# Challenges to International Tourism and the Prospect of Economic Diversification in Nigeria

*RASHEEDAT MUSA ONOZASI, DIMAS GARBA*

**Abstract**: *This study examines the challenges confronting international tourism and how they affect Nigeria's prospects for economic diversification between 2000 and 2024. The study argues that since the discovery of crude oil in the late 1950s, Nigeria's economy has shifted from a diversified economy to a monocultural economy, neglecting other economic sectors such as agriculture, mining, and tourism. However, few studies have systematically attempted to interrogate how the challenges confronting international tourism affect Nigeria's prospects for economic diversification using the tourism-led growth thesis. As a result, the study argues that although international tourism is a multipotential economic sector that can contribute to and influence the path to economic diversification due to its capacity for creating large-scale employment opportunities, for attracting foreign revenue and exchange earnings, and for increasing the GDP of the country as well as directing policies that support regional economic development, its potential is undermined by challenges such as insecurity and poor planning, among others. Using a qualitative descriptive research design and combining primary (KII) and secondary data sources to ensure analytical depth and triangulation, the study concludes that despite international tourism's vast economic potential for driving economic diversification in Nigeria, the major challenge facing it is the rentier character of the Nigerian state that depends on oil rents, leaving other sectors unproductive. It recommends that there be a need for the Nigerian government to show the political will to break away from oil rents towards investing in other sectors, including improving security governance that boosts the confidence of international tourists and taking strategic actions that market the country's tourism potential.*

**Keywords:** Economic Diversification, Economic Growth, International Tourism, Non-oil sectors, Nigeria

RASHEEDAT Musa Onozasi, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja
DIMAS Garba, Department of Political Science and International Relations, Nile University of Nigeria, Abuja

## Introduction

Since the discovery of crude oil in the late 1950s, Nigeria's economy shifted from a diversified economy to a monocultural economy. In this period, the Nigerian economy moved from agriculture, mining, and trade to crude oil exports (Esu & Udonwa, 2015). The implication of this was that employment, revenue and economic growth became affected. As a result, the Nigerian economy for several decades has been unable to ensure the country's development. The country continues to suffer from rising poverty, unemployment, inflation, poor industrialisation, limited foreign revenue earnings, and other challenges (Okonta et al., 2024). Accounting for this, scholars have raised the issue of poor economic diversification as the most significant challenge that has affected the country's economic progress. Similarly, Nigeria's lack of economic diversification has been traced to its over-reliance on crude oil rents in the 1970s that neglected agriculture and other essential sectors such as mining and tourism (Magaji et al., 2025). For example, in the 1960s, agriculture accounted for over 75 per cent of foreign revenue, approximately 70 per cent of GDP, and 75 per cent of national employment (Awe et al., 2023).

With the country's quest for economic diversification beyond crude oil, tourism has become a critical avenue towards Nigeria's economic revival and revitalisation (Dantong, 2024). To address this economic quagmire, scholars have identified tourism as a multipotential economic sector that can contribute and influence the path to economic diversification and recovery (Ndiomaluke et al., 2025). Nigeria is blessed with a rich natural and cultural ecosystem that places the country as one of the leading tourist destinations in Africa and the world (Uboegbulam, 2024). This advantage put Nigeria at an advantage for harnessing the economic value of international tourism. International tourism contributes to several key indicators that enhance economic growth and sustainable economic development (Solarin, Ulucak, & Erdogan, 2024). International tourism has the capacity to provide large-scale employment for the youth and women, attract foreign revenue and exchange earnings, and increase the GDP of the country as well as direct policies that support regional (economic) development in Nigeria. Despite international tourism's vast economic potential for driving economic diversification in Nigeria, the industry faces several challenges that undermine this prospect. Nigeria's tourism industry is encumbered with the problem of insecurity, limited infrastructure, bad roads, lack of standard, stable internet, electricity and other factors that support an enabling environment both in terms of policies and tourism promotion that elevate the industry (Egbo et al., 2025). Owing to this, this study argues that the potential vested in international tourism in Nigeria in realising and actualising the objective of economic diversification cannot be achieved without addressing the challenges that undermine the industry. However, the study argues that rentierism is the most challenging barrier to economic diversification in Nigeria and has undermined the strategic utilisation of international tourism (Kaya et al., 2019). As a result, Nigeria's prospect for economic diversification is hinged on its capacity to address the systemic, policy-related and infrastructural issues affecting international tourism, thereby ensuring the industry is suitable for attracting international tourists, safe for them and globally competitive, across both African and global markets. The study adopted the qualitative descriptive research design and collected data from primary sources through key informant interviews and complemented it using the secondary sources from journal articles, reports and newspaper publications. The data collected were analysed using thematic-content analysis that adopted relevant themes to situate the analysis.

## Conceptualising International Tourism and Economic Diversification

International tourism is a form of tourism different from local tourism (Gidebo, 2021). International tourism has been defined in various ways by scholars. However, Ghosh et al., (2017) contend that it encompasses all tourism receipts generated by visitors from abroad, including expenditure on food, drinks, lodging, transportation, entertainment, shopping, and international fares. The movement of people across national borders for either business or leisure purposes is called international tourism (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2022). Therefore, international tourism is any form of travel or leisure that takes place across the borders of countries. As a result, international tourism is described as a visitor economy, which refers to an economic activity powered by foreigners visiting a country for business or leisure (Kim et al., 2022).

On the other hand, economic diversification is an economic concept that is conceived in multidimensional ways. It is viewed as an economic strategy, as a process of stimulating economic growth, and as a means for driving production, among others (Uzonwanne, 2015; Tonuchi & Onyebuchi, 2019; Usman, 2022). The economic diversification of a country is linked to its economic activities in the primary, secondary, and service sectors, as they combine to drive growth in the gross domestic product (GDP). The primary, secondary, and service sectors encompass various economic activities, including mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism and hospitality, respectively (Delechat et al., 2024).

