

TOURISM GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE FACE OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS CRISES: THE CASE OF JOS METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

Musediq Olufemi, Lawal

Department of Sociology and Criminology, Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: flawal2005@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3667-2533>

Obasanjo Solomon Balogun

Department of Criminology and Security Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

balogun.so@unilorin.edu.ng, <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-2130-3539>

Habeeb Abdulrauf Salihu

Department of Criminology and Security Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

salihu.ha@unilorin.edu.ng, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6049-5143>

Abdullahi Kayode Ibrahim

Department of Criminology and Security Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

ibrahim.ak@unilorin.edu.ng, <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-1902-9398>

Tomisin, Adedunmola Akangbe

Department of Criminology and Security Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

ayorinde.ta@unilorin.edu.ng, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4043-4175>

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the effects of ethno-religious crisis and insecurity on tourism growth and development, something hardly researched on thus far. The study was specifically carried out in Jos Metropolis, capital of Plateau State, Nigeria. Both quantitative and qualitative research designs were used, involving 225 respondents. The paper explored available tourism resources and facilities; people's experience with ethno-religious crises; tourism situation before, during, and after the crises; and consequences of the crises on tourism growth and development. The results showed a significant drop in tourists' patronage in Jos, loss of skilled labour, and destruction of recreational amenities. A high rate of unemployment, low economic returns, and a lack of interpersonal relationships due to mistrust among the populace were equally noted. This study thus calls for adoption of proactive steps for reducing, if not getting rid of, the crises for growing tourism and hospitality as a vital service sector to achieving sustainable livelihoods and economic growth in Jos Metropolis, Plateau State, and the country of Nigeria, itself.

Keywords: *Tourism, Insecurity, Ethno-religious crises,*

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a universal phenomenon that is inevitable in human interaction (Okeke et al., 2017). This is obvious in the course of groups and states trying to meet their diverse wants from the same, always limited resources (Rahim, 2023). Some disputes, however, are unresolvable and have serious ramifications for national security, while others can be handled to foster improved relations between the parties (Katzenstein, 2018). Nigeria is not without these recurrent crises. A major one occurred during the civil war of the 1960s, which began shortly after independence (Okpanachi, 2011). Even after 1999, when Nigeria transitioned from military to civilian rule, it has witnessed an increase in the number of conflicts (Çanci & Odukoya, 2016). Incidences of religious and ethnic conflicts have contributed significantly to national problems in Nigerian society since the end of British colonial rule in 1960 (Suleiman, 2019).

In Plateau State, for example, over 13,500 people have died as a result of community violence since 1999. The remains of destroyed houses were scattered over the streets in several neighborhoods in its capital of Jos Metropolis (or just Jos). Despite the declaration of a state of emergency by the federal government in 2004, violence persisted in 2008 and 2010, resulting in more than 1,000 fatalities. Violence and relocation have altered Jos and many other rural communities, with up to 220,000 people been displaced. It has also changed livelihoods and caused religious isolation in rural areas. In places where mobility is restricted, religious segregation continues to have a substantial impact on livelihoods, changing how people live, work, travel, and trade. Meanwhile, Jos has, oddly, long maintained its status as an exciting tourist destination in Nigeria.

As it is well-known by now in many countries, tourism remains a frequently cited prospective growth sector, generating one of the few prospects for economic diversification (Ebiegber, 2022, Manzoor et al., 2019). This is because of the revenue from tourists' purchases of products and services, the taxes collected on tourism enterprises, and the chance for employment in tourism-related service industries. Tourism is thus touted as the world's largest single economic item, with foreign traders providing services in all areas of the hospitality industry, including housing, transportation, and attractions (Alamineh et al., 2023; Polat & Arslan, 2019).

The persistent violence in Jos, stemming primarily from ethno-religious conflicts, juxtaposed with the promotion and recognition of Jos as a major tourist destination and hospitality center in Nigeria is intriguing, to say the least. In spite of this, there is a dearth of empirical research about the status of tourism during and after the ethno-religious conflicts in Jos, as well as the effects on tourism growth and development. This is thus an exploratory study designed to understand the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on tourism in Jos.

