

## Tourism and Economic Development of Splash Park in Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

The role of tourism in economic development is well-documented globally. This study focuses on Splash Park in Kaduna State, Nigeria, to assess the economic impact of tourism activities. It examines factors shaping economic benefits and the contribution of visitor spending to Kaduna State's economic development through tourism at Splash Park. Data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to park visitors and stakeholders. A stratified sampling technique was employed, and a total of 300 respondents participated in the survey. The findings of the study reveal a majority (75%) perceive tourism's impact on Kaduna State as positive or very positive, aligning with the hypothesis that "tourism activities within Splash Park have a significant positive impact on the state's economic development." Respondents identified visitor spending (95%), local business development (80%), and employment generation (70%) as key factors driving economic benefits. These findings align with the hypothesis that "factors such as visitor spending, employment generation, and local business development significantly influence the economic benefits derived from tourism in Splash Park." The study's findings underscore the potential of tourism as a catalyst for economic development in Kaduna State. Recognizing the importance of visitor spending, local business growth, and job creation highlights opportunities for targeted development and policy interventions in the tourism sector. Thus, this study offers empirical evidence of the positive economic impact of tourism activities within Splash Park in Kaduna State. The findings emphasize the critical role of visitor spending, local business development, and employment generation. Moreover, the study provides practical recommendations for enhancing the economic impact of tourism and fostering sustainable growth in the region.

### **Background to the Study**

Tourism is a significant contributor to economic growth and development worldwide. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the tourism sector's importance extends beyond leisure and recreation, with its impact reaching into the domains of job creation, revenue generation, infrastructure development, and community empowerment (Cited in Meyer, 2015). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) also recognizes tourism as a potent driver of economic growth and development.

The UNWTO has highlighted the important role that tourism will play in the recovery of national economies and global trade in 2022. The sector's recovery is expected to drive growth in every world region, given its importance as a major export category. The report also notes that many destinations, particularly tourism-dependent countries, will need to diversify their tourism throughout 2022 and beyond (UNWTO, 2022). Tourism is a dynamic industry that has a significant impact on economic growth and development. Its role extends beyond leisure and recreation, reaching into the domains of job creation, revenue generation, infrastructure development, and community empowerment. The sector's recovery is expected to drive growth in every world region, making it an essential contributor to global trade and economic recovery.

In Nigeria, the tourism sector has emerged as a key player in the quest for sustainable economic progress, especially in the context of economic diversification and regional development. According to Statista, travel and tourism contributed 3.6% to Nigeria's GDP in 2021, which was equal to around 16 billion U.S. dollars. Compared to 2020, the contribution of travel and tourism to the Nigerian economy experienced an increase. The tourism industry contributes 2% of Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), but experts say its business volume and potential if properly harnessed can eclipse revenue from oil and gas (Statista, 2021). The contribution of travel and tourism to Nigeria's GDP has been increasing over the years. Experts believe that if properly harnessed, the business volume and potential of tourism can eclipse revenue from oil and gas.

Kaduna State, located in northern Nigeria, is a region that is rich in culture, history, and natural beauty. The state's area includes the traditional emirate of Zaria and Jemaa town (Britannica, 2021). Kaduna State has numerous tourist attractions such as the Nok Cultural Site at Kuwi in Jemaa's Local Government Area, the Maitsirga Waterfalls in Kafanchan, the Legendary Lord Lugard bridge in Kaduna town, and the Kerfena Hills in Zaria. Amidst this cultural mosaic lies Splash Park, formally known as "Kofar Gamji Amusement Park" or "Hassan Usman Katsina Park". The park is situated in the heart of the Kaduna metropolis along the Shooting Range New Extension next to the Kaduna Police College and occupies a landmass of about 7,000 square meters. It has beautiful greenery with several trees, a small mangrove, orchards, and small islands with majestic water flowing from the River Kaduna. The park is divided into two by the river with a footbridge built by Lord Frederick Lugard connecting them. The premises started as a garden during colonial rule and northern administrations (Nigeria Information & Guide, 2022).

