

LINKING CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: THE WAY FORWARD FOR NIGERIA

ALLU, EVELYN L. A.¹ & AYENI, DORCAS A.²

¹Department of Architecture, University of Jos, Nigeria

²Department, of Architecture, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Sustainability has been adopted as a global agenda for all development, especially as regards human activities on the environment. While climate change is as a result of human activities on the environment, tourism is a product of the environment harnessed by man. Yet limited research activities exist on the subject in the Nigerian context. This study forms the first part of future studies and hence, this study is a review of the theoretical findings linking climate change and sustainable tourism. Firstly, earlier research efforts are presented and the theoretical findings suggest a strong link between climate change and sustainable tourism and also identify the way forward for promoting sustainable development. Finally, the study advocates for more awareness/ education on the subject matter for all stakeholders, research collaborations and the promotion of strategies for managing processes leading to the promotion of sustainable tourism development in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Climate Change, Nigeria, Sustainability, Tourism

INTRODUCTION

Climate change and tourism are too diverse words, however interrelated due to the impact on each other. The study conducted by Peeters (2007) concluded that, climate change impacts on tourism, tourism on the other hand also impact climate change. Shedding more light on this conception, Hernandez and Ryan (2011) argue that emissions from tourism activities including transport and accommodation cause global warming and at the same time, climate change results and threatens the loss of natural resources such as landscapes, water, biodiversity, coastlines that make a destination attractive and on which tourism depends. This goes further to suggests that whilst there is a contribution from tourism through emissions to carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses, climate change also determines tourists flow and demand due to climatic variables on the different destinations.

Defining climate change, Ijeomah and Aiyeloja (2009) stated that it is a collective pattern of expression of weather elements over time and this include temperature, rainfall, dew, humidity, wind, sunshine, mist and cloud. Similarly, Yahaya et al. (2011) refer to climate change as a change in weather conditions that result from direct or indirect human activities that alter the atmospheric composition of the earth leading to global warming. Tourism on the other hand involves the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual domicile environment for not more than one consecutive year for the purpose of leisure, business and other purposes not remunerated (Olorunfemi and Raheem, 2008; Ayeni, 2012). These definitions show that tourism is climate sensitive; and presently, virtually all the continents are experiencing a form of climate change or the other. These, as noted by Prideaux et al. (2009) includes

changes such as reduced snow fall, flooding, more intense fire, severe drought, retreating glaciers and other impacts globally. As such, all tourists' destinations must adapt to the impacts climate change, minimize actions and activities that contribute to the risk of increasing to; rapid rise in temperature, and increase in atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gasses (Scott et al., 2012; Ijeomah and Aiyeloja, 2009).

Nigeria, a country with huge tourism resources has paid little attention to tourism development but heavily dependent on crude oil as assert by Yahaya et al.(2011) and Ayeni (2012) is not exempted from the climate change affecting all regions globally (Allu, 2014). The greenhouse gas emission is still very minimal and mainly contributed by five main sectors made up of energy, industry, agriculture, land use change and waste.

Presently, tourism in Nigeria is still at its lowest ebb; with the government looking at diversifying the Nigerian economy through tourism and with current climatic challenges in Nigeria only suggest that this industry is also vulnerable to the climate change crisis. The objective of this study therefore, is to establish and raise awareness on the relationship between climate change and tourism to all stakeholders in Nigeria. Additionally, to also suggest the way forward that would minimize the impact of climate change on sustainable tourism development in Nigeria.

This study is the first part of a two parts study on the link between climate change and sustainable tourism in Nigeria. As such this study's methodology employed mainly the review of relevant documents that, address the focus of this study. Subsequent sections relate the undertaken reviews relating to the key areas of this study accordingly.

CLIMATE CHANGE IN NIGERIA

Climate Change is basically an unprecedented trend in climatic patterns over a period of time. The changing climate pattern is largely due to the negative human activities on the natural environment causing depletion on the ozone layer. The adverse impact on the physical environment by human activities has been termed climate change (IIPC, 2007; Odjubo, 2010). Also climate change has become a threat to the balance between the natural and the built environment globally (Pyke et al, 2011).

