

Residents' attitudes towards proposed utilization of heritage resources as tourism attractions in Northern Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Controversy over the use of heritage resources as tourism attractions has received global attention, but little research has been conducted over the years, particularly in Africa. This study thus examines how socio-demographic factors and heritage significance affect local attitudes towards the proposed utilization of heritage resources for tourism in the Upper East Region of Ghana. The study used Social Exchange Theory as a framework to assess local residents' preparedness to trade their heritage resources for tourism's economic benefits. A mixed-methods approach based on pragmatic research underpinning was employed. To gather relevant data, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select household members for participation in the study. 400 respondents were employed for the quantitative survey while focus group discussion schedules were used for the qualitative interview. Data analysis techniques included percentages while t-tests and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test significance. The study indicated that age, education, gender and religion had influence on attitudes. The youth and those with higher education had more support than the elderly and less educated were respectively. More males than females also supported the use of heritage resources. More of the Christians had positive attitudes compared to Muslims and Traditionalists, respectively. There were generally significant relationships between socio-demographic variables and heritage significance on one hand and attitudes on the other. The significance attached to heritage resources influenced local attitudes towards their use. This study implies that, policies would have to be fashioned based on each socio-demographic variable to ensure general acceptability for heritage tourism purposes and development, while people who highly perceive heritage as significant should be assured of tourism's role in heritage conservation.

Keywords: Heritage Resource, Heritage Significance, Ghana, Local Attitudes, Socio-Demographic Characteristics

I. INTRODUCTION

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) asserts tourism's power to propel global economic growth and that this is manifested through multiple sectors, such as destination economies as well as environmental, social, and cultural spheres. Globally, the industry accounted for 10.4% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) and raked in about US\$ 196 billion in terms of revenue. In Africa, it contributed a total gross domestic product (GDP) of 8.5%, ranked at \$186 billion and employed 25 million people (WTTC, 2019). For these reasons, many developed and developing countries across the globe are adopting tourism as a strategy for revenue mobilisation in their development plans (Aboagye et al., 2013; Baptista et al., 2019). Thus, governments and community members, as well, are examining the potential of both natural and cultural resources for tourism development. Given the preponderance and local particularity of heritage globally, and especially in Africa, heritage tourism is in vogue with many private and public sectors converting heritage resources into attractions to enjoy its benefits in terms of revenue and employment (Timothy & Boyd, 2006). Africa is witnessing an increased utilization of its heritage for tourism due to its competitive advantage and benefits over other continents (Salazar & Yujie 2015; Ghana Tourism Authority [GTA], 2020; GTA, 2021).

Beyond establishing tourism, is the need to sustain the industry since it is seen as a double-edged sword for destination communities who endure the most of its positive and negative impacts (Postma & Schmuecker, 2017). The impacts are generally categorized into three namely the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural impacts (Garcia et al., 2015). Some of tourism's positive impacts often cited are provision of foreign exchange, job opportunities and

stimulation of local economic growth as against some negative ones, which include increased prices and cost of living as well as loss of cultural identity and commodification of culture (Yu et al., 2021). These impacts can sometimes positively or negatively induce local attitudes towards tourism development. In view of this, some experts argue that without the support of residents, there cannot be sustainable tourism. Their reasons are that residents play critical roles in cultural conservation and also form the core of sustainable tourism development (Mundt, 2011; Halim et al., 2022).

There is evidence of extensive studies that have explored the antecedents of residents' attitudes towards tourism in the last fifty years (Nunkoo et al., 2013; Almeida-García et al., 2016; Gursoy et al., 2017; Woosnam et al., 2017; Eusébio et al., 2018; Hadinejad et al., 2019; Rua, 2020) with diverse results. However, many of the studies contend direct relationships between perceived impacts of tourism and their attitudes towards tourism or support for tourism development. However, the effects of socio-demographic variables and attitudes have been contentious over space and time (Chen & Raab, 2012; Homsud, 2017; Ribeiro et al., 2017; Blackie, 2019). Despite Africa having abundant and rich cultural resources, research often focuses on understanding the factors influencing residents' attitudes towards tourism as a phenomenon and not the resources being used as attractions. Globally and in Africa, research focused on factors influencing residents' attitudes towards the proposed utilisation of cultural resources for tourism ends is terse (Yankholmes et al., 2009). In Ghana, such studies have occurred in the southern part. This paper, therefore, represents an initiative to fill the gap in northern Ghana by assessing factors that influence residents' attitudes towards proposed utilisation of heritage resources as tourism attractions in UER, northern Ghana.

