

Research on the Strategies of Tourism Development in Benin

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Abstract— Tourists from all over the world are attracted to Africa for the safari tourism opportunities that the continent offers. According to a report of the World Bank, there are 48 countries in the region which are the most popular destinations for international tourists. This paper examines the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism offer in the Republic of Benin using a SWOT analysis. The results show that by implementing a policy which aims at developing infrastructure for tourism and reducing the costs of some outputs, the tourism could be a greater driver of the economy in this country as the number of tourists is expected to substantially grow and reach a level of 315,000 tourists by 2023.

Index Terms— Tourism; SWOT analysis, Time series model

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism in recent years has become a popular worldwide leisure activity. Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure, or business purposes. Society's different ways of lifestyle and background have been seen to motivate the minds of numerous people to seek out newness and experience different things. Tourism gives the opportunity for people to visit other countries and see the beauty of nature, different climate, and weather. Tourism plays an important role in the economy of countless countries. Tourism is a combination of economic and socio-cultural issues bringing in vast amounts of income via purchases for goods and services in export and import, creating openings for employment, generating tax revenue and stimulating transportation services, hospitality services, and entertainment settings. The tourism industry is also important in increasing the economic base through its association with the agricultural, industrial and service sectors. Its role has become particularly important in developing countries (Edgell, Delmstro, Smith & Swanson, 2008).

Benin is a developing country located in West Africa. It is not only one of the coastal states of the Gulf of Guinea but also a country of sub-Saharan Africa, which is thought to be "a hand out of the ocean". It is thus a small country fully included in the intertropical zone, between the parallels 6° 30' and 12° 30' of northern latitude with an estimated population of 11.78 million in 2019 up from 10.6 million in 2014. Even as a small, evolving country, sectors

such as tourism and trade have contributed to a substantial take-off of the Beninese economy. In 2017, the contribution of travel and tourism to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for Benin was 5.7%. However, arrivals of tourists and tourism receipts are negligible in view of the scale of this industry worldwide. The organization of cultural life in Benin has always suffered from historical constraints brought by successive stages of its political life: the external invasion and destruction of its people's values, the colonists for iconoclasts, devaluation, and paradoxically, the systematic looting and reinforcing the effect of cultural acculturation.

Also, the repeated change of the political system is often referred to as cultural mimicry towards a kind of alienation of people's internal values, but all of these successive changes of political regimes and the government have not reduced the efforts of Benin people to seek their own cultural, philosophical and spiritual forms of patriotism as pointed in the constitution of 11 December 1990. In these circumstances, the question of the development of heritage reflected in cultural policy and echoed by the state in the cultural charter and vision Alafia 2025.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the strategies used in the tourism system in Benin in order to propose useful suggestions to improve the tourism development. To this end, we perform a SWOT analysis of the current situation of tourism in Benin for us to figure out the potentialities susceptible to attract visitors and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the sector. In addition, we make a forecast of tourism demand using a robust time series analysis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition and importance of tourism

Tourism is a social and economic phenomenon that heavily influences contemporary society (Crick, 1996). Nowadays, the tourism industry can be considered as business behavior since it might influence the development of a local economy. Therefore, places are competing against each other to promote themselves as goods. The secret for a successful destination is to approach the right target market and to provide an appropriate combination of local tourism products and services (Buhalis, 2000). Pick's (2005) argues that there will be a battle of destinations branding in future marketing; destinations are arguably to become the tourism industry's biggest brands.

Over the past several decades, the tourism industry has experienced rapid growth and has emerged an important sector proving to be beneficial to the economy in terms of

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employment creation, foreign exchange earnings, government revenue, and reduction in poverty (Clancy, 1999). Besides these direct effects, the tourism industry has also made incredible indirect positive impacts on the economy through its contribution to the balance of payments, improvement of human living standards, rising government revenues through profits and taxes and the expansion of production of goods and services (Paramati, Alam, & Chen, 2016). Fayissa, Nsiah, and Tadesse (2011) provided empirical evidence of tourism industry contribution to the GDP growth and investment in infrastructure and human capital development of Latin American countries. Therefore, tourism development has been the engine of economic growth across the world (Tang & Tan, 2013).

