesomagor. It is a migrant community and the majority of respondents have not lived there for long (1-20 years). There used to be a Community-Based Ecotourism Project (CBEP) which has ceased operation because residents did not know about operating ecotourism activity. This provides support to the literature that residents are disempowered when they have little or no knowledge about ecotourism [24,55-58]. Residents at Mesomagor have inadequate knowledge of the management of CBEP and since the beginning of this project, few people have had the chance to be trained. The project collapsed since those who have settled there within this period has little or no knowledge about CBEP. Therefore, future programs to revive the project and provide human empowerment to residents should consider those in this category.

The age of respondents in Kubease influences their social disempowerment. It has been established in the literature that

social disempowerment occurs when the majority of residents do not feel connected to their community and have not received infrastructure from ecotourism [17,18,20,59,60]. This study reveals that those who are socially disempowered in Kubease are the youth. In the case of Kubease, ecotourism started around 1996, so 2021 is 25 years. That is if a person was even 10 years at the beginning of ecotourism, that person will be 35 years in 2021 and it is not surprising that the youth (18-35) have not experienced more of ecotourism to feel that it connects them to their community. This is not just by chance but is statistically significant in the case of Kubease with the youth groups. Such groups have not witnessed the provision of social infrastructure from ecotourism as well which has implications for ecotourism sustainability. Therefore, programs to build social empowerment of residents should be targeted at the youth.

Moreover, age and length of stay influence the economic disempowerment of residents at Kubease. Earlier studies have emphasized that economic disempowerment occurs when there is leakage, economic gains are not spread equitably and the work of residents is not related to ecotourism [17], [20], [60], [61]. This study reveals that the economic disempowerment of residents is not just by chance but statistically significant among the youth, the adult, and those who have stayed moderately long in Kubease. It is the youth and the adult that form the working population hence interventions to economically empower residents should consider these groups. Furthermore, those who have stayed there moderately long are economically disempowered and if conditions remain permanent, their continuous stay at Kubease would increase their economic disempowerment status. Therefore, economic empowerment programs should also consider those in this category.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found age influences residents' human disempowerment and that it is important to provide knowledge, skills, and training to residents at an age that would be beneficial to their livelihoods. Again, length of stay was found to influence the human disempowerment of residents. Those who tend to stay longer at destinations where there are no conscious efforts to provide education, skills, and training programs to residents make them humanly disempowered. Furthermore, age and length of stay influence the economic disempowerment of residents. Ecotourism objectives require the provision of economic benefits and where residents stay longer at destinations where their economic objectives are not met as this study reveals, they become economically disempowered. The study recommends that policy interventions to build the human and economic empowerment of residents should take into consideration their age and length of stay. Furthermore, strategies should be put in place to provide human and economic empowerment to residents particularly the youth to enable them to enjoy prolonged benefits from ecotourism.

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