



ASSESSING TOURISTS' PERCEPTION OF ALTERNATIVES TO MASS TOURISM IN BAUCHI STATE

CHARITY JIDDA

Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University
of Abuja

Abstract

Bauchi State is a home to a number of tourist attractions such as Yankari National Park, the Lame Burra Forest Reserve and Sumu Wildlife Park among others. Annually, these sites receive a large number of tourists from different geographical locations, including outside the country. As a result, the state has experienced its share of mass tourism which has led to a number of challenges, such as environmental degradation, overcrowding, prostitution and the loss of cultural authenticity. In recent years, there has been a growing movement towards alternative forms of tourism which focus on sustainable and responsible travel, and on providing tourists with a more authentic and immersive experience. These forms of tourism are consistent with natural, social, and community values and allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences. This study investigated various forms of alternative to mass tourism with the aim of generating interests and creating desires in the minds of already discouraged potential tourists and hosts to promote tourism development in Bauchi State. A sample population of 100 respondents was conveniently selected from among tourists visiting Bauchi, who have lodged at different hotels within Bauchi metropolis. A structured, closed ended questionnaire based on 5-point Likert scale was administered to determine the level of agreement with different forms of alternative tourism. Data collected were analysed to find mean distributions and standard deviation. It was found that tourists are particularly interested in alternative tourism initiatives that focus on sustainability, authenticity, and community engagement. The study also found that tourists are willing to pay a premium for alternative tourism experiences, including superior accommodation, group tours, amusement parks, bicycle tour, farm and home stay, long term budget travel (excursions), ecotourism, disaster tourism, dark tourism, pop-culture tourism, awareness tour. This suggests that there is a growing market for alternative tourism in Bauchi State. It is recommended that government and private stakeholders should promote the cause of alternative tourism for sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Perception, Alternative tourism, Mass tourism, Satisfaction

Introduction

The revolution that greeted the globe in the 20th century greatly impacted on technology, transportation, and communication, leading to economic affluence for

many citizens in industrialized and developing countries. Tourism is one of the industries that has quietly emerged to become an important force in many societies and economies in various parts of the world (Smith and Eadington 2002). Higher discretionary incomes, smaller family size, changing demographics, lower transportation costs, improved public health standards, infrastructure development, and hospitable environments for tourists in many destinations have made tourism, especially long-distance tourism, an activity within the reach and desires of many members of many nations. Furthermore, developments in marketing, management, vertical and horizontal integration, pricing, and tour packaging, as well as capital investments in physical facilities and public infrastructure, have provided tourism with the necessary framework to allow the tremendous growth it has experienced over the past half century. Thus, tourism has indeed emerged as an "industry" which, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, in 2019 generated approximately 330 million jobs in its direct and service-related industries, such as airlines, hotels, travel services, and publications.

As observed by Smith and Eadington (1992), many countries which have possessed the necessary resources for tourism development have chosen, either consciously or otherwise, the path of developing large scale tourism as a major national or regional activity, thereby making it a major employer, taxpayer, and physical and political presence in many jurisdictions. As a result, tourism has often altered the very nature of social, political, and economic interaction that occurs in these places (Frechtling, 1994).

Bauchi State located in Northeastern Nigeria is known for its rich cultural heritage, historical sites, and natural attractions. To the state, tourism is a source of revenue, employment, and foreign exchange but not without the attendant challenges of mass tourism. Mass tourism typically refers to the traditional, high-volume approach to tourism where large numbers of tourists visit a destination at the same time, often resulting in overcrowding and environmental concerns (Weaver 2007). Noticeably, mass tourism has caused the state environmental degradation, overcrowding, prostitution and cultural commercialization. If the scenario were allowed to continue, tourism sustainability would be elusive.

Despite its numerous contributions, tourism development has not progressed without controversy. There is a lot of disillusionment with "mass" tourism because of the many problems it has triggered. Some of these negative impacts outlined by Cooper et al (2005) include overdevelopment, assimilation, conflict, and artificial reconstruction which can dilute or even destroy culture and ecological over consumption and pollution leading to pseudo conflicts.

