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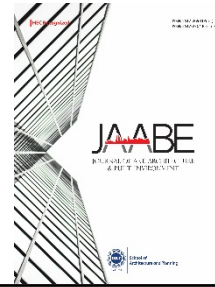
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Role of Architecture in Promoting Tourism for Economic Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Tourism involves visits to destinations of choice for recreation, medical, or business purposes. This industry, which is considered as one with a fast growth rate, could generate a huge amount of revenue and employment if it is properly planned and managed. Future development plans for tourism in line with architectural heritage would bring more insights and create interest for present as well as future generations. Nigeria is blessed with treasures of architecture that can people to travel to the cities for tourism. As such, the need arises for architecture to step in and respond to the diverse needs of tourists, be them cultural, medical, or landscape needs. Hence, this research explores the role of architecture in promoting tourism that furthers economic development through the built environment in Nigeria. It is based on a qualitative research method. Data was primarily obtained through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Relevant literature was also studied in a bid to elucidate useful information on the subject matter. The findings showed the indelible mark of architecture on tourism growth and development. Although, the availability of tourism infrastructure and the attractiveness of these attractions remain inadequate and below average. The current research, therefore, concludes that modern tourism is closely linked to architectural development which could turn tourism in Nigeria into a key driver of socioeconomic development and growth, if considered.

Keywords: architecture, infrastructure, growth, Nigerian economy, tourism

Introduction

In different parts of the world, tourism and its related activities are said to comprise the fastest developing industry, which grows annually at 4% in developed countries, such the UK, USA, Spain, France, and the Caribbean. African countries including Kenya, South Africa, and Morocco have seen a boost in their economy due to tourism related activities, as expressed by

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Ndajiya et al. (2014). Nigeria's financial system in the previous ten years showed signs and symptoms of a robust emerging market; however, it additionally exhibited common vulnerabilities of a resource-based economy. In 2014, the United Nations World Tourism agency (UNWTO) stated in its world barometer that tourism has proved to be a sturdy and resilient economic recreation that contributes to the monetary recovery of the host countries (United Nations World Tourism Organization [UNWTO], 2015).

The culture of Nigeria is rich and diverse, serving as a reason for tourism and its related activities to be a major avenue for generating foreign exchange in the economy. However, the Nigerian economy is mono-cultural, which drives the need for the tourism industry to be developed and further sustained. This compelled the Nigerian government to diversify the economy with the inauguration of the Nigerian Tourist Association in September 1962 (Ndajiya et al., 2014). The 1970s experienced a falling mono-cultural oil economy in Nigeria. Although, it has begun to rise since then, the nation still needs to develop its tourism industry due to the fact that fluctuations in the demand and price of oil is imminent in the international market. For the tourism industry to positively add to the well-being of Nigeria and her citizens, the Nigerian Tourist Board (NTB) was created (formerly the Nigerian Tourist Association (NTA). This board was further transformed by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism into the Nigerian Tourist Development Corporation (NTDC) by the virtue of Decree 81 of 1992 (Ndajiya et al., 2014). In the tourism sector, developed countries as noted by Ayeni (2015) account mostly for its great benefits, although developing countries have also begun to follow suit by tapping into the opportunities that tourism offers. Despite this, in Nigeria, tourism still remains an area that has not been fully explored, developed, or organised, resulting in a bad tourism infrastructure.

Infrastructure, on the other hand, is seen as essential in terms of services and facilities that a society needs in order for it to function effectively and efficiently. These, in turn, are key in determining the level of attractiveness of any tourist destination (Muratovski, 2012). Both architecture and tourism have been inter-linked for a while, where architecture has been regarded as majorly responsible for the crowd pull and tourism for helping architecture survive the test of time (Odoh et al., 2021). Muratovski (2012) opined that architecture is the foundation that drive economic growth and tourism. This

study is aimed at providing an overview of the impact of tourism on the economic development of Nigeria and the role architecture plays as a vital contributor in promoting tourism to the built environment.

Literature Review

Concept of Tourism

Generally, tourism furthers social, cultural and economic activities. It involves people moving around to destinations away from their usual day-to-day environment for business or pleasure (Nistoreanu & Hadad, [2020](#)). The history of tourism is of utmost importance. It began at the end of the 18th century, long before the creation of the word tourist. In the western world, the origin of tourism can be traced to ancient Greece and Rome due to their tradition of seasonal but organized travel with supporting infrastructure, sight-seeing, and an emphasis on experience. In the east, however, tourism existed mostly in form of pilgrimage to Mecca, which has always received visits for religious purposes. Indeed, each part of the world has their own history of tourism which remains a function of their culture, religion, or natural environment.