Economic diversification involves an economic transformation process that aims to reduce economic vulnerability to external shocks by shifting the economy from a single income source to multiple income sources (Okonta, Mobosi, & Nwokocha, 2024). Accordingly, Abdulrazaq and Lambe (2024) added that economic diversification is focused on enabling the transition of an economy from over-reliance on a single source of revenue to generating revenue from multiple sectors and markets. International tourism has been linked to economic diversification in developing and developed countries for achieving economic growth (Ogbuabor, Emeka & Ukwueze, 2025). The economic contribution of international tourism to economic diversification is multidimensional (Elgin & Elveren, 2024). As Chitadze (2019) noted, international tourism is seen as one of the most dynamic aspects of international trade. In promoting economic growth, Chitadze (2019:1) added that international tourism plays a lot of functions, such as: foreign exchange earnings, employment for the population, balance of payments, industrialisation, inflow of foreign capital and attraction for foreign investment. The above underscores the multifaceted relationship between international tourism and economic diversification, demonstrating its significant positive impacts on economic growth, revenue generation, employment, global competitiveness, and other crucial areas essential for driving economic progress.

## Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the challenges confronting international tourism and its prospects for economic diversification in Nigeria. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining primary and secondary data sources to ensure analytical depth and triangulation. Primary data were generated through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted between 2024 and 2025 with twelve purposively sampled respondents drawn from relevant stakeholder groups, including government officials in the Federal Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, academic experts in political science and international relations, and practitioners in Nigeria's tourism industry. Purposive sampling was adopted to ensure that participants possessed direct knowledge and experience relevant to the study's focus. The interviews were conducted in Abuja and analysed using thematic-content analysis. Secondary data were drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, and publications from organisations including the National Bureau of Statistics, the Central Bank of Nigeria, and UN Tourism. The integration of both sources enabled a comprehensive and corroborated assessment of the study's themes.

## Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored in the Tourism-Led Growth (TLG) hypothesis. In tourism economics, the TLGH is considered an essential theory that attempts to explain the relationship between tourism development and economic growth, particularly by measuring its impact through Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and GDP per capita (Chingarande & Saayman, 2018; Lin et al., 2019; Song & Wu, 2022). This theory argues that the tourism sector is a critical driver of economic growth (Roy & Medhekar, 2025). As a sector, tourism can contribute to the economic growth of a society through employment, infrastructural development, and the enhancement of foreign exchange earnings (Li et al., 2018; Sharpley, 2020). According to the TLGH, tourism serves as a catalyst for national economic expansion owing to its ability to boost GDP, promote international trade, and create conditions conducive to long-term social and economic growth (Chiu & Yeh, 2017; Song & Wu, 2022; Wong et al., 2024). Consequently, studies have found that international tourism development positively influences income generation, job creation, and foreign exchange earnings, which in turn produce favourable outcomes for the real GDP of a country (Nunkoo et al., 2020; Alcalá-Ordóñez et al., 2024). Importantly, while the TLGH has broad empirical support, scholars such as Song and Wu (2022) and Brida et al. (2016) have questioned its universal applicability, noting that its validity is conditioned by country-specific factors including institutional quality, infrastructure, and political stability.

Applying the theory to Nigeria as a developing country with considerable prospects for economic diversification, the theory is suitable because it explains the country’s international tourism as a sector capable of driving strategic investment, creating direct and indirect employment, boosting productivity through increased demand for local goods and services, and serving as a catalyst for foreign exchange earnings (Tang & Tan, 2015). In this regard, Nigeria’s international tourism is seen as an economic multiplier that can encourage "increased spending [that] circulates through the economy, boosting production and employment in other sectors" (Alcalá-Ordóñez et al., 2024). Furthermore, international tourism can contribute significantly to Nigeria's economic output through income generation for large, small, and medium-sized enterprises, as well as revenue for government and households derived from expenditure on travel, hospitality, food, entertainment, and other associated services. Foreign exchange generated from international tourist spending can serve as a substantial financial resource for investing in Nigeria's infrastructural development, improving public service delivery, reducing external debt, and attracting foreign capital inflows.

## Literature Review

### Prospect of International Tourism towards economic diversification in Nigeria

Globally, the tourism industry is one of the fastest-growing industries that has become a major economic growth accelerator in both the Global North and the Global South (Long, 2012). Tourism contributes to a country's objectives for generating income, job creation, alleviation of poverty and other tangible and intangible factors that drive socioeconomic development (Adeola et al., 2018). According to Ajani et al. (2018), tourism can serve as an effective economic revitalisation strategy for countries. In this vein, international tourism has become a major aspect of tourism that nations of the world have continued to harness for economic growth. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (2016), international tourism is one of the leading sectors for global economic growth. The African Travel and Tourism Association (ATTA) reported that in 2025 the industry grew by 5%, with countries in Africa and Asia playing a leading role in international tourism (ATTA, 2025).

Scholars have examined the contribution of international tourism to Nigeria's economy and found that it has been positive. International tourism in Nigeria has contributed to foreign exchange earnings, the creation of jobs and boosted fiscal revenue generation for the country (Matthew et al., 2021; Alamai et al., 2018; Eziocha et al., 2015). Additionally, the revenue generated from tourism has the potential to shift Nigeria's economy from its dependency on oil (Olufunke et al., 2022). According to the World Data Information (2025) on tourism in Nigeria, international tourism has been estimated to add 313.00 - 336.05 million dollars to the revenue receipts from international tourism. Thereby boosting Nigeria's economic growth in a significantly positive way through revenue generation into the economy.

Furthermore, Ameji and Urah (2024) stress that one of the benefits of tourism in Nigeria is its role in the promotion of inclusive growth by stimulating other economic sectors such as travel, transportation, infrastructural investments, and hospitality, among others. On the other hand, Salawu (2020) noted that the economic impact of international tourism on the Nigerian national economy is creating a channel for sustained long-term economic growth. The literature on the impact of international tourism on economic growth in Nigeria remains complex, as findings are divided between short-term and long-term impacts.

