

Tourism, Peace and National Development

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to identify the tourist attractions available in Northern Nigeria, and unveil the relationship between tourism and peace, as well as tourism and national development in the region. It attempts to understand the perception of respondents on whether tourism has any significance in building peace and contributing to national development in Northern Nigeria.

Method: The study adopts a mix method of quantitative and qualitative. Data was generated through structured questionnaire and complemented with a desk review of literature. Convenience Sampling was utilised in collecting data from 522 respondents in Kaduna (56), Kano (62), Kebbi (42), Katsina (45), Sokoto (54), Borno (63), Yobe (58), Bauchi (47), Adamawa (41), and Taraba (54) States of Northern Nigeria.

Result: The study revealed that northern Nigeria has numerous tourist attractions that have not been appreciated and highly under-utilised. The findings contradict the existing literature that tourism contributes to peace largely because of the poor awareness that respondents have on the tourist attractions in their region as well as their inability to utilise those sites for meaningful purposes. However, other findings of the study are in compliance with existing studies which posits that tourist attractions contributes to national development especially on the economic aspects. The study acknowledges the relevance of tourism to research purposes, as well as an avenue for promoting socio-cultural values.

Contribution: The paper contributes to the existing research based literature and debates on tourism and its relationship with peacebuilding and national development. It presents a location specific opinion of respondents on tourist attractions which will be used for empirical reference purposes. It will therefore benefit writers in the field of tourism to understand the current perception of individuals thereby exploring further into specifics of how investments in tourism can enhance peaceful co-existence and national development. Governments will find the piece useful as it will help in formulating policies and establishing institutions capable of reviving the tourism and socio-cultural economy at large.

Keywords: Tourism, Peace, National Development, Northern Nigeria

Introduction

Tourism is a multidimensional industry that has become a critical sector which contributes to social, cultural and economic development of societies. Tourist destinations worldwide attracts individuals and groups for different reasons including adventure, history, religion, research, business, nature, culture, recreation or other purposes. Tourism typically require the tourist to feel engaged in genuine experience of certain location they are visiting, and it requires that such tourists view the toured area as both authentic and different from their own lived experience. Natural and cultural heritage are most at times the absolute basis for worldwide tourism. People travel to see nature or explore certain history and cultural practice. This is done by individuals and in groups at different times and for different reasons.



The tourism sector is a service sector that grows to become an important source of income for many countries, which brings both positive and negative impacts on the tourist destinations. The importance of tourism has been recognised by the Manila Declaration on World Tourism since 1980 as an essential activity in the life of nations due its direct effects on the economic, socio- cultural, and environmental spheres of the societies, and on their international relations. The economic impacts of tourism include improved tax revenue, personal income, employment opportunities and increased standard of living. The socio-cultural effects are associated with interactions between people of different backgrounds and cultures, as well as different behaviours, attitudes and interests. The environmental effects surrounds vegetation, air quality, water bodies, and other natural resources.

Available literature or studies on tourism are largely focused on specific tourist attractions in foreign countries. The evidences obtainable in Nigeria are very few and with serious neglect on northern part of the country. Although this may be as a result of the concentration of the highly pronounced tourist attractions in the southern part, the northern part of the country equally has some attractions that are hardly being emphasized by writers. It has further been observed that the socio-cultural disposition of the region also contributes in why the available attractions in the region are less pronounced and appreciated. This study sought to identify tourist attractions available in northern Nigeria and understand the perception of the northerners on the tourist attractions in their region with specific emphasis on peace and national development.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this paper are to:

- i. Identify the tourist attractions available in Northern Nigeria;
- ii. Examine the perception of people on the relationship between tourist attractions and peacebuilding in Northern Nigeria; and
- iii. Examine the perception of people on the relationship between tourist attractions and national development in Northern Nigeria.

Tourist Attractions

Tourist attractions are sites that people visit because of its historical significance, cultural value, religious relevance, nature exploration, amusement and leisure exhibition, or built beauty in order to explore adventure, conduct research, find pleasure, or even play games depending on individual or group's interest. Tourist attractions are of different types and categories as there are both man-made and natural attractions. The features of a chosen destination are determined by the rationale, interest or expectations of tourists when visiting a destination. It could be for landscape, shopping, architecture, history, culture, legendary, religion, events, gastronomy, adventure, or fun.