The significance of this research is an attempt at gathering the disputing ethno-religious groups to the table to forge some common ground around tourism for the future of Jos, Plateau State, and Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have often underlined the importance of peaceful coexistence in developmental processes (Diminyi et al., 2022; Lamidi, 2019). Edewor et al. (2014). Ray and Esteban (2017) have long noted that conflict with its multidimensional consequences have resulted in a hindrance on progress, economic growth, political stability, and overall socio-economic development. Nigeria is constitutionally a secular state but religion has been culturally

influential in playing a fundamental role in the socio-political governance of the people. The integration of religion and politics in Nigerian political history by her founding fathers is believed to be one major problem behind the current religious violence and political instability bedeviling the country today (Akpanika, 2017).

In their study, Umeasiegbu et al. (2023) revealed that ethno-religious strife has become a persistent problem in Nigeria, especially since independence. Leveraging on this, Udom and Okolie (2022) revealed that the ethno-religious crisis has had a devastating impact on Nigeria's progress and prosperity. In the social and political process, Egwu (2011) believed that ethnic and religious identities are congruent and reinforce one another, which is where the concept of ethno-religious identity originates. Specific incidents during this period, according to Çanci and Odukoya (2016), included the Sagamu crisis in July 1999 in the southern part of the country, where many were killed and several properties were damaged. Compared to other types of local conflict, ethnic and religious conflicts are more violent and frequently result in ingrained hate. While religious allegiance has been seen as flexible, religious disagreements can be violent and highly emotional because individuals see their faith and loyalty to their belief as being tested. At their core, religious and ethnic hostilities are frequently complex, deeply rooted, and generational.

Contemporary acts of extreme violence such as terrorist attacks are often justified as 'holy warfare' (Sampson, 2012). This has led to much social unrest, and taken a toll on humanity in terms of deaths, displacements, destruction of lives and property, disruption of economic and social activities, poverty, insecurity, and so on. Many Nigerian villages have been devastated while neighbors who had lived in peace for decades have turned on one another with murderous zeal.

Areas generally known for tourism activities have become the hotspots of crises in Nigeria. As a result, the states that once drew large numbers of tourists now struggle to retain even the affection of the local populace (Higazi, 2016, Olayiwola, 2012). Fear thus becomes a common denominator in Nigeria (Targema & Sanda, 2022). All these developments, therefore, call for an exposition of how tourism fared during such conflicts. The study here attempts to shed some light on the situation in Jos, Plateau State, and Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical base of this study is anchored on the Left Realism theory. This theory is most often connected to the writing of British scholars John Lea and Jock Young (1984). They viewed crime causation from conventional sociological theory and it closely resembles the relative deprivation approach, which posits that experiencing poverty amid plenty creates discontent and breeds crime. Ian Taylor (1999) similarly posited that the world is currently in the midst of multiple crises that are shaping all human interactions, including criminality. These crises include those involving job creation, social inequality, social fear, political incompetence and failure, gender conflict, and family and parenting hardships. These crises have led to a society in which the government seems incapable of creating positive social change. The people subsequently become more fearful and isolated from one another, with some excluded from the social mainstream because of racism and discrimination.

The case in Jos perfectly fits into this scenario. The reality of conflicts there, as aptly reported by Higazi (2008), Chris (2009), and Joseph (2014), are clear manifestations of historical traditions of unequal access to political positions, economic resources, cultural resources, and

education. These problems have fallen squarely on the shoulders of young people who were not privy to the genesis of the conflict but relied on information passed to them and their experience of the on-hand exclusion and poverty. In line with the left realists' argument, the victims of misrule in all classes need and deserve protection, which should be the priority of the community in question. This theory thus makes a case for preemptive deterrence in which community organization efforts eliminate or reduce crime before police involvement becomes necessary. This implies the community takes charge to avoid the alienation of one group from another. However, it does not imply the relegation of life-saving public services of the police and the courts to an insignificant role. The main point here is that the issues leading to ethno-religious conflicts in Jos could be better resolved if the state (Federal Government of Nigeria) mobilizes its resources to work with the community for lasting solutions. According to the left realists, those who feel they are not part of society and have nothing to lose by committing crime need appropriate and timely attention for airing their views. This may reduce the number of marginalized segments, which, in turn, may lower delinquency rates. Community-based efforts, therefore, hold the greatest promise of crime and violence control, if not elimination.

