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Travel and Tourism in Europe: Bridging the Past, Present and Future Through the Economic Development

Abstract

The tourism industry has both economic and social impact on the lives of people globally. The study aims to investigate the trends in tourism in the European nations over the last few years and possible growth in future. This paper follows an investigation on secondary data to identify the latest trends of tourism in Europe; the changes in tourist's behaviour the economic development and the future trends. The hospitality and tourism industry has emerged and developed in various countries owing to the demand for tourism services/activities globally. However, various factors affecting the advancement of the sector in the EU exist. The research has revealed that tourism activities in the region have increased considerably owing to various factors such as friendly regional policies and unique destinations that are attractive to tourists from other areas, especially emerging nations such as China.

Keywords: *Tourism industry, destinations, behaviour, European Union, market share, economic development*

JEL: L83, L100, O52

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1. Introduction

Tourism is an occurrence that has witnessed increased economic and social significance but, has characterised human behaviour for more than a century (Butler, 2015). The tourism and hospitality industry has brought a significant economic transformation in the European Union (EU) as well as other parts of the world. United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2017) noted in 2016 that the EU had approximately 40.5% market share of

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worldwide international tourist arrivals. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017), the total contribution (induced + indirect + direct) of the hospitality and tourism industry to the EU's GDP was about 10.2%. However, there was a strong difference in arrivals between countries with Croatia, Malta or Cyprus having 20% in each while Netherland, Poland or Romania having about 5% each. Additionally, the significance of travel as a factor of growth in the economy has been depicted in various nations by recent research (Brida et al., 2016; Ohlan, 2017; Perles-Ribes et al., 2017; Salmani et al., 2014; Seghir et al., 2015).

The major function of the tourism industry in any country is to serve travellers. Camilleri (2017) asserts that its success depends on the affirmative inter-relationships of all the industries in the economy. Tourism has illustrated an important territorial dimension having uneven spatial distribution between and with nations of the world, and delivering a localised effect (Silva et al., 2018). According to the European Commission (2010) report, tourism is the greatest wealth generator and employment in both developing and developed economies in the world generating over 5% of the EU GDP. Consequently, it has a great role in the EU economy since it is the third-largest socio-economic undertaking after trade and distribution and construction industries in the region (European Commission, 2010). Tourism also provides to the development of the regions and, if viable, assists in preservation and enhancement of natural and cultural heritage. The significance of the spatial dimension of hospitality is emphasized by findings indicating that growth in tourism in one region positively influences arrivals in neighbouring areas (Romão et al., 2017). However, Kang et al. (2014) assert that public policy can influence the spatial array of demand for tourism services. Seasonality has been acknowledged as another distinctive aspect of the economic industry, having considerable environmental and socio-economic implications (Chung, 2009).

1.1 Rationale and Significance of the Study

The economic and market drivers are important factors that result in either an increase or decrease in tourist arrivals in a given region. For instance, the economic and financial crisis of 2008 had adverse influences on the labour market of the EU with the overall unemployment rate rising from 7% (2008) to 11% (2013) (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2014). The disaster affected the European market and the rate of travel as well as arrivals received from other continents and countries. The tourism industry offers a comprehensive understanding of the factors that enhance the advancement and continued growth for the European economy in a diverse and persistently changing sector.

Although the significance of tourism for the European incorporation process was first acknowledged on the 10th of April 1984, it was not until later that the European institutions began focusing on the industry because of its influence in the economy. Accordingly, the current study will offer a better and comprehensive understanding of how the tourism industry has been developing over the years and how it will shape the European economy. Additionally, it supports readers to understand the major drivers and factors sustaining the tourism sector in the European countries and how they are likely to shape the sector in the future.

The proposed research will support pertinent stakeholders in the hospitality and tourism sector in European countries to appreciate the importance and consequences of the sector in transforming the region's economy despite the economic hurdles. The tourism sector is one of the most notable sectors in Europe because it augments foreign revenues and new arrivals from neighbouring or other countries from other continents of the world. The European Commission (2010) predicted great downtown tourism on the continent by 2030. Therefore, the EU must take necessary actions to remain competitive, adapt its merchandise offerings to the ever-dynamic tourist inclinations as well as the demographic alterations. Accordingly, the

present study may have an impact on the policy-making process to ensure the tourism industry in Europe remains an attractive sector in the economy. Moreover, the current research hopes to acknowledge the significance of various dynamics in shaping and changing the industry in the region as well as other non-European countries. Finally, the present study will add to the existing literature assessing the influence of the tourism industry in various countries in Europe.

