



TOURISM: A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Oloyede Adeola. O. (Mrs.)

Department of Marketing, The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti. (+2348068930263)

ABSTRACT: *One of the persistent goals for any country is finding the means through which sustainable economic development can be achieved. In Nigeria, this need is most important considering the rampant levels of poverty and under- development. All over the world, there is a growing trend in the contribution of tourism to GDP, export and employment. However, despite the abundance of tourist sites and destinations in Nigeria, evidence suggest that the country has not fully realized the benefits that the tourism sector has to offer. A lot of reasons have been cited for this ranging from the under- development of the tourism sector, insecurity, poor infrastructure, ineffectual government policies, inadequate private participation to inadequate promotion of the sector. Nevertheless, the experiences of other countries including African ones such as Kenya, Gambia and South Africa have proven that tourism can promote economic development, poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. This study examines the ways through which tourism can be used as a key for sustainable economic development and concludes that this goal can only be realized if the aforementioned constraints are removed*

KEYWORDS: Tourism, Sustainability, Sustainable Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

One of the commercially important trends initiated in the 20th century was the growth in tourism as an important sector of the economy. This trend- premised on the human urge for rest, adventure and new experiences- has continued in the twenty first century because of the relatively lower costs of travel, improved safety and the design of policies aimed at encouraging tourism by governments all over the world. According to Yusuff and Akinde (2015), the impact of tourism over the years is becoming increasingly felt because the sector has proven to be a strong and resilient one and a major contributor to the economic growth of nations. This assertion is based on a statistic presented by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2014) that by 2013, the tourism sector outperformed finance, manufacturing, business services and the transportation sectors by contributing about 9.5% of the global GDP and around 9% of global employment (about 266 million jobs). Essentially, the sustained demand- on a global basis- for tourism coupled with its demonstrated ability to generate high employment levels have increased the value and importance attached to the sector as a tool for job creation and development (Aliqah & Al- Rfou, 2010; Havi & Enu, 2013; Aremu & Lawal, 2018).

In Nigeria, the importance of tourism is evident in the contribution of the sector to the economy which according to Aremu and Lawal (2018) stands at N1, 861.4 billion or 1.7% as at 2017. Mejabi (2015) earlier projected that based on the past trajectory of growth, the tourism sector is expected to generate around 2. 5 million jobs by 2027. The situation in Nigeria is a reflection of an Africa- wide phenomenon as demonstrated in the table below;

**Table 1: Country- Wise Contribution of Tourism to GDP and Employment (2014)**

S/ N	Countries	% contrib. to GDP	% contrib. to Employ
1.	Gambia	21.8	18.7
2.	Morocco	18.7	16.7
3.	Tunisia	15.2	13.8
4.	Namibia	14.8	19.4
5.	Tanzania	12.9	11.2
6.	Egypt	12.6	11.5
7.	Kenya	12.1	10.6
8.	Senegal	11.6	10.2
9.	South Africa	9.5	10.1
10.	Nigeria	3.2	2.8

Source: WTTC (2014) & Eneji, M. A., Odey, F.A., and Bullus, M. L. (2016)

As evident from the table, Nigeria still have the lowest percentage contribution of tourism to aggregate employment among the countries considered, this may be due to the fact that Nigeria has a relatively more diversified economic base and a larger population than these countries. Nevertheless, these figures signify potentials and as such it is necessary in light of the current rates of unemployment and economic hardship in Nigeria to consider how tourism can be used as a key to sustainable economic development.

Statement of Problem and Research Objectives

While the tourism sector has been explored deeply in Europe, Asia, South America and North America, its potentials remain largely untapped in Nigeria. As reported by Eneji et al (2016), Nigeria lags even among some African countries in terms of the realization of the potentials of the tourism sector. Ndajiya, Muhamma., and Muhammad, (2014) asserted that despite the availability of natural tourist attractions, the contribution of tourism to Nigeria's GDP is 5% lower than Africa's average. The policy orientation and actions of the government have over the years led to systemic neglect of the sector which in turn have led to low levels of investments in the infrastructure upon which a buoyant tourism sector depends. This policy orientation which stemmed from the *Dutch Disease* associated with the discovery of crude oil has impeded focus on tourism as a means for economic diversification and an avenue for earning foreign exchange. Associated with this is the high level of insecurity in the country, especially increasing cases of kidnapping, robbery and religious violence which have led to a distorted perception of Nigeria among international tourists. Yusuff and Akinde (2015) also highlighted that realizing the potentials of tourism in serving as source of employment, development and economic growth are now essential in the face of declining and fluctuating oil prices upon which a larger part of the national revenue depends. However, justifying policy reorientation towards a focus on tourism is dependent on an examination of how tourism can be employed as a key for sustainable economic development in Nigeria. In view of this, this study seeks to achieve the following research objectives;