### Economic Diversification and its Challenges in Nigeria

Nigeria's economy is defined as a mono-economy because it relies on one product for its source of foreign earnings (Awe et al., 2023). Historically, the discovery of crude oil in 1956 led to the transformation of Nigeria's economy. However, it was not until 1970 that the country's economy became mono-economic and overly dependent on crude oil. A major implication of this shift in the early 1970s, according to Awe et al. (2023), was that agriculture and other economically viable sectors were neglected and frustrated. Prior to Nigeria's independence in 1960, the agricultural sector contributed over 75% of foreign earnings, 68% of GDP, and over 75% of the country's total employment. However, the trend suffered a nosedive in the 1980s (Awe et al., 2018). According to Obafemi (2022), Nigeria's dependence on crude oil remains a stark economic reality, as 80% of the government's revenue and approximately 95% of all the country's external exchange earnings come from one economic sector dominating the economy (Ogunlade, 2025).

The lack of economic diversification is a major challenge that has plagued Nigeria's economy for several decades since the oil boom in the 1970s, alongside other structural and systemic challenges (Usman, 2022). The problem with economic diversification, as scholars have identified, lies in the country's seemingly over-reliance on crude oil rents while undervaluing and overlooking the development of other economic sectors for foreign exchange earnings. As a result, Owan et al. (2020) argued that economic diversification, as it relates to the Nigerian economy, is about ending crude oil dependence as the major source of the country's revenue generation in the GDP. Conversely, Usman (2022) noted that the problem of economic diversification, which remains a teething issue, is not solely a product of Nigeria’s reliance on “crude oil, subsistence agriculture, informal activities, and its subnational entities”; rather, the challenge of economic diversification in Nigeria is squarely rooted in the faulty politics of the country.

**Challenges Confronting International Tourism for Economic Diversification in Nigeria**

Scholars have identified Nigeria's vast potential for international tourism (Chijioke et al., 2024; Christiana et al., 2024). For Lawal (2025), Nigeria is characterised by vibrant natural and cultural heritage that opens it up for international tourism. The UN Tourism (2025) data have shown Nigeria's international tourism is growing with significant implications for economic growth. However, while Nigeria’s international tourism and the entire tourism industry are considered untapped sectors for economic diversification, the industry is faced with several challenges (Ebiegberi, 2022). Insecurity, infrastructural deficit, poor public services and a myriad of social factors that impede the industry (Effiom, 2013; Tso, 2017; Ebiegberi, 2022; Muoneke, 2024). Below is a tabular presentation of the challenges affecting international tourism as its implication for economic diversification:

**Table 4.0:** Challenges Affecting International Tourism in Nigeria and Their Impact on Economic Diversification

| **Challenges of International tourism** | **Manifestation** | **Impact on economic diversification** |
|---|---|---|
| Inadequate and Poor Infrastructure | Nigeria's inadequate road network, unreliable internal and intercity transport systems, inconsistent airport operations leading to frequent flight cancellations, the absence of standard airports, erratic | Inadequate infrastructure affects international tourism's economic value and contribution by hindering access to tourist destinations, reducing visitor experience quality, and limiting tourism |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | electricity supply, and insufficient basic amenities at tourist sites throughout the country exemplify the infrastructural deficiencies present in Nigeria. | revenue generation potential. As such, this restricts tourism’s ability to serve as a viable alternative to oil revenue, employment and addition to GDP, perpetuating Nigeria’s mono-economy. |
| Insecurity | The global perception of the state of Nigeria's security undermines its image as a safe and secure tourist destination. With the country facing high levels of multidimensional insecurity as a result of terrorism, banditry, kidnappings and civil unrest in various degrees across the country. Tourist destinations in regions in the northwest and northeast where insecurity is heightened affect international tourism. | Insecurity, by deterring international tourists, reduced the country's avenue for earning foreign exchange or creating jobs in tourism-related sectors or promoting internal revenue generation for states that will facilitate regional development. The outcome of this is that states and the country will continue to depend on oil revenue, thereby undermining efforts to diversify the economy. |
| Inadequate and Limited Funding and Investment on Tourism and its related sectors | Government and private sector funding and investment in tourism have been poor, limited and inadequate in developing the scale of tourism infrastructure, promotional marketing, and development needed to drive international tourism in the country. | The outcome of this is the limited contribution of the industry to economic growth, employment, and GDP. This limited funding and investment constrains the industry's potential and weakens efforts to leverage leverage the sector for economic diversification. |
| Lack of Global Marketing Footprint | Nigeria's absence of a unified brand for its tourism, coupled with an ineffective marketing strategy for global appeal as a welcoming tourism destination in the world in comparison to other African countries like Ghana, Rwanda, and South Africa, affects international tourism. | The reduction in global awareness of Nigeria’s tourism potential and value has led to low international tourist arrivals or visitors to the country. The economic impact of this has led to reduced foreign exchange earnings and the growth in other sectors that are linked with tourism, such as transportation, hostels and hospitality. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Widespread Corruption and Mismanagement | Misappropriation of funds, lack of professional management, and political appointments in tourism administration rather than expertise-driven leadership. | The diversion of resources away from tourism development leads to underutilised assets and poor economic growth of the industry, which in turn affects its contributions to economic diversification. |
| Poor Policy Implementation and Regulatory Inefficiencies | Nigeria's tourism industry is faced with bureaucratic hurdles, inconsistent policies, fragmented governance, and a lack of clear regulations for the tourism industry. This has weakened strategic focus both in terms of tourism development and economic growth. | This leads to the hampering of the effective implementation of tourism policies, reducing investor confidence and stalling sector growth. |

Source: Authors analysis (2025)

To buttress the above further, Ovuakporie (2016), noted international tourism in Nigeria has received only tokenistic attention in federal budgetary allocations. In his critique of the Buhari administration's approach to tourism, Ebiegberi (2022) citing Ovuakporie (2016), reported the former Minister of Information, Culture, and Tourism, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, who in 2016 described the sector's budgetary allocation as "mere tokenism". This persistent lack of funding and investment has constrained the development of essential infrastructure, hindered the effective marketing of Nigeria's tourism potential, and undermined the sector's ability to compete in the global market. This neglect is further reinforced by Nigeria's longstanding overdependence on oil revenues, which has diverted policy attention and resources away from diversifying into tourism and other non-oil sectors.