1.1 Research Objectives

- i. To explore the attitudes of residents towards the proposed utilization of heritage resources for tourism ends
- ii. To assess the influence of socio-demographic variables on residents' attitudes towards utilization of heritage resources as tourism products
- iii. To examine the influence of the heritage significance of residents and their attitudes

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Social exchange theory (SET) is often used in studies concerning residents' attitudes towards tourism development. SET postulates that in any interaction, there will be an exchange of resources based on individuals' perceived benefits (Deery et al., 2012; Davlembayeva & Alamanos, 2023). First, it defines what must exist to motivate an individual to engage in a social interaction. Secondly, it identifies the mechanisms of exchange, with resources for exchange based on the subjective cost-reward analysis. According to Blau (2017), two main conditions define what decisions people perform in exchange relations, namely the degree to which a similar performance has been rewarded to a person or others in the past and the degree to which the result of the exchange is valuable to a person. Blau (2017) further states that social exchange relations are influenced by social structures and social capital factors and that social capital includes norms, rules, information channels, expectations, and obligations that facilitate and constrain social relations. Research also suggests humans are evolutionarily inclined toward reciprocation, with people entering relationships and expecting favours in return (DeLamater & Ward, 2013; Thibaut & Kelley, 2017). Some of the weaknesses of SET include (i) poor integration of its core ideas, (ii) over concentration on cognitive and rational elements of resident-tourist transactions, (iv) lack of accuracy in terminology, (v) over simplification reciprocity, (vi) and categorization of constructs into negative and positive while assuming the absence of negative behaviour (Bennett et al., 2005). The adoption of this theory is to investigate whether residents in UER would be prepared to allow their heritage resources to be utilised as tourism attractions. These decisions hinge on how they perceive such resources and the nature of usage in the exchange process for tourism products. It further investigates reactions of people based on socio-demographic factors and the significance they attach to heritage resources.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Attitudes towards the Use of Heritage Resources as Attraction

Community residents have often expressed their attitudes towards decisions regarding the utilization of heritage resources for development purposes. However, the literature on this theme is not only scanty but also largely dated. While communities or some members indicate their support, others oppose the idea. Studies have revealed that several factors, including socio-demographic factors, knowledge of potential benefits, pressure from external forces, long-term association and the significance people attach to resources, particularly cultural items, determine attitudes (Yankholmes, et al., 2009; Frempong, 2008; Willibrand, 2009).

Studies in Thailand and Accra revealed huge local support for proposed use of heritage resources for tourism because of the long-time presence of tourism, knowledge that it can raise the profile of the communities, strengthen and revive heritage resources as well as the potential economic gains through seasonal employment and economic

diversification (Yankholmes, et.al. 2009). In Cape Coast, too, the overwhelming local endorsement for the proposed use of both cultural and historical heritage resources for direct tourism-related purposes was due to the benefits people stood to derive (Frempong, 2008).

2.2.2 Influence of Socio-Demographic Variables on Residents' Attitudes towards Utilization of Heritage Resources as Tourism Products

Many researchers have explored the influence of socio-demographic variables of residents on their attitudes towards the use of heritage as tourism attractions and the results are varied. Williebrand (2009) in a study in Sweden found that age and residence/location of residents influenced attitudes towards the use of wildlife as an attraction. In a related study in Accra, the only factor that had a significant influence on the attitudes of residents towards the use of transatlantic slave relics as attractions was residence while age, sex, marital status, religion and education did not exert a significant effect on the promotion of such heritage resources for tourism ends (Yankholmes et al., 2009).

The controversy about the promotion of heritage items for tourism purposes depends on how people perceive such items (Yanchlomes et al., 2009). Researchers in the past have either made propositions or found that the significance that residents attach to their heritage resources can determine their attitudes towards their proposed use for tourism (García et al., 2015). For example, Gibson, (1979) said “perceptions guide our behaviours and what we perceive determines what we do”. Amuquandoh (2010) posited that “Investigations into the meanings and interpretations assigned to tourism-related objects in the destination environment are of extreme importance in the identification of elements that residents will support or oppose for tourism purposes”. By this statement it means the values or significance assigned to tourism objects can explain residents’ attitudes when proposing to use them for tourism. In corroboration, while Brennan and Cooper (2008) asserted that local people who attach high importance to their heritage resources are more likely to oppose tourism; Rickson et al. (1990) said value orientations and actual participation could explain local attitudes towards tourism. Furthermore, Pollnac (2000) in a study in Indonesia succinctly states that the value(s) of natural resources have significant implications on how they are used. Yakhomes et al (2009) in Accra indirectly supported this view as they argued that the use of forts for habitation and fear of relocation influenced the majority of the residents to oppose the use of heritage as attractions.

2.2.3 Influence of the Heritage Significance of Residents and Their Attitudes

In specific situations, residents have openly opposed the use of their heritage resources for tourism purposes. For example, residents in South Africa denied access to female initiation rituals (circumcision) owing to perceived socio-cultural significance (Collins, 2005). In the view of Frempong (2008), the Posuban Shrine was largely opposed as a tourism attraction due to its religious significance. Boatbil et al. (2024) confirmed this claim, where the some residents of Tengzug in Talensi also refused the usage of their shrines or gods for tourism due to possible desecration. On the contrary, other residents in South Africa flouted their customs by succumbing to external pressures of tour operators and allowing tourist access to the male Xhosa dance (Collins, 2005). Willibrand (2009), in a study in Sweden, also found that local people who depended on wildlife for livelihoods opposed its use for hunting tourism because of its adverse effects. Another reason for their opposition was that introducing tourism would compromise the quality of hunting and adversely affect traditional livelihoods.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Setting