Studies have identified African is the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (IPCC, 2001; Parry et al, 2004; IPCC, 2007), and Nigeria is not an exception. As such, the impacts of climate change are felt across the entire country and include: drought/desertification, flash floods and flooding, increased temperature, land degradation, extreme weather events (storm, bush fires, storms etc), loss of biodiversity, rise in sea level and unpredictable weather patterns (Odjubo, 2010; Onyekuru and Marchart, 2012).

On the other hand, Nigeria has its fair share of blames regarding its negative human activities contributing towards to climate change. Such human activities include; gas flaring –causing land degradation, excessive tree cutting for fire wood and the lack of policy implementation (Sayne, 2011; Pat-Mbano and Alaka, 2012). The evidence and the manifestations of climate change impacts in Nigeria are becoming more frequent and it is feared that the trend would be continuous (National Adaptation Strategy and Plan of Action on Climate Change for Nigeria (NASPA-CCN), 2012). Hence, the assumptions that that the future climatic changes are going to be more extreme and catastrophic (IPCC, 2007; Amelung and Viner 2007). Yet, there seem to be unmatched strategic actions to tackle the problems of climate change by the Nigerian government (Onyekuru and Marchart, 2012). It is therefore, necessary for government to take proactive measures by adopting sustainable strategies that would mitigate and adapt to tackle these climatic challenges like the rest

of the world.

The global concern is now for every developmental stride at all levels of development to be sustainable. Hence, the adoption of Agenda 21 as the blue-print for sustainable development in all spheres of human activities globally (Ebohon, 2011). Also, in climate change related problems mitigation and adaptation are the two strategies employed to ensure that the impacts of climate change are tackled sustainably (Ayers and Huq, 2009). Notably, also is that the impacts of climate change affect every developmental sector and the tourism sector is not an exception.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

There have been debates by researchers since the Brundtland Report 'Our Common Future' in 1987 on sustainable development. The report defined it as development that meets the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs (WCED, 1987). This definition by the Brundtland Report has undergone quite a few alterations; while some see it as a wise use of resources for long term possibility, others are of the opinion that it is complex and complicated with so many opinions and ideas. Additionally, with the continual rise in world population, the future generation should not be left with little resources.

Consequently, the various debates have given rise to different definitions in various fields. In the field of tourism, sustainable tourism as defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organization is "*Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities*" (UNWTO, 2006). It is a process that meets the need of the present tourists and host communities while at the same time protects and enhances the needs of the future.

As highlighted by UNWTO (2006) sustainable tourism should be such that it is able on the long run to maintain tourist satisfaction, create awareness on sustainability issues, guarantee the tourist good experience and at the same time promote sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore, this can only be achieved through the practice of sustainable tourism principles as opined by UNWTO (2006); Ecological Tourism in Europe (2012), made up of ecological, social and economic principles. These principles include ecological processes through efficient use of tourism resources, conserving and preserving natural and cultural heritage as well as minimizing the negative impacts of tourism; social principle through sensitivity to local culture, promotion of visitor observation and participation as well as conserving their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values; and lastly the economical values by providing socio economic benefits to all stakeholders including employment and income earning opportunities as well as contributing to poverty alleviation. Thus, the above must be a continuous process and closely monitored in order to develop tourism sustainably avoid *socio-cultural, environmental and economic damage* as well as minimize ecological foot print (Ayeni and Ebohon, 2012; Long 2012).

Tourism is believed to be one of the fastest growing industry and of great economic benefit globally (Tunde, 2012) and will serve as a great source of economic diversification from crude oil in Nigeria (Ayeni, 2012). However, even with the vast tourism potentials available, many of the resources are yet to be harnessed; these are as a result of tourism policies as noted by Akinsola (2014) which are hampered by so many factors such as insecurity, low level of demand both local and international, insufficient tourism facilities and supporting infrastructure and negative perception of tourism. Olapade in Ayeni (2013) noted that many fascinating tourism destinations globally are able to attract tourists because of the availability of infrastructure, beautification and the creation of enabling environment which in the long run are able to

serve as avenue for employment and revenue generation. Other factors which have inhibited tourism development in Nigeria as noted by Akpan and Obang (2012) include poor electricity supply, deplorable condition of roads, religious intolerance, militancy, incessant bombings, and the kidnappings.