Famous attractions across the world include the Taj Mahal in India, Great Wall of China, Eiffel Tower in France, Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Borobudur Temple in Indonesia, Al-Masjid an Nabawi in Saudi Arabia, the Egyptian Pyramids in Egypt, Phi Phi Islands in Thailand, Hassan II Mosque in Morocco, Elmina Castle in Ghana, Windsor Castle in England, Cape of Good Hope in South Africa, Chongdeokgung Palace in South Korea, Vatican Museum in Italy, Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Lerd Tourist Village in Iran, Sun Moon Lake in Taiwan, Masai Mara Reserve of Kenya, Fort Santiago in Philippines, Acropolis of Greece, Forbidden City in China, St. Basil's Cathedral in Russia, Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Israel, Tower of London, Brandenburg Gate in Germany, Ukrainian Motherland Monument in Ukraine, Jebel Barkal of Sudan, Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia, Obudu Cattle Ranch in Nigeria, Hagia Sophia in Turkey, House of Slaves in Senegal, Calandula Falls in Angola, Drottningholm Palace

in Sweden, Fortaleza de Sao Sabastao in Mozambique, Alhambra in Spain, Prague Castle in Czechia, Plitvice National Park in Croatia, etc.

Tourist Attractions in Northern Nigeria

Similar to the aforementioned tourist attractions across the world, Nigeria's northern region is equally blessed with a number of sites that could have received global recognition if is equipped and well-managed. Unfortunately, they are mostly unknown to the foreign communities, and known too few of the country's citizens because it is largely neglected and not taking care of. The spate of insecurity that ravaged most states of the region further worsen the condition of these sites and makes it difficult to be accessed by tourists. Tourism in this region is therefore general low and locals have not developed the culture of tourism. Some of the tourist attractions in Northern Nigeria are depicted in the table below.

Table 1. Tourist Attractions in Northern Nigeria

S/N	Name of Tourist Site	Location (States)	Description of Tourist Sites
1.	Dagona Birds Sanctuary	Yobe	A place where birds of different species from Europe and other continents come to roost during winter.
2.	Kajuru Castle	Kaduna	A luxury villa built by German expatriate at the mountain-top. Its built in a metre thick granite stone in a fanciful Romanesque style adorned with turrets, armoury & dungeon
3.	Mai Deribe Palace	Borno	The residence of late Alhaji Mai Deribe. It is a house with a structure made with a mixture of liquid gold. The palace is huge and contains many apartments. It is believed to be the most decorated house in Africa and one of the 20 most adorned sites in the world.
4.	Gashaka-Gumti National Park	Taraba-Adamawa	Nigeria's largest park that covers an area of about 6,402km, characterised by savannah grassland, rugged terrain, mountainous, steep slopes, valleys and gorges. Has many water bodies within the area, and is also the highest mountain in Nigeria
5.	Yanakari Game Reserve	Bauchi	Large wildlife park that covers an area of about 2,244 square kilometres, and is home to several natural warm water springs and wide variety of flora and fauna. Visitors can see wildlife in its natural habitat.
6.	Ancient Kano Walls	Kano	Beautiful medieval ancient city walls that has a spiritual, cultural, and historical relevance. It has an estimated height of 30 to 50ft and about 40ft thick at the base with 15 gates around it.
7.	Kamuku National Park	Kaduna	Has a typical Sudanian ecology and a flat terrain with a total area of about 1,120km ²
8.	The Queen Amina's Wall	Kaduna	Fortified wall built to defend ancient city by Queen Amina of Zazzau who was famous for her smart military acts and strategy
9.	Mambilla Plateau	Taraba	The highest point in Nigeria standing at about 1,600metres above sea level and is a combination of waterfalls, hills & mountains
10.	Matsirga Waterfalls	Kaduna	Has a height of about 30 metres. The avalanche of the fall creates a rainbow-like mist which appears and disappears mysteriously.
11.	Kagoro Hills	Kaduna	An ancestral settlement situated at an altitude of about 1,246 metres above sea level. Its scene is one of the most picturesque natural attractions. The area is good for rock climbing, hunting safaris, fresh water springs, and a beautiful scene for relaxation and picnics.
12.	Shere Hills	Plateau	One of the foremost tourist attractions for hiking as it combines various hills and rock formations with the highest hill standing at 6,001 feet above sea level.