The Upper East Region (UER) has a landmass of 8,842 sq. km and constituting nearly 4% of land in Ghana (GSS, 2021). The region sits on longitude 0° and 1°W as well as latitudes 10° 30’N and 11°N in the Guinea and Sudan Savannah Grasslands. The White Volta, Red Volta, and the Sissili River (Yiran & Stringer, 2016) drain it. Annual rainfall is about 1,000 mm with temperatures ranging between 13.3°C to 41°C (Issahaku et al. 2016). Even though about 80% of the working class are engaged in rain-fed agriculture (GSS, 2015), the sector is dwindling owing to climate variability and change (Yiran & Stringer, 2016). Thus, alternative livelihood sources have become necessary. Attention on tourism as one of the panaceas has seen areas such as the Paga Crocodile Pond, Pikowro Slave Camp, Tengzug Shrine, and the Sirigu Women Pottery and Art recommending tourism promotion, which creates employment and revenue (Abdul-Kadri et al., 2022). Four communities, Tengzuk, Gunwoku, Zenga, and Fiisa, were purposively sampled for the study on the basis that, they are either active tourism sites or have the potential to be used.

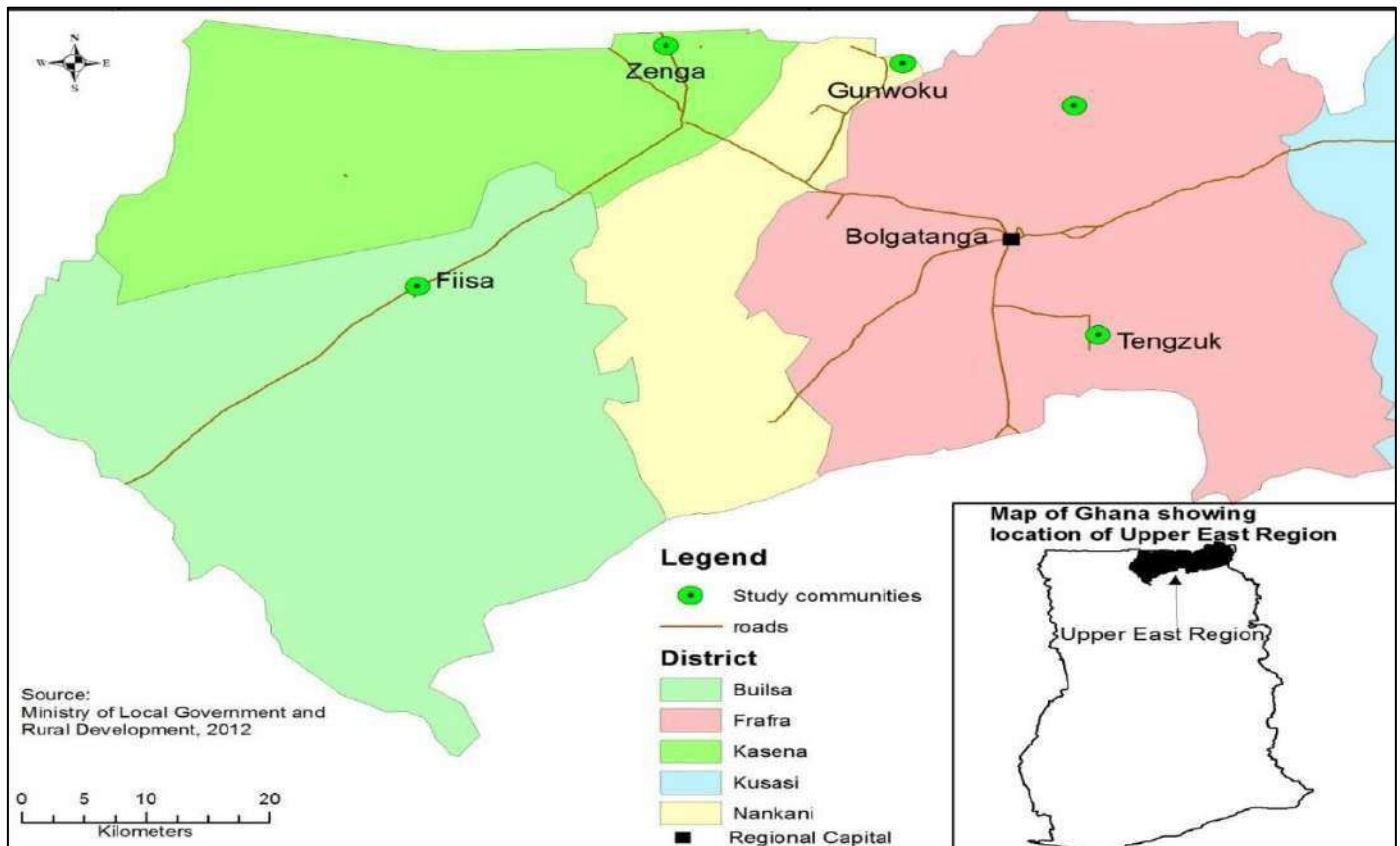


Figure 1
Map of Studied Communities

3.2 Research Design and Sampling Techniques

A mixed-methods approach based on pragmatic research underpinning was employed (Samuel et al, 2024). Questionnaires and focused group discussions (FGDs) were used to gather data. Data from questionnaires was derived from household members aged 18 years or more, and this included socio-demographic characteristics, significance attached to heritage and attitudes towards the proposed use of heritage for tourism. A sample of 400 household respondents was derived using Eq. 1 adopted from Bryman (2016).