2. Literature Review

2.1 European Union as a Destination

Over the last few years, tourism has remained a key driver of socio-economic progress by creating jobs, exporting income, and infrastructure development for many destinations globally (Tsai et al., 2009). Based on both international tourism receipts and arrivals, the European Union has five countries in the top ten destinations in the world although ranked in a different order (see Table 1).

Table 1: World's top tourism destinations by tourist arrivals and receipts.

International tourist arrivals							
		(Million)		Change (%)			
Rank	Series	2015	2016	15/14	16*/15		
France	TF	84.5	82.6	0.9	2.2		
United States	TF	77.5	75.9	3.3	2.1		
Spain	TF	68.2	75.3	5.0	10.5		
China	TF	56.9	59.3	2.3	4.2		
Italy	TF	50.7	52.4	4.4	3.2		
United Kingdom	TF	34.4	35.8	5.6	4.0		
Germany	TCF	35.0	35.6	6.0	1.8		
Mexico	TF	32.1	35.1	9.4	9.3		
Thailand	TF	29.9	32.6	20.6	8.9		
Turkey	TF	39.5	30.3	0.8	23.3		
International tourism receipts							
		Euro		Local currencies			
		Billion		Change (%)		Change (%)	
Rank		2015	2016	15/16	16*/15	15/14	16*/15
United States		185.1	186.1	28.2	0.5	7.0	0.3
Spain		51.0	54.7	4.0	7.2	4.0	7.2
Thailand		40.5	44.1	40.0	8.9	23.0	12.2
China		40.5	40.1	22.3	-1.0	3.6	5.3
France		40.4	38.4	-7.6	-5.1	-7.6	-5.1
United Kingdom		41.0	37.5	9.0	-8.5	-1.9	3.3
Italy		35.6	36.4	3.8	2.3	3.8	2.3
Germany		33.3	33.8	2.0	1.7	2.0	1.7
Australia		30.9	33.5	14.3	8.4	14.5	9.3
Hong Kong (China)		32.6	29.7	12.8	-8.9	-5.8	-9.0

Source: UNWTO, 2018.

Within the EU bloc, nearly eight destinations are found in southern and Mediterranean Europe. The zone recorded high growth of arrivals with the country with most recording 8% increase reaching nearly 193 million in 2016 (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2018). UNWTO (2018) argue that the growth in the number of arrivals from other European nations in 2016 is attributable to the issue of security. The report further acknowledges that most countries in the region recorded an increase in the number of arrivals but, the highest growth was noted in Spain, which the third-largest European destination (arrivals).

In 2016, the globe's most visited destination after the US and France was Spain obtaining nearly 7 million more international arrivals reaching 75 million, which indicated an increase of 10%. Spain has led the international tourism receipts in the European Union with nearly 55 billion euros in the same year (was 16% of total EU receipts) (UNWTO, 2018).

A report by UNWTO (2018) affirmed that the UK, which is the largest destination in the zone, had a 4% increase in arrivals to about 36 million. However, the growth was relatively low, given that the British pound devalued in 2016 owing to the Brexit phenomenon. The fall in the value of the pound made most destinations for source markets to be affordable.

Even though France is the world's top destination, its international arrivals considerably dropped by 2% to about 83 million following the Nice attack (2016) and the Paris attack (2015). Furthermore, various air traffic control strikes and floods in the capital city have negatively influenced the outcome of arrivals (UNWTO, 2018). However, the 2016 UEFA European Championship augmented the figure of visitors in various French cities and towns where the games took place. Nevertheless, the receipts earned by France dropped by 5% to approximately 38 billion euros, following a drop of 8% in 2015.

Italy is the third-largest European destination, which received about 52 million arrivals recording a 3% increase after obtaining the same growth in the year 2015. The UNWTO (2018) noted that development was driven by a continuous rise in tourism flows from Asia as well as an increase in new tourism services (supply via room rental podia). The country recorded about 36 billion euros, which was a 2% increase compared to that recorded in 2015.