The growth of tourism may lead to an increase in government revenues and household income through different channels like improvements in the balance of payments and additional employment. Tourism can support policymakers to foster economic growth through creating regional employment opportunities, supplying foreign exchange, and promoting transportation, construction, food/beverage and accommodation sectors. In addition, policy makers can use tourism as an instrument to decrease inequalities in regional welfare, because tourism leads to income transfer from developed countries to developing countries (Tugcu, 2014).

According to the (World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) 2017), this industry has had an impressive impact on the world economy. It created 292 million jobs and increased the global GDP by 10.2% in 2016. It is forecasted that the contribution of tourism industry on global GDP will increase and it will create 380 million jobs by 2027, which means 11% of the jobs in the world (Vellas, 1985). The economic impact of tourism and travel is also high because they are at the origin of the growth of investment in infrastructure, and they are a source of foreign exchange not subject to purchase obligations and payments are determined. Because of its diverse nature, tourism is affecting all areas of economic activity, it has a great influence on the other sectors, such as agriculture, construction, handicrafts, and trade and transport services. The tourism sector is the main consumer of local crafts, rural and urban, as well as for furniture and equipment. The effect of tourism does not stop here, it also affects the society. Because it is a means of communication and cultural exchange between the people in the country, especially in the mass market. Therefore, many countries, like Benin, regard this sector as a quick and easy solution to overcome their economic difficulties. To do this, they choose to use and promotion of resources in order to attract more tourists to this very competitive market. (Houdonou, 2006), it has more social benefits (water supply, electricity, communications systems, better roads, etc.), cultural and financial directly shared by members of the local communities.

B. Strategies of Tourism Development

Public policies often play a key role in developing a country's tourism industry (Lejárraga & Walkenhorst,

2013). As an important economic hub, the development of tourism has been a matter of concern from policymakers globally with Yu and Ko (2012) stating that if some Asian countries such as Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia are active in the development of tourism, it is because those countries have developed infrastructure for tourism and provided good communication links between tourists and tourism agencies as well as lowering costs and waiting time. For instance, some tourism agencies in Thailand have secured contracts with airlines to reduce ticket rates for foreign tourists so as to attract more of them (Buzinde & Yarnal, 2012). Early studies on how public policy affects tourism development have mainly focused on theoretical analysis. Pearce, 1998, Vernon et al., (2005) emphasize the role of government in promoting tourism development regarding institutional mode selection, policy formulation, and promotion of public and sector cooperation, respectively. Alipour and Kilic (2005) indicated that the failure of policy institutions has caused the difference in tourism development between two similar regions. Dredge (2006) shows that policy networks can shape tourism development by harnessing public-private partnerships. In general, these studies have confirmed that public policy affects tourism development. Today's tourists choose places that offer variety, and the tourism market segmentation reflects this desire for diversity. With limited resources, the tourism destination must focus on brand development, marketing strategy and other influencing factors (Konecnik and Gartner, 2007, Lumsdon, 1997, Pike, 2005). First, marketing strategy (including product, price, promotion and place, the 4 Ps) has been a major factor in tourism strategy planning. Tourism destination development considerations include the need for attractive tourist products and adjustments according to the product lifecycle, while price impacts profits and affects changes in sales, primarily in promotions that involve communicating with customers and promoting tourist buying behavior. Finally, the place (distribution) is the point of contacting that attracts tourists to revisit tourist destinations through various channels (Lumsdon, 1997, Witt and Moutinho, 1994).