As previously mentioned, tourism policies in Nigeria is hampered by many factors and these as opined by the Federal Ministry of Environment (2010) threatens sustainable development and have discouraged tourism development. Also contributing to this is the rapid rate of urbanization where many rural areas with tourism potentials are gradually tending towards urban centres; leading to poor planning and uncoordinated development.

Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Environment (2010) argue that the uncoordinated development is making most of the destinations and the physical infrastructure extremely susceptible to climate change impacts which is a major challenge for any sustainable development especially in the built environment (Allu and Ebohon, 2015). Many of the tourists attractions are located along the coastal areas are also susceptible to sea level rise due to the impacts of climate change. Additionally, many tourism destinations like; hotels, sporting arenas, museums and other tourists sites are already been affected by the impacts of climate change in Nigeria. These impacts includes; flooding, deforestations, erosions, increased temperatures and wind events, (IPCC, 2007; and Kummert and Robert, 2012). Thus, climate change has a direct link with tourism and for its sustainable development.

IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

Tourism is an important economic sector globally. Tourism is one of top three largest economic sectors and the most climate dependant sector in the world (Amelung et al, 2007; Scott, et al, 2009). Furthermore, tourism has been observed to decline as a result of both natural and human-induced climate change (WTO, 2010). The nature of the impacts of climate on tourism is also dependant on the type of tourism and its location (Amelung et al, 2007).

Thomas et al. (2004) have opined that Africa's tourism is mainly biodiversity based and that the seasonal climatic changes have significantly affected the balance in biodiversity in Africa and they further suggested that this has led to the extinction of some indigenous species. Yet, research on the role of climatic factors on tourism is inadequate (Manfield et al, 2007). As such, the climatic changes the Africa's biodiversity has been uncontrollably been affected over the years as follows:

- Drop in the survival rate of animals (Midgley et al, 2002)
- Increased vulnerability of fauna and flora (Bond et al 2004)
- Increased salinity due to the rising sea level: causes loss of both fauna and flora species (Gitay et al. (2002),
- Shift in season: results in decreased faunas and birds colonies (Gitay et al, (2002),
- Increased temperatures and extreme weather: affects the flow of tourists visiting, breeding of marine creatures and migration patterns (Mings 1997; Gitay et al, 2002),
- Decreased rainfall: causing drought and desertification, loss of animals and their breeding (Ngugi et al, 2003; UNEP, 2003)

- Deforestation: causing forced animal migration (UNEP, 2003; Thomas et al, 2004).

The implication is that Africa would be losing the economic advantages of the industry due to climate change incidences on its tourism as was discussed above. However, the solution lays with the ability to integrate; natural environment and resources with the built environment and for communities to plan, protect and enhance their environment sustainably for the future. These thought were echoed in The World Summit on Sustainable Development which was held in 2002.

According to Altinay and Hussain (2005) the summit identified sustainable tourism as dealing with tourism and its associated infrastructures within the context of sustainable development in the following regard:

- Operate within natural capacities for the regeneration and future productivity of natural resources.
- Recognize the contribution that people and communities, customs and lifestyles, add to the tourism experience.
- Accept that these people must have an equitable share in the economic value to tourism, guided by the wishes of the local people and communities in host areas.