The main objective of this paper is to explore how tourism can be utilized as key to sustainable national economic development in Nigeria while the specific objectives are to;

1. Evaluate the trend of the contribution of tourism to the Nigerian economy.
2. Examine the ways in which tourism can be used a key to sustainable national economic development in Nigeria.
3. Identify the constraints on the use of tourism as a key to sustainable national economic development in Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the trend of the contribution of tourism to the Nigerian economy?
2. What are the ways in which tourism can be used as a key to sustainable national economic development in Nigeria?
3. What are the constraints on the use of tourism as a key to sustainable national economic development in Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this paper are to explore how tourism can be used as a key to sustainable economic development in Nigeria and also make policy recommendations on how tourism can be made viable. This study will employ a historical research design because inferences will be drawn from past events and trends in tourism globally. The importance attached to tourism has prompted a lot of research on the subject. Content analysis will be relied on to extract data and information relevant to the objectives of this paper. The sources of data for this paper will include journals, trade publications, books and other contemporary sources on the concepts of tourism and sustainable economic development.

Tourism: A Globally Rising Phenomenon

Globally- tourism is making important contributions to the economy of many countries, whether developed, developing or under- developed. Scowsill (2015) expressed that the tourism industry remains one of the major sources of foreign exchange. Mejabi (2015) also highlighted that the tourism industry contributes around 9% of global GDP and provides direct employment for nearly 77 million people worldwide, with indirect employment for some 234 million more. In another report, Adebayo, W. O., Jegede, A. O. and Eniafe, D. F. (2017) asserted that the tourism industry accounts for 9.4% of the global investments and 10.9 percent of exports. Essentially, tourism supports 1 in 12 jobs globally (Scowsill, 2015). By 2018, the growth trajectory of the global tourism industry has improved.

In the developing countries of the world, the importance attached to tourism has increased based on the willingness of such countries to reap the benefits associated with a vibrant tourism sector. Aremu and Lawal (2018) asserted that such benefits include employment creation (with emphasis on women, minorities, migrants and youths), socio- economic development, improved infrastructure and most importantly poverty reduction. According to Sofronov

(2018), the growth rate of the travel and tourism industry surpassed that of the global economy for the seventh year in a row and by as much as 1.6% in 2017 alone beating the growth rate of other major industrial sectors. ICAO (2018) further reported that in 2017, tourism provided 1 in 10 jobs globally (313 million jobs) and 10.4% of global GDP. These figures are fuelled by the number of international tourist arrivals- a common indicator for tourism levels- which stood at 1.322 billion as at 2017 and is expected to increase by as much as 5% - 7% per annum over the next decade.