METHODOLOGY

Within the ambit of exploratory research design, this study adopted survey and qualitative approaches. Specifically, a questionnaire and an interview guide were used for data collection of primary data. In addition, secondary sources in the form of textbooks, magazines, journals, internet materials, etc. were also utilized.

The study engaged the services of five third-year students of the Sociology Department at the University of Jos as research assistants (RAs). All five hailed from Plateau State, and they were adequately briefed and carefully trained for the research.

Those sampled for key informant interviews included two most senior officials from each of the selected tourist resorts, and two officials of Plateau State Tourism Board. Two academics each from the field of Criminology and Sociology of Development who were residents of the State were also engaged as key informant interview sessions.

A total of nine tourism resorts were identified across Plateau State. From each of these tourism resorts, 25 tourists were sampled making 225 altogether for questionnaire administration. Access to the tourists were facilitated by the head of personnel in each of the resorts. The criteria for inclusion were that they must be domestic residents residing in Plateau State and must have lived in the community for up to at least five years. The criteria for tourist selection were to ensure that they had adequate knowledge about the issues of the research. A copy of the questionnaire was given to each of the respondents. However, only 205 copies of the questionnaire could be used in the end. Out of this number, 190 copies were certified as appropriate for descriptive analysis using simple percentages to capture findings. The qualitative data collected through interviews were subjected to content analysis, ethnographic summaries and verbatim quotations. The respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the information they provided.

FINDINGS

The study's respondents were composed of males (59.3%) and females (40.7%). They were in the age range of 30 years (61.2%) and above 30 years of age (38.8%). The respondents were fairly educated with 14.4% having primary education, 18.1% having secondary education, 32.3%

having Ordinary National Diploma (OND) certificates and 35.2% having Higher National Diploma/University degrees or certificates. A total of 47.4% of these respondents were not married, 40.2% were married, and 12.4% were divorcees. In addition, 42.7% of the respondents identified as Muslims, while 57.3% identified as Christians. Their occupations were in trading (15.1%), civil service (28.3%), and corporate (private) business enterprise (33.4%); the remaining 23.2% were students. Most of the respondents had lived in the study area since birth (41.3%). This was followed by those who, at the time of this study, stayed in the community for more than five years (32.1%), spent between three and five years (6.4%), and spent less than three years (20.2%).

Resources and Patronage of Tourist Facilities

Majority of the respondents in the study area (76.4%) affirmed their knowledge and relevance of leisure and recreation activities and were able to list a series of recreational facilities available in Jos and its environs. The remaining 23.6% were able to mention between two and five such facilities. The recreational facilities mentioned by these people included Jos Wildlife Park, Jos Zoological Garden, National Museum Jos, Shere Hills Mountaineering, Solomon Lar Amusement Park, Assop Falls, Kerang Volcanic Mountain, International Tourist Centre, and Rayfield Resorts. Information gathered in the field and reviewed here covers a number of facilities that could be divided into three types: (a) sports amenities, snooker tables, and swimming pools; (b) leisure facilities such as picnic tables, chairs, restaurants, concrete seats, a children's play area, a slide, a glide, a swing, and a merry-go-round; and (c) amenities that provide additional services, outdoor sports, and relaxation, such as souvenir stores, signposts, toilets, and transportation services.

Ethno-religious Crises and the Populace Experience

The respondents affirmed the existence and occurrence of an ethno-religious crisis and the accompanied insecurity generated in Jos. A little more than half of them (51.3%) believed the crises had occurred over 10 years ago (51.3%), 36.3% said the crises began earlier than that, while 12.5% thought they were shorter than that. One could conclude that they were mindful of the crises.

The study revealed various causes for the crises, with 48.4% of the respondents pointing to religious problems, 20.3% to political manipulation and conflicts, and 31.3% to fear of domination of one tribe by another. According to a participant in the interviews, Jos was one of Nigeria's most badly affected districts by ethno-religious conflicts. At least thousands of people were killed during the Jos uprising in 2001. These long-standing tensions in small towns and villages within the state escalated into violence and a high rate of insecurity among the people (Male/Staff Member/Rayfield Resorts).

Digging deeper into the crisis in Jos-Plateau as the area was formerly known, another participant noted that 'since the middle of the 1970s, religion has become a major factor in Nigerian politics, with both political figures and religious leaders asking their followers to cast their votes according to their beliefs. The ensuing crises further damaged the confidence amongst Jos's religious communities and sparked a large-scale migration out of the northern states, including Plateau State' (Male/Official of Plateau State Tourism Board).

