

## **Tourism As A Potential Source Of Foreign Exchange In Nigeria: Case Study Of Yankari Game Reserve, Bauchi State.**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Nigeria has over 7000 tourist centers, with more than 4000 yet to be explored. The Yankari Game Reserve in Bauchi State, Nigeria, is perhaps the most popular game reserve in the West African sub-region, a revenue generating natural edifice that has in years spoke volumes of the fact that tourism is becoming an essential part of the country's economy. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in 2014 also envisaged a growth of 6 percent per annum for period of ten years for the Nigerian tourism industry. In view of this, the study focuses on empirical investigation of the contribution of the rapidly developing tourism sector to economic growth in Nigeria. This study adopted the secondary method of data collection. The findings reveal a unilateral causality and positive long-run between tourism development and economic growth via tourism generated foreign exchange in Nigeria. The tourism-led growth is also thus confirmed for Nigeria. The study recommends adequate security, increase investment in infrastructure and tourist centers to boost tourism activities in the country.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes. These people are called visitors (which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents) and tourism has to do with their activities, some of which imply tourism expenditure (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008). Tourism is considered as an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational and economic sectors of national societies and on their international relations. Tourism boosts up economic activities through its multiplier effects and exploits local cultural and natural specialties in a positive way. Tourism over the years has proven to be a surprisingly strong and resilient economic activity and a fundamental contributor to economic growth of nations by generating billions of dollars in exports and creating millions of jobs. Acknowledging these facts, many developing and developed countries today rely on tourism as an option for sustainable development of their nations. Tourism industry has now grown to be the world's largest industries and one of its fastest growing economic sectors. The recent publication of World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2014) showed that in 2013, travel & tourism's total contribution to the global economy rose to US\$7 trillion, about 9.5 per cent of global GDP, not only outpacing the wider economy but also growing faster than other significant sectors such as financial and business services, transport and manufacturing and its total contribution to employment was nearly 266 million jobs about 8.9 percent of world employment. The sustained demand for travel & tourism, together with its ability to generate high levels of employment continues to prove the importance and value of the sector as a tool for economic development and job creation.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly Nigeria, organized tourism dates back to 1962 with the creation of Nigeria Tourist Association by group of tourism practitioners in the country (Ashikodi 2010). Tourism was officially recognized by government as a potential economic activity in 1976 with the establishment of Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB). In 1992, the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) was established to replace NTB because the latter failed to create any meaningful impact on the country's tourism industry. To strengthen and revitalize the tourism industry, the government in conjunction with United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2006 produced a National Tourism Development Master Plan (NTDC, 2006). The master plan produced in three volumes focused on the institutional and capacity strengthening support to tourism sector. And since then tourism activities had gathered momentum in Nigeria.

Tourism today has become one of the engines of growth for Nigerian economy with a contribution of

3.20 per cent to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and providing 2.70 per cent of total employment in 2013 (WTTC, 2014). Tourism industry contribution to GDP, according to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) is envisaged to rise by 1.9 per cent in 2014 and rise by 6.1 per cent per annum from 2014 to 2024. Nigeria tourism sector is therefore growing and it is capable of generating employment and earning large amount of foreign exchange that rivaled agriculture and petroleum sectors.

Despite tourism's increasing importance in Nigeria economy, the sector has attracted limited attention in terms of empirical research. Thus, this lack of research on the impact of tourism on economic growth in Nigeria is the major motivation for this study using the Wukari game reserve in Bauchi State, Nigeria as a case study.