$$n = Z^2pq \dots \dots \dots \text{Eq. 1 d2}$$

Where n is the desired sample, z is the standard normal deviation, set at 1.96 or 95% confidence level, p is the proportion (i.e. 0.52) in the target population Estimated to be above 18 years; q = 1-p (i.e. 0.48) and d is the degree of accuracy desired (usually set at 0.05) (Yakholmes et al., 2009). The total household sample was proportionally shared for the four communities based on their respective populations, but later adjusted to bridge observed marked differences. Thus, the sample sizes were Tenzug (120), Zenga (66), Fiisa (64), and Gunwuko (150). A list of numbered houses was obtained from Assemblymen and women or community leaders. Simple random sampling was used to select household members and respondents. Purposive sampling, used to select focus group discussants, is a qualitative technique that discusses specific issues by groups (Bryman, 2016; Teye, 2012). Its advantage in blending different opinions to enrich research data and explore individual viewpoints to build consensus about emerging differences makes it popular in many studies (Heiskanen et al., 2008). A total of eight FGDs were held, with two in each community, but one for males and females. According to Teye (2008), gender separation avoids male dominance in patriarchal societies where females become uncomfortable in group discussions. With eight people for each FGD, it provided a conducive atmosphere for fruitful discussions, unlike large numbers (Yiran & Stringer, 2016).

3.3 Selection of Heritage Resources

Eleven tangible and intangible heritage resources were selected for the study based on residents’ views on the relevance of each resource relative to others. Ten opinion leaders in each of the four communities ranked heritage resources based on importance to the community on a scale of one to 10. Those with average scores of 5 and above were selected.

3.4 Data Collection

The questionnaires comprised both closed and open-ended questions and were administered to 400 respondents. Respondents answered questions on their socio-demographic data. They rated the significance of each heritage resource based on perceived intrinsic and extrinsic values. Pretesting of questionnaires was to ensure consistent wording, formatting and alignment with the study’s objectives. FGD schedules were used to provide further information and explanations on the relationship between socio-demographic variables and significance attached to heritage resources on one hand and attitudes on the other. Despite being prone to bias, FGD enables greater in-depth probing to explain relationships between dependent and independent variables (Teye, 2008)

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

Quantitative data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate tables on attitudes of residents towards the utilization of heritage resources. This was summarised into a 3-point Likert scale of being “Supportive”, “neutral” or “Not supportive”. Analysis of Variance [ANOVA] and t-test were used to determine existing relationships between socio-demographic characteristics and the attitudes of residents towards the proposed use of heritage resources as tourism attractions. The t-test focused on variables with two categories. A p-value less than or equal to 0.05 means there is a significant difference. The presentations and discussions included relevant quotations from FGDs. Triangulation was also done to ensure the overall validity and reliability of the study (Bryman, 2016). Bar graphs were used to illustrate the proportion of residents’ support and also its relationship with significance they attach to heritage resources.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Response Rate

4.1.1 Attitudes towards the Use of Heritage Resources as Attractions

The results of the study revealed significant support for eight out of the eleven heritage resources, as indicated in Figure 2. Generally, the support ranges from 25% to 70%. Support that ranged from 50% to 70% included political systems, folklore, music and dance, festivals, shrines, arts and crafts, and agriculture. However, agricultural system, landscape, and burial systems received less than 50% support. The FGDs similarly revealed this, but noted that only the celebratory and non-spiritual aspects of festivals and political systems were permitted for tourism purposes. In explaining this, an FGD participant at Tengzug noted:

“Those of us who practice the traditional religion are always uncomfortable exposing sacred aspects of our sacrifices to strangers or neighbours. For example, the sacred components (mol) of the Golgo festival are performed at midnight, and lights are not permitted. Uninitiated people are also not permitted there, and it takes place around 2 am” (51 years old, male).