This was stressed further by another participant who submitted that, 'the federal government declared a state of emergency in 2004 following a deadly attack in Yelwa (southern

Plateau State) that resulted in over 700 deaths’ (Male/Academic/Criminologist/UNIJOS). Another insight showed that ‘in 2008, violence between Muslim and Christian youths in Jos resulted in 700 deaths, while 2010 was one of the bloodiest years ever, with nearly 1,000 fatalities’ (Male/Officer of NSCDC, Jos). It was also noted that ‘Since 2010, Jos has experienced a significant rise in spontaneous reprisal and revenge killings, causing fear among the local population that any minor incident could trigger another explosion’ Male/Staff member National Museum, Jos).

Further insight into the impacts of the crises was revealed ‘as extending beyond city limits, causing bloody conflicts, looting, and devastation in Anglo-Jos and other (formerly) calm neighborhoods, as well as the southern city of Bukuru’ (Female/Staff Member/Shere Hills Mountaineering). In the view of another participant, ‘The violent clashes between Jos and Bukuru led to the destruction of numerous small informal businesses, especially those related to tourism services, exacerbating the issue (of insecurity)’ (Male/Staff Member/Kerang Volcanic Mountain).

It was also noted that ‘trust between two sides is lacking, with accusations of amassing weapons and preparing for new assaults’ (/Male/Staff Member/International Tourist Centre). A similar view revealed that ‘families in Jos, whose homes have not been destroyed, have been forced or volunteered to relocate to religiously controlled neighborhoods, causing disruptions to tourist businesses’ (Male/Staff Member/Assop Falls).

According to the study's findings, the ‘inability to resolve the conflicts in Jos led to a prolonged internal conflict involving political leaders from various ethnic groups (with significant religious influence)’ (Male/Staff Member/Solomon Lar Amusement Park). In the words of another participant, ‘the escalating savagery of the killings has caused a significant breakdown in communication and trust between religious communities and the wider public’ (Male/Staff Member/Jos Zoological Garden). Another participant revealed that, ‘urban violence is characterized by street fights, attacks, and counterattacks, with major streets often blocked during riots and frequent targeted killings’ (Female/Staff Member/Kerang Volcanic Mountain).

The above findings corroborated the views of Higazi (2016), Olayiwola (2012) and Sampson (2012) about the dynamics of conflicts and associated factors like ethnic and religious factors on one hand and the far-reaching negative impacts on peaceful coexistence. While this did not quite kill off tourism in Jos or other parts of Plateau State, the fact that it is still a somewhat viable business/industry suggests how much more the business and service of tourism could become if not for the conflicts and insecurity.

Ethno-religious Crises and Tourism Situation

The information provided by the respondents affirmed the negative effects of ethno-religious crises on tourism development in the State. Tourism activities before the emergence of crises were analyzed using the views of the respondents.

Jos's pre-crisis tourism situation is displayed in Table 1, including the prevalence of recreational establishments (10.3%), cross-cultural interaction (21.1%), foreign national presence at tourism establishments (18.2%), seamless business dealings with tourism-based establishments (15.1%), 24-hour consumption of tourism products (16.2%), and stable business opportunities (19.1%). One of the key informants revealed that ‘residents of this state are willing to patronize resorts as long as they provide excellent services, leading to the excellent position of

the tourism sector before ethno-religious crises impacted the state' (Male/Official of Plateau State Tourism Board).

Table 1: Situation of Tourism activities before the Crises

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Prevalence of recreation joints	20	10.3
Cross-cultural interaction at recreation joints	40	21.1
High presence of foreign nationals at tourism-related outfits	34	18.2
Availability of business transactions with tourism-based industries by individuals	29	15.1
Tourism product consumption takes place around 24 hours in major cities	31	16.2
Constant business opportunities that further help in the expansion of the tourism sector	36	19.1
Total	190	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

All this is to reaffirm what appears to be the commonsensical view from Alamineh et al., 2023 and Polat and Arslan (2019)—that tourism thrives better in crisis-free situations.