Tourism has been widely acknowledged by scholars as an activity that promotes growth in an economy, whether developed or developing, as postulated by the tourism-led growth hypothesis (Nistoreanu & Hadad, [2020](#)). According to Jalil et al. ([2013](#)), the tourism sector is an important business driver of the world economy, as this is evident by the fact that tourism and its related activities cause to develop infrastructure and also generate revenue and employment.

Economic Impact of Tourism

The science of economics deals with how a society manages scarce commodities. Tourism is a scarce commodity in the society and if poorly managed, it can affect the economy adversely. However, despite the scarce nature of tourism, it arguably remains one of the largest industries, worldwide (Amutha, [2011](#)). The United Nation World Tourism Organisation stated that tourism generates 5% of the global GDP. It also predicted that the number of international arrivals will reach up to 1.6 billion by the year 2020. However, this prediction was impacted adversely by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic that shook the entire world. Countries such as UAE owe their economic breakthrough to tourism. Statistics show that for every ten (10) individuals residing in Dubai, only 2 are citizens

while eight (8) are tourists (Al Saed et al., [2020](#)). The high sense of focus, emphasis, and attention on tourism as the power house of UAE's economic growth is a logical consequence of the above fact and brings positive influence to other aspects of the country's economic growth. Al Saed et al. ([2020](#)) further stated that in 2018 figures from the Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing in Dubai showed that 15.92 million international tourists visited Dubai. It comprised an average of 3.5 visitors per night, giving the economy a 2.1% rise in GDP in the first nine months of the year. Over the years, tourism has been shown to be a vital tool used to bring about economic growth in a nation, with billions of dollars generated in terms of exports and job creation.

Tourism and Economic Development in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the government lagged behind in creating a strong statutory board until 1976, prior to which the private sector founded the Nigerian Tourism Association in 1962, that became a part of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1964. However, tourism in Nigeria gained proper recognition only in 1976 which led to the formation of the Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB) (Yusuff & Akinde, [2015](#)), when the government was saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that the tourism industry is made an official sector for driving the nation's economy. Consequently, in 1990, the National Tourism Policy was formulated and adopted. Over the last forty years, however, several tourism programmes, such as wildlife conservation, as well as museum and archaeological site preservation, have been put in place both by the federal government and state governments. However, due to political instability and military dictatorship, tourism was largely neglected (Oloidi, [2019](#)). In 2005, the Federal Government of Nigeria, in collaboration with the UNWTO, facilitated the development of the Nigerian tourism master plan. The goal was to develop tourism that is sustainable in nature, taking advantage of the diversity in heritage, to promote both domestic and international tourism. In spite of all these initiatives, Nigeria's tourism industry has not made a significant economic impact (Ndajiya et al., [2014](#); UNWTO, [2015](#); Yusuff & Akinde, [2015](#)).

The land mass of Nigeria is about 365,000 square miles. The country has magnificent cultural and historical heritages, which remain critical for developing rural and urban tourism. With these serving as potentials, and Nigeria being the most populous African country, the nation has not fully tapped into these resources yet to develop its tourism sector. However,

according to experts, Ndajiya et al. (2014), Ayeni (2015), and Yusuff and Akinde (2015), the current position of Nigerian tourism can be summarized as follows:

1. Nigeria has a unique, untapped tourism goldmine that provides potential opportunities for investors.
2. Tourism in Nigeria functions largely below standard.
3. Compared to other African countries (say Tanzania for instance), Nigeria lags behind in tourism.
4. With succeeding governments, there has been a lack of a comprehensive and well-coordinated tourism agenda necessary for its development.
5. The ministry of tourism is often seen as secondary among government ministries.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2014) stated that the tourism sector made a contribution of 3.2% to the country's GDP and provided 2.7% of total employment in 2013. This percentage rose by 4.1% in 2014, during which trade and tourism contributed 3.6% of the total employment rate and also attracted a sum of N889.3bn in capital investment. These figures imply that the tourism industry is operational below par. Nigeria was ranked at 116, receiving only \$601,000,000. Suffice it to say that other African countries including Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, and South Africa were ranked higher than Nigeria. Furthermore, the WTTC projected that the tourism sector in Nigeria will experience 6% per annum growth between 2014 and 2024. Based on this projection, tourism in Nigeria is growing rapidly and has the ability to generate employment as well as a large foreign exchange as compared to other sectors of the economy (WTTC, 2014).