Outcomes of corporatized forms of tourism, which appears as a constituent of consumer oriented capitalist globalisation, have been found to be detrimental to indigenous cultures, ecology, and the environment as a whole. Alternative tourism, as an element of alternative globalisation, has the potential to establish a consensus on bringing about sustainable global development and peace

Advocates of eco-socialism maintain that globalized capitalism has over-consumed natural resources leading to the social exclusion of indigenous communities, poverty and environmental degradation (Lowy, 2005; Schwartzman, 2009). The process of capitalist globalization of tourism could be arrested by alternative forms of tourism that bring justice through social equity and environmental sustainability (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008; Rogers, 2008).

In his contribution, Bramwell (2004) summarizes the negative impacts of mass tourism to include Cultural destruction, (i. e. modernization leading to world mono-culture, freezes culture as performers, loss of language, religion, rituals, material culture)

- environmental destruction (as a result of game drives, resorts: golf, ski, beach, desert, world as play ground)
- marginal employment (low skill, low wage, menial services, prostitution, drug trade, gambling, hustlers)
- low benefits (no job security, no health care, no organizing, no work safety rules or environmental standards)
- outside hiring (skilled middle and senior management recruited out of the area and transferred in)
- unrealistic expectations (divert young people from school and brighter futures.
- anti-democratic collusion (industry support of repressive governments)
- negative lifestyles (STD's, substance abuse, begging, hustling)

It is this glaring negative outcome of mass tourism that has led many observers and researchers to criticize vociferously the past methods and directions of tourism development and to offer instead the hope of "alternative tourism," that are consistent with natural, social, and community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in alternative forms of tourism. These alternatives include cultural tourism, eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and community-based tourism, among others. However, there is limited research on how tourists perceive and engage with alternative tourism options in Bauchi State.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to assess tourists' perceptions of alternative tourism options in Bauchi State, including their awareness of these alternatives, their preferences, and factors influencing their choices. Specially, the following research questions provide the anchor

1. What are the negative impacts of mass tourism?
2. What alternative forms of tourism address the negative impacts of mass tourism?
3. How is alternative tourism acceptable to tourists and hosts?

Alternative Tourism

By the 1990s, there is a sense that the public has become "tired" of the crowds, weary of jet lag, awakened to the evidences of prostitution and pollution, and in search of

something "new." – Alternative tourism. Alternative tourism is defined by Giampiccoli, Andrea. Mtapuri, Oliver. (2021) as that form of tourism activities that are consistent with natural, social, and community values and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences. Innovative but rapidly gaining in popularity as "alternative" vacations for this decade are walking tours, barge and canal tours, bicycle tours, home and farm stays (Arramberri 2010), dark tourism, slum tourism, disaster tourism, pop-culture, ghost tourism (Neldelcu, 2010).

Youth tourism has also taken many forms over time, most of which seem to have been a simple expression of youthful energy and curiosity about the world beyond their bounded society. Their travels were usually a form of "alternatives" to prevailing tourism. In recent years, the youth hostel movement encouraged "hitchhikers" (Morgan, Prideaux, & Timothy 2004)) and the 1960s generated the "hippies," followed by what Li, & Petrick (2008) now terms the "long term budget traveler,"

Ashley. Boyd and Goodwin (2000) defined alternative tourism by accommodation type when they said; in alternative tourism (AT) the "client" receives accommodation directly in or at the home of the host with, eventually, other services and facilities offered there. However, they later went on to list a number of other features by which alternative tourism might be distinguished from "conventional/commercial tourism." These features essentially describe the nature of the enterprises. Alternative Tourism or Community Based Tourism [C B T] is a privately offered set of hospitality services (and features), extended to visitors, by individuals, families, or a local community. A prime aim of Alternative Tourism is to establish direct personal/cultural intercommunication and understanding between host and guest.

Advantages

Alternative Tourism is a concept that opposes polarisation and is therefore a more humane and naturalistic substitute for mass tourism (Weaver & Lawton, 2002). Alternative Tourism promotes limited-scale, low-impact, community-based activities. It gives emphasis to the contact and understanding between the hosts and the tourist, as well as the environment" (Giampiccoli, Andrea. Mtapuri, Oliver. 2021)); it is tourism that is consistent with the natural, social and community values and that allows a positive relationship among locals and tourists. From a business/industry and general point of view Alternative Tourism involves the existence of small or medium companies, created by families or friends, where there is the possibility of more visitor contact with the communities and where most of the time there is respect for an environment (Giampiccoli, Andrea. Mtapuri, Oliver. 2021). Alternative forms of tourism include Sustainable Tourism, which may be considered to be a force that strives to develop tourism with a human face and care for the environment and its ecology (Leong, 2008).