Situation of Tourism Activities during the Crises

Respondents were also quick to offer their views on tourism activities during the crises. One respondent said 'the majority of tourist resorts and recreational facilities were forced to close to protect the operators' and tourists' lives. At the time, the priority was to save lives. Those who were concerned about losing their wealth invested in resorts and were unwilling to flee on time paid with their lives' (Female/Staff Member/Assop Falls). Another respondent stated that 'during these crises, cross-cultural encounters disappeared due to concerns about ethnic origin and religious allegiance, leaving recreation and tourism a distant idea' (Male/Education Unit/National Museum, Jos). As a result, yet another respondent opined that 'foreign nationals were aware of a potential disaster and returned to their home countries, some to Abuja FCT, while others moved to neighboring states' (Male/Police Officials, PPRO Unit, Plateau State).

Lending credence to the above, another submission revealed that 'small businesses in the tourism industry collapsed due to crises thereby affecting the recreational needs of people. These businesses, which previously complemented corporate tourism, now rely on improvisation and ingenuity' (Female/Staff Member/Solomon Lar Amusement Park). The constant business opportunities for tourists at their resorts have been disrupted by the uncertainty resulting from the crises. As another respondent noted. "The state's round-the-clock lifestyle became a ghost, with military barracks being the only above for recreational activities. These activities were limited to special preserves for 'the tough'. Not everyone had the opportunity to enter military barracks (Female/Official of Plateau State Tourism Board).

Table 2 reveals that the impacts of the above incidences of conflicts on the tourism sector had led to a reduction in the number of recreation joints (6.2%), skilled manpower (17.2%), and patronage of tourism resorts (13.4%). Jos and Plateau State had thus recorded a high rate of unemployment (24.3%), lack of trust among the residents (9.2%), drop in economic returns from tourism ventures (12.3%), and decline in friendly/peaceful inter-tribal interactions (7.3%). Meanwhile, 10.1% of the respondents cited recreation joints were only prominent within the military and paramilitary zones.

Table 2: Tourism and Social Livelihood after the Crises

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Drastic reduction in the number of recreation joints	12	6.2
Loss of skilled manpower in the tourism sector	33	17.2
Patronage becomes skeletal in nature	26	13.4
A high rate of unemployment was witnessed	46	24.3
Lack of trust among the residents	17	9.2
Poor economic returns from tourism ventures	23	12.3
Absence of inter-tribal interactions through recreation	14	7.3
Recreation joints took place in military and paramilitary zones only	19	10.1
Total	190	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The effects of the conflicts on recreational activities according to the information emanating from the participants in the qualitative study are classified into 6 categories. These include (a) physical restrictions, (b) psychological impact, (c) social isolation, (d) changes in Leisure Patterns, (e) cultural expression, and (f) economic consequences. In the case of physical restriction, a participant pointed out that the crises led to limited access to public spaces where recreational facilities were located (and) curfews being imposed to restrict the movement of the populace during the crises. At the same time, several recreational infrastructures like parks, and community centers were destroyed thereby limiting the individuals' recreational activities (Male/Staff Member/Jos Zoological Garden). In the words of another participant, 'ethno-religious conflicts caused fear, anxiety, and social disconnection among the populace, leading to spontaneous crises and the loss of social connections and community interactions' (Female/Staff Member/Jos Wildlife Park). The people became isolated as a result of segregation and division along ethnic/religious lines. While this had resulted in increased mistrust and hostility among the people, it further reduced intergroup interactions and social cohesion among them (Female/Academic/Development Sociologist, UNIJOS).

Not surprisingly, tourism activities had faced a series of challenges due to the ethno-religious crises, affirming the accounts of Mou and Mou (2017) and Umeasiegbu et al. (2023) about the declining state of tourism as was witnessed in Jos.

Consequence of the Crises on Tourism Growth and Development

Table 3 shows the effects of the crises on the people, communities, and touristic activities in the study areas after the ethno-religious crises. According to the data, international and inter-state tourists' patronage reduced by 15.3%. It was also revealed that many people have either relocated away from the state permanently or left Plateau State for tourist resorts in neighboring states (31.2%). In the opinion of others according to the data, interest became shifted from resort patronage to emerging neighborhood-based recreation activities like Soccer Viewing Centers (28.3%). As such, 25.2% of the respondents believed economic leakages occurred through tourist outflow into the neighbouring states.