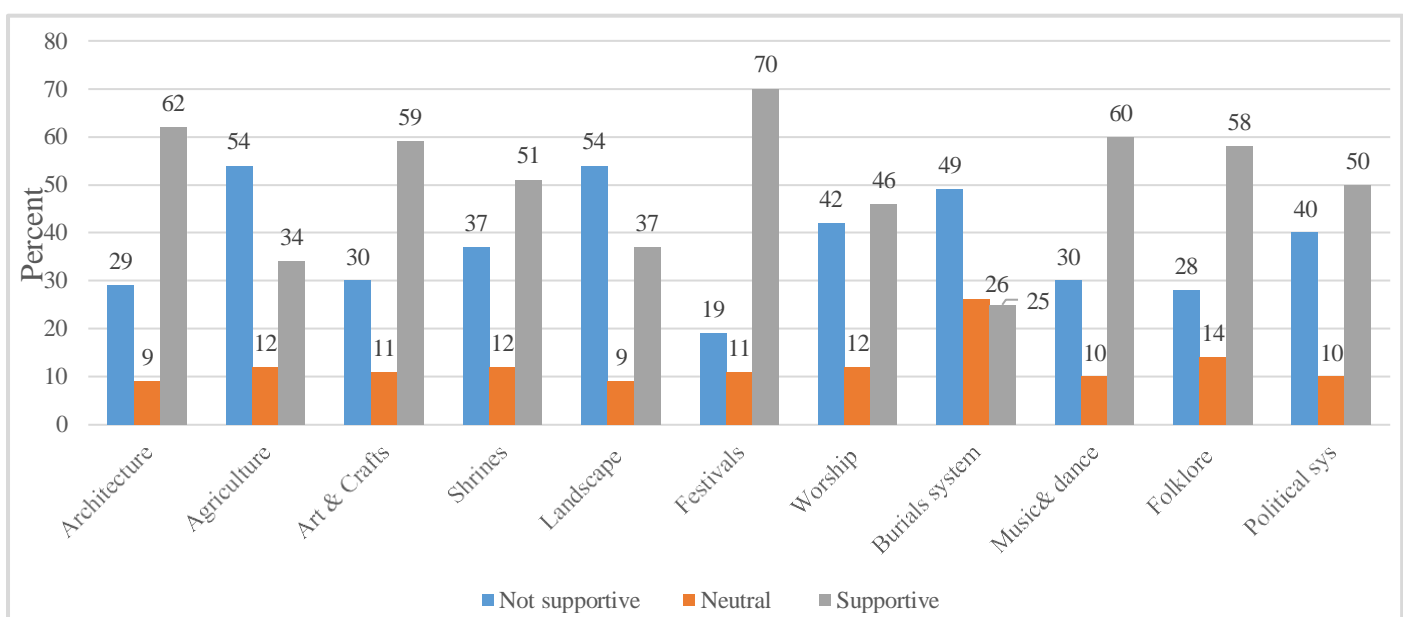


Figure 2
Attitudes towards Using Resources as Attractions



Some participants in the FGDs provided various reasons for local opposition to the use of particular heritage resources for tourism.

“The majority of us depend on farming for food and landscape for fuel wood, medicine, fruits, etc. Allowing their use for tourism will make us lose them, whilst we may not gain anything.” Tourism can bring about adverse effects on our livelihoods if we allow agriculture and the inherited landscape to be used as tourism attractions. Tourism is capable of outcompeting traditional livelihoods based on such resources (A male participant at Zenga). It can also lead to possible adverse effects on non-tourism-related resources. Our greatest fear is that we may sacrifice some valued heritage resources for tourism, only for the privileged in society to invest and reap the benefits and leave us (A male participant at Tengzok).

4.1.2 Factors Influencing Residents’ Attitudes towards Heritage Utilization

The study explored the influence that socio-demographic variables of residents and the significance they attach to heritage have on attitudes towards the proposed utilization of heritage resources as tourism attractions.

Relationship between Gender and Attitudes: The results revealed that, apart from traditional architecture, more females supported the use of all tangible heritage resources compared to males. The reverse is true, that more males also opposed the use of all heritage resources except architecture. The female FGDs explained that more of them viewed architecture to be important to them compared to their male counterparts. In terms of intangible heritage, the study revealed that more females supported the use of all the intangible resources except burial systems for tourism ends. Even for resources such as festivals, music, and dance and folklores for which more than 50% of males supported their utilisation, female support again far outstripped the former. According to female FGDs, females’ past dependence on cultural resources such as landscape for vegetables, fuelwood, weaving grass and sheanuts for butter, as well as intangible resources, is declining. A participant at Gunwoku said the female support could be due to heavy involvement in the production of straw items and smock cloths that have become part of the tourism product mix of the region. At Tengzug, a female participant said:

“Most of the things we used to get from farmlands and forests are difficult to get. So if we can get money through tourism, it is good” (45 years old, female).

Independent sample t-tests showed that gender significantly related to attitudes for all the heritage resources except architecture, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1
T-Test for Gender

Resources	Test-Value = 0(t)	df	Sig.	Mean	Conf (95%)	
					Lower	Upper
Architecture	66.872	399	.000	3.42	3.32	3.52
Agriculture	50.737	399	.000	2.82	2.71	2.93
Art & Craft	63.620	399	.000	3.39	3.29	3.49
Shrines	56.732	399	.000	3.17	3.06	3.28
Landscapes	47.489	399	.000	2.83	2.72	2.95
Festivals	66.081	399	.000	3.69	3.58	3.79
Worship	53.374	399	.000	3.08	2.96	3.19
Burial	54.720	399	.000	2.74	2.64	2.84
Mus & dance	64.235	399	.000	3.43	3.32	3.53
Folk lore	65.345	399	.000	3.38	3.27	3.48
Political	57.013	399	.000	3.14	3.03	3.25

4.1.3 Relationship between Age and Attitudes

The results generated indicated that higher percentages of younger respondents supported the use of tangible heritage resources as attractions compared to older ones. The only exception was the 40-49 age group, which had the highest support in respect of inherited landscape. Except for this, it can be said that support levels generally decreased with increasing age and particularly for intangible heritage resources. The findings from the questionnaire survey were corroborated by the FGDs. A young participant at Zenga had this to say:

“These heritage resources are outmoded and of no use to us, the youth. Many town people do not want to use them. So if they can be used for tourism to improve lives, why prevent it?” (25 years old, male)

A one-way ANOVA test revealed that age is significantly related to the attitudes for architecture, agriculture, shrines, inherited landscapes, festivals, folklore and political systems, but not art and crafts, burial systems, worship systems and music and dance, as in Table 2.

