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# ROLES OF ROAD TRANSPORT IN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

*Ohwofasa Onokohwomomo Wilson and Onah Henry Heelas*

## Abstract

*In recent time tourism has become an extremely popular global activity. As a service industry, tourism has numerous tangible and intangible elements. Among them are: transportation and accommodation. This study examined the roles of road transport in tourism development. Road Infrastructure is a fundamental requirement for tourism development. However, inadequacy of road infrastructure in terms of quality and density affects the tourism industry. The paper exploits qualitative research technique and review of literature to drive home its point. The paper concluded that, a good road transportation system will promote the tourism industry, integrate and open up places for development, thereby, boost revenue generation and earning of such an area and also lead to sustainable growth and development of a nation. The paper recommended among others the provision of good roads across the country and to link the rural and urban centres of the country in order to ensure safety and security of tourists.*

**Keywords: Tourism, Development, Transportation, Road and Role.**

## Introduction

Tourism is an economic activity that is concerned with the entry, stay and movement of foreigners inside and outside a certain country, city or a region. It has been recognized and accepted as the fastest growing sector of the global economy. United Nations World Tourism Organization (1999) explained that tourism is a catalyst to economic development of nations based on empirical evidences and not a mere political fallacy. In Nigeria, there is a new Federal Government policy thrust which recognizes the vast potential of the sub sector. With this, there are indications that there are more exciting days ahead for every tourists and the tourism industry.

Over the years, many tourism organizations in Nigeria are confronted with some challenges. For example, poor transportation, inadequate road infrastructure; provision and maintenance of portable water supply, sewages, electricity, inadequate finance/banking services, absence of effective motivating and enforcement and lack of adequate awareness. The paper examined roles of road transport in tourism development in Nigeria.

The perception of tourism as a new human activity generating multiple effects was slowly formed but the first attempts to define it emerged in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, (Boniface and Cooper, 1998). However, the need to define it arises, first, from a technical, statistical point of view and then from a conceptual perspective, so as to frame its scope and understand it's working. From then on, according to Beni (2005), definitions of tourism have grown in number, and there are many definitions as the number of authors discussing the topic, because tourism is practically associated with nearly all the sectors of human social activities. From a conceptual point of view, some authors emphasize the economic aspect, others social and cultural features, and while others, the anthropological elements, and others still, its geographic aspects (Tribe, 1997).

The paper focused on identifying the more common definitions that provide the necessary framework to tourism activities and draw the limits of tourism studies and their categorization.

On the basis of categorization, they include individual/group tourism, recreational or leisure tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism, health-tourism, sport tourism, conference tourism, etc. In a very emphatic approach, we might say that tourism is what visitors do, which, moreover, is implicit in the UNWTO definition when it identifies tourism as "The activity of persons travelling". Many researchers see tourism as a phenomenon, (Figuerola (1985); Tribe, (2006); and Papadopoulos, (1981). But for Bull, (1995), "tourism is neither a phenomenon nor even a simple set of industries" because it is a human activity which encompasses human behaviour, use of resource, and interaction with other people, economic and environments.

The first definition which endures to the tough and tick of time was that produced by Benuecker, (1965). According to him, tourism is "the set of all the phenomena, especially economic ones, produced by the arrival, stay and departure of travelers in a certain state or community and which, as a consequence, are directly linked to them". This definition identifies phenomenon such as economic ones as well as those of "transport production" and of "social life" and linked their interdependence. Leiper (1979) sees tourism as the system involving the discretionary travel and temporary stay of persons away from their usual place of residence for a night or more. In turn, in 1982, Mathienson and Wall, attempted a broader approach considering that tourism "is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their usual places of residence and work; the activities undertaken during the stay and the facilities created to cater for the needs of tourist. In the work of Mathienson and Wall, "facilities" implies transport infrastructure. Many other definitions could be cited.

The major aim of paper therefore, is to identify some of the most representative ones that bear credence to "transportation and travel". From the above definition, three elements of interest may be highlighted; they are; "tourism is a sum of relations and phenomena." "It requires a displacement of a location outside the usual residence;" it comprises anyone, whether resident or not, and any place of destination; i.e, domestic or inbound (International) tourism. This definition was adopted, according to WTO, (1999), and OMT, (1995) by the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (IASSET).