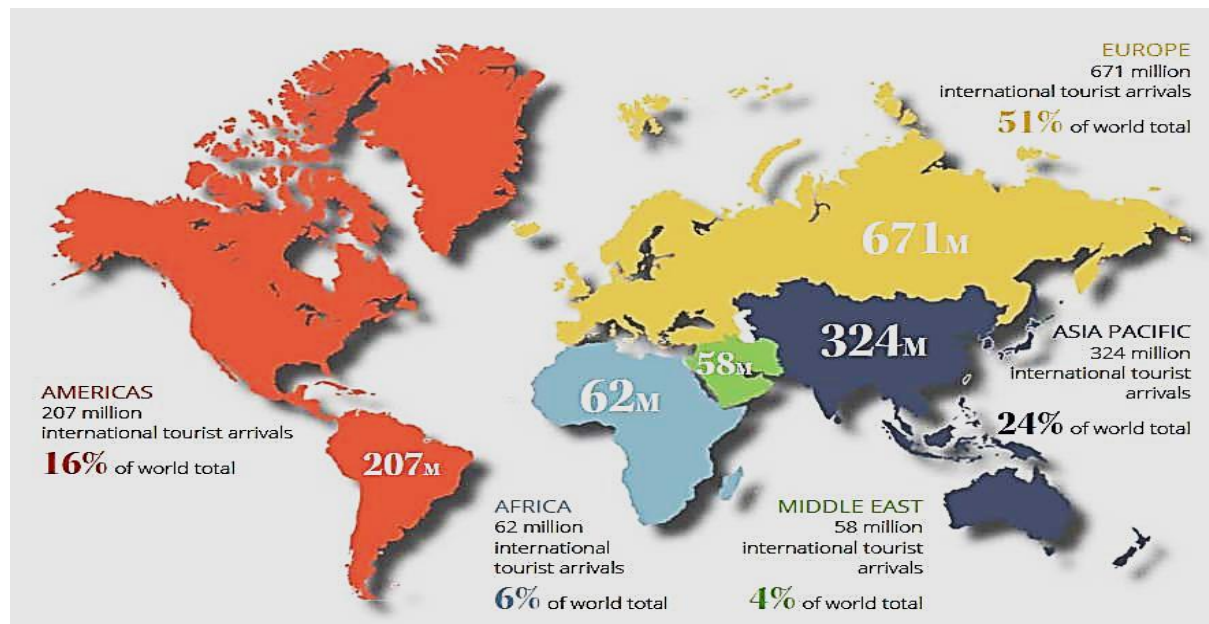


Figure 1: Infographic Showing International Tourist Arrivals (2017) Per Continent.

Source: ICAO (2018).

According to Zach and Hill (2017) and Sofronov (2018), the developed countries of the world still attracts the largest number of tourists every year. This is due to the availability of a well-organized tourism sector which actively promotes the tourism potentials of these countries coupled with the presence of a secure environment and abundant interesting and beautiful places of interest to visit. Sofronov (2018) remarked that such destinations as St Tropez, Eiffel Tower, Niagara Falls, The Grand Canyon, Stonehenge, The Great Wall, Piazza del Campo, The Forbidden City and the Miniature Wonderland among others are located in the developed countries of the world and have gained competitive advantage in the tourism market that cannot be easily matched by destinations in the developing countries. The table below shows the most visited countries by tourists in the world.

**Table 2: Most Visited Countries by Tourists in the World (2017)**

S/N	Country	Visitors (millions)
1.	France	82.6
2.	USA	75.6
3.	Spain	75.2
4.	China	59.3
5.	Italy	52.4
6.	UK	35.8
7.	Germany	35.6
8.	Mexico	35.0
9.	Thailand	32.6
10.	Turkey	30

Source: Sofronov, 2018

The global growth in the tourism sector has being attributed to a number of factors. Sofronov (2018) contended that the growth in the sector is partially a reflection of rising income and the need for adventure among the world population. He further noted that it is also as a result of the promotional drive on the part of national governments that tourism asides from its contribution to economic growth can also be used as an instrument for fostering peace, tolerance and intercultural exchange. In another study, Yesawich (2000) expressed that the consistent and remarkable growth in the tourism sector can be traced to the rising levels of international trade and investment, global diffusion of information technology, improved macro- economic policies, higher living standards and private sectors that are becoming increasingly dynamic even in the developing countries of the world. Another important factor that has fostered the development of the global tourism sector is the vigorous competition among industry players (Cetron, 2001). As noted by Mehran and Olya (2018), 'tourism offers a combination of products and services which need to be customized based on the preferences of different market segments. The implication of this is that there are a lot of industry stakeholders (global and local hotel chains, cruise companies, travels and tours agencies and airlines amongst others) who are constantly trying to increase their market share through quality service, which has led to a high rate of innovation in the sector with the attendant effect of increase in demand.

The Concept of Sustainable National Economic Development

Sustainable economic development is one of the major concerns of the 21st century and its importance is derived from the fact that the economic development models adopted in the 19th and 20th century are found to be short of ideas in terms of balancing needs, welfare and development for present and future generations. Eneji et al (2016) conceptualized sustainable development as the kind which combines the duality of satisfying the needs of the present generation without endangering the possibilities of meeting those of future generations. In economic terms, sustainable economic development relates to the paradigm of meeting economic needs without crossing the resource use threshold beyond which the ability of future generations to meet their own needs will be hampered. Brundtland (1987) noted that the framework of sustainable economic development is premised on the projection that each generation should only make use of resources in serving its own needs that will not hamper the



ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Consequentially, unsustainability results when the demand and use of resources in a particular generation exceeds a threshold, beyond which the further use of resources will deprive future generations. Sustainable economic development is conceptually the third aspect of the sustainable development frame (the other two are social and ecological) and it can be defined as the ability of an economic system to undergo continuous maintenance and renewal in order to achieve system objectives (Martin and Schouten, 2012).