The country has continued to reap the profits associated with the successful reconstruction of its tourism industry over the last ten years. In 2016, the figure of arrivals rose by 9% for the second year, which resulted in 14 million arrivals attributed to the enhanced air connectivity (UNWTO, 2018). The receipts also grew in line with the arrivals recording an 8% increase to a total of 9 billion euros.

3. Latest Trends in EU tourism

3.1 Development of International Tourism

Regarding the arrivals, international tourism has demonstrated tremendous growth after the end of World War II, developing from nearly 25 million (1950) to 1.1 billion (2014) (UNWTO, 2014). For comparison, the population of the world in the same period has developed from nearly 5.7 billion (1994) to 7.2 billion (2014). Camilleri (2018) argue that the rising number of tourism activity in the world today is associable with various factors such as physical, cultural aspects, and prestige and status. The author further claims that the development of sectors such as transportation, accommodation, and ancillary services has enhanced the growth of the tourism industry in the world.

Although Europe has the largest destination in the world of tourism, it is not the fastest-developing zone. Owing to its slower rate of growth, Europe's market share has dropped by 9% from 60% (1995) to 51% (2014) (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2014). However, the zones that have noted dramatic increase include Asia and Pacific (from 15% (1995) to 23% (2014)), Middle East (from 2% to 5%), and Africa (from 4% to 5%). Ullström (2009) affirmed that factors such as government policy and few unique landscapes stagnate the growth of the tourism industry. These two aspects can reduce arrivals leading to a

declining market share in a country in the long run. Debyser (2014) agrees that policy responses towards other neighbouring or competing nations have affected the European Union tourism industry. As a result, the EU tourism policy has been focusing on maintaining Europe's leading market position (European Commission, 2010) by improving its economic and government policies.

Tourism contributes to both job creation (Young, 2015), socio-economic cohesion (COSME, 2015), growth, and economic recovery. Europe's ability to successfully realise a leading position in the market, as well as a stable economy, will rely on various internal and external dynamics as well as the capacity to exploit its comparative strengths and response to challenges (European Commission, 2014). The UNWTO (2014) pointed out that Europe's strengths encompass its infrastructure, cultural diversity, and borderless travel zones within Schengen expanse while the challenges include facets such as demographic change, innovation, and sustainability. Tourism contributes to both job creation (Young, 2015), socio-economic cohesion (COSME, 2015), growth, and economic recovery. Europe's ability to successfully realise a leading position in the market, as well as a stable economy, will rely on various internal and external dynamics as well as the capacity to exploit its comparative strengths and response to challenges (European Commission, 2014). The UNWTO (2014) pointed out that Europe's strengths encompass its infrastructure, cultural diversity, and borderless travel zones within Schengen expanse while the challenges include facets such as demographic change, innovation, and sustainability.

Some research has shown that factors such as wars and conflicts, natural disasters, terrorist attacks, currency instability, the outbreak of deadly and contagious diseases affect the development of the tourism industry (Clerides and Pashourtidou, 2007; Camilleri, 2018). Conflicts happening closer to Europe affects the arrival in the region, as demonstrated by Weiss et al. (2013). Weiss and others established that ski tourism in Slovakia considerably dropped due to mild winter in the region. Moreover, the authors found that the tourism industry in Ukraine was affected by the global crisis, conflicts, and the neighbouring countries' currencies and the Euro. When these factors adversely affect other zones of the world, the market share of Europe slightly changes causing what Chung (2009) terms as seasonality in tourist destinations.

Seasonality itself has a discernible geographical structure, varying significantly from one country to another depending on the type of destination (mountain, seaside, and city) and climate. For instance, the 2011 and 2012 political upheavals in the Arab world decreased the market share of Middle East from 6.4% (2010) to 5.0% (2012), while the market share of Europe amplified from 50.7% to 51.6% respectively (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2014). Moreover, visa policies can affect international tourist arrivals in various parts of the world. A report by the European Commission (2013) affirmed that short-stay facilitation of visas on tourism affected the tourism industry. For instance, the EU lost approximately 6.6 million possible visitors from India, Russia, China, Ukraine, South Africa, and Saudi Arabia owing to the policy.