13.	Kainji Dam	Niger	One of the longest dams in the world, and also the first dam to be built in Nigeria.
14.	Surame Cultural Landscape	Sokoto	Ancient kingdom that existed around 15 th and 15 th centuries that has a unique site with a surface of about 9 kilometres in which third of the relics has some traces of human settlement in the form of Hausa foundations, wall rubbles, wells, remains of compound enclosures, potsherds, trench and ditches, etc.
15.	Sukur Cultural Landscape	Adamawa	It is a hilltop settlement which stood at an elevation of 1045 metres. An ancient settlement with a recorded history of iron smelting technology, flourishing trade, strong political institution dating back to 16 th century. It is characterised by terraces on the farmlands, dry stone structures and stone paved walkways.
16.	Sultan Palace	Sokoto	The palace is a home to the Sultan of Sokoto, the traditional and spiritual leader of the Sokoto caliphate who historically holds the most important Muslim position in Nigeria.
17.	Gurara Waterfalls	Niger	A beautiful waterfall with approximately 30 metres in height. It was used as a recreation centre by the Europeans.
18.	Sambisa Game Reserve	Borno	One of the conservation legacies bequeathed to Nigeria by the colonial power. An area re-gazetted as a National Game Reserve of rare animals. It covers an area of 60,000 square kilometres.
19.	Gidan Makama	Kano	A museum in Kano that served as a temporary palace for many Hausa Kings of Kano before the current palace was constructed in 15 th century. The museum holds significant collections of crafts, arts, and items of historic interest to the Kano history.
20.	Dufuna Canoe	Yobe	Is an ancient canoe with 3000 years of history accidentally discovered by nomadic Fulani. It is house in a Canoe house and has attract a number tourists since its discovery.
21.	Ancient Nok Settlement	Kaduna	Where the famous terracotta figurines of the Nok people (one of the oldest Africa's civilisation) were found.
22.	Tulo-Tulowa	Yobe	Also known as 'the desert of land hope', and it is a mushy oasis with abundant water in a low valley providing magnificent picturesque view in the desert.
23.	Donga River Basin Forests	Taraba	It has a hilly and rocky terrain that houses over 190 species of birds
24.	Dala Hill	Kano	A hill that is 534 metres high and contains a stairway with 101 steps to the bottom to top. The hill was a historical site of community that engaged in iron-working.
25.	Gobarau Minaret	Katsina	Constructed over 600 years ago and still standing. It served as a central mosque during the reign of the first Muslim emir
26.	Rabeh's Fort	Borno	A fort built in 1849 after the successful invasion of the Bornu Empire by Rabeh and served as his home and headquarters
27.	Bitako Hills and Rock Formations	Taraba	The hill is a sprawling rock formations. It's a beautiful place with amazing rock formations for nature lovers and adventure seekers.
28.	Kusugu Well	Katsina	Historical and mythical well that has great relevance in Hausa history and tradition because of its link with a tricky snake
29.	Mandara Mountains	Adamawa	A volcanic range extending about 190km. It's an ideal place for hiking, rock and mountain climbing.
30.	Kiri Dam	Adamawa	Specifically built to supply electricity and water needs. the dam is an ideal place for boat racing and surfing.
31.	Argungu Fishing Festival	Kebbi	An annual 4-day festival and dance festival. It is a biggest fishing festival in Africa organised to promote unity and life with thousands of fishermen in attendance.
32.	Germache Shrine	Kebbi	A spiritual water-logged location surrounded by thick trees and has crocodiles in the water. The local inhabitants visit the place with sacrifice and make special request to the shrine