**Data presentation and Discussion of Findings**

**Economic Prospects of International Tourism to Economic Diversification in Nigeria**

The majority of the respondents argued that international tourism holds enormous economic potential to contribute to Nigeria's economic growth. However, the impact of international tourism has remained significantly unrealised in turning the economic fortunes of Nigeria due to several mediating factors such as infrastructural gaps, insecurity, and a lack of political will that is a product of the rent-seeking character of the Nigerian political class involved in policymaking. The contributions of international tourism towards Nigeria's economic diversification prospects, according to a business practitioner in the Nigeria's tourism industry stated that:

> In recent years, international tourism has gained rejuvenated attention. Local festivals such as the Ojude Oba Festival and diaspora-led Detty December have become more than cultural currency but also an economic platform that

> has placed Nigeria as a tourist destination with the potential for attracting revenue, creating jobs and facilitating infrastructural development in the country (KII, Abuja, December 2025).

Beyond positioning Nigeria for attracting revenue, driving mass job employment and infrastructural improvements. Furthermore, the respondent noted that:

> Although Nigeria is uniquely positioned to harness the economic benefits of international tourism, the country is yet to develop the needed infrastructure and align policies with strategic actions that will advance the economic fortunes of the country. However, we must recognise that international tourism is an untapped revenue generation source for Nigeria (KII, Abuja, December 2025).

Furthermore, an employee of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism added that international tourism can drive regional economic development in Nigeria. Given Nigeria's diversified tourism resources, the growth and development of international tourism will ensure that less developed areas receive the needed infrastructure for developing the sector. As such, the respondent added that:

> Nigeria's tourism is located in largely rural areas, and this can potentially set the pace for regional economic and infrastructural development to occur. When tourists visit local areas to experience tourism, they directly contribute to the local economy by stimulating economic activities such as the purchase of local food delicacies, buying locally made crafts, clothing and other items that provide income to the residents in the areas. (KII, Abuja, June 2025).

Despite the marginal economic contributions that international tourism has added to the Nigerian economy in terms of the GDP, the sector holds a significant potential for economic diversification. To understand the meagre contribution of international tourism is to realise the obvious fact that the sector faces several challenges that undermine the industry’s potential. Challenges such as high levels of insecurity, poor infrastructure, and a lack of strategic marketing that could showcase the comparative advantages of its tourist destinations.

As a respondent noted:

> One of the major obstacles to Nigeria’s economic diversification is the reliance on oil rent, which has affected nearly every productive sector in the nation. This rent-seeking behaviour has continued to undermine real efforts towards economic development. Agriculture, manufacturing, and even tourism have not received the real support that is required to transform them into generators of massive employment and revenues because the country's focus is still on oil (Senior Civil Servant/ Federal Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism /Abuja/July 2025).

This aligned with existing argument that Nigeria's path towards economic diversification will start with reducing its oil dependence and see to the development of other critical sectors. Such as the commitment to strategically investing in agriculture, digital technology, manufacturing, and the service industries (Ndiomaluke et al., 2025). On the contrary, another respondent argued that:

> Nigeria’s poor investment in the development of other viable economic sectors is not simply the structural deficiency that oil rents create. It is also the lack of political will by the government to commit fully to economic

> diversification. For economic diversification to happen in Nigeria, it will require both economic reengineering and the political will to ensure that public policies are tailored towards economic growth (Senior Civil Servant/Federal Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism/Abuja/July 2025).

Economic diversification has stagnated due to the lack of political will and overreliance on crude oil rent. In this vein, several scholars have called the government's attention to the need to support and encourage economic diversification in Nigeria (Uwakaeme, 2015; Bello & Aliyu, 2016; Evbuomwan, 2016; Chris et al., 2015). As observed by a Professor of Political Science and International Relations:

> Economic diversification is only a policy statement that has hardly been implemented. Nigeria's major challenge to economic diversification is the fact that governments across levels are becoming so dependent on crude oil revenue that they do not have the courage to promote economic diversification in actions beyond words, (KII, Abuja, July 2025).

To this end, the crisis of economic diversification in Nigeria comes from multidimensional factors. However, Awe, Musa, and Sanusi (2023) have noted that economic diversification offers Nigeria an opportunity to reduce its high level of poverty have failed to yield results. Similarly, Suberu et al. (2015) added that economic diversification when achieved can help boost manufacturing productivity in the country, ensuring job availability. Also, economic diversification through investment in non-oil sectors such as agriculture and tourism has been identified as the most effective and impactful step towards diversifying the Nigerian economy (Awe et al., 2018).

**Challenges facing International Tourism in Nigeria**

Respondents identified various challenges confronting international tourism in Nigeria. While they agree that challenges such as infrastructure and insecurity, among other structural factors, persist. The majority of the respondents have decried the lack of a well-coordinated and strategic national tourism policy in Nigeria. According to a practitioner and business owner in Nigeria's tourism industry:

> In Nigeria, there is a mismatch between policy formulation, implementation and coordination such that tourism hangs on a shaky and hollow government presence and institutional collaboration (KII Abuja, July 2025).

Additionally, Agbebi (2014) stressed that tourism in Nigeria is undermined by low level of and poor policy implementation. This arises from poor communication, resource allocation, and ineffective monitoring systems that align policy objectives with actionable implementation. Respondents further added that the reason why, despite the country's remarkable institutional and policy frameworks, the sector has remained globally uncompetitive is due to policy implementation mismatch. A respondent from the Federal Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism corroborated the above stating that:

> The development of international tourism potential in Nigeria requires coordinated efforts of the government at all levels and their respective agencies. This is because international tourism contributes to both national and state economic development. It also requires that laws operating at the national and state levels are properly aligned…. Again, national policies and

> state policies are expected not to conflate. One cannot say this of the Nigerian situation. It is clearly fragmented and misaligned (KII, Abuja, November 2025).

The problem of this broken, fragmented and poorly coordinated approach between the federal and state government towards the development of international tourism contributes to the problem of policy implementation inconsistency, poor public sector investment, poor planning and allocation of resources to critical infrastructures and sectors needed for international tourism to thrive. Without doubt, the issue of poor intergovernmental coordination has added another layer of complexity to the successful implementation of the national tourism policy historically. Responding to this, a Professor of Political Science and International Relations added that:

> Effective implementation of Nigeria's national tourism policy will require effective and proper planning. And proper planning will also require that all relevant governmental tiers and related agencies work together and identify critical issues that must be addressed towards the development of international tourism (KII, Abuja, May 2025).