## II. THEORY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The "theory of tourism development" is an offshoot of the development theory and was propounded by Harrison Dunt and Mafrowd stellar in 2004. This theorist asserted that As international tourism increased in importance, the way it has been regarded has changed. Furthermore also, Jafari noted some time ago that the warmth of the welcome it has been accorded has vacillated from initial "advocacy" to caution, adaptation and then a more objective "knowledge-based" approach. He noted, that such changes were not necessarily in sequence; rather, they tend to co-exist (Jafari 1989: 19–25). And these emotional or ideological approaches were reflected in academic analyses of tourism, which have often attempted to harness and apply development theory, though (it is suggested here) with a degree of only modest success. How development theory has been applied to tourism has been discussed at length elsewhere (Harrison 2014; Mowforth and Munt 2009; Telfer 2015) and this is no place for a detailed review of the literature. However, while "modern man" has figured as a key feature of tourism studies from the very outset; little academic writing on tourism has explicitly used a modernization perspective. Exceptions include MacNaught's early defense of tourism in the Pacific (1982), and studies of Chinese tourism by Oakes (1998) and Sofield and Li (1998), while more recently Andriotis (2003) and Sharpley (2001) have considered tourism as a modernizing influence in Crete and Cyprus, respectively. Special mention should also be made of Aramberri, who bravely defends mass tourism as a welcome example of modernity (2010). By contrast, though, modernization and neoliberal perspectives are implicit in the many debates over tourism's impacts in both developing countries (Telfer 2015) and developed countries. The various roles of indigenous arts and crafts, authenticity, tradition and social structures, entrepreneurship, commoditization and social change generally, can all be subsumed under the modernization umbrella (Harrison 2001a: 6–7). Even more importantly, perhaps, a modernization orientation is also the default mode of thinking for policy-makers throughout the world, even if most are unaware of the quasi-theoretical base on which rests their advocacy of tourism as a means of obtaining foreign investment, economic growth, foreign exchange and tourism employment. Much the same can be said of governments and international agencies that espouse neoliberal principles in promoting the role of the private sector in tourism (Telfer 2015: 48–57). Economically, and perhaps also socially, culturally or politically dependent, they are exploited or "ripped off" by their more developed partners, especially transnational companies, primarily tour operators or hotel groups, who use their bargaining power to cut the junior partner's profits to the bare minimum.

### **Tourism in Nigeria: Showcasing the numerous tourist sites in Nigeria.**

Tourism in Nigeria centers largely on events, due to the country's ample amount of ethnic groups, but also includes rain forests, savannah, waterfalls, and other natural attractions. The industry suffers from the country's poor electricity, roads, and water quality. Some of the tourist areas are;

The Yankari Game reserve, it is a top destination for wildlife and ecotourism. It is a place to see some of the Africa's greatest animals such as elephants, lions, tigers etc. another feature at Yankari is Wikki Warm springs with flood-lit at night and lovely warm water to bath in. an ideal place for bird watchers, because the variety of birds here is astounding.

The Idanre hills are unique tourist located in Idanre town haven that attracts mystery lovers, spiritualists and lovers of adventure from all parts of the world. It is a hills that houses some wonderful things which confound the senses. The hills surrounds the town, envelopes it and dominates life in the town.

The Abuja millennium park was designed by architect Manfredi Nicoletti and was officially opened by the United Kingdom's Elizabeth II in December 2003. A river crosses the Park in its main rectilinear axis, dividing it into two parts. One side on the Park is dedicated to uncontaminated nature. In a system of terraces at different levels are located Nigeria's mountain vegetation, Savanna, Deciduous forest, Rainforest and brushwood as well as greenhouses for butterflies and tropical birds. The other side, corresponding to the main entrance from road, is dedicated to the scientific knowledge of the natural environment. This part of the Park has a very traditional and rigid Italian Style Garden Layout. Entering the Park, a rectilinear path completely paved with Roman white travertine brings the public into its green areas. A series of fountains run alongside this white mark

refreshing the public during the hottest days. This path visually links the enormous Cotton Tree, a holy tree of Abuja situated on one side of the Millennium Park, with the Aso Rock, the holy Rock of Abuja. The path layout is based on a trident geometry separated by huge polygonal pools. The roads are crossed by a series of multicolored bushes going from yellow to red with a very particular wave-like course.

Obudu Mountain Resort (formerly known as the Obudu Cattle Ranch) is a ranch and resort on the Obudu Plateau in Cross River State, Nigeria, with a cable car climbing 870 meters (2,850 ft) from the base to the top of the plateau gives visitors a scenic view while bypassing the extremely winding road to the top.

