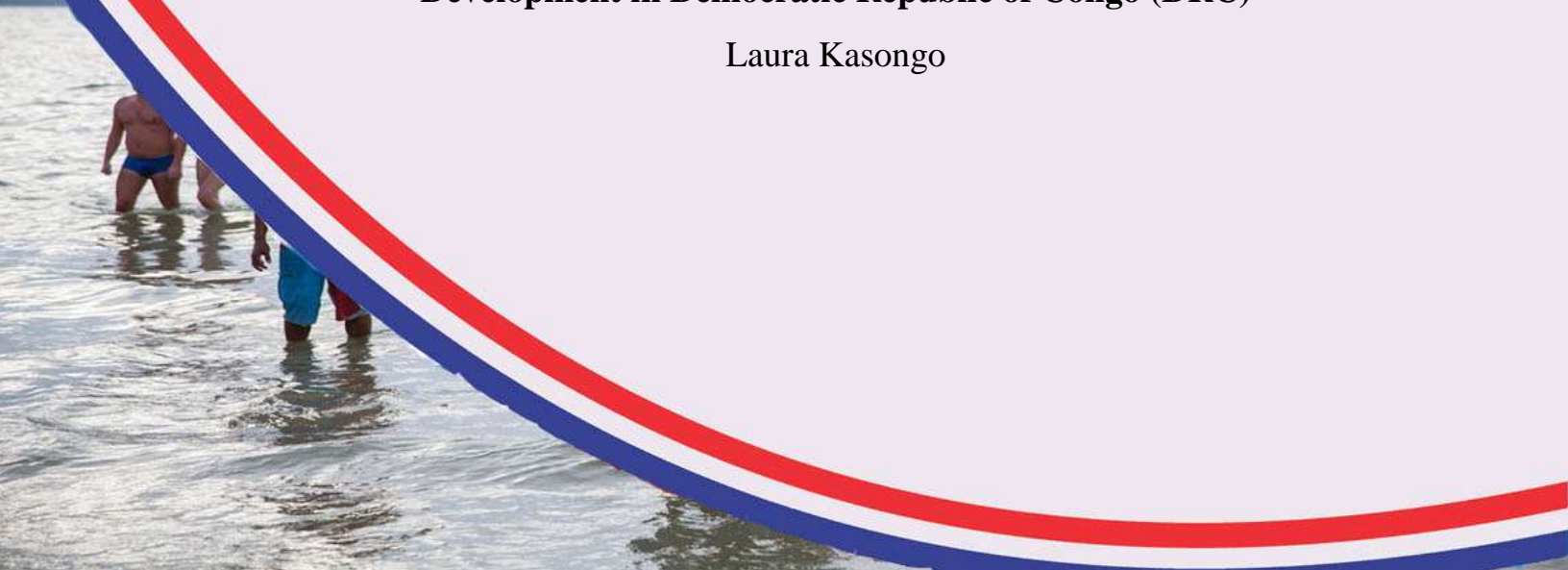


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**Impact of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry on Social Economic
Development in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

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Republic of Congo (DRC)**

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Abstract

Purpose: The study sought to analyze the impacts of the hospitality and tourism industry on social economic development in democratic republic of Congo (DRC).

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Findings: The results show that the greatest perceived socio-economic impacts of the hospitality sector are increased employment, improved living standards, greater tax revenues to State and local governments and growth in local retail sales. The hospitality industry generates substantial direct and indirect revenues for local and regional economies.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Social exchange theory and Otus theory may be used to anchor future studies in the tourism sector. The study results will also benefit other stakeholders such as the policy makers as well as researchers and scholars from different parts of the world. The top management of hospitality industries in the country will also use the study findings to improve tourism performance in all their activities and programs. The study recommends that the adoption of effective social protection development policies in the tourism and hospitality sector will help to improve efficiency in their major operations and activities.