Respondents also observed drastic changes in leisure patterns with the shift from public to private recreational activities due to insecurity of open spaces stemming from the ethno-religious crises. They pointed to an increased focus on indoor activities such as gaming and reading and a reduction in participation in group sports or social events. According to one of them, 'Tourist activities' economic benefits were stifled by shifting interest to other issues, with

Table 3: Effects of the Crises on the People, Communities and Tourist Activities

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
International and inter-state tourists' patronage reduced	29	15.3
Permanent relocation or oscillatory	59	31.2
Interest shifted from resort patronage to emerging neighborhood-based recreation activities like Soccer Viewing Centers	54	28.3
Economic leakages occurred through tourist outflow from the State	48	25.2
Total	190	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Football Viewing Centers becoming popular for those unable to afford far-flung recreation' (Male/Academic/Development Sociologist, UNIJOS). It was submitted further that 'the comatose tourism situation also translated to loss of social benefits that usually accompanied tourism activities. Though a significant number of people patronized the military and paramilitary zones for fun, some people couldn't enjoy such privilege" (Female/official of Solomon Lar Amusement Park). Capital flight from the tourism sector and stoppage of direct investment were glaring. This has led to the absence of opportunities for further expansion of the tourism industry (Female/Academic/Development Sociologist, UNIJOS).

The financial fallout, according to a respondent, had brought about 'low savings rates, weak economic returns, and disincentives to invest in travel and tourism. (They) have led to increased poverty, job loss, and unstable economies' (Male/Official of Plateau State Tourism Board). It was also noted that 'conflicts have led to environmental degradation, causing once-renowned landscapes and natural resources to deteriorate and become unattractive for tourist patronage' (Female/Staff Member/National Museum Jos).

Again, unsurprisingly, as observed by Banna et al. (2023); Kollias and Tzeremes (2022) and Zhenmin (2020), ethnoreligious crises in Jos had also negatively impacted the people and the communities, even changing their lifestyles. Equally damaging in impacts has been the damage to the physical environment as the decline in tourist visits has led to its neglect.

Inherent Benefits of Tourism and Implication of Crises on Tourism and Development

Respondents from one of the resorts noted that tourists spending money in a destination region provides both direct and indirect economic advantages. Firms that provide tourist services, such as hotels, attractions, and transportation providers, profit directly from visitor spending. This, however, became a pipe dream in times of ethno-religious crises in Jos (Male/Academic/Development Sociologist, UNIJOS). Along the same line, respondents noted that numerous indirect beneficiaries from tourism—such as souvenir stores, gas stations, banks, and other businesses that supply goods and services to tourists—were also economically affected as money spent by tourists in a given location could no longer be recirculated and returned to the local economy to generate more revenue (Female/Staff Member/Rayfield Resorts; Male/Staff Member/Solomon Lar Amusement Park). Other respondents observed that 'tourism workers' wages and compensation that can boost other industries by increasing their purchasing power is on the reverse in Jos (or not happening)" due to lost jobs and income (Male/Officer of NSCDC, Jos; Male/Staff Member/Rayfield Resorts).

Tourism potentials in the form of job and revenue generation, according to respondents, are also lost due to insecurity and ethno-religious crises that discouraged individuals and businesses to invest in Jos and Plateau State (Female/Staff Member/International Tourist

Centre). Additionally, the anticipated booms from the sector, if without the conflicts, could have significantly contributed to the country's coffers by bringing in large sums of foreign exchange (Male/Academic/Criminologist/UNI JOS).

The effects of ethno-religious crises were noted to affect negatively cultural dynamics and growth. According to a respondent, the crises impinged on cultural expression among the people as cultural practices and traditions were suppressed during the period. Several cultural heritage and identities were lost to the crises hence the significant reduction in cultural exchange and understanding among the populace (Female/Official of Plateau State Tourism Board). Another respondent noted that further reduced business confidence greatly in investing in cultural heritage and historical sites that even in peaceful times would not generate high business investments (Male/Staff Member/National Museum Jos).