The park has a wide lawn for relaxation and a children's playground. It also has a terrace for couples who choose to stroll together, also known as the Lord Lugard footbridge. The bridge is also a popular backdrop for wedding couples who love to have their photos taken there. The park is indeed the most visited place during celebrations such as Valentine's Day, Christmas, Sallah, and New Year. The intersection of tourism and economic development in Kaduna, particularly within the context of Splash Park, presents a compelling subject of study. This study embarks on an exploration of the intricate relationship between tourism and economic development by focusing on Splash Park as a microcosm of the broader Nigerian tourism landscape.

While the potential of tourism to stimulate economic development is widely acknowledged, there remains a significant gap in our understanding of the extent to which tourism activities contribute to economic growth, particularly in the context of Kaduna State and, more specifically, Splash Park. Despite its popularity as a recreational destination, the economic implications of Splash Park's tourism activities have not been comprehensively examined. This research problem necessitates a closer examination of the park's economic dynamics, visitor profiles, and the mechanisms through which tourism stimulates economic growth within the park's vicinity. To address this research problem, the following questions will guide our investigation:

1. What is the relationship between tourism activities within Splash Park and the economic development of Kaduna State?
2. What is the relationship between the factors influencing the economic benefits derived from tourism in Splash Park?
3. What is the relationship between visitor spending and the economic development of Kaduna State through tourism in Splash Park?
4. What strategies can be recommended to maximize the economic impact of tourism in Splash Park and its surrounding communities?

### **Research Hypothesis**

1. **H1:** Tourism activities within Splash Park have a significant positive impact on the economic development of Kaduna State.
2. **H2:** Factors such as visitor spending, employment generation, and local business development significantly influence the economic benefits derived from tourism in Splash Park.
3. **H3:** There is a positive correlation between visitor spending in Splash Park and its contribution to the economic development of Kaduna State.
4. **H4:** Implementing strategic policies and infrastructure improvements in Splash Park can enhance its role as a catalyst for economic progress in the park's vicinity and Kaduna State as a whole.

In the pursuit of empirical evidence to support or refute these hypotheses, this study endeavors to shed light on the intricate interplay between tourism and economic development within the context of Splash Park, thereby contributing to our understanding of tourism's role as a catalyst for economic progress in the region.

### Conceptual Clarifications

1. **Tourism:** Tourism refers to the travel and temporary stay of individuals or groups to destinations outside their usual place of residence for leisure, business, or other purposes. It encompasses a wide range of activities, such as sightseeing, cultural exploration, recreational activities, and more (UNWTO, 2019).
2. **Economic Development:** Economic development is the process by which a region or country aims to improve the economic well-being and living standards of its population. It involves various strategies and policies to stimulate economic growth, create jobs, reduce poverty, and enhance the overall quality of life (World Bank, 2020).
3. **Visitor Spending:** Visitor spending refers to the expenditures made by tourists or visitors during their stay in a particular destination. It includes spending on accommodation, food, transportation, entertainment, and other goods and services, contributing to the local economy (U.S. Travel Association, 2021).
4. **Local Business:** A local business is a small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) that operates within a specific geographic area, serving the needs of the local community. These businesses are typically independently owned and play a crucial role in the local economy by providing goods and services to residents (Small Business Administration, 2021).

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings of the relationship between tourism and economic development offer valuable insights into understanding how tourism activities within Splash Park can contribute to the economic growth of Kaduna State. One of the foundational theories in the realm of tourism economics is the Tourism Multiplier Effect (TME). The TME posits that initial spending by tourists in a destination leads to a chain reaction of additional spending as income circulates through the local economy. This concept implies that when tourists visit a destination like Splash Park, their spending does not simply benefit the park itself but also has a ripple effect on various sectors, such as accommodation, food services, transportation, and retail (Dwyer et al., 2020). For instance, tourists may spend on hotels, restaurants, and souvenir shops in Kaduna city, not just within Splash Park's vicinity. This increased expenditure generates income and employment opportunities for residents, leading to economic growth in the region.

The Income Elasticity of Demand (YED) theory offers further insights into the relationship between tourism and economic development. YED measures the responsiveness of the quantity demanded of a good or service to changes in income (Huang et al., 2014). In the context of tourism, it suggests that as individuals' incomes rise, their propensity to travel and spend on tourism-related activities also increases. When applied to Splash Park, this theory suggests that if the economic conditions of visitors improve, leading to higher incomes, they are more likely to visit the park, engage in leisure activities, and spend on various services offered within the park and the surrounding region. Consequently, an increase in tourism demand can contribute to higher revenues and stimulate economic development (Wong, 1997).