Sustainable Development Framework

The link between tourism and sustainable economic development is evident in terms of the income multiplier effect, friendliness with ecosystem, employment and infrastructural and environmental development (Eneji et al, 2016). Essentially, the dynamics of the tourism industry involves assets which are not used up in the course of production. Such assets include rocks, plateaus, festivals, parks and gardens amongst others. Unlike the extractive industries, tourism entails multi- dimensional investments in physical infrastructure, environment, human capital and institutions in order to produce a service or experience that is easily renewable (Bankole, 2002). As such tourism fits into an avenue through which the goals of sustainable economic development can be achieved. Tourism does not also stress available resources in the long term. Ladan (2003) asserted that tourism is by nature a sum of relationships, phenomena and experiences arising from the travel of and stay of non- residents, in so far as permanent residence is excluded. As such tourism is sustainable because it does not include a deterioration of resource base.

Tourism in Nigeria

As noted earlier, while tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world, its potentials have not been fully realized in Nigeria. Although, much has been recommended in terms of the utilization of tourism as a tool for job creation, poverty alleviation, fostering peace and tolerance and economic development, current realities sharply differ from these recommendations. According to Yusuff and Akinde (2015), organized tourism in Nigeria dates back to 1962 with the establishment of the Nigeria Tourist Association followed by the creation of the Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB) in 1976. The ineffectiveness of the NTB prompted the creation in 1992 of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) and the design of the National Tourism Development Masterplan in 2006. WTTC (2014) reported that tourism contributed 3.2% of GDP in 2013 and this is forecasted to rise by 6.1% per annum till 2024.

In Nigeria, the tourism sector revolves around a number of destinations, festivals and activities. Examples of such destinations include the Yankari Game Reserve, The Obudu Cattle Ranch, The Old Oyo National Park, The Ikogosi Warm Springs, The Erin- Ijesha Waterfalls, The Afikpo Caves and the Bar Beach among others. According to Eneji et al (2016), the country is also home to a number of festivals which draw significant number of tourists and international visitors into the country, these include the Osun- Oshogbo festivals, the Oranmiyan Day, Olojo festival, Argungu Fishing Festival, Eyo Masquerades and Carnivals (Lagos, Abuja and Calabar). Olukesusi (1999) contended that Nigeria has abundant tourism resources including old cities and towns and the culture of people inhabiting them. Adebayo et al (2017) estimated that there are about 101 major tourist destinations in Nigeria. However, despite the abundance of these resources, the country alongside other African countries ranked lowest in terms of daily receipts value from tourism as shown in the table below;