3.2 Changes in Tourist Profiles and Behaviour

Although development regarding the volume of tourists to or within the EU is important, it is essential to acknowledge the profile and tourists' behaviour to understand the future of the tourism industry in Europe. Andrades et al. (2015) assert that destination marketers and tourism facility providers are facing various issues affecting consumer behaviour in the industry. They believe that understanding the behaviour of consumers, particularly tourist behaviour, helps firms to design and improve their service productivity to satisfy the demands of their customers. Consumers may experience high involvement when they deliberate some

social, physical or financial aspects linked to the services and products offered by organisations in the tourism industry.

Maslow (1943) formulated a model that explains why consumption of services and products increases in the market/industry. Maslow argues that customers have needs that must be successively met, according to the priorities of consumers themselves (Jerome, 2013). Following Maslow's conceptual framework regarding human being impetuses, Hsu, Cai et al. (2010) argue that the uncovering of these needs by clients is what inspires them to initiate the quest for service/product to satisfy that want (Adiele and Nath, 2013). As a result, the consumption of the service reduces the initial tension generated by the consciousness of unsatisfied needs. Given that motivation has a great significance in marketing decisions such as advertising, product development, positioning, and segmentation, it has received considerable attention from tourism academics (Cohen et al., 2013). Nonetheless, McCabe (2000) argues that the motivation of tourists is featured neither by a cognitivist nor behaviourist strategy but rather by a union of both. As a result, White and Thompson (2009) developed a theoretically strong conceptualisation of motivation that showed motivation as an elusive process.

Eurostat (2012) affirmed that the global share of people with 60 years and above has augmented from 9% (1994) to 12% (2014). Eurostat (2015) points out that the rate of participation among the EU28 tourists aged 65 and over in 2012 was lower compared to the total population. The report also noted that senior tourists made 26% more trips in 2011 than in 2006. Additionally, they noted seniors make longer trips compared to other age groups. For instance, in 2011, most seniors spent 11 nights when compared to 9.8 nights spent by most age groups. However, the seniors' consumption habit was inspired by safety, quality of services, and products offered. Scott et al. (2009) observed the same preferences among senior tourists in various nations. The authors affirmed that seniors from Australia and the US often made more trips; the trips were longer reflecting increased revenues, more lively life, and better health.

3.3 Source Markets

European Parliamentary Research Service (2015) affirmed that the EU has been receiving a high number of tourists from emerging economies. OECD (2014) established Germany to be the largest source market for travellers in European destinations, followed by the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Dutch, Italy, the US and Belgium in 2013 (see table 2).

Table 2: Origins markets for tourism in Europe.

Country	Average market share, 2003-2008	Average market share, 2008-13	Market share, 2013
Germany	17.2%	15.0%	14.2%
United Kingdom	12.4%	10.2%	9.4%
Russia	3.2%	4.7%	5.9%
France	5.5%	5.4%	5.3%
Netherlands	5.6%	5.1%	4.6%
Italy	5.0%	4.7%	4.2%
United States	4.3%	4.0%	4.0%
Belgium	3.8%	3.9%	3.8%

Source: OECD, 2014.

One of the fastest developing and emerging source markets for tourism in Europe was China. The findings were similar to those obtained by UNWTO (2018), which reported that most European tourist destinations often received more travellers from China compared to other emerging economies outside Europe.

3.4 Future Trends

In the long run, the trends that have been mentioned above are likely to transform the tourism sector in Europe and the world in general. UNWTO (2014) predicted that the number of global tourism will augment by average 3% per year from 2010 to 2030. UNWTO expects Europe to uphold its position as a top tourist destination receiving about 744 million travellers by 2030 (with 577 million expected in EU28). Leigh et al. (2013) agree that change in climate will continue to influence tourism in various European destinations. Phenomenon such as heatwaves and drought in the southern part of Europe will force tourism to spread over the year in these regions.

3.5 Gaps in the Literature Review

Various gaps exist in the literature review that the current exploration expects to answer. Firstly, the prevailing literature under-explored the magnitude of technology in the development of tourism in the European region. Technology such as spaceships can have a great influence on the travelling time and trips made by travellers globally; hence, improving the creativity and competitiveness in the industry in Europe and other parts of the world. As a result, research needs to establish how technology may affect the attitude and motivation of tourists from other regions. Secondly, the prevailing literature did not exhaustively assess how the operations of firms in the industry affect the growing number of tourists from emerging nations into European destinations. The success and effectiveness of organizations have a considerable impact on the development of an industry and its related industries. Finally, most of the studies reviewed did not evaluate how the EU can integrate certain policies to make their tourist destinations more attractive than other parts of the world. Different policies in various parts of the region can have an adverse effect on the tourism industry of the whole area in the mid-term.