33.	Tomb of Usmanu Dan Fodio	Sokoto	The place where Usman Dan Fodio, the founder of Sokoto Caliphate was buried
34.	Kwiambana Forest Reserve	Zamfara	Built on and around a granite inselberg with two peaks. It is protected by a ditch and bank between 5-7 metres high topped by a rubble wall.
35.	Karishi Traditional Settlement	Kebbi	Karishi settlement is a very traditional settlement located at a very hilly area. The inhabitants rarely come down for anything and their king is never seen except once within a year during a particular festival
36.	Kiyawa City Walls	Zamfara	Kiyawa was once a mighty city. The walls were ancient walls constructed for the purpose of securing the territory. The ruins of such is still available. It has the width of about 2 metres and height of about 10 metres.
37.	Enemabia Warm Spring	Benue	A warm natural spring that has a lush scenery in an exotic location for people who enjoy nature, adventure and swimming.
38.	Dokshi Spring water	Yobe	The source of this spring water gushes both hot and cold water which emerge from the ground and flows down in two streams meeting at some 55 metres from the sources. It offers exciting view and maintains a constant temperature at the point where the hot and cold water meets.
39.	Owu Waterfalls	Kwara	Built in 1976. It is the highest and most spectacular natural waterfall in West Africa with its ambience, cool environs and lush tributes to nature.
40.	Birnin Kudu Rock Painting	Jigawa	Noted for the presence of large number of rocks and their fascinating ancient paintings which are the oldest rock paintings in Nigeria.
41.	Farin Ruwa Falls	Nasarawa	A magnificent work of nature that has high level falls of about 150 metres high and 50 metres wide.
42.	Yamtarwala Graveyard	Borno	Graveyard of the conqueror and hero of Biu Emirate who depended its integrity in the late 15 th century. The mythology surrounding his death made the site surrogate for tourist attraction.
43.	Anwase-Abande Ranges	Benue	A network of great hills, valleys, streams, natural forests, and other natural formations.
44.	Lokoja Confluence	Kogi	A point where Nigeria's longest river, River Niger meets the River Benue at a point that forms the Y-Shape that is seen on the country's map.
45.	Hadejia-Nguru Wetlands	Jigawa / Yobe	The wetland formed where the waters of the Hadejia and Jama'are rivers meet the lines of ancient sand dunes. The wetlands are important for migratory waterfowl and supports extensive wet-season rice farming and dry season irrigation.
46.	Lord Lugard Rest House Mount Patti	Kogi	A colonial rest house of Sir Lord Lugard built on the peak of Mount Patti for relaxation and viewing pleasure of the sprawling town.
47.	Mungo Park Monument	Kwara	Built on a hill in an island encircled by the rushing powerful current of the River Niger. It was erected in honour of Mungo Park voyage which saw him trace the River Niger to its origin
48.	Mai's Graveyard Kukawa	Borno	A burial chamber designated for deceased Emirs (Mai) of Kanem-Bornu empire. People visit for spiritual connotations, religious purposes. It has mud walls, hay roof and wooden door which protect the area from collapse.
49.	Esie Museum	Kwara	The first museum in Nigeria built in 1945 that once housed a thousand tombstone and is famed to have the largest collection of soapstone images in the world
50.	Tiga Dam / Rock Castle	Kano	An attraction centre where fishing and boating takes place. At far end of the Dam is the Rock Castle built to accommodate Queen Elizabeth and her entourage in the 1960s.

Source: Compiled by the authors

The table above shows fifty (50) identified different tourist attractions in Northern Nigeria. Aside these, there are more, all of which have not been recognised, managed or utilised by both government and citizens. According to [Adeleke \(2008\)](#), citing Fakiyesi (n.d.), the current state of tourism in Nigeria is devastating. The country has a unique, untapped tourism goldmine that offers potential opportunities for investors. Yet, the sector operates below international standard and behind that of many other African countries. Successive governments have failed to establish comprehensive and well-coordinated agendas for tourism development at local or national level. In fact, the various agencies responsible for tourism are often seen as a junior player in the governments.

Tourism and Peace

Tourism has immense potential for peace-making largely because of its prominence as a global industry. The major argument on this nexus according to [Bhoola \(2022\)](#) is that when people travel frequently, it helps them to get to know new people, new cultures, and new values. Such experience is capable of increasing mutual understanding among people who have been living in diverse cultural backgrounds. Tourism is not only a generator of peace, but also a beneficiary of peace because it is only possible in a peaceful environment.

Tourism promotes peaceful coexistence between and among visitors and host community members. The presence of tourist attractions boosts recreational and sports system which attracts visitors, promotes education and enlightenment, and enhances interpersonal relationships which facilitates social development among people ([Mbagwu et al., 2016](#)). Tourism is a major bridge for building mutual understanding, and has a unique ability to promote peace between and among people globally. If tourism is promoted, it has the potential of enhancing the spirit of international solidarity and shared values which are essential in having our common humanity to prevail ([Pololikashvili, 2022](#)).

The social relations between tourists and community members enhance mutual appreciation, understanding, tolerance, learning, bonding, awareness, respect and likings which enhance social development in the community ([Ghosh, 2011](#)). Tourism would be peaceful if the tourists are culturally sensitive, and adapt to the environment without any form of disrespect, degradation, or exploitation. The host community is equally required to relate with the visitors in a polite, balanced and fair manner regardless of where they come from. Conflict arises when people look down on others instead of appreciating the differences. Human beings are of different types and behave in different ways. As such, it is only moral to respect and tolerate one another so long as the person or his community has not behaved or related towards one in a manner that it is disrespectful or violent.