For tourists, the tourism destination image is formed from the travel environment, including its natural resources, and will directly or indirectly affect tourist travel intentions (Jang et al., 2009, Pan et al., 2014). Based on the above, the tourism destination must consider travel motivation to analyze and strategically utilize its distinctive natural resources and to provide a safe and attractive travel environment to enhance tourist travel intentions. Therefore, marketing strategy, brand equity and travel are important factors in strategic tourism destination development.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To efficiently assess the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism sector in Benin, we first perform a SWOT analysis using primary and secondary data collected from literature review and from tourism agencies.

Then knowing that the tourism demand is the most influential and the most unpredictable variable of the study, we try to predict this variable by applying a robust time series analysis to data made up of the tourist’s arrivals in Benin from 1995 to 2017 with the aim of determining the demand function. First, we construct a table using data on the demand of tourism in Benin and from that point, we derive the demand function patterns such as the regular and irregular seasonality, as well as the trend. Finally, we run a simple linear regression of the deseasonalized function Y_t on the period t .

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities

	coordination between agencies, and between the private and the public sector
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Opportunities	constraints
- the growth of tourism in Africa - increased donor interest and investors to the sector highly competitive global context	- highly competitive global context - negative image of Africa

Source: national tourism policy in Benin - STI

Table (1): Swot analysis

Strength	Weaknesses
Tourism Products	
-product highly motivating: parks and reserves, lake village, the royal courts - interesting and diverse supporting products : historic buildings, lagoons, villages - very friendly people	- absence of proper beach products - low level of existing attractions
positioning on the tourist markets	
- news destination - security -competitive prices	- the destination is not known to the public - lack of promotion - absence / lack of responsiveness in Benin
The tourist facilities	
- convention facility size - business hotels in Cotonou	- lack of qualifications of hotels - transport infrastructure less responsive
The functioning of the sector	
- the dynamism and determination of tourism professionals	- lack of qualified employees - low organizational capacity -lack of cooperation and

2. Determination of tourism demand function

Table (2): Determination of

T	YEAR	Y _T DEMAND (,000)	MA(6)	CMA(6)	Y _T /CMA(6) ST, IT	ST	Y _T /ST DESEASONALIZE	T _T	FORECAST
1	1995	138				0.98	140.82	110.21	108.01
2	1996	143				0.88	162.50	115.97	102.05
3	1997	148				1.12	132.14	121.73	136.34
4	1998	152				1.16	131.03	127.49	147.89
5	1999	158				1.16	136.21	133.25	154.57
6	2000	163	150.33	147.67	1.10	1.1	148.18	139.01	152.91
7	2001	106	145.0	139.1	0.76	0.98	108.16	144.77	141.88
8	2002	72	133.2	135.4	0.53	0.88	81.82	150.53	132.47
9	2003	175	137.7	139.5	1.25	1.12	156.25	156.29	175.05
10	2004	174	141.3	142.8	1.22	1.16	150.00	1106.75	1283.83
11	2005	176	144.3	145.3	1.21	1.16	151.72	167.81	194.66
12	2006	175	146.33	153.33	1.14	1.1	159.09	173.57	190.93
13	2007	190	160.3	170.3	1.12	0.98	193.88	179.33	175.75
14	2008	191	180.2	180.6	1.06	0.88	217.05	185.10	162.88
15	2009	180	181.0	183.2	0.98	1.12	160.71	190.86	213.76
16	2010	200	185.3	188.2	1.06	1.16	172.41	196.62	228.07
17	2011	210	191.0	194.1	1.08	1.16	181.03	202.38	234.76
18	2012	212	197.17	199.67	1.06	1.1	192.73	208.14	228.95
19	2013	220	202.2	205.0	1.07	0.98	224.49	213.90	209.62
20	2014	225	207.8	214.1	1.05	0.88	255.68	219.66	193.30
21	2015	255	220.3	227.8	1.12	1.12	227.68	225.42	252.47
22	2016	290	235.3	242.8	1.19	1.16	250.00	231.18	268.17
23	2017	300	250.3	250.3	1.20	1.16	258.62	236.94	274.85
24	2018					1.1		242.70	266.97
25	2019					0.98		248.46	243.49
26	2020					0.88		254.22	223.71
27	2021					1.12		259.98	291.18
28	2022					1.16		265.74	308.26
29	2023					1.16		271.50	314.94