The ultimate aim of alternative tourism is to create a better quality of life for all people, economic sustainability and a reduction in structural violence. Justice tourism and reconciliation tourism are elements of Alternative Tourism with the potential to bring positive peace (Blanchard, 2005). Equitable returns and shared cultural understanding through compatible local-visitor relationships are the objectives which can help establish long-term peace (Malley, 2002). Alternative tourism, by rejecting mass tourism, attempts to help societies become part of a larger movement of alternative globalisation (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2008).

Proper strategies need to be adopted to ensure that tourism development encompasses local community issues (Ashley, Boyd and Goodwin 2000). Increasingly, in the study of international humanitarian intervention, researchers are pointing out that the key to success lies in the ability to adapt each project to the local realities, and to make them work in harmony with all aspects of the community. Li, X., & Petrick, (2008), argue that local economic development, especially in poor and developing countries, must be implemented through the expansion of human capabilities rather than the parameters set by proponents of capitalist globalisation.

Research Methodology

This research is a descriptive study using survey sampling as its main research design to gather information on the relevance of Alternative Tourism as a way of addressing the disillusionment associated with mass tourism to enhance sustainable tourism development. A sample population of 100 respondents comprising tourists visiting Bauchi was chosen. Yankari Booking office at Zaranda Hotel and that near Ramadan Press provided the link to the tourists. The respondents who were randomly selected were given a set of questionnaire to indicate their level of agreement with different forms of alternative tourism, ranging from 'Strongly disagree' (1) to 'Strongly agree' (5). The alternative forms of tourism investigated include superior accommodation, group tours, amusement parks, bicycle tour, farm and home stay, long term budget travel (excursions), ecotourism, disaster tourism, dark tourism, pop-culture tourism, awareness tour. Out of 100 questionnaires distributed, 85 were correctly completed and returned, representing a good proportion of the population studied. Thirty-five of the respondents were females. Moreover, data were also collected from secondary sources such as journals, books, magazines, newspapers and the Internet. Information gathered from the survey was processed using Minitab 15.

Data Analysis

Mean statistics was conducted to analyse the level of acceptance of Alternative Tourism as an alternative to corporatized (mass) tourism that receives much criticism, especially among the female folk. Surprisingly, a combined mean of 3.77 between the male and the female strata for almost all the tourism alternatives tested was recorded (**See table 2**). When interpreted against the lower and upper limit of the scores table, it means that the respondents agreed to the fact that Alternative Tourism could be emphasized above mass tourism to enhance national

transformation. A total of 71 respondents (83.5%) acceded to this position. Only dark tourism and pop-culture scored below 3.5 which translate to position of uncertainty; and this could be due to non-familiarity of the respondents with these forms of tourism activities. A further test by sampled standard deviation reveals a cluster around 4.0 which arguments the earlier finding. Responding to ‘ How is Alternative Tourism acceptable to tourists’, 68 respondents (80%) strongly agreed (means score of 3.99) that Alternative Tourism could promote limited-scale, low-impact, community-based activities (Sarkar and George, 2010); understanding between the hosts and the tourist, as well as the environment (Morgan, Prideaux, & Timothy. 2004)); consistency with the natural, social and community values that allows a positive relationship among locals and tourists (Weaver 2011); and equitable returns and shared cultural understanding through compatible local-visitor relationships which can help establish long-term peace (Malley, 2002) (See table 3)

Discussion

From findings revealed by data analysis, it is apparent that tourists could accept alternative forms of tourism as a more humane and naturalistic substitute for mass tourism. This is true of superior accommodation, excursions, group tours, home and farm stay, bicycle tour, awareness tour, ecotourism, disaster tourism, slum tourism, among others. Proper strategies need to be adopted to ensure that tourism development encompasses local community issues (Buckley, 2012). Ideally, the key to success lies in the ability to adapt each project to the local realities, and to make them work in harmony with all aspects of the community. Involvement of culture in tourism can have a positive impact on the socio-cultural systems of destination communities (Leong, 2008).