The political instabilities, crime, and ethno-religious disputes in many countries have been a major impediment to tourism development. However, if tourism is done based on the principles and good practices, could be a powerful tool that would reduce many country's dependences on a single sector. Responsible tourism could also reduce national instabilities by helping to create wealth, bridge cultural differences, foster peace among the different ethnic and religion groups, and develop rural communities.

[Gatchalian and Reiman \(2005\)](#) posit that tourism has the potential to bring profound benefits to communities because it serves as an instrument that fosters open and friendly communication between nations and cultures, creates a global language of peace that can help people understand one another and accept their differences. It can bring about unity in

diversity – where people eventually realize that, although they may differ in customs, traditions and value systems, they share the same hopes and dreams for the future. Moreover, crimes meted as a result of poverty challenges could be mitigated through the development of a robust and sustainable tourism industry. When properly developed and managed, tourism can serve as a tool for protecting natural environments, preserving historical, archaeological, and religious monuments, and stimulating local cultures, folklore, traditions, arts and crafts, and cuisine, and in the long run, promote sustainable peace and development.

Tourism is one of the lucrative industry that provide social improvement, promotes peace and security. Many defend tourism as a potential system that would reduce tension and suspicion by influencing national politics, international relations and world peace (Salazar, 2006). The reasons why tourism contributes to the peace is because various private and public organizations venture into tourism business, and its driving growth, creating jobs, improving social development and promoting stability (Sofronov, 2018). The role is to contribute to the creation of a sustainable economy, job opportunities, peace development and cultural exchange among others. Indeed, tourism yields crucial social benefits around the globe and possesses the power to transform the lives of people by driving peace development, decreasing the poverty rate through the endowment of incomes, and encouraging tolerance and understanding through intercultural exchange and mutual understanding (Sofronov, 2018).

Tourism and National Development

The tourism sector offers great opportunities for both developed and developing countries. It contributes to local infrastructure development, creates more jobs, strengthens the local economy, and can help to conserve cultural assets and traditions, and the natural environment, as well as reduce poverty and inequality. This can be achieved if local people and governments are able to benefit from the income opportunities and associated spending arising from tourism.

Developing countries engage in tourism in order to advance their economy, promote peace, develop human resources, and reduce their poverty level. The assumption is that tourism helps to enhance employment opportunities and earnings, which can be of major economic significance to their citizens. In terms of employment, the local community could expand their earnings and socio-economic condition, which could lead to an improved standard of living (Manzoor et al, 2019). During trips, tourists pay for travel services like flights, airport taxi, hotel room, food & beverage, car rental, attraction tickets and access to sites, resulting in a destination's economic multiplier-effect translating into economic empowerment for local populace including farmers, artisans, souvenirs shops, grocery hawkers and traders. The economic penetration of tourism activities at a destination is far-reaching and deep, to the levels of the 'common man' (Karim, 2020). Therefore, tourism leads to growth and development in countries' service industries, jobs creation, company profits, balance of payments, international trade, and social infrastructure development like pipe-borne water, good roads, constant electricity, excellent seaports, affordable telecommunication facilities, efficient airports, productive rail transport, and guaranteed security.

Having an impact on the economies of the countries, has led tourism to be regarded as one of the topics of dialogue between high-level foreign affairs committees. In other words, tourism has enhanced diplomacy and therefore has succeeded in eventually finding its place in international treaties and agreements. Given that the tourists need to go to embassies to enter the other countries, and governments have given different options to their ambassadors as their highest-ranking representatives, they directly and indirectly play a significant role in

accepting tourists; therefore, the ambassadors take all aspects of the internal, external and regional issues of tourists into account by diplomacy and international relations because the implementation of "international relations or tourism diplomacy" will have a very direct and powerful impact on economic, political, cultural and social issues (Jalalpour & Shojaeifar, 2017). Tourism is important medium for promoting interventional goodwill and friendship between and among countries across the world. Since tourism is a cultural phenomenon, promoting the varied cultures and the styles, it helps to foster regional understanding, cooperation, social education among communities and nations worldwide.