4. Conclusion, Implications and limitations

In acknowledging the complexity of tourism concept at the EU, industry or firm level, it is essential to remember that the future of the industry depends on the level of government's and EU implementation and passing of supportive policies. The various dynamics (external and internal) have a significant influence on the socio-economic development of countries in Europe and outside. Tourism has enhanced the national competitiveness of the region by making it more attractive to travellers looking for new places for their vacation and leisure.

The literature reviewed has illustrated that the tourism industry is an important sector that supports the development of both social, economic, and political in a country (Butler, 2015). Evidence has shown that the tourism industry upset the unemployment level in a country whose government focuses on investing resources such as money and policies in the sector. Nevertheless, various stakeholders and policymakers in the EU ought to emphasize on models that preserve the environment to ensure their sector remains competitive. Given there are similar destinations as those offered by European countries, competition for travellers is high, which necessitates competitive management approaches.

With a growing economy, the region will experience a significant economic transformation that will result in an improved market share of international tourists (UNWTO, 2017). The industry also allows the government to protect and intensify the natural and cultural heritage, which helps the community to remain cohesive (COSME, 2015). As a

result, poor environmental protection policies may lead to disastrous environmental and socio-economic implications affecting the economy of the nation (Chung, 2009).

Tsai et al. (2009) affirm that the sector has grown rapidly to create employment opportunities for the fast-growing population of the EU. When more youths receive employment, the rate of crime also considerably decline because they can earn a living. Moreover, the sector attracts foreign revenues brought by travellers from other regions, which translates into infrastructural development and a high living standard of citizens in the region (Tsai et al., 2009). However, the pace at which the sector grows depends on the advancement of other industries in the economy such as food and beverages, accommodation, and transportation. Accordingly, the state ought to check these sectors by implanting friendly policies when they desire to improve their national competitiveness in the region. With foreign incomes likely to augment in the future, the EU should address all the issues touching on the sectors in a bid to improve the future development of the industry. The government should focus on both the sector and firm level of the tourism industry to understand and know the macro-dynamics upsetting the flow of tourists into the region. More resources could be put aside to ensure that visitors have the desire to visit the region more often.

In multifaceted sectors such as the tourism industry, various factors exist that have a considerable influence on the future growth and advancement of the sector in the European continent. There is an international increase in hospitality and tourism both in terms of the arrival of tourism and expenses touching tourism in Europe. The tendencies that are majorly influencing the industry include: augmented concern over safety and security issues among travelers, the importance of quality services resulting in extra prospects for high revenue, and enhanced competitiveness. In the field of tourism, the demand of tourists globally, particularly from emerging economies, has increased the number of firms operating in the sector. Adopting responsive policies to the environment has also improved the movement of travellers into Europe for leisure and vacation. Such developments have witnessed that tourism remains a key driver of socio-economic evolution by generating jobs, through foreign revenues, and infrastructural development for most destinations globally. Owing to the policies adopted by the European Union, the region has five countries in the top ten destinations around the globe, which include France, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

The region has recorded a high growth of tourist arrivals compared to other regions such as Africa with the country with the most growth recording an 8% increase in 2016. Some of the factors that have influenced tourism arrivals and activities in the EU include physical, cultural aspects, and prestige and status. Moreover, aspects such as government policy and few unique landscapes may deteriorate the growth of the tourism sector, leading to a fall in the market share of a nation. Europe's capacity to effectively achieve a leading position in the market, as well as the steady economy, will rely on various internal and external dynamics besides the capacity to exploit its comparative strengths and reaction to challenges. Therefore, governments should focus on exploiting the opportunities in the country as the most appropriate strategy towards competing in the world of tourism and improving the economy. Although development regarding the volume of tourists to or within the EU is important, it is essential to acknowledge the profile and tourists' behaviour to understand the future of the tourism industry in Europe. Various non-governmental organisations have predicted the growth of global tourism by an average of 3% per year between 2010 and 2030.

There have been many studies for the travel and tourism in Europe, although the current one is limited to specific European countries and not in the whole Europe. Further research needs to investigate the bridging among the past, present and future in other European countries as well and also to compare the findings with other countries outside Europe.

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