Table 2
ANOVA Test for Age

Resources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Architecture	14.286	4	3.571	3.499	.008
Agric.	27.501	4	6.875	5.833	.000
Art & Craft	9.491	4	2.373	2.113	.079
Shrines	28.921	4	7.230	6.074	.000
Landscapes	50.284	4	12.571	9.595	.000
Festivals	27.550	4	6.887	5.804	.000
Worship	10.939	4	2.735	2.079	.083
Burial	2.865	4	.716	.713	.583
Mus & dan	9.429	4	2.357	2.096	.081
Folk lore	24.769	4	6.192	6.100	.000
Political	27.936	4	6.984	6.037	.000

4.1.4 Influence of Religion on Local Attitudes

The results showed more Christians approving the use of tangible resources such as architecture, art and crafts and shrines as attractions, followed by Muslims and Traditionalists respectively. For agriculture and landscape, Muslims were more followed by Christians and Traditionalists, respectively. The study further revealed that support towards the use of all the intangible resources was highest among Christians, followed by Muslims and Traditionalists, respectively, except for burial systems. Many traditionalists in the FGDs opposed wholesale conversions of heritage resources into tourism attractions as it conflicts with religious beliefs. They also feared possible misinterpretations and flouting of taboos by tourists as they are commercialised for tourism ends. This, they believed, could lead to spiritual and physical calamities to individuals and the community. A participant at Tengzug succinctly stated:

“The Tonab shrine abhors the use of cameras. However, local tourists do not obey, you can find pictures of the god in books. We do not know what will happen. That is why some of our people do not allow their shrines for tourism purposes at all”. (57 years old, male)

A one-way ANOVA test indicated that religion had a significant influence on residents' attitudes for all domains of heritage resources, as in table 3.

Table 3
ANOVA Test for Religion

Resources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Architecture	12.597	2	6.298	6.176	.002
Agric.	48.055	2	24.028	21.437	.000
Art & Craft	57.756	2	28.878	28.994	.000
Shrines	157.848	2	78.924	91.818	.000
Landscapes	52.987	2	26.493	20.431	.000
Festivals	35.694	2	17.847	15.382	.000
Worship	189.990	2	94.995	110.723	.000
Burial	35.150	2	17.575	19.153	.000
Mus & dan	71.480	2	35.740	37.117	.000
Folk lore	28.120	2	14.060	14.038	.000
Political	113.154	2	56.577	60.424	.000

4.1.5 Influence of Education on Local Attitudes

Local support for the use of tangible heritage resources as attractions increased with increasing levels of education, except for architecture. Therefore, support among those with first degrees and above was highest, followed by those with “Sec/SHS”, “Basic education” and “no education”. In the case of intangible heritage resources, relatively more respondents with higher levels of education supported their use as attractions compared to those with lower education, but the relationship did not follow a systematic pattern. Based on FGDs, the study further showed greater preference among more educated persons for the use of heritage resources as attractions because of their awareness of the potential benefits of tourism, compared to people with low or no education. For example, a degree holder at Zenga said:



“We see that tourism has given employment in hotels and tour guiding” That is not all, our people sell cultural artefacts to tourists, exhibit cultural performances for fees, restaurant owners sell food, and tourists pay fees (33 years old, male).

An ANOVA test revealed relationships between education and support for the use of most resources were significant for all heritage resources except festivals and architecture, as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4
ANOVA Test for Education

Resources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Architecture	8.115	3	2.705	2.617	.051
Agric.	88.975	3	29.658	29.066	.000
Art & Craft	25.573	3	8.524	7.894	.000
Shrines	40.083	3	13.361	11.527	.000
Landscapes	91.945	3	30.648	25.506	.000
Festivals	11.561	3	3.854	3.148	.025
Worship	60.385	3	20.128	16.952	.000
Burial	12.834	3	4.278	4.382	.005
Mus & dan	19.880	3	6.627	6.048	.000
Folk lore	12.827	3	4.276	4.100	.007
Political	22.778	3	7.593	6.507	.000

4.1.6 Effects of Heritage Significance on Residents’ Attitudes

The study results showed that about 60% to 87% of residents who perceive all tangible heritage resources as highly unimportant supported their utilisation for tourism. Conversely, only about 16% to 40% of those who perceived them as important supported the use of heritage as an attraction. Similarly, from 56% to 100% of residents who perceived intangible heritage resources as unimportant supported their utilization as tourism attractions. However, for those who perceived them as important, their support ranged from 3% to 65% as indicated in Figure 3.