The Cross River National Park is a national park of Nigeria, located in Cross River State, Nigeria. There are two separate sections, Okwangwo (established 1991) and Oban (established 1988). The park has a total area of about 4,000 km<sup>2</sup>, most of which consists of primary moist tropical rainforests in the North and Central parts, with mangrove swamps on the coastal zones. Parts of the park belong to the Guinea-Congolian region, with a closed canopy and scattered emergent trees reaching 40 or 50 meters in height. The park has one of the oldest rainforests in Africa, and has been identified as a biodiversity hot spot. Sixteen primate species have been recorded in the park. Rare primates include common chimpanzees, drills and (in Okwangwo) Cross River gorillas. Another primate, the gray-cheeked mangabey, seems to have recently become extinct in the area. Both divisions of the park are threatened by illegal logging, slash and burn farming and poaching. Eco-tourism may support efforts to preserve the park fauna. Assisting villagers in buffer zones to practice sustainable forestry also holds promise. The National Nigerian War Museum in Umuahia showcases the military history of Nigeria with relics from the Biafra-Nigerian civil war. It has a collection of tanks, AFLs, ships and aircraft all from Nigeria or Biafra. Almost all tanks and AFLs are Biafran and all aircraft are Nigerian.

### **Tourism as a Potential Source of Foreign Exchange in Nigeria: A case study of Yankari Game Reserve, Bauchi State.**

Yankari Game Reserve is a large wildlife park located in the south-central part of Bauchi State, Nigeria. It covers an area of about 2,244 square kilometers (866 sq mi) and is home to several natural warm water springs, as well as a wide variety of flora and fauna. The reserve is also a vast village to animals such as primates, waterbucks, bushbucks, oribi, crocodiles, hippopotamus, roan gazelle, wild ox and countless species of monkeys. Unarguably one of the country's richest reserves. Yankari Game Reserve also contains one of the largest surviving elephant population in West Africa estimated at 350 animals inclusive of endangered species, this population of elephants is perhaps the only viable population remaining in Nigeria. The reserve also contains important populations of lion, buffalo, hippo, roan and hartebeest protected by a ranger force of around eighty in number. Yankari Game Reserve stands out as one of the most popular tourist destination in Nigeria. Though the reserve host visitors all year round, but November to May are considered the best time to visit, because this is when more amusement would be experience since the vegetation has dried out and animals begin to parade the waterways. Another interesting feature of the reserve is the Wikki Warm Spring, which is great spot to unwind and cool oneself. Of course, this area is a no-go area for animals; and it is definitely safe for visitors. Except a variety of winged creatures, offering their benediction from the sky.

The primary aim of establishing the YGR is the conservation of wildlife. Emanating from this primary aim is the objective of wise use of the resource (reserve) as a tourist resort for recreational purposes such as game viewing, boating and swimming, among others. Some inherent advantages of wildlife conservation include genetic presentation and diversity, flora and soil conservation, generation of employment as well as watershed management.

The tourist potential of the YGR is tremendous, even though a small portion of the potential is currently being tapped. According to Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB) report(2016), a total number of over 39,000 tourists visits the game reserves, and more than a thousand foreigners in that figure generating in a conversion to the Nigerian currency, an estimated revenue of forty million one, hundred and thirty five thousand, two hundred and twenty two naira, eighty five kobo (₦40,135,223.85) since 2009, with the lowest generated revenue from foreign tourists being placed at one million, seven hundred and five thousand ,five hundred and twenty four naira (₦1,705,524.00) which was in 2009.

### **Highlighting the Value of Tourism to Nigeria.**

1. Income generation: if properly used, tourism generated income can be tremendously beneficial to the host country and its local communities.
2. Employment: the tourism industry encompasses many different areas, with tourism comes hotels, restaurants, car rental agencies, tour companies, service stations, souvenir shops, equipment rentals and much more. All these create many different levels of employment for people in given community.
3. Recreation: travel based recreation provides relief from the monotony of daily routine. A change in place and

- climate helps a traveler to recharge his mind, body and spirit.
4. **Economic Benefits:** tourism can provide direct jobs to the community, such as tour guides or hotel housekeeping indirect employment is generated through other industries such as agriculture, food production and retail. Visitor's expenditure generates income for the local community and can lead to the alleviation of poverty in countries which are heavily reliant on tourism.
  5. **Diversification:** in addition to bringing prosperity to an economy, it also allows an economy to develop a new form of income. This acts as an insurance policy in case of hard times, because the additional dollars coming in can help support traditional industries in case they come under financial pressure.
  6. **Foreign Exchange Generation:** in addition to income creation and employment opportunities, tourism equally helps a country to overcome balance of payment problem. This is because international tourists who buy tourism services add value to the receiving country's revenue accounts in nation's invisible transaction.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