Comparatively, United Arab Emirates presents a compelling case. The country has been able to invest its oil revenue in developing the needed infrastructure that has transformed Dubai into a leading destination of global tourism. This feat is achieved due to political will backed by creative and bold investment from oil rents. As a result, creating more opportunities for economic growth. As stated by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2025:2) report:

> (International) tourism continues to be a cornerstone of the UAE's economic diversification strategy, with Dubai at the forefront of the industry's growth. International Tourism in 2025 is projected to be a record-breaking year, with the sector's total economic contribution forecast to hit AED 267.5 billion (US$72.8bn), accounting for almost 13% of national GDP.

To clearly illustrate the impact of Dubai's tourism potential to the UAE, a decade ago (2015), the sector contributed 8.7% amounting to US$36.43 billion to the economy. However, the sector is projected to contribute to the growth of the country's GDP by 5.4% and by 2026 expected to reach 11.2% of GDP doubling its revenue contribution to the nation's economy by $64.47 billion (WTTC, 2025). On the other hand, in Nigeria, the government has continued to pay lip service to international tourism and its development. According to a respondent in the Federal Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism:

> Crude oil has continued to dominate the center of Nigeria's revenue generation system despite talks of diversification or developing the tourism sector for economic value addition. The continuous neglect of whether agriculture, tourism, human capital development or any other aspect is itself a government policy. As national policy is what government does or does not. Therefore, Nigeria's national policy is facing a counter policy when the government act contrarily to developing international tourism in the country.

As such, rethinking economic growth and ensuring economic diversification requires that the government must ensure that economic policies are formulated and implemented with the interest of the citizens, their wellbeing and prosperity in mind. Despite international tourism's potential to create mass employment, generate revenue and boost the GDP, the Nigerian government has time and time again formulated policies that have hardly been implemented and, even where they are implemented, have failed to address the issues that impede the realisation of the policies.

**Conclusion**

International tourism despite its capacity to encourage economic growth and diversification in Nigeria has been undermined by several challenges. In Nigeria, international tourism can contribute to job, creation, infrastructural development, foreign exchange earnings as well as stimulate growth in other economic sector that has the capacity to multiply the economic effects of international tourism in the prospect of realising economic diversification. Nigeria must be serious about economic diversification if it must harness the potentials of international tourism by ensuring that through committed political will, investment in critical areas, adequate funding and a clear policy direction for international tourism develop it towards economic growth. As such, deducing from the arguments and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are outlined towards improving the economic value of international tourism by addressing its challenges and the sector's prospects for economic diversification in Nigeria. To achieve this, the government, private sector and other stakeholders must work collaboratively in addressing the challenges by ensuring that:

1. **Security governance in Nigeria is improved as a pathway to boosting confidence in international tourists' perception of the country:** For Nigeria to fully realise and benefit from the economic potential of international tourism as a critical tool towards economic diversification, there is a need for the government to take deliberate and sustained efforts towards improving security.
2. **Prioritise funding and investment in infrastructure:** It is imperative that the government allocate a significant amount of money and promote private sector investment in vital infrastructure, including reliable road networks, a steady supply of electricity, effective transit systems, internet connectivity, and clean water.
3. **Strategic investment in enhancing Nigeria's international image:** Nigeria must strategically invest in enhancing its image internationally that goes beyond the insecurity, economic hardship, religious intolerance, fraud to that of resilience, a rich cultural heritage, natural attractions, entertainment, talents and hospitality
4. **The Nigerian government must take actionable steps towards economic diversification backed by political will:** The Nigerian government must show the political will to reduce its dependence on oil revenues through sustained investment in non-oil sectors, given that international tourism offers significant opportunities in employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, and regional development.
5. **Effective implementation of tourism policies that goes beyond bureaucratic hurdles and inconsistencies:** There is the need to strengthen institutional capacity, enhancing inter-agency collaboration, and ensuring that policies are insulated from political interference will enable Nigeria to harness the full potential of its tourism sector.

**References**

Abdulrazaq, B. O., & Lambe, E. O. (2024). Unemployment Challenges in Nigeria: The Imperative for Economic Diversification. *Kashere Journal of Politics and International Relations*, *2*(2), 302-317. https://journals.fukashere.edu.ng/index.php/kjpir/article/download/365/308.

Adeola, O., Boso, N., & Evans, O. (2018). Drivers of international tourism demand in Africa. *Business Economics*, *53*(1), 25-36. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s11369-017-0051-3.

Adetola, B. O., Akinola, O., & Aina, A. (2024). Tourism Policies and Performance of Nigerian Heritage Sites. *Advances in Research*, 25(3), 227-240, https://doi.org/10.9734/air/2024/v25i31067.

African Travel and Tourism Association. (2025, September 10). *Global tourism grows 5% in first half of 2025, led by Africa and Asia*. https://atta.travel/resource/global-tourism-grows-5-in-first-half-of-2025-led-by-africa-and-asia.html#:~:text=10%20Sep%202025-,Global%20Tourism%20Grows%205%25%20in%20First%20Half%20of%202025%2C%20Led,recovery%20across%20several%20major%20markets..

Agbebi, P. A. (2014). Exploring tourism policy, planning and governance in the transformation of Nigeria economy. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality*, *3*(3), Article 129. https://doi.org/10.4172/2167-0269.1000129.

Ajani, F., Oluyisola, O. O., Kalu, J. E., & Ayodele, I. A. (2018). Determinants of international tourism demand in Nigeria. *African Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Management*, *3*, 16-29. https://journals.ui.edu.ng/index.php/ajfarm/article/download/140/117.

Akhy, A. A., & Roy, M. (2020). Socio-economic impacts of accommodation on tourism development: Bangladesh perspective. In Azizul Hassan (Ed.), *Tourism marketing in Bangladesh* (pp. 51–71). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003007241.

Alamai, M. M., Hussaini, M. U., & Fatima, A. L. (2018). Tourism and the Economy of Nigeria: A synthesis of its contributions to GDP from 2005-2016. *Advances in social sciences research journal*, *5*(11).