Tourism and Architecture

According to Olanusi et al. (2015), despite the close collaboration between the business sectors of architecture and tourism, no direct goal setting or strategic development has been directed towards relating tourism to architecture. Muratovski (2012) noted that to a certain degree, architecture serves as a symbol of identity and promotes the culture of a people or a place. This implies that the importance or value of the built environment for promoting tourism cannot be overemphasized. When it comes to placing value on a building, clients tend to base this on the cost of

construction, which remains inclusive of the cost of land, approval fees, design professionals' fees, as well as building materials and labour costs. However, design aesthetics, information, and culture are considered of a lesser value and are not included. Therefore, the real contribution of architecture to the economy remains unrecognised (Burke et al., [2016](#)). The fact remains that buildings (architecture) draw one's attention to their country of origin or location, such as the Burj Khalifa to Dubai, the Sydney Opera House to Australia, and the Eiffel Tower to Paris are but a few examples.

Impact of Architecture on Tourism Development

In one way or another, everyone comes in contact with the built environment every day. According to Farajirad and Eftekharian ([2012](#)), architecture forms a regular part of the daily life, since people occupy buildings and utilize both open and enclosed spaces. Architecture plays two important roles in tourism. Firstly, it serves the purpose of providing infrastructure. Secondly, it adds attraction to the cityscape of a place. The quality of a place, region, or country is positively impacted by its architecture as noted by Khaksar et al. ([2011](#)). In the same vein, Yildiz and Akbulut ([2013](#)) affirmed that both architecture and tourism have a close relationship since infrastructure and attraction complement each other, whereby opportunities are created that allow individuals to travel to destinations for a plethora of reasons, such as shopping, leisure, or historical reasons.

Architecture is one of the building blocks of tourism. Precisely, iconic architecture of a given place becomes the hallmark of its identity due to its perceived uniqueness (Scerri et al., [2016](#)). It is almost impossible to discuss tourism without architecture, as architecture forms a part of the platform upon which tourism is marketed and advertised. According to Maitland and Newman ([2009](#)), the pull-factors towards a tourist destination include the quality of the place, the culture of its people (food, dressing, habits, practices, beliefs), and its architecture. Iconic architecture (buildings, landmarks, monuments) distinguishes a place by its physical obstructiveness. The Sydney Opera House is a good example of iconic architecture contributing an estimated sum of AU\$ 640 yearly to the Australian economy.

Vitruvius, the Roman architect and theorist, postulated that good architecture should possess three (3) qualities: firmitas, utilitas, and venustas. These are popularly known today as firmness, utility, and beauty, respectively. Considering the delight or beauty of a building, otherwise known as its aesthetics, refers to how a building appears to its observers and it extends to the way the building is able to engage their mind. An example of an iconic building which makes the city easily identifiable is the Taj Mahal in India. Khaksar et al. (2011) opined that it is through architecture that traditional or indigenous construction or building materials and techniques are adopted, which showcase to the tourist the skills used in construction. Architecture and tourism creates opportunities that allow the past to continue to be told or seen into the present. One way this is achieved is through cultural events and urban renewal projects. Through the combination of modern technology with the traditional methods of architecture, aesthetically pleasing and environmentally friendly structures are created for tourists.

Research Method

The research method employed to make connections between architecture, tourism, and built environment for furthering economic growth was the qualitative method. Data was sourced primarily from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. In order to reflect the population of the nation in its entirety, participants were selected from Lagos. It is the former capital city and considered to be the economic and commercial hub (Lagos State Government, 2022) of the country. Moreover, the participants were also selected from Abuja, the current administrative and political capital. The respondents for the questionnaires were selected randomly and included built environment professionals and individuals who engaged in tourist activities. A 5-point Likert scale was used to record the answers to the questions which were centred on economic development in Nigeria through architecture and tourism. Two hundred (200) questionnaires were administered originally. A total of one hundred and seventy-two (172) were returned and deemed fit for analysis, giving an 86% response rate.

Interviews with 18 persons were conducted. The participants were representative of built environment professionals (architects), tourist companies, and tourists. A total of 4 predetermined questions were asked about the subject matter, with a series of follow up questions based on their responses. The interviews were transcribed and themes were derived

(including poor quality of infrastructure, inadequate tourism policies, economic growth, and poor representation), analysed, and triangulated against the findings. On the basis of content analysis, a connection was established between architecture, tourism, and economic development in Nigeria. The results were expressed in percentages and frequency regarding the contribution architecture makes in promoting tourism and determining its impact on the economic development of the nation. Secondary sources of data comprised a review of related literature available on tourism and architecture.