Keywords: *Hospitality, Tourism, Industry, Social Economic Development*

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an asset that is useful in increasing the revenue of an economy. It refers to the activities which individuals engage in for the purposes of traveling and staying in places that are considered their unusual environment for recreation, business, and other reasons. It is also portrayed as an activity that maintains sustainable development for future generations while also acting as a tool for instilling coexistence (Jin, 2018). Its significance can be seen in the promotion of indirect growth of other aspects of the society, such as economic, regional, and patrimonial areas. It is illustrated as a process of change and continuous development of regions. In recent times, tourism is one of the largest industries that have contributed to the socio-economic growth of many countries especially countries where tourism is the mainstay of her economy, World Tourism Organization. Despite the fact that that industry is a vehicle for promoting cultural exchange that enhances international understanding and goodwill among the diverse peoples of the world, it is also a catalyst for enhancing many country destination employment opportunities, foreign exchange and infrastructural facilities (Saner, 2019). The development of tourism as a critical sector of the economy has gradually assumed a center stage in the economic agenda of most nations of the world. In the past few decades, international attention on tourism as a critical sector of the economy has greatly increased. This is in view of its capacity to quickly stimulate income growth, generate foreign exchange and contribute to domestic earnings of government through fees and taxes. Tourism has always been regarded as a means of economic modernization, but has not been seriously considered as a means of social and cultural modernization (MC Neill, 2018). The concept of socio-economic modernization emphasizes improvements in various indicators, including improvement in living conditions and the quality of life and well-being of populations. Tourism has recently been assumed as the world largest employer of labor and safest of all the industries with regards to atmospheric pollution.

Tourism has been describing by Cross as an industry of globalization which has witnessed people of different nations. As this happens, new friendships are established, interpretation of cultural differences resulting in greater tolerance occur, and global diversities are better appreciated and understood (Qian, 2017). Thus, the emergence of a synthetic global culture has been largely predicted since 1956 to become a reality. Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is located in Central Africa and is the largest French-speaking country in the continent. The country is known for its size, being the second largest country in the continent after Algeria. It is known for its abundance in natural resources endowed with Avast land of tourist attraction which visitors will find it triggering and captivating. Resources such as beautiful climate with good sunshine, pleasant beach fronts, cultural values and historic potentials abound (Etambakonga, 2020). The outbreak of conflicts and wars in the 1990s, however, led to the widespread looting of resources. As a post-conflict country, DRC is still undergoing recovery and reconstruction efforts. Only recently has the country's vast deposits of natural resources been contributing in economic development and peace building within the Central African region. DRC majorly exports refined copper, diamonds, crude petroleum, and cobalt. Recently, international organizations have been recognizing tourism as a potential factor in driving inclusive growth and economic development in the African region. Tourism in Africa accounts for about 8.5% of the GDP, 7% of international trade, 30% of trade in services and 7% of total exports of goods and services to developing countries According to

(UNTWO 2017), the travel and tourism industry had a growth rate of approximately 4% for eight years and 393 million people travelled abroad between 2008 and 2017 (Badibanga, 2020). With such development, the international community has recognized tourism as a solution to reduce poverty in developing countries by using it to structurally transform economies through creating new jobs and increasing exports (UNWTO. 2017). Thus, tourism is a topic that is of utmost importance in a developing country like the DRC.

Statement of the Problem

Although tourism plays an important role in the economy of some countries, tourism in Africa continent is yet to reach its full economic maturity. It has been observed that tourism in Congo still suffers from neglect because the local, state and federal governments of Congo are still indifferent to tourism development despite the preferred status accorded the sector. Based on this, Congo as a country has several potentials that have not been given attention. Congo is a country endowed with Avast land of tourist attraction which visitors will find it triggering and captivating. Resources such as beautiful climate with good sunshine, pleasant beach fronts, cultural values and historic potentials abound; but for varied reasons, these potentials are neither fully exploited nor turned to good advantage. Various tourist attractions and most species of flora and fauna adapted to the state are threatened notwithstanding their economic importance. Few of these sites have only being are creation center with array of flora, fauna and tourism features that have been neglected; while most are yet to be discovered and developed. However, trade and tourism in DRC still face many challenges. The decades of instability and violence in the country led to poor economic management and infrastructure, arbitrary taxation, marginal enforcement of property rights, and the weak rule of law. Such are critical obstacles in developing a conducive business environment for trade. In terms of tourism, armed conflicts, inadequate infrastructure and management and poor communication and financial services hinder tourists from traveling to the country.