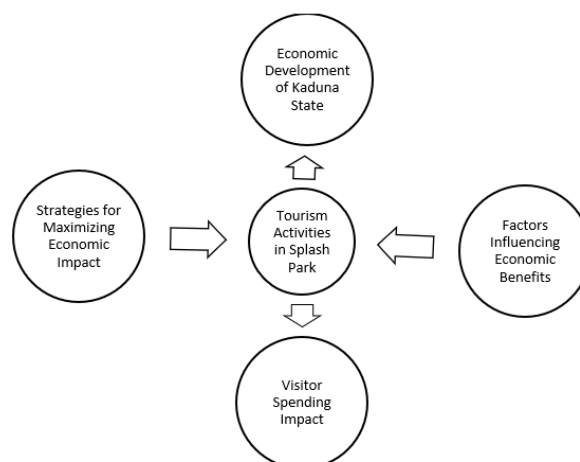
The Destination Life Cycle (DLC) theory introduced by Butler (1980) offers a dynamic perspective on how tourism destinations evolve. The DLC model includes several stages: exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, and stagnation (Butler, 1980). This theory posits that destinations initially experience rapid tourism growth, which can drive economic development. As tourism matures, however, there may be challenges related to sustainability and diminishing returns. In the context of Splash Park, understanding its position within the destination life cycle is crucial for assessing its potential for sustained economic development. This theory implies that strategic planning and development efforts must be aligned with the park's current stage within the cycle to maximize economic benefits.

Theoretical frameworks such as the Tourism Multiplier Effect, Income Elasticity of Demand, and Destination Life Cycle Theory provide a solid foundation for analyzing how tourism activities within Splash Park may contribute to the economic development of Kaduna State. These theories emphasize the dynamic and interconnected nature of tourism's impact on local economies and underscore the importance of strategic planning and policy development in harnessing the economic potential of tourism.

### Conceptual Review

The conceptual model employed in this study serves as a visual framework that encapsulates the core elements of our investigation into the relationship between tourism activities within Splash Park and the economic development of Kaduna State. This model provides a structured representation of the key concepts, variables, and hypothesized relationships that guide our research.

**Figure 1:** Conceptual Framework of the Study



**Source:** Researchers Conceptualization



At the heart of our study lies the central concept of "Tourism Activities in Splash Park." This encompasses the diverse array of activities, attractions, and experiences offered within the park's boundaries, making it a focal point for both domestic and international tourists. Some of the surrounding concepts are:

1. **Economic Development of Kaduna State:** This concept represents the broader economic prosperity and growth of Kaduna State, which is the outcome under investigation. The arrow connecting "Tourism Activities in Splash Park" to "Economic Development of Kaduna State" signifies our hypothesis (H1) that tourism activities have a significant positive impact on the state's economic development.
2. **Factors Influencing Economic Benefits:** Surrounding the central concept, we identify the key factors that influence the economic benefits derived from tourism. These factors encompass a range of variables, including visitor spending, local business development, and employment generation. The arrow indicates that these factors directly influence the nature and extent of tourism activities within Splash Park.
3. **Visitor Spending Impact:** This concept focuses on the financial contributions made by visitors to Splash Park and their impact on the broader economic development of Kaduna State. The arrow signifies our hypothesis (H3) that there exists a positive correlation between visitor spending in Splash Park and its contribution to the economic development of Kaduna State.
4. **Strategies for Maximizing Economic Impact:** The outermost layer of our conceptual model encompasses strategies and recommendations for enhancing the economic impact of tourism in Splash Park and its surrounding communities. These strategies include promoting local products and crafts, investing in infrastructure development, partnering with local businesses, enhancing marketing efforts, and implementing sustainable tourism practices. The arrow indicates the proactive measures that can be taken to enhance the nature and extent of tourism activities within Splash Park.

This conceptual model provides a clear and structured overview of the relationships explored in this study. It aids in visualizing how tourism activities within Splash Park are interconnected with factors influencing economic benefits, visitor spending, and strategies for maximizing economic impact. As we delve into the empirical findings of our research, this model will guide our discussions, offering a reference point for understanding the interplay between these vital components.