The success of the community-based alternative tourism can bring better quality of life, economic sustainability and a reduction in structural violence (Blanchard, 2005). It is also clear that it has become increasingly vital to combine local community participation with government intervention while dealing with tourism projects. This ensures that social and cultural conditions in the local communities are recognized and enhanced (Rogers, 2008).

It is imperative to seek a shift from the predominantly corporatised tourism that stems from the unchallenged reign of the capitalist system since the fall of socialism. Alternative approaches that lead to more just and equitable forms of tourism are essential in addressing the critical issues of local community well-being and ecology while realizing the recreational and economic value of tourism

Conclusion

When Bauchi State, like many other destinations, shifts emphasis from ‘mass’ to ‘Alternative (Soft)’ Tourism, it can have the prospect of achieving sustainable tourism development and tap the many resources afforded by the industry. It is hoped that a Public Private Partnership (PPP), if reasonably instituted, could save the image of the tourism industry by strategizing towards viable alternatives.

References

- Arramberry J. (2010). *Modern Mass Tourism*, Social Science Series, vol 14, Emerald Publishing.
- Ashley, C., C. Boyd and H. Goodwin (2000). *Pro-Poor Tourism: Putting poverty at the heart of the tourism agenda*, London, Overseas Development Institute, n° 51.
- Blanchard, L.A. (2005). *Peace, Tourism and Conflict, Does Tourism make or break Peace?* : Routledge
- Bramwell B (2004). *Mass Tourism, Diversification and Sustainability in Southern Europe's Coastal Regions*: Channel View Publications.
- Buckley, R. (2009). *Ecotourism: Principles and Practices*, Wallingford, CABI. DOI : [10.1079/9781845934576.0000](https://doi.org/10.1079/9781845934576.0000)
- Buckley, R. C. (2012). *Alternative tourism: Principles and practices* (2nd ed.). CABI.
- Cooper, Chris; et al (2005). *Tourism: Principles and Practice* (3rd ed.). Harlow: [Pearson Education](https://www.pearson.com). ISBN 027368406X. OCLC 466952897.
- Crandall, L. (1994). The social impact of tourism on developing regions and its measurement. In *Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, second edition. J.R. Brent Ritchie and Charles R. Goeldner (eds). New York: John Wiley and Sons Inc..
- George, B.P. (2007). Local community support for post-tsunami recovery efforts at an agrarian village and a tourist destination: A comparative analysis. *Community Development Journal*, 24 (1), 1-15.
- Giampiccoli, Andrea. Mtapuri, Oliver. (2021) From Conventional to Alternative Tourism: Rebalancing Tourism towards a Community-Based Tourism Approach in Hanoi, Vietnam. *Social Sciences*, 10. DOI: [10.3390/socsci10050176](https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10050176)
- Haro Aragón, Marina. García-Mestanza, Josefa. Caballero-Galeote, Lidia. (2021) Stakeholders' Perception on the Impacts of Tourism on Mass Destinations: The Case of Seville. *Sustainability*, 13. DOI: [10.3390/su13168768](https://doi.org/10.3390/su13168768)
- Higgins, D (2008) 'Engaging the Small Firm in Learning: practice based theorising on complex social knowledge in the SME Firm'. In: ISBE Conference ...
- Hjalager, A.M. (2004), Sustainable Leisure Life Modes and Rural Welfare Economy. The Case of the Randers Ford Area, Denmark. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6, 177-188.
- Leong, A.M.W. (2008). International Tourism and World Peace, *Journal of Macau University of Science and Technology*, 2(2), 38-44
- Li, X., & Petrick, J. F. (2008). Tourism marketing in an era of paradigm shift. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(3), 235-244. Link
- Lowy, M. (2005). What is Ecosocialism? *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, 16(2), 15-24
- Malley, M. (2002). Leven's words about tourism, peace still ring true, *Hotel and Motel Management*, November, USA.
- Morgan, N., Prideaux, B., & Timothy, D. J. (2004). *Alternative tourism: Contemporary issues and case studies*. Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann
- Rogers, A. (2008). Bringing people together for just peace: Challenges to tourism in the 21st Century, *Anniversary Book*, 1718(41), 103-111
- Salazar, N.B. (2006), Building a „Culture of Peace“ through Tourism ; Reflexive and analytical notes and queries, *Universitas Humanística* no.62 julio-diciembre de 2006, 319-333
- Schwartzman, D. (2009). Eco-socialism or Ecocatastrophie. *Capitalism, Nature, Socialism*, 20(1), 6-33.
- UNWTO (2008). *Tourism Facts and Figures*. Retrieved February 15, 2010, from www.unwto.org
- WBIDC (2007). *Thirty Years of Left Front Government in West Bengal: A tryst with Challenges and Opportunities*. Retrieved September 1, 2009, from <http://www.wbidc.com>
- Wearing, S.(2002). *Re-centering the Self in Volunteer Tourism*. Brisbane, Australia: World Congress of the International Sociological Association.
- Weaver, D. B. (2011). *Alternative Tourism: Concepts, Practices and Case Studies*. Channel View Publications
- Weaver, D., & Lawton, L. (2002) *Tourism Management*. Milton, Australia: Wiley
- Weaver, D.B (2007). *Towards Sustainable Mass Tourism: Paradigm Shift or Paradigm Nudge?* : Wiley
- Winter School 2005 --- Peace through Tourism -- PACS 6910.