Tourism creates a cultural exchange between tourists and local citizens. Exhibitions, conferences, and events usually attract foreigners. Organizing authorities usually gain profits from registration fees, gift sales, exhibition spaces, and sales of media copyright. Furthermore, foreign tourists bring diversity and cultural enrichment to the hosting country. Tourism is a great opportunity for foreigners to learn about a new culture, but it also creates many opportunities for local citizens. It allows young entrepreneurs to establish new products and services that would not be sustainable on the local population of residents alone. Moreover, residents experience the benefits that come with tourism occurring in their own country (Yehia, 2019).

Tourism improves local community development. A productive tourism engenders youth empowerment and community participation at destinations and attraction sites. Because the community groups are the primary owners and custodians of tourist attractions in their locale, being their cultural and natural heritage. Invariably, youths, women, the elderly and other community stakeholders benefit from their active, and or passive, support to visiting tourists needs. They provide basic services like tour guides, transport facilities, language interpreters, security personnel, farm produce, and environmental sanitation because no one knows the history and antecedents of tourist attractions more than the indigenes or aboriginals in a community. As such, youth and women restiveness and unemployment would be seriously ameliorated.

Another major point of note in tourism issue is its capacity to stimulate infrastructural development. Perhaps, the benefits from infrastructural development justified the primary reasons for implementing tourism programmes and activities worldwide, and improvement of the existing ones such as the structure hosting a particular attraction, airports and roads for travel purposes, electricity for lightening, hotels for accommodation, and business infrastructure for exchange of goods and services. The development of the new infrastructures provides opportunities for more job creation. A large number of people benefit from the wide range of jobs ranging from the unskilled to the highly specialized. In fact, even the construction and maintenance of airports, electricity, roads, water supply, and hotels create jobs for thousands of work force.

Research Method

The study adopted a mixed of both qualitative and quantitative approach. Data for the study is generated through desk review of literature and complemented with primary data generated using structured questionnaire. The study targeted the North-East and North-West states of Northern Nigeria. Convenience Sampling was utilised in collecting data from 522 respondents in Kaduna (56), Kano (62), Kebbi (42), Katsina (45), Sokoto (54), Borno (63), Yobe (58), Bauchi (47), Adamawa (41), and Taraba (54) States of Northern Nigeria that have certain tourist attractions in their territories. Respondents were reached using a Google Based questionnaire distributed via WhatsApp platforms on a random basis with restrictions in responses to only those in the States of interest. Data generated was presented and analysed in a descriptive form with statistics, pie-charts, and narrations.

Result and Discussion

Data obtained through survey for this study is discussed in this subsection based on the contribution of tourism to peace and national development. The analysis below presents the findings:

Tourism and Peace

The table below presents the data obtained from primary source using structured questionnaire to understand the perception of respondents on tourism and peace, as well as tourism and national development. Responses were received from 522 persons across northern Nigeria.

Table 2. Tourism and Peace

Questions	A	UD	DA
Tourism can be used as a bridge for building understanding	34%	02%	64%
Tourist attractions build international solidarity & shared value	38%	04%	58%
Tourism helps grow networks & promotes friendship	40%	15%	45%
Tourist centres help take away anger and worries	25%	21%	54%
Tourist centres serve as a place for hangout and catching fun	53%	04%	43%

Source: Survey (2023)

The table above shows that the level of understanding of the values and potentials of tourism is not adequately known to the respondents. This is evident from the responses generated across building understanding, promoting shared values, building solidarity, growing networks, minimizing worries, serving as fun base, useful for research purposes, promoting economic activities, boosting national income, appreciating cultural values, and attracting investments and explorations.

Participants were asked to indicate their agreement level on whether tourism can truly be used as a bridge for building understanding. The responses showed that only 34% agreed and the majority (64%) disagreed with the notion. This indicate that the respondents do not believe in building understanding through tourist affairs. This finding conflict with the positions of [Mbagwu et al \(2016\)](#), [Twining-Ward & Shiels \(2017\)](#), and [Pololikashvili \(2022\)](#) where they all posit that tourism is a major bridge for building understanding and has a unique ability to promote peace between and among people everywhere.

Despite the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)'s emphasis on the idea that tourism increases the spirit of international solidarity and shared values, and also common humanity to prevail; the findings in this study reveals that majority of the respondents (58%) disagreed on the idea that tourist attractions build international solidarity and shared values. However, the remaining 38% disagreed and 4% were neutral. This is equally an indicator of weakness on the part of respondents whom were unable to agree with tourism's ability to strengthen solidarity.