### **Empirical Review**

This empirical literature review explores research studies and empirical evidence about the nexus between tourism activities within Splash Park and the economic development of Kaduna State. Emphasizing the empirical aspect of the literature, this review aims to provide insights into the specific case of Splash Park while drawing on broader empirical evidence in the field of tourism and economic development.

Numerous empirical studies worldwide have established tourism's role as a potent driver of economic development. A study by Brida et al. (2015) in their analysis of regional data in Italy found a strong positive relationship between tourism and economic growth. Similarly, Chen and Huang (2019), in their empirical research on Chinese provinces, documented the significant contribution of tourism to regional economic development, particularly in terms of employment and income generation.

Empirical investigations into the economic impact of tourism consistently underscore its positive contributions. Liu et al. (2019), in a study focused on heritage tourism in China, revealed the substantial economic benefits, including revenue generation and job creation. In a European context, Gössling et al. (2020) examined the economic impacts of tourism in various regions and noted its role in promoting economic diversification. These studies have identified several factors that influence the economic benefits derived from tourism. For instance, a study by Li and Li (2019) on Chinese tourism destinations highlighted the importance of infrastructure development in enhancing economic benefits. Similarly, Gursoy et al. (2019) conducted empirical research on the role of local tourism businesses and found a positive correlation between local business development and economic impact.

Empirical evidence on the link between visitor spending and economic development is well-documented. A study by Zhang and Zhong (2018) conducted in the United States demonstrated the direct positive impact of visitor spending on local economies, including job creation and income growth. Additionally, Song et al. (2012) explored the economic impacts of tourism expenditure in a global context and established a strong connection between visitor spending and economic development. Sustainable tourism practices have garnered empirical attention for their potential to promote both economic growth and environmental conservation. Empirical research by Gössling et al. (2019) on sustainable tourism in Costa Rica showcased the economic advantages of eco-friendly tourism initiatives, emphasizing their role in fostering economic development while preserving natural resources.

Empirical studies specific to Nigeria and Kaduna State provide insights into the tourism landscape. Research by Adeyinka-Ojo et al. (2018) examined tourism development in Nigeria and identified challenges and opportunities. However, empirical studies specifically addressing Splash Park within the Kaduna context are limited.

This empirical literature review underscores the global consensus on tourism's potential to drive economic development. While empirical evidence from various regions supports the positive impact of tourism, the specific context of Splash Park within Kaduna State presents a research gap that this study aims to address. By leveraging existing empirical knowledge, this study aims to contribute to the empirical evidence base while providing insights tailored to the unique dynamics of Splash Park and its role in the economic development of Kaduna State.

## **Methodology**

The methodology employed in this study involves the collection of data through structured questionnaires administered to both park visitors and stakeholders. A stratified sampling technique was used to ensure a representative and diverse sample, with a total of 300 respondents participating in the survey.

## **Sampling Technique**

The selection of participants for this study was conducted using a stratified sampling technique. This approach was chosen to ensure that different segments of the population, including park visitors and stakeholders, were adequately represented in the survey.

## **Park Visitors**

For the park visitor sample, the following strata were identified:

- a. Stratum 1: Age Groups**
- b.** Subgroup A: Visitors aged 18-25
- c.** Subgroup B: Visitors aged 26-40
- d.** Subgroup C: Visitors aged 41 and above
- e. Stratum 2: Nationality**
- f.** Subgroup A: Nigerian visitors
- g.** Subgroup B: International visitors
- h. Stratum 3: Frequency of Visits**

**Subgroup A:** First-time visitors

**Subgroup B:** Repeat visitors (visited the park more than once)

Within each stratum, a random sample of visitors was selected to participate in the survey. This approach ensured that the survey captured a wide range of visitor demographics, motivations, and experiences.

## **Data Collection**

### **Survey Questionnaires**

Structured survey questionnaires were used as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaires were designed to gather information on various aspects related to tourism and economic development, including visitor demographics, travel motivations, expenditure patterns, and perceptions of the park's economic impact.

The survey questionnaires were distributed to park visitors during their visits to Splash Park. Trained surveyors approached visitors at the park's entrance and various contact points within the park. The surveyors explained the purpose of the study, obtained informed consent from participants, and administered the questionnaires. Participants were encouraged to provide honest and accurate responses. Quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaires were analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, through the use of percentages, were calculated to summarize the survey findings.