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that ethnoreligious disputes and violence in Jos, the capital city of Plateau State in Nigeria due to unresolved political and escalating poverty situations. It significantly impacted the political, economic, and social stability of Jos, Nigeria's pride in tourism growth, perhaps not surprisingly as other business or economic sectors would be similarly affected. The significance of this study is to lend further credence to the importance of social or religious peace and harmony for the potentials of the tourism industry to flourish more fully and to bring even greater business and economic benefits to Jos, Plateau State, and the country of Nigeria. Just as importantly, this service-based industry of tourism has the enormous potential of creating important social, cultural and religious exchanges that could only help to broaden the thinking of the people to be more tolerant and accepting of difference, thereby creating a greater, more lasting peaceful environment for tourism to thrive. And, in this age of increasing awareness of the importance of our natural environment as a vital part of our life-giving ecosystem, a growing and thriving tourism has the potential to generate revenue, resources and human cooperation and creativity to help develop a truly sustainable natural ecology for human and civilizational growth and progress.

It is, of course, a given that peace and security are vital pre-conditions of wealth generation and economic growth. This is true with all kinds of businesses or professions, including tourism. But tourism also has the added value of bringing peoples of all creeds and colors to learn and share with one another to cultivate the long-term goal of living in peace and harmony. It also has the potential of opening the world's eyes wider to the important contributions humans can make to the eco-system that is vital to human existence and well-being.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One limitation of this study is that the research was done only on one city in Nigeria. Even though the findings uncovered may seem reasonable, they are still not scientifically generalizable. Another limitation is that the claims of this study about how Jos/Plateau State could grow and develop economically and culturally without the ethno-cultural crises if another Nigerian tourist destination not prone to such crises is compared to for verifying or strengthening the claims.

Despite the above limitations, the following are some possible recommendations:

(a) Tourism managers should seek strong political backing for tourism at the highest levels of government. This may require the government to promote tourism more as a way to promote peace and stability. Aside from that, managers should collaborate closely with all well-meaning organisations whose missions include promoting peaceful coexistence and sustainable development. It is within this that the communities and the state will be ridden of crises and their services and products will be protected and sustained.

(b) It is critical for the government to take the lead in developing effective institutions and coordinating mechanisms to sustain communication with all stakeholders, especially the different ethnic and religious groups in the country.

(c) Private investors should be courted and encouraged in the tourism industry. Perhaps some incentives should be given as well to entice individuals and businesses to promote tourism in more challenging areas of the country still confronted with ethno-religious conflicts. This is required given the critical role that the private sector might play in this area, as well as the requirement for the government to provide an enabling environment and supporting infrastructure to attract investments.

REFERENCES

- Akpanika, E.N. (2017). Religious and political crises in Nigeria: A historical exploration.
- Alamineh, G.A., Hussein, J.W., Endaweke, Y. and Tadesse, B. (2023). The Local Communities' Perceptions on the Social Impact of Tourism and its implication for Sustainable Development in Amhara regional state, *Heliyon*, 9(6), e17088, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e17088>.
- Banna, H., Alam, A. Chen, X.H. & Alam, A.W. (2023). Energy security and economic stability: The role of inflation and war, *Energy Economics*, 126, 106949, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eneco.2023.106949>.
- Çancı, H. & Odukoya, O.A. (2016). Ethnic and Religious Crises in Nigeria: A specific analysis upon identities (1999–2013). *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 16(1), 87-110.
- Chris, M. (2009). Strategies for [Re] building state capacity to manage ethnic and religious conflict in Nigeria. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3(3), 105-125.
- Diminyi, C.A., Oba, D.O., Abutu, G.N., Eta, J.N. & Anselem, P.E. (2022). Challenges for Developing Cultural Tourism through Local Festivals in Igala, Nigeria. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 11(4):1609-1624. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.312>.
- Ebiegber, A.D. (2022). Challenges of Tourism in Expanding Human and Economic Opportunities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Accounting, Finance & Management Research (IJAAMR)*, 6(1):14-22.
- Edewor, P.A., Aluko, Y.A. & Folarin, S.F. (2014). 'Managing Ethnic and Cultural Diversity for National Integration in Nigeria', *Developing Country Studies*, 4(6), 70–76.