Alcalá-Ordóñez, A., Brida, J. G., & Cárdenas-García, P. J. (2024). Has the tourism-led growth hypothesis been confirmed? Evidence from an updated literature review. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *27*(22), 3571-3607.

Aljazeera. (2021). Gunmen Kidnap over 300 girls in Nigeria School raid: Police. Zamfara: Aljazeera Media Network. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/2/26/nigerian-school-students-abducted-in-second-kidnapping-in-a-week.

Ameji, E., & Urah, S. (2024). The Role of Tourism in Promoting Inclusive Growth in Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting*. https://doi.org/10.9734/ajeba/2024/v24i81462.

Anyasor, M. O., Rejoice Okocha, E., Agina, E. K., & Nwankwo, U. C. (2021). Effectiveness of visa facilitation and international openness as strategies for tourism development: a comparative study of Nigeria and selected African countries. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, *9*(2), 28-45.

Awe, O. O., Akinlana, D. M., Yaya, O. S., and Aromolaran, O. (2018). Time series analysis of the behaviour of import and export of agricultural and non-agricultural goods in West Africa: A case study of Nigeria. *AGRIS on-line Papers in Economics and Informatics*, 10(665-2018-3621), 15-22.

Awe, O. O., Musa, A. P., & Sanusi, G. P. (2023). Revisiting economic diversification in Africa's largest resource-rich nation: Empirical insights from unsupervised machine learning. *Resources Policy*, *82*, 103540. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.resourpol.2023.103540

Babatunde, A. (2020). Nigerian Tourism Agency indicted for failing to remit unspent funds, illegal payments. Retrieved from Premium Times Nigeria : www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/370831-nigeriantourism-agency-indicted-forfailing-to-remit-unspent-funds-illegal-payments.html.

Balaguer, J., & Cantavella-Jordá, M. (2002). Tourism as a long-run economic growth factor: The Spanish case. *Applied Economics*, *34*(7), 877–884. https://doi.org/10.1080/00036840110058923

Bankole, A. O. (2013). Harnessing cultural heritage for tourism development in Nigeria: Issues and prospects. *Global Journal of Commerce and Management Perspective*, *2*(3), 121-131.

Bello, M. Z., and Aliyu, C. U. (2016). Diversification of the Nigerian economy for sustainable development: Issues and challenges. International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Studies, 3(2), 75-81.

Brida, J. G., Cortes-Jimenez, I., & Pulina, M. (2016). Has the tourism-led growth hypothesis been validated? A literature review. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *19*(5), 394-430. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.868414.

Cherkasov, I., Seredina, M., Mishurova, O., Adashova, T., & Iebedeva, O. (2018). The Effect of International Tourism on the Development of Global Social-Economic Processes. *Journal Of Environmental Management And Tourism*, *8*(6), 1166-1170. doi:10.14505//jemt.v8.6(22).02.

Chijioke, N. M., Benedicta, C. O., Stella, I. N., & Emmanuel, T. O. (2024). Geo-Tourism for Wealth Creation: Unveiling the Geoscience Potential of Southeast Nigeria. *The Asian Review of Civil Engineering*, *13*(1), 6-15.

Chingarande, A., & Saayman, A. (2018). Critical success factors for tourism-led growth. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *20*(6), 800–818. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.2233

Chioma-Akinyemi, Y. (2024). Determinants of International Tourist Arrivals in Nigeria: Dynamic Panel Data Regression Analysis. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, *72*(2), 163-172.

Chitadze, N. (2019). International tourism and its impact on world politics and world economy. *Journal of Social Sciences, 8*(2), 5–15.

Chiu, Y.-B., & Yeh, L.-T. (2017). The threshold effects of the tourism-led growth hypothesis: Evidence from a cross-sectional model. *Journal of Travel Research*, *56*(5), 625–637. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875166509.

Chris, O., Amujiri, B., and Ndibe, N. (2015). Diversification of the economy: A panacea for Nigerian economic development. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 2(5), 477-483.

Christiana, A., Akpoghomeh, O. S., & Mbee, M. D. (2024). The Impact of Socio-Economic Characteristics on Maritime Tourism Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Multidiscilinary Research ans Studies*, *4*(3), 25-31.

Dantong, R. (2024). Economic Diversification Tourism in Plateau State, Nigeria. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, (18), 02. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm?abstractid=5071343.

Delechat, M. C. C., Melina, M. G., Newiak, M. M., Papageorgiou, M. C., & Spatafora, M. N. (2024). *Economic Diversification in Developing Countries: Lessons from Country Experiences with Broad-Based and Industrial Policies*. International Monetary Fund.

Ebiegberi, A. D. (2022). Challenges of tourism in expanding human and economic opportunities in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Accounting, Finance & Management Research (IJAAFMR)*, *6*(1), 14-22.

Effiom, R. A. (2013). The tourism industry conundrum and the Nigeria experience. *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research*, 10(2), 76–90. ISSN: 1813-2227.

Egbo, J. C., Anih, K., Jonas, O. M., Peter, O. E., & Obiokoye, U. C. (2025). Challenges of Sustainable Tourism Practice in Nigeria. *Rekayasa Sipil*, *19*(2), 203-209.

Elgin, C., & Elveren, A. Y. (2024). Unpacking the economic impact of tourism: A multidimensional approach to sustainable development. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *478*, 143947.

Ertugrul, H. M., & Mangir, F. (2013). The tourism-led growth hypothesis: Empirical evidence from Türkiye. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *18*(7), 633–646. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2013.868409.

Esu, G. E., & Udonwa, U. (2015). Economic diversification and economic growth: Evidence from Nigeria. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development*, *6*(16), 56-68.

Evbuomwan, G. O. (2016). Diversification of the Nigerian economy: Agriculture and solid minerals as panacea. Bullion publication of the Central Bank of Nigeria, 1(40), 50-69.

Eyisi, A., Lee, D., & Trees, K. (2023). Developing responsible tourism in emerging economies: the case of Nigeria. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, *21*(1), 94-109.

Eze, U., & Okafor, O. C. (2025). Influence of destination image and destination facility on satisfaction of tourists' needs among tourism sites in south east, Nigeria. *International Journal of Contemporary Research in Marketing and Management Sciences*, *13*(4), 8-19.