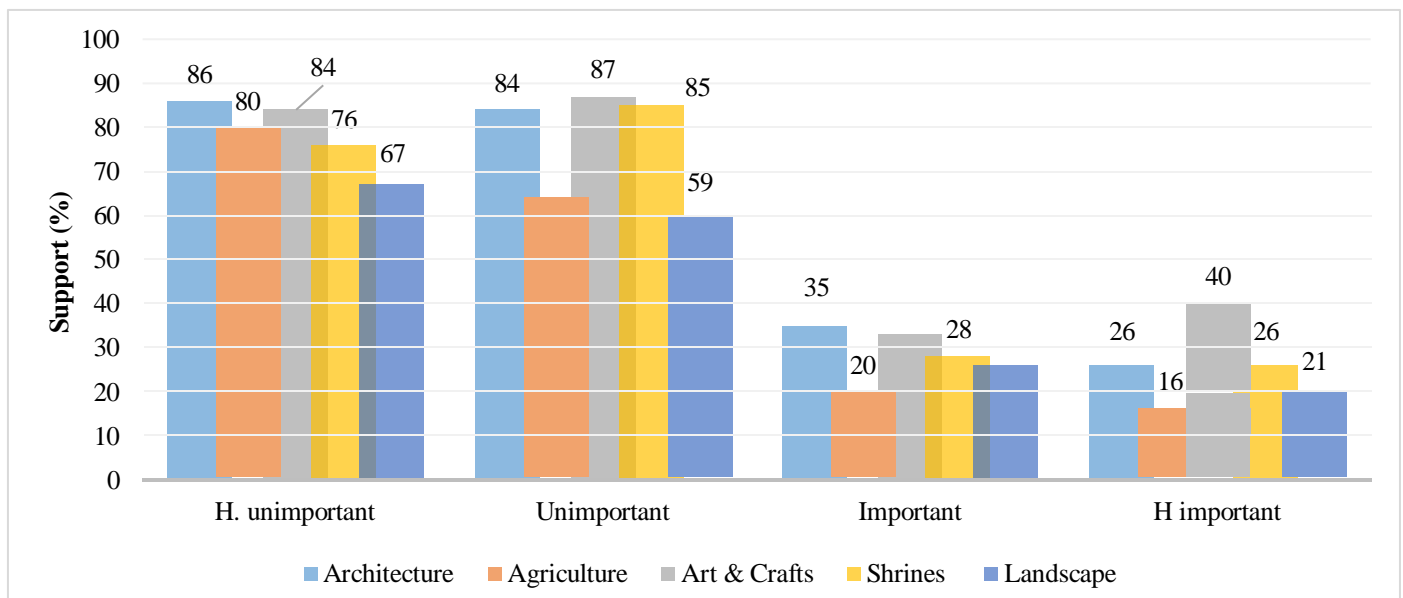


Figure 3
Tangible Heritage Significance and Residents’ Attitudes

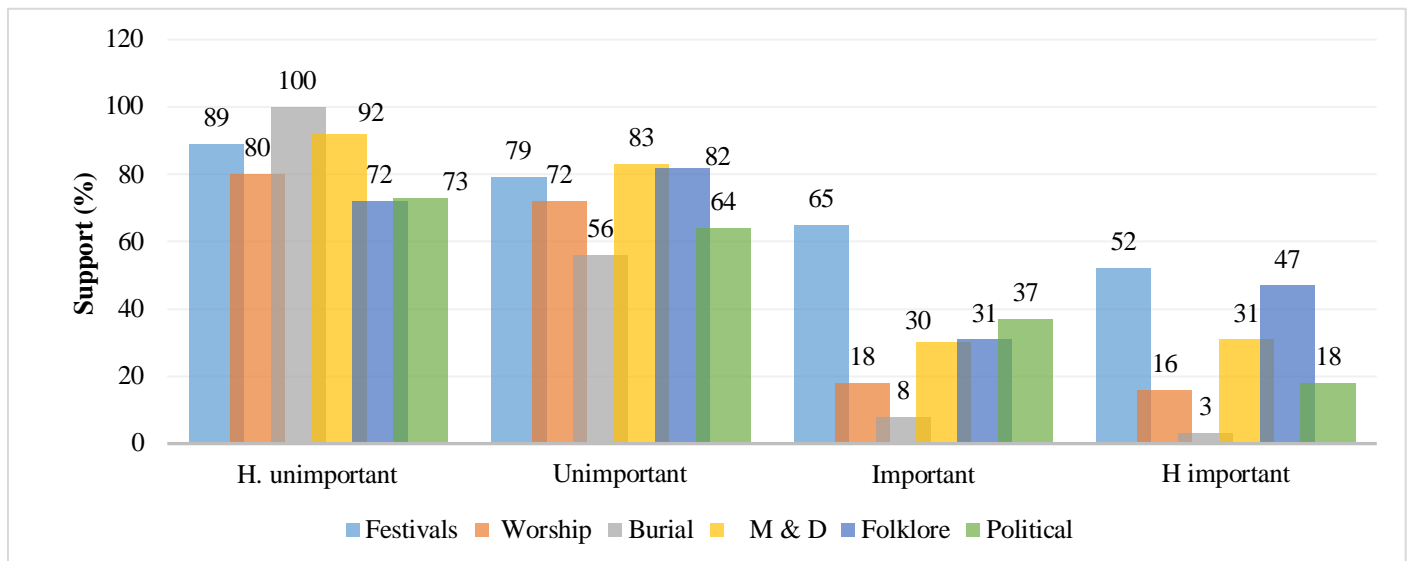


Figure 4
Intangible Heritage Significance and Residents' Attitudes

4.2 Discussion

Generally, local support for the use of many heritage resources was high and ranging from 50% to 70% for eight out of the eleven resources considered. Resources such as agriculture, landscape and burial systems received less than 50% support. Those in support believed tourism would bring economic benefits and maintain cultural identities, or it is because the values they attach to heritage resources were declining. On the other hand, those who opposed the use of heritage resources for tourism complained about likely exposure of sacred components of culture to outsiders, its adverse consequences to livelihoods, competition from tourism, tourism benefits skewing towards the privileged in society, likely disrespect to ancestors and painful memories in the case of burial systems. This corroborates findings in other areas where residents opposed the use of wildlife as a tourism attraction due to fear of competition and loss of hunting quality (Willibrand, 2009), religious significance (Frempong, 2008) and painful memories (Yankholmes et al., 2009). More females than males supported the utilization of heritage resources except for burial systems. This is because many of the former had lower perceived importance for heritage, embraced new faiths (Christianity and Islam), depended less on heritage resources compared to males, as well as had the potential to benefit through industries such food production, and weaving of smock or straw products for sale to visitors. Except for the 40-49 age group, support for the use of heritage resources for tourism decreased with increasing age. This was because older people attached higher traditional values to heritage resources compared to the youth with fading importance of such resources due to modernization. Similarly, Willebrand (2009) in Sweden found greater preference among the youth and middle age towards the use of wildlife for tourism compared to the elderly. More Christians and Muslims than traditionalists supported the use of heritage resources for tourism, as traditionalists believed in the religious, spiritual and practical significance of heritage resources compared to others. Perhaps the large dominance of females in the modern faiths (Christianity and Islam) explains the larger support from the two. More residents with higher levels of education also supported the use of heritage resources for tourism compared to those with lower education due to the former's recognition that tourism generated revenue and created employment.