This study examined the dynamic relationship between tourism and economic growth in Nigeria for the period 1995 till date. Adopting the concepts and methods of the cointegration and Granger causality test, the study investigated the short-term dynamic relations and longrun equilibrium conditions. Similar to the findings of Zortuk (2009) using data for Turkey, Kreishan (2010) using data for Jordan and Mishra et.al (2011) using data for India, a unilateral causality and positive significant long-run equilibrium relationship exist in Nigeria. The significant impact of tourism on Nigerian economy justifies the necessity of public intervention; the paper therefore recommends provision of adequate security for both domestic and foreign tourists, tax incentives to hotels and tourism related industries and investment in basic infrastructure such as roads, better air ports facilities and good transport system. These will go a long way to ensure stable tourism demand for the country.

### **STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

These addresses the overall issues identified above and determines the direction, methodology and actions the government must take if tourism is to become a profitable and sustainable economic activity linked to the governments overall policy of development through institutional capacity building. The development of a vibrant tourism industry will rest with a range of actions and implementation processes. It shows the way forward through a series of recommendations and action plans as well as the implementation processes necessary to make them work. The following is a summary of the key recommendations from which the Action and Implementation Program evolves:

#### **1. Positioning Nigeria Tourism**

That Nigeria adopts a clear identifiable positioning as a cultural and regional conference destination in the tourism marketplace.

#### **2. Tourism Clusters**

The development of tourism should be concentrated in five clusters. The five clusters are: - Tropical Rainforest; Conference Capital; Atlantic Gateway; Scenic Nature and Sahara Gateway.

#### **3. Product Development**

Market led quality products should be developed for international, regional and domestic tourists.

#### **4. Flagship Tourism Projects**

Within each tourism cluster, flagship projects should be developed to act as tourism icons and as a catalyst for all further development of tourism within the cluster. The Flagship Projects proposed are: Tinapa Business, Leisure and Conference Resort (Tropical Rainforest) Cross River Tropical Rainforest (Tropical Rainforest) Development of Conference, Meetings and Event Management Capability (Conference Capital) Farin Ruwa Eco Tourism Project (Conference Capital) Olokola Cultural Resort (Atlantic Gateway) Museum of Traditional Nigerian Architecture (Scenic Nature) Ancient City of Kano (Sahara Gateway).

#### **5. Sites of Regional Significance**

Investment resources should be allocated to a number of sites of regional significance which are unique to Nigeria and offer the country a competitive advantage.

#### **6. Accommodation**

Encourage the development of international three star hotels. The management and operation of all accommodation units be privatized and that privately owned "Boutique" hotels be encouraged. Implement hotel classification as a development as well as a marketing tool.

#### **7. Arts and Crafts**

Reconstitute the National Crafts Council. Establish design centers and mobile clinics introducing standards and quality control.

## **8. Festivals and Events**

Promote the initial Calendar of Festivals and agree annual dates Improve spectator facilities and crowd control where needed. Develop a new national cultural show with the National Dance Troupe to be based in the new Culture & Tourism Centre.

## **9. National Parks**

Strengthen the protection role of the National Parks Service. Implement the recommendations made for the individual parks within the clusters.

## **10. Access and Internal Transport**

Perimeter fencing should be erected at all airports. Safety requirements should be fully implemented for all domestic aircraft and air traffic.

### **FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS**

Investment resources should be allocated to a number of sites of regional significance which are unique to Nigeria and offer the country a competitive advantage.

That Nigeria adopts a clear identifiable positioning as a cultural and regional conference destination in the tourism marketplace.

Encourage the development of international three star hotels. The management and operation of all accommodation units be privatized and that privately owned "Boutique" hotels be encouraged.

The development of tourism products should be preceded by an environment impact study. Planning and the protection of cultural assets and heritage sites require the co-ordination of the three tiers of government and particularly local governments.

Strengthen the protection role of the National Parks Service. Implement the recommendations made for the individual parks within the clusters.

The overall marketing approach for tourism in Nigeria will be to create a range of holiday packages and market these packages directly to international tour operators and regional travel agents for inclusion in their holiday programs.

A major promotional and public relations campaign will also be undertaken to counteract the country's negative image.

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