Eziocha, E. U., Ohaka, J., & Dagogo, D. W. (2015). International Tourism and Fiscal Revenue Earnings in Nigeria. *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting*, 6, 248-251.

Ghosh, R. N., Siddique, M. A. B., & Gabbay, R. (2017). International tourism and economic development. In *Tourism and economic development* (pp. 19-29). Routledge.

Gidebo, H. B. (2021). Factors determining international tourist flow to tourism destinations: A systematic review. *Journal of Hospitality Management and Tourism*, *12*(1), 9-17.

Haq, F., & Medhekar, A. (2022). The economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on spiritual tourism in Kartarpur Corridor. *International Journal of Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage*, *10*(2), 36–46.

Hipsher, S. (2017). Tourism: Job creation, entrepreneurship, and quality of life. In *Poverty reduction, the private sector, and tourism in mainland Southeast Asia* (pp. 231-251). Singapore: Springer Singapore.

Ichime, M. O., Awogbemi, T. O., & Ezi, C. T. (2024). Economic diversification: As panacea for sustainable economic growth in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Economics*, *6*(4), 65-75.

Kareem, O. I. (2008). A panel data analysis of demand for tourism in Africa. A Paper Presented at the 14th African Econometric Society Annual Conference, held at Cape Town, South Africa. https://www.academia.edu/download/41736022/Kareem_DEMAND_tourism.pdf.

Kaya, A., Tok, E., Koc, M., Mezher, T., & Tsai, I. T. (2019). Economic diversification potential in the rentier states towards a sustainable development: A theoretical model. *Sustainability*, *11*(3), 911.

Kim, Y. R., Liu, A., & Williams, A. M. (2022). Competitiveness in the visitor economy: A systematic literature review. *Tourism Economics*, *28*(3), 817-842. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/13548166211034437.

Lawal, Y. O. (2025). Harnessing Tourism Potentials of West African States (ECOWAS) in Advancing the Promotion of Tourism. *FUO-Journal of Educational Research*, *5*(1), 84-93.

Lew, A. A. (2011). Tourism's role in the global economy. *Tourism Geographies*, *13*(1), 148-151.

Li, K. X., Jin, M., & Shi, W. (2018). Tourism as an important impetus to promoting economic growth: A critical review. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, *26*, 135–142. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2017.10.002

Lin, V. S., Yang, Y., & Li, G. (2019). Where can tourism-led growth and economy-driven tourism growth occur? *Journal of Travel Research*, *58*(5), 760–773. https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287518773919

Long, P. (2012). Tourism impacts and support for tourism development in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam: An examination of residents' perceptions. *Asia Social Science*, *8*(8). https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/Delivery.cfm?abstractid=2096974.

Magaji, S., Musa, I., & Ismail, Y. (2025). Evaluating the Link between Oil Price and Macroeconomic Dynamics in Nigeria. *New Advances in Business, Management and Economics*, *5*(5), 96-115.

Matthew, O. A., Ede, C., Osabohien, R., Ejemeyovwi, J., Ayanda, T., & Okunbor, J. (2021). Interaction effect of tourism and foreign exchange earnings on economic growth in Nigeria. *Global Business Review*, *22*(1), 7-22. https://doi.org/10.1177/09721509188129

Matthew, O. A., Ede, C., Osabohien, R., Ejemeyovwi, J., Ayanda, T., & Okunbor, J. (2021). Interaction effect of tourism and foreign exchange earnings on economic growth in Nigeria. *Global Business Review*, *22*(1), 7–22. https://doi.org/10.1177/0972150918812985

Muoneke, N. (2024). Safety and Security Concerns in Nigeria's Tourism Sector: The Issue of Geotourism Destinations. *Information Management and Business Review*, *16*(3(I), 616-625. https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v16i3(I).4014.

Ndiomaluke, C., Obi, C., Orajaka, U., Ejefobihi, U., & Percy, N. (2025). Economic diversification strategies for sustainable development in Nigeria. *Journal of Policy and Development Studies*, *18*(3), 1-23.

Nguyen, P. C., Schinckus, C., Chong, F. H. L., Nguyen, B. Q., & Tran, D. L. T. (2025). Tourism and contribution to employment: global evidence. *Journal of Economics and Development*, *27*(1), 22-37.

Nunkoo, R., Seetanah, B., Jaffur, Z. R. K., Moraghen, P. G. W., & Sannassee, R. V. (2020). Tourism and economic growth: A meta-regression analysis. *Journal of Travel Research*, *59*(3), 404-423.

Obafemi, Y. A. (2022). Non-oil sectors, economic diversification and growth in Nigeria: Further empirical evidence. Studies in Business and Economics, 17(1), 290–311.

Ogbuabor, J. E., Emeka, E. T., & Ukwueze, E. R. (2025). Do international tourism arrivals, infrastructural development, and trade openness promote economic complexity in Africa?. *The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development*, *34*(1), 126-147.

Ogunlade, J. J. (2025). Evaluation of Nigeria's Economic Diversification 1980-2023. *International Journal of Management, Accounting and Economics*, 12(10), 1552- 1578. DOI: https://doi.org/10.22034/ijmae.2025.531118.1796.

Okeke-Korieocha, I., & Okojie, K. (2024, February 29). *Why Nigeria is top on Kenya's list for travel, tourism expansion*. Business Day. https://businessday.ng/aviation/article/why-nigeria-is-top-on-kenyas-list-for-travel-tourism-expansion/?amp.

Okonta, P. O., Mobosi, I. A., & Nwokocha, V. C. (2024). Development of entrepreneurial firms in emerging economies for economic diversification: An insight from Nigeria. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy*, *15*(4), 20778-20796.

Olufunke, K., Abifarin, O., & Oyebanji, A. (2022). Harnessing Nigeria's Tourism potentials for Sustainable socio-economic development: The context of law and policy. *Megatrend revija*. https://doi.org/10.5937/megrev2203115a.

Onwachukwu, C. I., & Roy, M. (2021). Culinary image of Bangladesh and tourists' travel intention: The impact of visual attention. In Azizul Hassan (Ed.), *Tourism Products and Services in Bangladesh: Concept Analysis and Development Suggestions* (pp. 245–262). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-4279-8.