### **Roles of the Tourism Industry**

The role of tourism in sustainable development of a nation is no longer a debatable issue in national development agenda or strategies of the developing nations, Nigeria inclusive. Nigeria is a country where tourism resource potentials abound but has not been fully tapped and exploited. In an attempt to sum up the advantages or contributions of tourism to a country's development, the followings could be postulated:

Tourism is an important factor of economic development, because, it motivates the development of several sectors of the nation's economy, e.g. it boosts urbanization by the continuous growth of construction and renovation of tourist facilities (creating and improving infrastructure and tourist superstructure);

Tourism enhances the demand on agricultural production because of the increase in consumption. It enlarges the market for local goods, helps the state to earn more foreign exchange, thereby helping in poverty eradication.

Tourism makes a positive impact on employment in a country. In the effort to curb unemployment, the tourism industry has played an important role in most states, providing direct and indirect, formal and informal, skilled, unskilled and semi-skilled employment.

Such employment ranges from work in formal areas like rated hotels/5-star hotels and other means of accommodation, (UNECA, 2011).

Tourism provides alternative economic activities such as travel agencies, tourist guides/interpreters, handcraft/souvenir industry and shops as well as other selling places.

Tourism feeds the economic circuit in the country visited, thus, activating the multiple effects. Above all, tourism helps to create new town and improve the image of the country.

### **Roles of Transportation in Tourism Development**

Nigerians, over the years, have realized the danger of continuous dependence on oil-based economy without a definite policy made to avert this imminent danger that would unfold on the depletion of oil, (Onyeocha, Nnaji, Anyanwu, Ajoku, Opoola, Faith and Maduakolam, 2015). Though, over the years efforts have been made to increase the Nation's earning through increased solid mineral exploitation, it is still at the teething stage. Against this back-drop, a more virile and diversified economy that will create a paradigm shift is the development of the tourism industry sub-sector.

An articulated policy guideline that can stimulate individual and organisations both locally and internationally is to engage in the emerging market tourism potential. Nigeria with its enviable rich geographical natural resources and rich cultural heritage, offers a wide range of tourist potentials. These include extended and roomy flowing rivers, mountains and hills, ocean beaches, unique wildlife, vast tracts of unspoiled nature ranging from tropical forest, waterfalls, rapidly growing cities endowed with conducive climatic conditions. The country boasts of huge tourism potential that can be exploited to boost the nation's economic base. Other attractions include traditional ways of life preserved in local customs; rich and varied handicrafts/colourful products depicting native arts and life style; etc. In addition to this, Ojobor, (2008) observed that there are rich traditional festivals of various ethnic groups, historical edifices, and recreational parks that attract both local and international tourists are among the tourism potentials in Nigeria.

According to Anyeogu, (2012), these attractions are yet to be fully tapped or are being enjoyed by a few outsiders, who are rich visitors in quest of adventurous pleasure trips into the country or are inaccessible due to poor transportation infrastructure. The lack of transport infrastructure is observed as a militating factor against many prospective Nigeria-bound tourists both local and international. This impediment to the tourism sector has not been given adequate attention by past administrations and has impaired the development of the sector, and by extension the sustainable development of the nation, Nigeria.

Transport or transportation is the movement of people, animals and goods from one location to another. Transport forms a system of organization in which tourist has a distinct place. In this regard, transport and communication are considered as integral parts making the tourist travel

possible. It has been realized that the different modern modes of transportation such as road, rails and airways, play an important role in the total infrastructure for tourism (Robinson, 1976). The transport industry constitutes one of the most important segments for the production of tourism. Robinson, (1976) posits that "transport has been at once a cause and an effect of the growth of tourism, "and by extension promotes sustainable national growth and development. Improved transport infrastructure stimulates tourism and the growth of the tourism, industries in turn, stimulates transport. Research findings, according to Morteza, Malek, Ahreza and Abrofarakh, (2013) show that tourism can generate very fast returns on investment, and thus depends upon, among other things, the efficient roads, water-ways, rails and airways linkages. Tourism traffic gives the economic stability to the area whose economy mainly depends upon the tourists.

Very little has been done by scholars to analyze the overall relationship between tourism and transportation. Qualitatively, we can rightly assume that tourism cannot exist without transport. Being an element and displacement activity, transport is an integral part and determinant factor of tourism, thus, tourism is inconceivable without transport. Moreover, transport carries along with it the consumption of time which is an overriding factor in various types of tourism. This "time factor" plays an important role in tourism motivations and development.

The interdependence of tourism and transport in its entire various modes, is manifested in the fact that both are subject to similar external factors like political, economic/religious crises or even bad weather. For instance, road transport companies, airlines, hoteliers in various destination areas where people spent their holidays will be adversely affected by poor weather where, specifically, airways are a major mode of transportations.