Theoretical Review

This Study will benefit from the social exchange theory which was proposed by George Homans (1958) and the Otus theory by Slattery (2009)

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

This theory suggests that expressed support for tourism development is considered as a willingness to enter into an exchange, and residents select exchanges after assessing the benefits and costs. Attributes of tourism development impact namely: economic, social, culture and environment are valid and reliable. In this way, tourism differs markedly from agriculture and other rural activities. When tourism growth emerges from a carefully designed and implemented strategy, tourism is documented to contribute to generating foreign exchange earnings, creating employment and income, and stimulating domestic consumption. the impacts of destinations change over time the involvement of locals in. Developed nation's value standards that are superior to those of the developing nations. Beyond social exchange theory, there is a range of conceptual frameworks arising from social psychology that can be applied to the study of tourist-host relations. Tourism leads to economic development in host nations through job creation, the multiplier effect,

infrastructure development and improvement of business conditions. There are different types of visitors at different times. Different factors lead to the successful development of tourism in rural areas in different stages of development. tourism and the satisfaction with material well-being, and the relationship between the social impact of tourism and the satisfaction with community well-being were strongest among residents in communities characterized to be in the maturity stage of tourism development. This theory represents an effort to conceptualize tourism and development, and their interlinking features, within the broad geographical perspective. Tourism destination control increases potential growth through external stakeholder support which is important. development in regions.

The Otus Theory

Otus theory stipulates that there is a positive relationship between the contribution of service business to GDP and the demand of domestic leisure for hotels. The structural balance of an economy and the economic policies that influence its development are shown to be determinants of the volume and structure of hotel supply. Similarly, these features of an economy are also shown to be determinants of the volumes of domestic hotel business and leisure demand. It stipulates that there is a positive relationship between the contribution of service business to GDP and the demand of domestic leisure for hotels. Additionally, the theory states that the greater the hotel supply in terms of size and structure, the greater the concentration of hotel in brands. Due to the changing environment and trends in the hospitality industry. The Otus theory is helpful in that it provides insights that in order for the hotels to operate and contribute to the GDP, there is a need to come up with a strategic direction that can address the changes in social economic developments.

Empirical Review

Ndeche (2021) conducted a study to evaluate the stakeholders' level of involvement and their influence on achieving sustainability tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County, Kenya. The research instruments used to collect primary data were structured questionnaires and interview schedules. Data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics where frequencies, mean and standard deviation were used; inferential statistics was also conducted which included correlation and regression analyses. The results were disseminated through qualitative description and use of visual tools like tables, bars and pie-charts. It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform policy on how stakeholders engagement influence tourism development in a destination, contribute to the knowledge gap and create room for further researches. The study found that stakeholders' level of involvement had significant positive relationship with sustainable tourism and hospitality industry ($p < .05$; $\beta = 1.023$). Based on these findings, the study concluded that it is important for the tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County to emphasize the role of different stakeholders for its sustainability.

Maingi (2019) conducted a study to examine how national governments address the problem of over tourism in East Africa and determines underlying principles and best practice in sustainable tourism certification, local governance and management in dealing with over tourism. To address the objectives, the researcher conducted an exploratory experience survey research design. The study examines the different articles in the subject area and interview findings of practitioner

respondents. Based on a review of the existing dimensions of over tourism, the effects of over tourism and local governance, the study sought to derive a holistic (systemic and integrated) perspective on the subject matter. The paper presents valuable evidence from industry practitioners on the effects of over tourism in East Africa by classifying the effects as psychological, physical, economic and socio-cultural. Further, the paper examines how East African governments address the problem of over tourism

Vitisia (2015) conducted a study to examine and find out the exact impact of travel advisories on the tourism industry in Kenya. The study was guided by the experience Kenya has had from 2000-2014. The study heavily relied on secondary data that was collected from publications, journals, Kenya National Bureau of statistics, and oral interviews of employees in tourist related businesses such as Hotels, Travel Agencies, Tour operators, Kenya Tourist board and conference organizers. From the findings of the study, it is concluded that travel advisories have adverse effects on the tourism industry and the economy of Kenya at large as tourists opt for other destinations resulting into reduced levels of employment and loss of income for many families.