- Egwu, S. (2011). Ethno-Religious Conflicts and National Security in Nigeria: Illustrations from the “Middle Belt”. In: Adejumobi, S. (eds) *State, Economy, and Society in Post-Military Nigeria*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230117594_3
- Higazi, A. (2008). Social mobilization and collective violence: vigilantes and militias in the lowlands of Plateau State, Central Nigeria. *Africa*, 78(1), 107-135.
- Higazi, A. (2016). Farmer-pastoralist conflicts on the Jos Plateau, central Nigeria: Security responses of Local Vigilantes and the Nigerian State. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 16(4), 365-385.
- Joseph, R.A. (2014). *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press, Vol. 56.
- Katzenstein, P.J. (2018). *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan*. Cornell University Press.
- Kollias, C. & Tzeremes, P. (2022). The nexus between social unrest and economic growth in Middle East and Central Asia countries, *Review of Economics and Political Science*, 7(2), 74-86. <https://doi.org/10.1108/REPS-06-2021-0059>.
- Lea, J., & Young, J. (1984). *What is to be done about law and order?* New York: Penguin.
- Manzoor, F., Wei, L., Asif, M., Haq, M.Z. & Rehman, H. (2019). The Contribution of Sustainable Tourism to Economic Growth and Employment in Pakistan. *International Journal of Environmental Resources and Public Health*.16(19):3785. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16193785.
- Mou, S.P. & Mou, D. (2017). Peace, Security and Sustainable National Development in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. *International Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies (IJPCS)*, 4(2): 20-40.
- Okeke, C.O., Ibenwa, C.N. & Okeke, G.T. (2017). Conflicts between African Traditional Religion and Christianity in Eastern Nigeria: The Igbo example. *Sage Open*, 7(2), 2158244017709322.
- Okpanachi, E. (2011). Confronting the Governance Challenges of Developing Nigeria's Extractive Industry: Policy and Performance in the Oil and Gas Sector 1. *Review of policy research*, 28(1), 25-47.
- Olayiwola, A.R.O. (2012). Federalism, Ethnic Politics, State and Religion in Nigeria. *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society*, 4, 1-22.
- Polat, H.A. & Arslan, A. (2019). The rise of Popular Tourism in the Holy Land: Thomas Cook and John Mason Cook's enterprise skills that shaped the travel industry, *Tourism Management*, 75, 231-244, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.05.003>.
- Rahim, M.A. (2023). *Managing Conflict in Organizations*. Routledge.
- Ray, D. & Esteban, J. M. (2017) Conflict and Development (August 2017). Annual Review of Economics, Vol. 9, pp. 263-293, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3017726> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-economics-061109-080205>
- Sampson, I.T. (2012). Religious violence in Nigeria: Causal Diagnoses and Strategic Recommendations to the State and Religious Communities. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution*, 12(1), 103-134.
- Suleiman, I. (2019). Ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria: A Case Study of Tafawa Balewa L.G.A. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance*, 1(2): 30-37.

- Targema, T.S. & Sanda, H.U. (2022). Social Media and the Management of Ethno-Religious Conflicts: Stakeholders' Perspectives. *The Journal of Society and Media*, 6(1), 232-256. DOI:10.26740/jsm.v6n1.p232-256.
- Taylor, I. (1999). *Crime in Context: A Critical Criminology of Market Societies*, Oxford: Polity Press.
- Udom, I.D. & Okolie, U.C. (2022). Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria: A Threat to The Quest for National Integration. *The Indonesian Journal of International Clinical Legal Education*, 4(1), 61-88; <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijicle.v4i1.50116>.
- Umeasiegbu, L.C.O., Ogu, O.A. & Chukwuemeka, E.E. (2023). Ethno-religious Conflict and Nigeria Development Nexus. *Irish International Journal of Law, Political Sciences and Administration*, 7(4), 108–128.
- Zhenmin, L. (2020). *Recovering Better (Introduction): Economic and Social Challenges and Opportunities - A compilation of the United Nations High-level Advisory Board on Economic and Social Affairs*, New York: United Nations, pp. 4-13.

Affiliations of interviewed respondents:

Assop Falls
 Development Sociology Department, UNIJOSS
 Education Unit/National Museum, Jos
 International Tourist Centre
 Jos Wildlife Park
 Jos Zoological Garden
 Kerang Volcanic Mountain
 National Museum, Jos
 NSCDC, Jos
 Plateau State Tourism Board Criminology Department, UNIJOSS
 Police Officials, PPRO Unit, Plateau State
 Rayfield Resorts
 Shere Hills Mountaineering
 Solomon Lar Amusement Park