## Presentation and Analysis of Data

**Table 1:** Demographics

Demographics	Percentage
Age	
- 18-25	35%
- 26-40	50%
- 41 and above	15%
Nationality	
- Nigerian	80%
- International	20%
Frequency of Visits	
- First-time visitor	60%
- Repeat visitor	40%

**Age:** The majority of respondents fell within the age group of 26-40 (50%), followed by the 18-25 age group (35%). A smaller percentage, 15%, were aged 41 and above.

**Nationality:** The vast majority of respondents were Nigerian (80%), while the remaining 20% identified as international visitors. This reflects a predominantly local respondent base.

**Frequency of Visits:** Respondents' visitation patterns were relatively evenly distributed, with 60% identifying as first-time visitors and 40% as repeat visitors. This indicates a mix of newcomers and those familiar with Splash Park.

**Table 2:** Economic Impact of Tourism

Economic Impact	Percentage
Perceived economic impact of tourism in Splash Park on Kaduna State	
- Very Negative	2%
- Negative	8%
- Neutral	15%
- Positive	55%
- Very Positive	20%
Factors influencing economic benefits	
- Visitor spending	95%
- Employment generation	70%
- Local business development	80%
- Infrastructure improvements	45%
- Government policies and support	25%
- Others (please specify)	10%

**Perceived Economic Impact:** Notably, a significant portion of respondents (75%) perceived the economic impact of tourism at Splash Park on Kaduna State as positive (55%) or very positive (20%). Only 10% expressed negative views. This suggests that a substantial majority of respondents see tourism as beneficial for the state's economy.

**Factors Influencing Economic Benefits:** When asked about factors influencing economic benefits, respondents identified visitor spending (95%), local business development (80%), and employment generation (70%) as the most significant contributors. These responses indicate a consensus among participants regarding the key drivers of economic benefits derived from tourism.

**Table 3:** Visitor Spending and Economic Impact

Visitor Spending	Percentage
Your spending during your visit to Splash Park today	
- Less than ₦5000	10%
- ₦5000 - ₦10,000	30%
- ₦10,001 - ₦20,000	40%
- ₦20,001 - ₦30,000	15%
- ₦30,001 or more	5%
Does visitor spending in Splash Park contribute to the economic development of Kaduna State?	
- Yes	90%
- No	10%
If "Yes," how does visitor spending benefit the local economy?	
- Job creation	75%
- Increased revenue for local businesses	60%
- Infrastructure development	30%
- Enhanced community well-being	20%
- Others (please specify)	10%

**Visitor Spending:** Respondents' spending habits at Splash Park varied, with the majority (40%) estimating their spending to be in the range of ₦10,001 to ₦20,000. Around 30% spent between ₦5,000 and ₦10,000, and 15% spent ₦20,001 to ₦30,000. Interestingly, 90% of respondents agreed that visitor spending positively contributes to the economic development of Kaduna State.

**Perceptions of Economic Impact:** A significant majority of respondents believed that visitor spending at Splash Park has a positive impact on the local economy (90%). This aligns with their positive perceptions of tourism's economic impact in Section 2.

**Benefits of Visitor Spending:** Respondents highlighted various ways in which visitor spending benefits the local economy. Most notably, 75% mentioned job creation, while 60% emphasized increased revenue for local businesses. Other mentioned benefits included infrastructure development (30%) and enhanced community well-being (20%).

**Table 4:** Strategies for Maximizing Economic Impact

Strategies and Recommendations
Participants provided various recommendations, including:
- "Promote local products and crafts to attract tourists."
- "Invest in infrastructure development and maintenance."
- "Create partnerships with local businesses for mutual growth."
- "Enhance marketing and promotion efforts."
- "Implement sustainable tourism practices to preserve the park's natural beauty."

### Discussions of Findings

A substantial majority of respondents, accounting for 75% of the sample, expressed positive perceptions of the economic impact of tourism activities within Splash Park in Kaduna State. They characterized this impact as either positive or very positive. This finding aligns with the first hypothesis (H1) formulated for this study, which posited that "tourism activities within Splash Park have a significant positive impact on the economic development of Kaduna State."