Appendices

Table 1: Dissatisfying aspects of Mass Tourism

	Σfx / Σf		Combined Mean	Result
	Male (50)	Female		

			(35)		
1	Ecological overconsumption	4.00	4.00	4.00	Agree
2	Marginal employment with poor wages	4.25	4.10	4.19	Agree
3	Cultural commercialization	4.45	4.15	4.33	Agree
4	Absence or low community participation	4.85	4.50	4.71	SA
5	Unrealistic expectation – diverting youths from school and brighter future	4.00	3.80	3.92	Agree
6	Negative lifestyles (STD, begging, hustling, etc)	4.30	4.35	4.32	Agree
7	Anti-democratic collusion	3.90	3.53	3.75	Agree
8	Low benefits (no job security, no health care, no work safety rules, etc	4.15	4.00	4.09	Agree
	Total	4.24	4.05	4.16	Agree

Table 2: Alternative forms of Tourism

		$\sum fx / \sum f$		Combined Mean	Result
		Male (50)	Female (35)		
1	Walking tours	4.00	3.85	3.94	Agree
2	Barge and canal tours	3.60	3.50	3.56	Agree
3	Superior accommodation	4.45	4.25	4.37	Agree
4	Bicycle tours	4.35	3.90	4.16	Agree
5	Home and farm stays	3.80	4.10	3.92	Agree
6	Disaster tourism	3.90	3.55	3.76	Agree
7	Dark tourism	2.95	3.25	3.07	Uncertain
8	Pop-culture tourism	3.20	3.00	3.12	Uncertain
9	Excursion (group tours)	4.40	4.10	4.28	Agree
10	Slum tourism	3.25	3.45	3.33	Uncertain
11	Awareness tours	4.00	3.95	3.98	Agree
	Total	3.81	3.72	3.77	Agree

Table 3: Accepted advantages of Alternative Tourism

		$\sum fx / \sum f$		Combined Mean	Result
		Male (50)	Female (35)		
1	Promote limited-scale, low-impact, community-based activities	4.00	4.10	4.04	Agree
2	Understanding between the hosts and the tourist, as well as the environment	4.5	4.00	4.29	Agree
3	Consistency with the natural, social and community values that allows a positive relationship among locals and tourists	4.60	4.25	4.46	Agree
4	Equitable returns and shared cultural understanding through compatible local-visitor relationships	3.85	4.00	3.91	Agree
5	Long – term peace	3.60	3.60	3.60	Agree
6	Existence of small or medium companies, created by families or friends	3.50	3.50	3.50	Agree
7	Developing tourism with a human face and care for the environment and its ecology	3.85	4.00	3.91	Agree
8	Better quality of life for all people, economic sustainability and a reduction in structural violence.	4.10	4.25	4.16	Agree
	Total	4.00	3.96	3.99	Agree