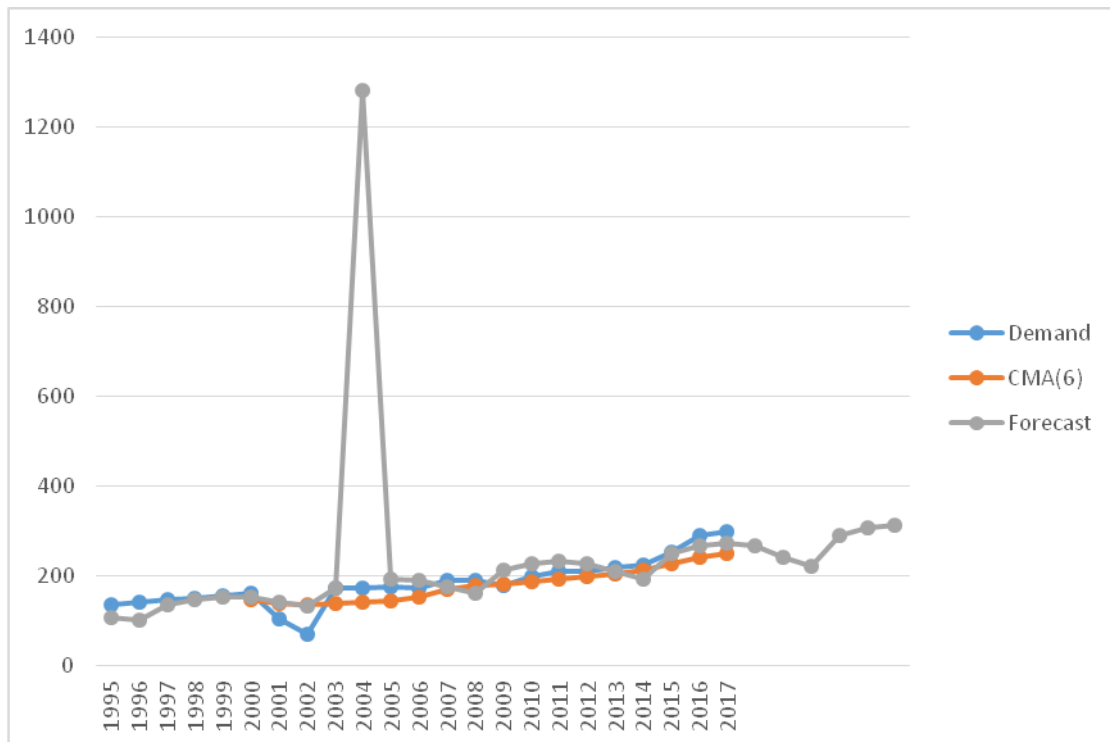


Fig (1): Time series plot of tourism demand

To determine tourism demand function, we make a simple linear regression of the variable Y_t (deseasonalize)

on the period t . The results are as followed:

SUMMARY OUTPUT						
<i>REGRESSION STATISTICS</i>						
MULTIPLE R	0.825892895					
R SQUARE	0.682099075					
ADJUSTED R SQUARE	0.666960935					
STANDARD ERROR	27.29932089					
OBSERVATIONS	23					
<i>ANOVA</i>						
	<i>DF</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>SIGNIFICANCE F</i>	
REGRESSION	1	33579.84	33579.84213	45.0583167	1.2144E-06	
RESIDUAL	21	15650.31	745.2529212			
TOTAL	22	49230.15				
	<i>COEFFICIENTS</i>	<i>STANDARD ERROR</i>	<i>T STAT</i>	<i>P-VALUE</i>	<i>LOWER 95%</i>	<i>UPPER 95%</i>
INTERCEPT	104.4502291	11.76632	8.877054478	1.4941E-08	79.9808352	128.9196
T	5.76035261	0.858147	6.712549194	1.2144E-06	3.97573864	7.544967

The **intercept** and the **t** are significant and prove that the model built upon the variables is consistent.