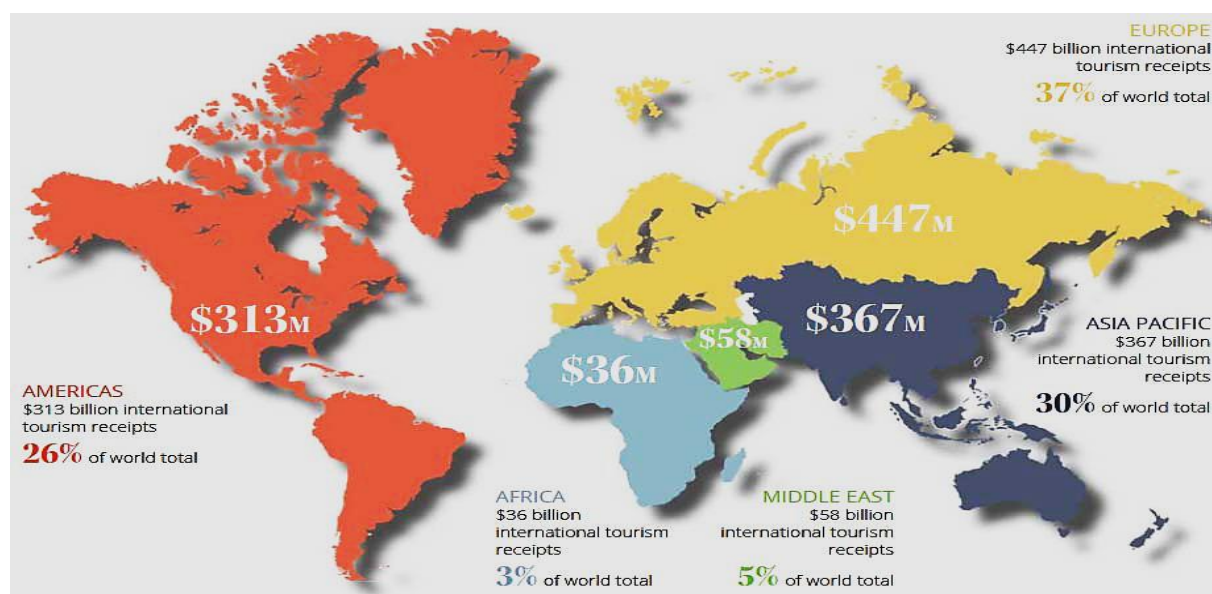


Figure 2: Daily Receipts Value (in US\$) from Tourism Per Continent (2018)

Source: ICAO (2018)

A key indicator that has demonstrated the trend in the Nigerian tourism industry is the level of international tourist arrivals in Nigeria. Yusuff and Akinde (2015) reported that international tourist arrivals rose from 850, 000 in 2001 to about 1.55 million in 2010 before the Boko Haram insurgency in the Northern and North- Eastern part of Nigeria caused a decline to 486,000 in 2012. The decline in international tourist arrivals have also being attributed to poor tourism promotions, insecurity, inadequate infrastructure and low business confidence index in the country's travel & tourism sector Bello, Y. O., Bello, M. B. and Raja, N. R. Y. (2014). Mejabi (2015) also noted that while a significant number of the tourist attractions in the country are in the rural and semi- urban areas, such areas emphatically lack the supportive infrastructure required for a vibrant tourism sector. These factors combined with ineffectual government policies, marked over- dependence on oil and low levels of capital investment in the tourism sector have also contributed to the erratic records of the tourism sector over the years. The table below shows the trend of economic contributions of tourism to the Nigerian economy between 2000 and 2016.

Table 3: Economic Contributions of Tourism to the Nigerian Economy: 2000- 2016

Year	Contribution to GDP (billions)	Contribution to GDP (%)	Total Visitor Exports (billions)	Share of exports (%)	Contribution to Employment (0000)	Contribution to Employment (%)
2000	209.1	4.40	18.92	0.70	1,643	3.80
2001	219.56	4.40	18.69	0.80	1,700	3.90
2002	356.95	5.00	30.87	1.20	1,960	4.30
2003	379.5	4.30	7.50	0.20	1,773	3.70
2004	652.96	5.50	6.51	0.10	2,349	4.80
2005	832.69	5.60	18.25	0.30	2,445	4.90



Year	Contribution to GDP (billions)	Contribution to GDP (%)	Total Visitor Exports (billions)	Share of exports (%)	Contribution to Employment (0000)	Contribution to Employment (%)
2006	494.11	2.60	26.89	0.30	1,209	2.30
2007	879.29	4.10	42.40	0.60	1,988	3.60
2008	1870.4	5.40	159.0	1.10	2,616	4.40
2009	1686.9	4.40	172.2	1.50	2,266	3.80
2010	1315.8	2.90	149.8	0.80	1,583	2.40
2011	1291.2	2.80	129.8	0.60	1,595	2.50
2012	1460	2.90	109	0.60	1,779	2.50
2013	1559.5	3.10	107.1	0.70	1,836	2.70
2014	1589.6	3.10	106.2	0.70	1,811	2.70
2015	1579.1	3.15	110.1	0.67	1,845	2.72
2016	1765	3.10	109.7	0.72	1,876	2.65

Source: World Tourism Council (2018)

How Tourism Can Be Employed as Key to Sustainable National Economic Development

The position that tourism can be employed as a key to sustainable national economic development has been demonstrated in different countries. In order to fulfil the criteria of being amenable to sustainable development, a sector must demonstrate sustainable management. According to Aremu and Lawal (2018), this entails maximization of social and economic benefits to the local community and the environment as well as the minimization of negative impacts. The activities that tourism comprises of aligns with these criteria. According to Ndajiyia et al (2014) and Mejabi (2015), tourism ensures sustainable development within the context of providing local communities with income (mainly through payment for services rendered and revenue from the sales of local crafts). This is unlike the extractive industries which also provide local income but have the consequences of environmental degradation and pollution. In supporting this view, Ndajiyia et al (2014) further noted that the Tourism Income Multiplier (TIM) provides a model for ensuring sustainable economic development as it provides direct and indirect employment, encourages the inclusion of local communities in the development of their communities and necessitates the development of infrastructure in places where it is lacking and inadequate.