The findings generally showed that socio-demographic factors have a significant relationship with residents' attitudes towards the proposed utilization of heritage for tourism ends. However, the findings contrast with others who found that age, sex, marital status, religion, and education did not exert a significant effect on the promotion of their heritage for tourism (Yankholmes et al., 2009). The study found that many of the people who perceived heritage resources as important did not support their use for tourism, and vice versa. The study, based on the findings, proposes a model to understand residents' attitudes towards the proposed utilization of heritage resources for tourism as indicated in Figure 5.

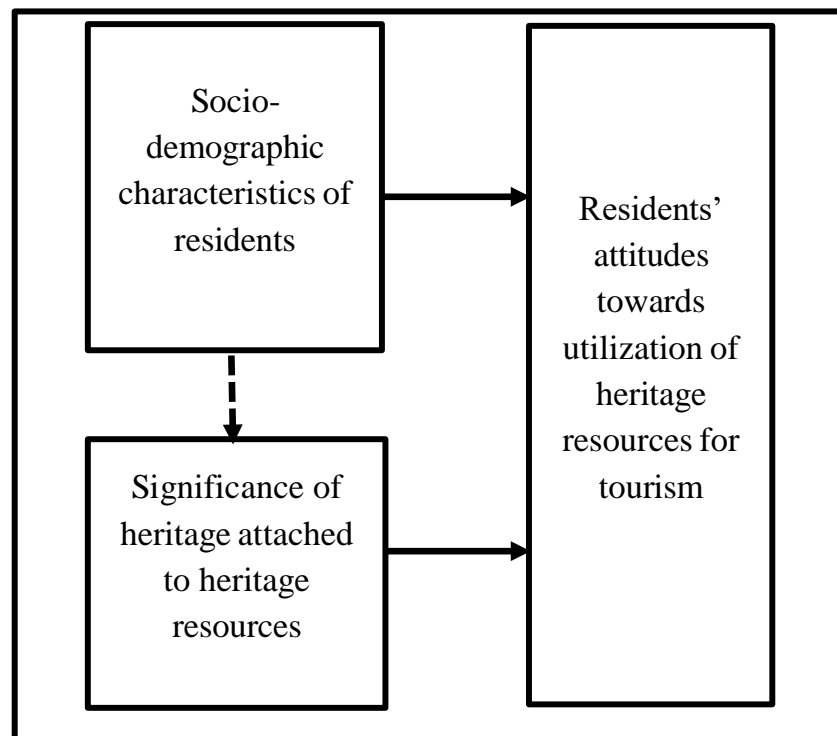


Figure 5
A Model to understand local attitudes Towards the Proposed use of Heritage Resources

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study seeks to assess the attitudes of residents towards the use of heritage resources for tourism. The paper concludes that support for the use of many heritage resources for tourism ends is high among residents. Such a trend is explained by the declining dependence on heritage resources due to modernization among the population and rising awareness of the benefits of tourism. With declining dependence, the significance residents attach to heritage resources would be low. This does not motivate local conservation efforts. Consequently, the very tourism industry they are promoting heritage resources to establish will become unsustainable.

Socio-demographic variables of residents generally influence decisions to accept the use of heritage resources for tourism. More females were disposed to the use of heritage resources compared to males, just as the elderly outstripped the youth. Residents with higher education were less opposed to the use of heritage compared to those with lower education. People who believed in the traditional religion were more opposed to the use of heritage compared to Muslims and Christians. The level of significance attached to heritage resources by residents has a stronger influence on their attitudes.

5.2 Recommendations

The study therefore recommends that the government, in collaboration with local stakeholders, should fashion out policies to provide public education on the importance of tourism and the need to preserve cultural heritage resources for the sustainability of the former. Education of the youth and females on the importance of heritage and its preservation without associating it with religious beliefs is necessary. There is a need for further studies on this theme in Ghana to provide a detailed understanding for policy purposes, as cultural resources are largely those converted for tourism purposes in the country.

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