Then we got the following model:

$$y_t = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_t$$

$$y_t = 104.45 + 5.76x_t$$

Y_t is the demand function and X_t the corresponding period.

Using this function, we can accurately predict the tourism demand for any coming year. For example the year 2023 corresponds to the period 29, to find out how many tourists will be visiting Benin in 2023, we have:

$$y_{2023} = 104.45 + 5.76 \times 29 = 314.940$$

So, in 2023 there will be 314940 tourists who will be visiting Benin. Measures should be taken to a remarkable increase in the number of tourists in the coming years.

One of the disadvantages of tourism of Benin's accessibility and affordability of air travel is prohibitive.

The accessibility of the destination Benin is the lack of barriers to the use of "benign" first and to other routing plays a very important role in marketing strategy. It is therefore appropriate to establish the importance of different channels of distribution.

The destination of Benin "may be sold by its own sales force through direct contact with customers through advertising or through intermediaries such as travel agencies of the place.

It is available to the destination by informing the number of actors in the field of tourism. The information will have to increase quickly the attendance rate, because it will make the "benign" into more accessible

The intermediate (travel agencies, to...) they may enter the product into the channels they offer and to allow easy access to new markets, thus the Benin beyond traditional markets. It is therefore, to determine the target markets in which the product is to be marketed, and to that end we must focus on regional population and American black populations who want to know their culture of origin and the rest of the world interested in Benin.

The specific target markets and the sales and distribution system will be introduced, and the advantage of communicating that to target markets, and to the members of the distribution network.

The decisions relating to communication in the tourism industry are of great importance in terms of the investment needed.

The policy will aim to increase the demand for the products of a destination by drawing the attention of potential customers (tourists) the existence and characteristics of the "benign" destination, influence on the decision of the group to the destination.

In order to raise interest in the case of Benin "cultural awareness, and promote the use of the so-called control channel, as well as those of indispensable

The use of channels can result in a great effort on the advertising medium. In fact, it is about the destination Benin through advertisements and articles in newspapers and specialized theme and in magazines from around the

world.

In addition, we need to put advertisements in radio with a big audition to host countries. thus, the radio (radio France international, the BBC, and television (tv5), France (5), will have a positive impact on arrival. furthermore, in order to promote tourism products, the technology of information and communication are essential. for that reason, the national tourism administration of Benin should consider strengthening and updating the website of tourism in order to make the country more attractive and to provide visitors with a wide range of detailed information.

Advertising at point of sale by the giant posters, which will be located at the entrance to the city of Cotonou, the wagons at the airport, as well as through brochures, leaflets, catalogues, which will be available in travel agencies and distributed to foreign embassies, consulates and other representations of diplomatic of Benin to the outside

The strategies of "destination, Benin and developed, it would be necessary to ensure that they are actually in a marketing plan covering all the efforts of the organization to attract and satisfy the tourists set.

V. CONCLUSION

It is clear from the foregoing that the contribution of tourism to the economy of Benin, which has significant advantages in terms of tourism potential should be maximized. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the need for it to get out of the traditional patterns of development and design to suit the era of leisure and tourism industry. To achieve this, the public and private sectors must collaborate closely in order to establish a marketing strategy of the destination country. This strategy will eventually increase tourism arrivals and receipts in a more consistent performance of tourism service.

VI. Limitation of Study

It should be noted that this study has several limitations. The data used for this paper come from the archives of Benin National Agency of Tourism whose period are not recent, and it is not possible to make sector specific conclusions. Also, it is very difficult to access the data because Benin has problems of computerization of data.

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