Data Analysis and Results

Tourism in Nigeria

The primary aim of the current study was to examine the role architecture could play in Nigerian tourism and how this would contribute to the development of its economy. In order to evaluate how tourism fares in promoting economic growth in Nigeria, the respondents were asked to state whether or not they have visited any tourist destination inside the country. Of the 172 respondents, 149 (86.6%) affirmed that they had visited, while 23 (13.4%) had not. Those who claimed to have visited tourist destinations were asked to rate the overall development of such sites. In this regard, 89 (51.7%) were of the opinion that development was either very poor or poor, that is, 30 (17.4%) and 59 (34.3% percent), respectively. While, 47 (27.3%) respondents rated development as average, 10 (5.8%) as good and 3 (1.75%) classified it as excellent. The respondents were also asked for their preferred tourism routes. In this regard, 90 (52.3%) favoured international tourism, while 59 (34.3%) preferred domestic tourism. Keeping in view the answers to the follow up questions, the findings from the interviews showed that a lack of government investment in the growth of the nation through tourism was a prevalent theme, occurring 16 times (88.8%). Hence, it was concluded that tourism policies need to be implemented. Furthermore, those who claimed to be involved in tourism related activities had reasons as to what attracted them to these various destinations. In this regard, 35 (20.3%) respondents said that they were interested in the architecture of the place, while 16 (9.3%) visited for medical reasons, 20 (11.6%) were tourists visiting due to aesthetically pleasing landscape, while 78 (45.3%) visited for cultural purposes.

Architecture in Tourism (Infrastructure)

Farajirad and Eftekharian (2012) postulated that architecture plays two key roles in tourism: serving as infrastructure and serving as a source of attraction. Investigating the infrastructural role, the respondents were asked if there was ample infrastructure available in the tourist sites visited by them. It was recorded that only 4 (2.3%) tourists said that the infrastructure provided was excellent, while 11 (6.4%) said that they were adequately available, and 19 (11%) said that they were available. Whereas, 23 (13.4%) respondents said that they were inadequately available, while 92 (53.4%) of them said that they were not available. The non-availability may be because many of the tourist destinations were not well-developed, as such they were not developed in terms of infrastructure. The respondents also rated the state of infrastructure on the sites visited and the results corroborated the previous responses to availability. The few facilities available were rated as very poor, poor, average, good, and excellent by 34 (19.8%), 52 (30.2%), 45 (26.2%), 11 (6.4%), and 7(4.1%) respondents, respectively.

The presence of architectural design and facilities were also examined. In this regard, 28 (16.3%) respondents said that those available were very poor, while 61 (35.5%) designated them as poor, 38 (22%) designated them as average, 17 (9.9%) designated them as good, and only 5 (2.9%) described the facilities provided as excellent. Thus, it can be summarised that the architectural design and facilities across many tourist destinations in Nigeria are nothing to write home about. The pattern 'poor quality of infrastructure' occurred 13 (72.2%) times during the interviews of the 18 respondents. Professionals involved in both the tourism and construction industry expressed their views that for tourism to boost the economy through infrastructure, facilities need to be brought to world standards. Furthermore, the contribution of architectural design to the landscape was also investigated. This was to ascertain whether blending architecture and the landscape successfully attracted tourists. In this regard, 36 (20.9%) said that it was very poor, while 68 (39.5%) described it as poor, 30 (17.4%) as average, 10 (5.8%) as good, and only 5 (2.9%) described it as excellent. This gives a broad view of why many of the destinations were not patronised by tourists.

Architecture in Tourism (Attractions)

It was established in the literature that architecture serves as the source of attraction or pull factor for users to visit tourist destinations. In a bid to ascertain this fact, the respondents were asked if there was any iconic architectural feature that attracted them in particular. In response, 3 (1.7%) respondents strongly agreed, 11 (6.4%) agreed, 21 (12.2%) neither agreed or disagreed, 49 (28.5%) disagreed, and 65 (37.8%) strongly disagreed. These figures show a deficiency of architecture in Nigerian tourist sites.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the pull factor. In response, 4 (2.3%) said that they were very satisfied, 8 (4.7%) were satisfied, 21 (12.2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 46 (26.7%) were dissatisfied, while 70 (40.7%) were very dissatisfied. These figures show that the majority expressed dissatisfaction with the level of attraction architecture was able to provide to tourist destinations. Furthermore, 16 (88.9%) respondents also mentioned the theme 'poor representation' during their interviews. As mentioned previously, on site architecture was not aesthetically pleasing, implying that more efforts need to be directed at improving it in terms of aesthetics as a pull factor for people to visit these destinations. Tourist companies expressed that the majority of their clients were attracted to destinations that showcased their culture through their city scape.