According to studies, (Singh, 2008 and WTO, 1999) it was discovered that road transport among other modes forms a larger part of tourism budget. These studies revealed the interdependent role transport plays in the fate of tourism in those tourist-related areas of a nation. The economic development of any society is a complex process which depends on several interacting forces, perhaps one of the most important of these forces is the provision of adequate transport infrastructure, (Onokerhoraye (1977) cited in Onakomaiya, (1981).

Below are some identified roles of transport in the development of the tourism industry. In emphasizing the role of transportation in a nation's development, Omuinu, 2007, stated that transportation encourages city development, expansion and involvements through exchange of human/natural resources and socio-cultural activities. Transports form the circulatory system that connects cities, regions, communities, countries with each other. This role has been demonstrated in tourism industry, thus, bringing people and goods from the commercial nerve centres to the interior/rural settings and vice versa. Transportation has impacted positively on the expansion of tourism. Undoubtedly, the dualization, extension and expansion of major road network has greatly enhanced the tourist flow from tourist-generating centres to various destination areas because of the emergence of people of moderate means in the market of holiday making, picnics, excursion activities etc.

Transport is an integral part of the tourism industry. It is largely due to the improvement of transportation that tourism has expanded transportation links to the various destinations and

ferries. Tourism is all about travel and the role of transportation in its operation is vital. In area of accessibility, transport gets tourists to the destination, usually by its various modes from their various service regions. Social role, in this regard, the development of transportation system for tourism has a social impact on the social services of the destination as the transport modes facilitates access to healthcare, welfare, culture or artistic events, thus performing social services. In the area of economic growth and development, transport drives or slows economic growth. Transport facilitates major investment in tourism as efficient transportation systems attract investment at the destination such as the building of hotels and other ancillary services (Shopping Malls/Shoprite, Barbering Shops/Saloon, etc.)

Transport has enhanced the liberalization of tourism industry. Transport has led to the liberalization of some sectors of the tourism industry, such as God is Good Motors, Muyi Lines, Edegebe Motorsetc. These private transport companies have seen many players enter the sector and break the monopoly of the nation's transport sector as the only player in the transport business. These private players now play major part in the transportation of tourist and have led to an innovative spirit by players launching unique products and transportation of tourist to resort centres. Adequate transport facilities are essential for economic development of the tourist centres. Thus, transport is considered as infrastructure of the tourist industry, since transport and tourism are inseparable. Singh, (1975) expressed that, "transport is to tourism what veins and artereries are to the body system.

Therefore, the rapid growth of tourism in the contemporary world is not possible without the assistance of developed means of transportation. In this regard, if a destination has good transport facilities, it would certainly attract more tourists traffic and provide better opportunity to them, because easy accessibility is a key factor for the growth and development of tourists movements. The degree of accessibility created by adequate and efficient transport infrastructure enhances the level of attractiveness of particular site and with the increase of the accessibility and volume of tourist traffic, new area of attraction may be strengthened and sometimes new sites (destination) may be created. According to IUOTO, (1979), comfortable and efficient transport facilities are the sine qua non of the tourism industry.

## **Conclusion**

Tourism offers opportunity for a nation's development. Therefore, the role of transportation and infrastructural development in order to promote the tourism industry cannot be overemphasized. This paper has attempted to give various definitions of tourism as it relates to transportation and states that Tourism to Nigeria is a sub sector of industries and has abundant potentials for growth and can contribute to sustainable development of the country. The paper therefore concludes that there is a positive relationship between transportation and the economic growth of the tourism industry and by extension sustainable development of the nation. Thus "the more developed a country, the more developed the transport system," and subsequently the more developed the tourist industry.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the above conclusion, the study recommends that:

- Government should increase investment/funding of the urban transport/traffic through increasing subvention to urban transport managers in order to fast-track the growth of the



tourism industry.

- More research studies should be conducted so that the tourism potentials of the country are made public both to national and foreign tourists
- The urban transport planners and managers should identify alternative sources of funding of infrastructure in terms of good roads, expansion of railways, development of airports, provision and maintenance of basic amenities at picnic spots and other catering facilities in order to attract tourists both in and outside the country.
- It is essential to take real steps for the planning, promotion, development and marketing of tourism along with rebranding of the image of Nigeria within and outside the country, thus boosting the tourism industry.
- Tourism organizations, both the private and public, should be well equipped in crisis management and tourism contingency planning to deal effectively with such crisis and restore the crisis-damaged image of tourism destination.

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