Furthermore, two years later another global action for climate change in the tourism industry held and was led by the UN and convened the Second International Conference on Climate Change and Tourism. This conference was held in Davos, Switzerland, 2007. At the end of the conference a declaration known as the Davos declaration (2007) states the following:

- Climate is a key resource for tourism and the sector is highly sensitive to the impacts of climate change and global warming, many elements of which are already being felt. It is estimated to contribute some 5% of global CO₂ emissions.
- Tourism - business and leisure - will continue to be a vital component of the global economy, an important contributor to the Millennium Development Goals and an integral, positive element in our society.
- Given tourism's importance in the global challenges of climate change and poverty reduction, there is a need to urgently adopt a range of policies which encourages truly sustainable tourism that reflects a "quadruple bottom line" of environmental, social, economic and climate responsiveness.
- The tourism sector must rapidly respond to climate change, within the evolving UN framework and progressively reduce its Greenhouse Gas (GHG) contribution if it is to grow in a sustainable manner; this will require action to:
 - mitigate its GHG emissions, derived especially from transport and accommodation activities;
 - adapt tourism businesses and destinations to changing climate conditions;
 - apply existing and new technology to improve energy efficiency;
- Secure financial resources to help poor regions and countries.

Climate change impacts affect all aspects of life and remained the most threatening global challenge to sustainable development. According to Jol (2010) one of the most vulnerable sectors to the impacts of climate change is the tourism sector. Also WTO (2010) further explains this vulnerability of the tourism sector to climate change as quoted below;

“The tourism sector is highly climate sensitive as climate defines the length and quality of tourism seasons, affects tourism operations and influences the environmental conditions that have potential for attracting and deterring visitors. The effects of a changing climate will have considerable impacts on tourism business and in some parts of the world these consequences are already increasingly evident.” (WTO, 2010 pp.27)

Given that Nigeria is already experiencing the negative impacts of climate change, the concern expressed by WTO (2010) as quoted above can be deduced to be true for Nigeria. WTO report (2010) also concluded that the practice of sustainable tourism would be a good tool to promote sustainable development and poverty alleviation. The Report furthermore observed that only 15 out of the 55 African countries have established some level of sustainable tourism. The observation made by the WTO report only goes to show that there is the need to seek and advance solutions towards promoting sustainable development through sustainable practices that would mitigate and adapt the tourism sector for the future.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND THE WAY FORWARD FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Reviews from the preceding sections have established the link between climate change and tourism. Also the negative impacts of climate change on tourism are no longer questionable. We have also shown that there are international concerns and as such the Davos declaration (2007) provided the premises for sustainable tourism operation as was enumerated in an earlier section. However, individual countries are expected to key into the international agenda. Hence, the study suggests the way forward for the Nigerian tourism sector.

It is important that the blue print of the Davos declaration is mainstreamed into the operational levels of tourism in Nigeria. Given the Nigerian scenario, the government needs to take proactive measures to overturn the challenges posed by the negative impacts of climate change and particularly in the tourism sector considered an economically valuable sector. More so that the Nigerian economy is in dire need of diversification.

Thus, appropriate policy formulation and firm decisions on the strategies for promoting sustainable development through sustainable tourism should be thought through. It is also necessary to have a monitoring, enforcement and evaluation system in place, in order to ensure sustainable implementation at all levels.

Collaborations between government agencies, stakeholders and communities would ensure actualization of sustainable applications. Through organized awareness campaigns and reward for good practice amongst tourism operators.

The potentials for sustainable tourism in Nigeria are enormous, therefore, inaction is not an option and as such all tourism operations within the country should be encouraged to operate sustainably for the good of all.

CONCLUSIONS

This study presented the link between climate change and sustainable tourism and highlighted on the way forward for sustainable development in the tourism sector for Nigeria. This archival discourse documents the challenges of climate change in Nigeria. The study also notes that, there is a high tourism potential in Nigeria. However, it is argued that the impacts of climate change if not addressed to minimize its impacts would hamper the global concern for achieving sustainable

development. This is especially for the tourism industry that may in the near future become the major contributor to the economy of Nigeria.

The study also suggests that mainstreaming the Devos Declaration into all developmental levels of tourism in Nigeria is necessary. Furthermore, in order to maintain a balance between minimizing the impacts of climate change and sustainable tourism, the government needs to formulate sustainable policies and its strict applications on all tourism development amongst all stakeholders.

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