The positive perception of the economic impact of tourism activities at Splash Park finds support in existing research on the relationship between tourism and economic development. Specifically, these findings are consistent with the assertion made by Manzoor, et al, (2019) that tourism can serve as a catalyst for economic growth in host regions, which in this case, is Kaduna State. Smith's research suggests that tourism has the potential to stimulate various economic sectors, including hospitality, transportation, and local businesses, thereby generating income and employment opportunities for the local population.

The positive perceptions regarding the economic impact of tourism at Splash Park hold significant implications for the region. Firstly, the favorable perception among respondents suggests that there is a general recognition of the value of tourism as an economic driver in Kaduna State. This recognition can serve as a foundation for further development and investment in the tourism sector. Moreover, the positive perception can attract potential investors and tourists to the region. When a destination is seen as having a positive economic impact, it becomes more appealing to both domestic and international travelers, potentially leading to increased visitation and revenue generation (Bădulescu, A. et al, 2018).

The study's findings indicate that three primary factors significantly influence the economic benefits derived from tourism in Splash Park. The overwhelming majority of respondents, constituting 95% of the sample, identified visitor spending as a pivotal factor in driving economic benefits. This suggests that the monetary contributions made by visitors through various expenditures such as accommodation, dining, and souvenir purchases play a central role in boosting the economic prosperity of the region. A substantial proportion of respondents, comprising 80% of the sample, emphasized the

importance of local business growth in augmenting economic benefits. This underscores the symbiotic relationship between tourism and local enterprises, as the influx of visitors provides a market for local businesses to thrive. Nearly three-quarters of the respondents, accounting for 70% of the sample, recognized employment generation as a critical factor in driving economic gains. This suggests that the tourism sector in Splash Park has a significant role in creating job opportunities for the local population, which is crucial for enhancing livelihoods and overall economic well-being.

The findings align closely with the second hypothesis (H2) posited in the study, which postulates that "factors such as visitor spending, employment generation, and local business development significantly influence the economic benefits derived from tourism in Splash Park." The responses provided by the participants corroborate this hypothesis, emphasizing the central role of visitor spending, local business growth, and job creation in contributing to the economic prosperity of the region.

Furthermore, these findings resonate with established literature on tourism impact. (O'Sullivan, & Jackson, 2002) highlight the significance of visitor expenditure and local economic development in influencing the economic benefits derived from tourism. Their research underscores the multifaceted contributions of tourism to local economies, including job creation and revenue generation.

Also, the findings of the study overwhelmingly affirm the positive contribution of visitor spending to the economic development of Kaduna State. A substantial 90% of respondents expressed agreement with the notion that visitor spending in Splash Park has a positive impact on the state's economic development. This resounding consensus underscores the perceived importance of tourism-related spending as a driver of economic progress. The study's results align closely with the third hypothesis (H3) formulated for this research, which posits a "positive correlation between visitor spending in Splash Park and its contribution to the economic development of Kaduna State." The high degree of agreement among respondents about the positive impact of visitor spending provides empirical support for this hypothesis.

These findings are consistent with existing research that emphasizes the economic benefits of tourism expenditure for local economies (Milne, & Ateljevic, 2001; Li, K., et al, 2018; Cela, A et al., 2013; Cárdenas-García, et al., 2015). Specifically, they resonate with the work of Wong, (1996), which underscores the role of visitor spending in stimulating economic growth in host regions. This research highlights that the money spent by tourists in a destination has a multiplier effect, generating income for various sectors, including hospitality, retail, and services, and thereby contributing to overall economic development. The robust affirmation of the positive impact of visitor spending on the economic development of Kaduna State carries important implications. Firstly, it suggests that investments aimed at attracting and retaining tourists in Splash Park can yield significant economic benefits for the broader state economy. This may involve strategies to enhance the tourism experience, promote local products and services, and encourage longer stays by visitors.

Moreover, the findings underline the need for effective destination management and policies that support sustainable tourism growth. Ensuring that a portion of visitor spending circulates within the local community through initiatives such as sourcing local products and engaging local businesses can amplify the economic impact of tourism.