It is appalling that a large number of participants (45%) disagreed with the idea that tourism grows networks and promotes knowing new people. Even though another 40% agreed with the notion. However, 15% of the respondents were neutral about the notion, as they neither agree nor disagree. The fact that such a big number chose to be neutral means that something is wrong. The issue of tourism being a great avenue for networking and connection has been attested by many writers including [O'Dwyer \(2017\)](#) and [Twining-Ward & Shiels \(2017\)](#) as a major benefit that tourists benefit from. Tourists often make friends when they travel and increase their network with like-minds.

Participants were asked whether tourist centre is a good place for taking away anger and worries. A large number (21) of the respondents refused to take position about the question, while the majority (44%) even disagreed that tourist centres can serve as a place to forget one's worry and anger. Only 25% of the respondents agreed that tourist attractions can be a good place for taking away anger and worries. However, 53% of the respondents agreed that tourist centres serve as a place for hangout and catching fun. Even though 43% disputed this claim, it is evident that tourist centres are good places for catching fun. The conflict here is the fact that those who disagreed that the centres will take away their anger and worries were the same persons that believed it is a good place to catch fun. The finding therefore validates the revelations of [Choi & Choi \(2018\)](#) on the nexus between tourism and fun as well as on-the-spot behaviour of tourists.

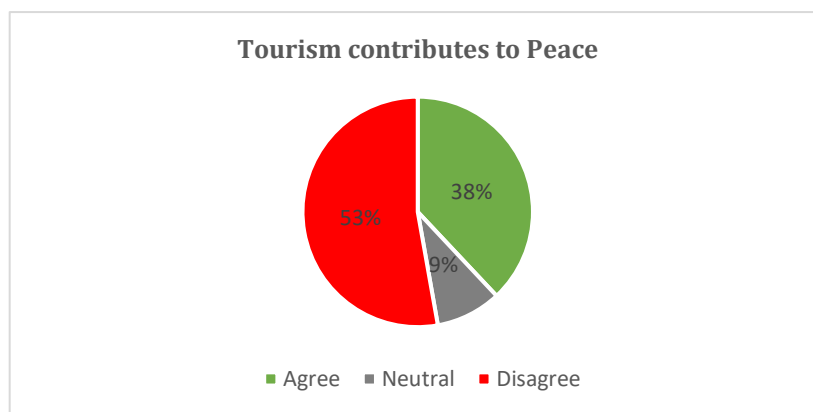


Figure 1. Tourism and Peace
Source: Survey (2023)

Fig. 1 shows the total agreement level of participants about the contribution of tourism to peace. The statistics showed that majority (58%) of the participants disagreed with the notion that tourism contributes to peace. Those that agreed constitute 38% of the respondents, and the remaining 9% were entirely neutral about the issue.

Tourism and National Development

The table below presents the data obtained from primary source using structured questionnaire to understand the perception of respondents on tourism and national development. Responses were received from 522 persons across northern Nigeria.

Table 3. Tourism and National Development

Questions	A	UD	DA
Tourist attractions are useful for research purposes	56%	08%	36%
Tourist attractions promote economic activities in the communities	34%	05%	61%
Tourist attractions provide avenue for appreciating socio-cultural values	57%	03%	40%
Tourism boosts national income and tax generation	60%	03%	37%
Tourist attractions foreign visitors, investments and explorations	54%	04%	42%

Source: Survey (2023)

The nexus between research and tourism has been discussed extensively by different scholars including [Faulkner \(2003\)](#), [Bartkus & McDonald \(2016\)](#), and [Ahmed \(2019\)](#). The nexus has been established that tourist centres serve as good research location where writers and learners make investigations, explore findings and make references. This paper further ascertains this position as majority (56%) of the respondents agreed that tourist centres are useful for research purposes. Only 36% disagreed with this notion and 8% remained neutral.

The participants therefore are in tandem with literature findings that tourist centres are useful for research goals and objectives.

The respondents disagreed with the postulation that tourism promote economic activities in communities largely because they do not see such thrive in their communities. Overwhelming majority (61) disagreed with the notion and only 34% agreed. Yet, many scholars posit that setting up or effective management of tourist attractions can boost a community's economic activities (Ijeoma, 2010; Ghosh, 2011; Fotuhinia, 2014; Abubakar, 2014; Yehia, 2019). On the contrary however, the participants (60%) agreed that tourism boosts the nation's tax and income generation. Only 37% disagreed with this, and another 3% remained neutral. Many scholars (Mbagwu, 2016; Twining-Ward & Shiels, 2017; Manzoor, 2019; Yehia, 2019; Soken-Huberty, 2022) share this opinion and stresses on the benefits of tourism to income generation and tax enhancement.