Tourism can also be employed as a key to sustainable national economic development because of the economic dynamism which it can potentially foster. Eneji et al (2016) noted that 92% of the tourism consumption in the country is domestic. Considering the large number of international tourists, there is a huge potential if these tourists can be attracted to the country. Bankole (2002) expressed that tapping this potential demand would increase the demand for local arts and crafts, lead to the creation of a vibrant tourist services sub- sector (through the employment of hoteliers, park rangers, tour guides, airport workers, hoteliers, caterers, taxi drivers and artists among others) and reduce the country's dependence on the indiscriminate harvesting of the ecosystem and wildlife for livelihood purposes. This is especially relevant in the rural and semi- urban areas where the majority of the country's major tourist destinations are located and where more than 70% of the local population is still engaged in labour intensive

and often marginally productive crop and livestock farming. The development of a vibrant tourism sector will lead to a shift of labour towards tourism services and hospitality and will consequentially necessitate a shift towards scientific farming systems which are more eco-friendly and help in contributing to sustainable economic development.

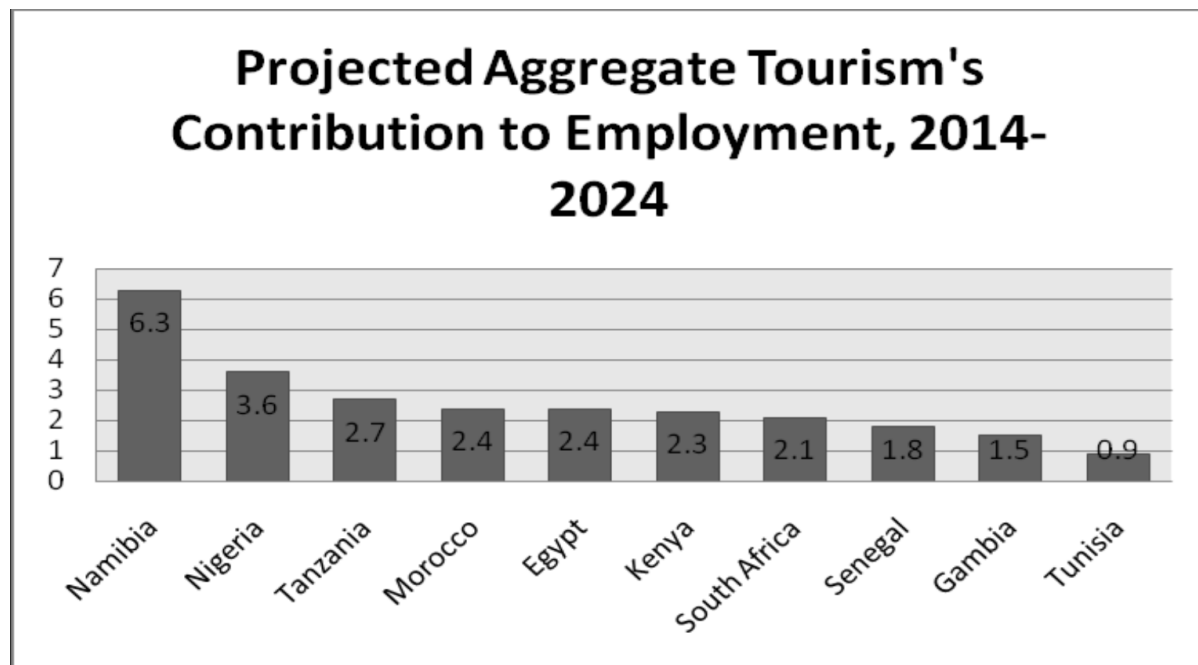


Figure 3: Projected Aggregate Tourism's Contribution to Employment among African Countries

Source: Eneji, M. A., Odey, F.A., and Bullus, M. L. (2016).

Another area through which tourism can be employed as a key to sustainable national economic development and one with particular relevance to Nigeria relates to the earning of foreign exchange. According to Ndajiya (2014), development and promotion of the tourism sector and removing the obstacles that have limited the growth of the sector will increase the influx of international tourists into the country and this will consequentially translate into significant foreign exchange earnings for the country. This model of earning foreign exchange is more sustainable when compared with a foreign exchange earning system based mainly on the export of crude- oil and other natural resources. Also, while the process of earning revenue through the export of crude oil have generated ripple effects which include environmental degradation, communal strife, pollution and terrorism, tourism always produce the opposite effect. Scowsill (2015) highlighted that tourism also contributes to sustainable economic development through 'poverty eradication, promotion of gender equality, environmental sustainability, trade and economic growth and fostering partnership for development'. While these effects are not the direct aims of tourism, they nonetheless lead to the creation of conditions that foster sustainable national economic development.