Otuya-Asohro, E. O. (2024). Harnessing the Potentials of Tourism in Nigeria through Public Relations. *Journal of social responsibility, tourism and hospitality*. https://doi.org/10.55529/jsrth.43.23.32.

Ovuakporie, E. (2016). 2016 Budget: Buhari's allocation to tourism, mere tokenism - Lai Mohammed. Vanguard Newspaper. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2016/05/2016-budget-buharis-allocation-to-tourism-mere-tokenism-lai-mohammed/.

Owan, V. J., Ndibe, V. C., & Anyanwu, C. C. (2020). Diversification and Economic Growth in Nigeria (1981–2016): An Econometric Approach Based on Ordinary Least Squares (OLS). *European Journal of Sustainable Development Research*, 4(4), em0131.
Doi 10.29333/ejosdr/8285.

Pavlic, I., Svilokos, T., & Tolic, M. S. (2015). Tourism, real effective exchange rate and economic growth: Empirical evidence for Croatia. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *17*(3), 282–291. https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.1986.

Rahman, M. H., Voumik, L. C., Nafi, S. M., & Zimon, G. (2024). Effects of tourism and other macroeconomic variables on women's employment in agricultural, industry and service sectors: evidence from African countries. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *27*(14), 2287-2307.

Raifu, I. A., & Afolabi, J. A. (2024). Revisiting the tourism-led-growth hypothesis: Fresh evidence from the world's top ten tourist destinations. *Asian Economic Letters*, *5*(1), https://doi.org/10.46557/001c.91077.

Richards, G. (2011). *Cultural tourism: Global and local perspectives*. Routledge.

Roy, M., & Medhekar, A. (2025). Tourism-Led growth hypothesis: a global perspective bibliographic analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 1-32.
https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2025.2523354

Salawu, M. K. (2020). Tourism and economic growth in African largest economy. *Eurasian Journal of Economics and Finance*, *8*(2), 68-84.

Scheyvens, R. (2024). International development and tourism geographies. *Tourism Geographies*, *27*(3–4), 620–630. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2024.2330579.

Sharpley, R. (2020). Tourism, sustainable development and the theoretical divide: 20 years on. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *57*(11), 393–394.

Solarin, S. A., Ulucak, R., & Erdogan, S. (2024). Assessing the economic impacts of tourism markets and activities diversification: evidence from a new dynamic regression approach. *Journal of Travel Research*, *63*(8), 2078-2093.

Song, H., & Wu, D. C. (2022). A critique of tourism-led economic growth studies. *Journal of Travel Research*, *61*(4), 719–729. https://doi.org/10.1177/00472875211018514

Suberu, O. J., Ajala, O. A., Akande, M. O., and Olure-Bank, A. (2015). Diversification of the Nigerian economy towards a sustainable growth and economic development. *International journal of Economics, finance and Management sciences*, 3(2), 107-114.

Tang, C. F., & Tan, E. C. (2015). Tourism-Led growth hypothesis in Malaysia: Evidence based upon regime shift cointegration and time-varying granger causality techniques. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, *20*(sup1), 1430–1450. https://doi.org/10.1080/10941665.2014.998247

Tonuchi, J. E., & Onyebuchi, N. A. (2019). Economic diversification in Nigeria: The role of agriculture and manufacturing sector. *International Journal of Research in Electronics and Computer Engineering*, *7*(3), 916-919.

Tso, E. (2017). The Evolution of Global Tourism: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities. *International Journal of Open Publication and Exploration*, *5*(01). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384055504_The_Evolution_of_Global_Tourism_Trends_Challenges_and_Opportunities.

Uboegbulam, G. C. (2024). Tourism and Economic Development of Splash Park in Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria. *Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management and Finance*, *5*(1), 129-141.

UN Tourism (2025). International tourism up 5% in first half of 2025 despite global challenges. World Tourism Barometer. https://www.untourism.int/un-tourism-world-tourism-barometer-data.

United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) (2022). World Tourism Barometer: November 2022. UNWTO. https://en.unwto-ap.org/news/worldtourismbarometer_september2022/.

Usman, Z. (2022). *Economic diversification in Nigeria: The politics of building a post-oil economy* (p. 312). Bloomsbury Academic.

Uwagboe, O. O. (2023). *A history of the Nigerian federal government's national tourism governance system 1962-2006* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).

Uwakaeme, O. S. (2015). Economic growth in Nigeria: An empirical investigation of determinants and causal relationship (1980–2012). American journal of economics, 5(1), 9-20.

Uzonwanne, M. C. (2015). Economic diversification in Nigeria in the face of dwindling oil revenue. *Journal of Economics and sustainable development*, 6(4), 61-67.

Wagner, R., & Glover, S. (2013). Tourism and employment: A critical overview. *Tourism Review*, *68*(4), 5–14. https://doi.org/10.1108/TR-02-2013-0012.

Wong, D. W., Tai, A. C., Chan, D. Y., & Lee, H. F. (2024). Can tourism development and economic growth mutually reinforce in small countries? Evidence from Singapore. *Current Issues in Tourism*, *27*(8), 1316–1331. https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2023.2213879.

World Data Information (2025). *Tourism in Nigeria*. World Data.info. https://www.worlddata.info/africa/nigeria/tourism.php.

World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) (2025). *International Traveller spend in the UAE to reach a record AED 228BN this year, reveals WTTC*. WTTC. https://wttc.org/news/international-traveller-spend-uae-to-reach-a-record-aed-228bn.

World Travel and Tourism Council. (2024). Travel industry to contribute record $11 trillion to global GDP in 2024. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/business/travel-industry-contribute-record-11-trillion-global-gdp-2024-2024-09-03(open in a new window)

Yusuff, M. A., & Akinde, M. A. (2015). Tourism development and economic growth nexus: Nigeria's experience. *European Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, *3*(4), 1-10.

Zhao, L., Li, Q., & Chen, J. M. (2025). How does infrastructure investment boost tourism development? Evidence from China. *Tourism Economics*, *0*(0). https://doi.org/10.1177/13548166251315789