### **Prominent Strategies for Maximizing Economic Impact**

The responses from participants highlighted several key strategies that hold the potential to maximize the economic impact of tourism in Splash Park and its adjacent communities:

1. **Promoting Local Products and Crafts:** A notable recommendation from respondents was the promotion of local products and crafts. This strategy involves showcasing and marketing locally made items to tourists, creating opportunities for local artisans and entrepreneurs. This aligns with the idea of cultural tourism, which emphasizes the unique offerings of a destination and supports local businesses.
2. **Investing in Infrastructure Development and Maintenance:** Infrastructure development and maintenance were recognized as crucial. Respondents emphasized the need to invest in physical infrastructure such as roads, accommodation facilities, and recreational areas to enhance the overall visitor experience. Maintaining the park's infrastructure was also seen as vital to ensure its long-term attractiveness to tourists.
3. **Creating Partnerships with Local Businesses:** Establishing partnerships with local businesses emerged as a recommended strategy. This approach involves collaboration between the tourism sector and local enterprises, fostering mutual growth and benefiting both parties. Such partnerships can lead to the incorporation of local products and services into the tourism experience.
4. **Enhancing Marketing and Promotion Efforts:** Respondents underscored the importance of effective marketing and promotion efforts. Effective promotion can attract a larger and more diverse visitor base to Splash Park. Utilizing various marketing channels, including digital platforms and tourism events, can increase awareness and draw attention to the park's attractions.
5. **Implementing Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Sustainable tourism practices were also emphasized as a critical strategy. Sustainable tourism involves responsible management of resources, preservation of cultural heritage, and minimizing negative environmental impacts. Implementing sustainability measures can not only enhance the park's reputation but also contribute to long-term economic viability.

These recommended strategies align with the fourth hypothesis (H4) of the study, which suggests that "implementing strategic policies and infrastructure improvements in Splash Park can enhance its role as a catalyst for economic progress in the park's vicinity and Kaduna State as a whole." The strategies mentioned by participants reflect the notion of strategic policies aimed at improving infrastructure and promoting sustainable tourism practices. Moreover, these strategies align with best practices in tourism



development and sustainable tourism, as highlighted in the work of Hall (2019). Sustainable tourism practices, infrastructure development, and collaboration with local businesses are recognized as key elements in fostering economic growth in tourism destinations.

In summary, the study findings indicate that tourism activities within Splash Park are perceived positively in terms of their economic impact on Kaduna State. Key factors influencing economic benefits include visitor spending, local business development, and employment generation. Visitor spending is seen as a significant contributor to economic development. The recommended strategies, if implemented, can further maximize the economic impact of tourism in the region and promote sustainable growth.

### **Conclusion**

In the pursuit of understanding the intricate relationship between tourism activities within Splash Park and the economic development of Kaduna State, this empirical investigation has unveiled valuable insights. Our study, guided by a robust conceptual model, has revealed that tourism activities indeed wield a significant positive impact on the economic development of Kaduna State. Most respondents perceive this impact as positive, aligning with our initial hypothesis (H1). Moreover, our findings underscore the pivotal role of visitor spending, local business development, and employment generation as critical factors influencing the economic benefits derived from tourism in Splash Park. The positive correlation identified between visitor spending and economic development (supporting H3) illuminates the potent economic contributions of tourists to Kaduna State.

In line with our research objectives, we have also gleaned valuable recommendations from our respondents. These recommendations span from promoting local products and crafts, investing in infrastructure, fostering partnerships with local businesses, enhancing marketing efforts, to embracing sustainable tourism practices. These strategies, if thoughtfully implemented, can further maximize the economic impact of tourism within Splash Park and its surrounding communities, paving the way for sustainable growth in Kaduna State.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Promote Local Products and Crafts:** Collaborate with local artisans and craft makers to showcase and sell their products within Splash Park, encouraging economic growth within the region.
2. **Invest in Infrastructure:** Allocate resources to enhance and maintain the park's infrastructure to attract more visitors and improve the overall visitor experience.
3. **Partnerships with Local Businesses:** Establish partnerships with local businesses, including hotels, restaurants, and transportation services, to create comprehensive tourism packages and mutually beneficial relationships.
4. **Enhanced Marketing Efforts:** Invest in marketing and promotional activities to increase awareness of Splash Park as a tourist destination, both domestically and internationally.

5. Sustainable Tourism Practices: Implement sustainable tourism practices that preserve the natural and cultural heritage of the region, ensuring the long-term viability of tourism in Kaduna State.

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