Majority of the participants agreed that tourism serves as avenue for appreciating socio-cultural values (57%), attracting foreign visits and investments (54%), and exploration of host communities (54%). This validate the findings of OECD (2009), Mbagwu et al (2016), Abdullahi (2019), Manzoor et al (2019), Yehia (2019) and Soken-Huberty (2022) where they emphasize on the significance of tourism in attracting investments and appreciating cultural values of local communities, and boosts economic potentials of countries.

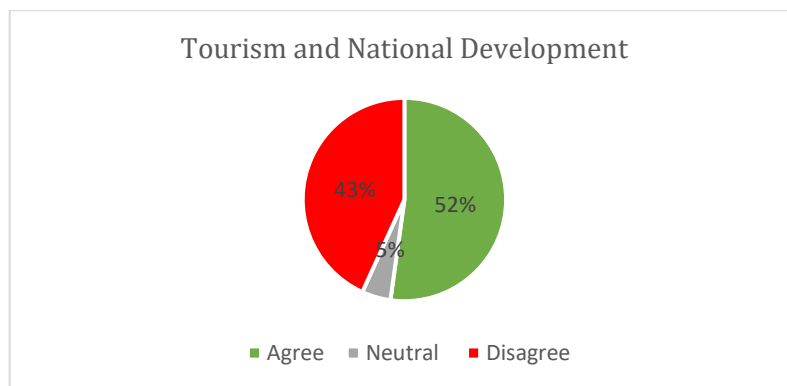


Figure 2. Tourism and National Development

Source: Survey (2023)

fig. 2 shows the total agreement level of participants about the contribution of tourism to national development. The statistics showed that majority (52%) of the participants agreed with the notion that tourism contributes to national development. Those that disagreed constitute 43% of the respondents, and the remaining 5% were entirely neutral about the issue. Nonetheless, the 43% that disagreed is still a big percentage that is non-negligible.

Conclusion

On a general note therefore, the paper revealed that northern Nigeria has numerous tourist attractions across all the states, but these sites are not adequately utilised or taken good care of as a result of citizens' inability to develop 'tourism culture' and governments neglect on the contributions of the sector in the economy and national development. The tourist centres in the north are seldom recognised, cherished or appreciated. The paper further revealed low level of understanding among the respondents on the nexus between tourism and peace as many of the responses indicated disagreement to the notion that tourist attractions can build solidarity, promote shared value, supports in taking away anger, or used as a bridge for building understanding. This is unconnected to the fact that the respondents' socio-cultural disposition doesn't promote engagement in tourism activities.

The paper further unveils that participants support the notion that tourism can contribute to national development particularly from economic perspective with majority of the participants indicating a positive correlation between tourism versus income generation, tax maximization, investments, and general economic activities in the host community. The respondents equally testified to the significance of tourist centres in research activities and other socio-cultural explorations. Despite the fact that respondent's do not interface adequately with tourist attractions, majority were able to testify to its developmental potentials based on observations of other countries and seeming obvious economic potentials. The study conclude therefore that the northern Nigeria's tourist attractions must be explored, revived and utilised by respective governments and interested private sector in order to harness its full potentials. Only when the potentials of such attractions are harnessed can the citizens in the region be able to appreciate their existence. It wouldn't be far-fetched to conclude that Nigeria's tourism industry, if well-developed, can add direct economic value to the country's cultural heritage, and also translate to mass populace empowerment, wealth generation and infrastructural development.

Nigeria's Federal, States and Local Governments must therefore understand the contributions that tourist attractions can bring to economic and national development. Northern region is a territory already devastated by high rate of poverty and poor economic activities in general which largely contributes to the ongoing conflict. Investing in tourist attractions has the potentials of revamping the region's economic growth and development. Government can invest or partner with non-governmental sector to build tourism infrastructure across the available sites. This will attract local and international investments and visitations that could subsequently boost economic activities, generate employment opportunities and contribute to improving the standard of living. While working on improving the tourism sector, efforts must be made to enhance security as almost all the states that these attractions are based have security challenges. Adequate security must therefore be provided, while engaging the youth population in the immediate community to work in any established institution around the locality. This way, more youths will be engaged and the tendencies of partaking in criminal activity will be reduced.

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