Chege (2013) conducted a study to determine the main tourism attraction in Kibera slum, establish the perceptions of Kibera's slum dwellers, Kenya Tourism Board and Victoria Safaris in Kenya towards slum tourism, determine the benefits of slum tourism to Kibera slum dwellers, establish measures to be taken to promote slum tourism in Kibera and to determine the viability of slum tourism as a tourism product. The exploratory and descriptive survey research design was used. The target population of the study was 800,000 residents of Kibera slum who live in a total of 12 villages, 160 employees of Kenya tourism Board (KTB) and 38 employees of Victoria Safaris. The results of the study showed that slum tourism is a viable tourism product as majority of the respondents, 435 (92.2%), affirmed this. There was a strong liking for slum tourism across all categories as majority, 396 (83.9%), view it as beneficial to the slum residents in improving their living conditions. Poor understanding of slum tourism concept and lack of involvement of residents was the major challenge while lack of policy was the second major challenge. Observing=residents' life style and taking photographs were identified as major tourist activities" in Kibera slum while improvement of security and involvement

Muthuri (2013) conducted a study to understand reasons why local communities living around Meru National Park are not able to take part in tourism happening in their locality with a view to generating knowledge that could inform initiatives aimed at enhancing local community participation in tourism development. The research was designed as a cross-sectional descriptive study which employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Questionnaires, face to face interviews and photography of features relevant to the study objectives were employed as data collection methods. The findings were projected to have a far reaching impact in stimulating among other things, formulation of a Community-based tourism policy to provide a framework for encouraging and guiding local communities to access opportunities in tourism development and share in the benefits of tourism activities taking place within their community. Specifically, the study found out that for local people to benefit from tourism development in their neighborhood there is great need for aggressive awareness campaigns to educate the community on the importance of tourism as a viable economic option at the local level.

RESULTS

The results were grouped into various research gap categories namely, conceptual, geographical and contextual gaps.

Research Gaps

Conceptual Gaps

A conceptual gap is the missing gap of knowledge which is related to the role a variable play in an already existing body of knowledge and it is a sub-set of research gap. Ndeche (2021) conducted a study to evaluate the stakeholders' level of involvement and their influence on achieving sustainability tourism and hospitality industry in Kakamega County, Kenya. Maingi (2019) conducted a study to examines how national governments address the problem of over tourism in East Africa This two studies presented a conceptual gap since our study will impact of the hospitality and tourism industry on social economic development in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Geographical Gap and Contextual gaps

A geographical gap is the missing piece or pieces in the research literature, is the area that has not yet been explored or is under-explored. Vitisia (2015) conducted a study to examine and find out the exact impact of travel advisories on the tourism industry in Kenya. Chege (2013) conducted a study to determine the main tourism attraction in Kibera slum, establish the perceptions of Kibera's slum dwellers, Kenya Tourism Board and Victoria Safaris in Kenya. This two studies presented a geographical gap since our study was conducted in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study found out that the hospitality industry is one of the key contributors to the economic growth in the USA. The greatest perceived socio-economic impacts of the hospitality sector are increased employment, improved living standards, greater tax revenues to State and local governments and growth in local retail sales. The hospitality industry generates substantial direct and indirect revenues for local and regional economies. This study examined the impact of hospitality tourism and socio-economic development in Congo. With available increase in infrastructures, reduction in crime rate more opportunities will be opened for more investments in hospitality tourism in the area. This is evidenced from findings of this study that persons in the area have gainfully employed which contributed to their elevation of their standard of living, thereby, encouraging socio-economic development of the country.

Recommendations

Since the Social exchange theory and Otus theory were useful on giving insights on tourism and social economic development. The researcher recommends that the theories can be used in the future for future studies in the tourism sector.

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