The quest for sustainable economic development has revealed that the goal of sustainability is more feasible and best realized when the community is involved (Lele, 1991). Tourism can



potentially serve as a key to achieving sustainable national economic development because it is mainly a communal activity as such local residents have a vested interest in ensuring that tourism projects succeed and are well managed. This is because of the perception that their livelihood is intertwined with the success of such projects or ventures. Enemuo and Oduntan (2012) asserted that tourism development has a significant effect on the sustainability of the socio-cultural lives of the host communities. Communities are more likely to adopt sustainable modes of livelihood if it has favourable impact on their lives. In these communities in particular and in the country generally, communal involvement in tourism is also spurred because the sector promotes peaceful co- existence at the local and global levels and tolerance- factors that are necessary for sustainable economic development.

Constraints on the Use of Tourism as a Key to Sustainable National Economic Development in Nigeria

While tourism offers tremendous potentials as a tool for sustainable national economic development, the sector has been continually constrained by a number of challenges. According to Aremu and Lawal (2018), a major challenge that has plagued the tourism sector is the over- reliance on oil as the major source of government revenue and the means of earning foreign exchange which has caused a systemic neglect of other non- oil sectors and leading to under- development in these sectors, tourism included. Enemuo and Oduntan (2012) expressed that the challenges constraining the growth of the tourism sector are inadequate finance, corruption and system- wide non- implementation of tourism policies.

Yusuff and Akinde (2015) asserted that the major challenges faced by the sector are the lack of adequate infrastructure, insecurity and low level of capital investment in the tourism sector of Nigeria, due to lack of interest by financial institutions to lend capital to tourism investors. It is important to note that while these factors are important as constraints faced by the system, insecurity as expressed in the recent waves of kidnapping and insurgencies has proved detrimental to the country's tourism sector with the government of some countries warning their citizens to avoid certain cities. While having a detrimental effect on current performance, this key challenge also has deleterious future consequences as it erodes international tourists' confidence in the country.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

This paper has demonstrated the importance of tourism to economic growth globally and with a focus on Nigeria. Tourism has been identified as the fastest growing sector in the world, ahead of finance and industry. The global trends in the contribution of tourism to GDP and employment were explored, with an African study showing that Nigeria has the least tourism-to- GDP and tourism-employment contributions. This has been traced to the effect of some challenging factors, nevertheless the ways in which tourism can be used as a key for sustainable economic development has been described. Adapting tourism to this purpose is dependent on implementing some of the recommendations below;

1. A key aspect of developing the tourism sector is finding practical solutions to the problem of insecurity. It is important to realize that tourism cannot develop in an environment rife with kidnappings, armed robbery and insurgency as this is anathema to international tourists and investors.



2. Secondly, attention should be focused on a public- private partnership (PPP) approach to infrastructural development. This is a more feasible towards meeting the infrastructure roads of the tourism sector as reliance on the government is difficult in the present era of budget constraints and political instability.
3. There is also the need for an integrated program for sustainable tourism development. A key component of this program will be institutional capacity building for stakeholders in the tourism sector and also for communities to ensure that tourist attractions are continually maintained as they are the key resource for the sector.
4. It is also important that a comprehensive and constantly updated tourism database be established. The importance of such database for tourism planning, policy implementation and promotion cannot be over- emphasized.
5. The future growth of tourism in the country is predicated on the activities of the private sector. It is therefore important that policies that increase the ease-of-doing-business in the sector be promoted so as to attract the much-needed private investment and participation into the sector.

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APPENDIX

Tables

Table 1: Country- wise contribution of tourism to GDP and employment (2014)

Table 2: Most visited countries by tourists in the world (2017)

Table 3: Economic contributions of tourism to the Nigerian economy: 2000- 2016

Figures

Figure 1: Infographic showing international tourist arrivals (2017) per continent

Figure 2: Daily Receipts Value (in US\$) from Tourism per Continent (2018)

Figure 3: Projected Aggregate Tourism's Contribution to Employment among African Countries