Discussion

The analysis revealed that tourist destinations in Nigeria are underdeveloped. This, in turn, does not garner much national or international patronage for these destinations. This finding also corroborates with literature which states that not much effort has been made to develop the tourism sector in Nigeria, as important features required for the development of tourism are lacking, especially through architecture. The analysis also revealed that despite the potential of tourism to bring about economic development, such potentials as providing infrastructure and adopting iconic architecture have not been fully utilised or even adequately realized. With this deficiency, it was revealed that visitors would rather travel to other countries where the connection between tourism and architecture is well-developed. Architecture not only adds to the image of a city or an environment, rather it further serves to preserve their history and culture. The current study showed that one of the reasons people visit a

destination is its architecture. Keeping in view the above finding, architecture in Nigeria should be developed and preserved in a bid to attract tourists. This would, in turn, make Nigeria a preferred choice with respect to tourist activities by showcasing the nation's culture and heritage, thereby fostering the future development of the country.

From the above analysis, it was determined that the availability of tourism infrastructure and the attractiveness of tourist destinations across Nigeria remains very low. Literature also revealed that various issues exist which affect tourism in Nigeria adversely. Moreover, strategies are not in place to define and implement tourism policies, which accounts for the main reason this industry remains underdeveloped. With the diverse culture existing in Nigeria, this is one avenue to be tapped into in order to showcase its heritage and identity. In order for the tourism sector in Nigeria to be recognized and put on the world map, there needs to be a careful identification and development of key areas in tourism that can boost the economy. Architecture is one such area. It was also revealed that architecture and tourism are interrelated. The results, therefore, reflected that the role of architecture is to portray the image and identity of a place. Furthermore, architecture is to blend with its environment, thus creating a symbol for it through aesthetics and infrastructure.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Tourism and architecture are interwoven and require conscientious efforts to boost them. As revealed by the current study, architecture is a reference to the emotional appeal of goods and services, both tangible and intangible, from the outer frame of the building envelop to the interior spaces that accommodate them. Architecture thereby helps drive tourism, which brings about economic growth and national development. As is evident, the mega architectural urbanism in Dubai transformed its desert landscape to attract international businesses, creative workers, tourists, and affluent users. However, in developing nations such as Nigeria that have a massive potential for tourism, this sector needs to be promoted and built to accommodate the necessary features, as this industry has the capacity to be a major player in the economic development of the country. Architecture and tourism should be interlinked, using the former to provide both infrastructure and attraction to serve as pull factors in boosting tourism in the country. One of the major reasons people engage in tourism is to experience culture; therefore, iconic architecture should be prevalent in the

Nigerian tourism space, showcasing the nation's culture and heritage and attracting more visitors both domestically and internationally, in turn generating more revenue.

Significantly, architecture (which is majorly below standard) needs to be improved at many of the Nigerian tourist destinations to attract users as well as to satisfy the experience of the visitors. Although, more efforts need to be channelled towards improving and developing tourist destinations. One way this can be harnessed is through its traditional architecture. With a significant input in infrastructural development indigenous to Nigeria, tourism has the potential to thrive in the country, bringing about economic development. Furthermore, the government has a significant role to play in implementing and developing the 2006 tourism master plan, thereby developing the tourism industry.

In the tourism industry, Nigeria falls behind in terms of its development and cannot be compared with other African nations such as Kenya and Ghana, thereby losing accruable revenue and job creation activities. However, jobs can be created if the government taps into all that tourism has to offer by creating built-up environments that enable commercial activities. This will further assist in ensuring socioeconomic progress. It is, therefore, recommended that Nigeria should take a practical cue and emulate countries such as Dubai to grow her tourism industry through the following measures:

1. Engaging the services of qualified and certified professionals including architects and engineers for the execution of all building and construction projects. These professionals possess the required training and skill to make projects iconic and distinctive.
2. The government should take the lead in investing in tourism development and implementing the already ratified 2006 tourism master plan. Keeping in view the experiences of Dubai, tourism remains a viable alternative for the mono-petroleum dependent economy of Nigeria.
3. Environmental protection and conservation should be the watch word of every citizen. Just as the government is to spearhead tourism development, the masses need to protect and conserve the heritage or historic environment right at their doorstep. A strong sense of commitment and ownership would be a driving force for the government and NGOs to invest in architecture and tourism.

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