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Kenya'da Turizm Faaliyetlerinin Durumu ve Etkilerinin Değerlendirilmesi

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ABSTRACT:

Tourism plays a significant role in the economic development of Kenya. However, the development of the sector continues to face challenges arising, both locally and globally. This study identifies and analyses these problems and how they impact tourism activities. The study provides a brief overview of the role of international tourism by highlighting its socio-economic, environmental, and political contributions to the country's development. Also discussed are the sustainability issues around mass tourism and its effect on the environmental, social, economic, and cultural aspects of life in the host regions. The key to addressing the tourism sector's performance is the understanding of the significant role the market plays. Focusing on this, the study examines emerging issues in the Kenyan tourism sector i.e. seasonality, overreliance on the international market, impacts of tourism infrastructure development on space, among others, and their roles in shaping the tourism industry. It is established that overdependence on the international market exposes Kenyan tourism to global risks that could result in the collapse of the sector, thus negatively affecting the economy. To safeguard the Country from external risks, the study proposes strengthening domestic tourism by encouraging local investors' participation in international tourism. The study also identifies the main problems related to tourism activities in Kenya including; pollution, destruction of cultural heritage, the threat to the health of both human and aquatic life, human-wildlife conflicts, less economic benefits to local communities and host nations dues to dominance by transnational corporations, social ills like drug abuse, luring of young girls into sex resulting into early pregnancy and school drop-out among other problems. The findings of this research are based on a review of previously done research literature, academic documents, government reports, among other secondary and primary sources of data.

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KEYWORDS: Culture, environment, heritage, pollution, sustainability, tourism.

ÖZ:

Turizm, Kenya'nın ekonomik kalkınmasında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bununla birlikte, sektörün gelişimi hem yerel hem de küresel olarak ortaya çıkan zorluklarla karşılaşmaya devam etmektedir. Çalışma, bu sorunları belirlemekte ve bunların turizm faaliyetlerini nasıl etkilediğini analiz etmektedir. Çalışma, turizmin ülkenin kalkınmasındaki sosyo-ekonomik, çevresel ve politik katkılarını vurgulayarak uluslararası turizmin rolüne genel bir bakış sunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda kitle turizmi etrafındaki sürdürülebilirlik konuları ve bunun ev sahibi bölgelerdeki yaşamın çevresel, sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel yönleri üzerindeki etkisi de tartışılmaktadır. Turizm sektörü performansını değerlendirmenin anahtarı, pazardaki oynadığı önemli rolü anlamaktır. Buna odaklanan çalışma, Kenya turizm sektöründe ortaya çıkan sorunları, yani mevsimsellik, uluslararası pazara aşırı güven, turizm altyapısının geliştirilmesinin mekan üzerindeki etkileri ve turizm endüstrisini şekillendirmedeki rollerini incelemektedir. Uluslararası pazara aşırı bağımlılığın Kenya turizmini sektörün çökmesine neden olabilecek küresel risklere maruz bırakarak ekonomiyi olumsuz yönde etkilediği tespit edilmiştir. Ülkeyi dış risklerden korumak için çalışma, yerel yatırımcıların uluslararası turizme katılımını teşvik ederek iç turizmin güçlendirilmesini önermektedir. Çalışma aynı zamanda Kenya'daki turizm faaliyetleri ile ilgili temel sorunları kirlilik, kültürel mirasın tahrip edilmesi, hem insan hem de su yaşamının sağlığına yönelik tehdit, insan-yaban hayatı çatışmaları, yerel topluluklara ve ev sahibi uluslara daha az ekonomik fayda, ulus ötesi şirketlerin hâkimiyetine ilişkin ücretler, uyuşturucu kullanımı gibi sosyal hastalıklar, genç kızların cezbedilmesi, erken gebelik ve diğer sorunların yanı sıra okulu bırakma ile sonuçlanan seks vb tanımlamaktadır. Bu araştırmanın bulguları, daha önce yapılmış araştırma literatürünün, akademik belgelerin ve diğer ikincil ve birincil veri kaynaklarının yanı sıra hükümet raporlarının bir incelemesine dayanmaktadır.

ANAHTAR KELİMELER: Kültür, çevre, miras, kirlilik, sürdürülebilirlik, turizm

“An Assessment of the State and Impact of Tourism Activities in Kenya”

INTRODUCTION

Globally, regionally and nationally, the economic significance of tourism cannot be underestimated as it directly contributes to countries' economic development and growth by generating both local and foreign revenues, attracting investments, especially in hotel industries, contributing towards infrastructure development and modernization i.e. the roads, airports, and beaches, and also providing both short-term and long-term employment to many. As Du, Lew, and Ng (2016) demonstrate, international tourism is the largest service sector in international trade and among the most thriving sectors in more than 80% of world economies, therefore an important part of the global economic network. Also, the significance of the sector is illustrated by the number of international tourists' visits recorded in 2016 by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) which stood at 1.235 billion tourists, generating a total of US\$1220 billion in revenues (Fareed, Meo, Zulfıqar, Shahzad, & Wang, 2018). In times of global challenges and crises, tourism has also played an important role in contributing to global peace and boosting the bilateral relationship between countries through cultural diplomacy actions of exchanging ideas, arts, information, and other cultural aspects, thus fostering mutual understanding between people and among nations. (Carbone, 2017). Despite these contributions of tourism to both national and international development, concerns have been raised about many issues related to tourism, ranging from environmental, economic, social, cultural, etc. The continued rising numbers of people engaging in mass tourism have raised concerns about its sustainability, considering its impacts on the environment, socio-economic, and cultural aspects of life among the host destination. The performance of the tourism sector is also dependent on many local and international factors, making it a very sensitive and fluid sector. Therefore, the aim of this study is to establish the emerging issues affecting tourism sector performance in Kenya, considering the dynamic nature of the sector and its reliance on external global factors. Besides, the study seeks to identify and analyze the social, environmental, economic, and political problems that arise from increased tourism activities in Kenya which are likely to affect the activist's sustainability. The paper's remaining sections are arranged as follows: The first section discusses the methodology adopted for the study and gives a brief description of the study area. The second section analyzes the historical perspective of tourism development in Kenya and identifies the main emerging issues and their roles in the sector. The third section examines the problems attributed to Kenya's tourism activities, and finally, the last section delivers on the conclusions based on the findings.

1. Methodology and Study Area Description

Located in Eastern Africa, Kenya is rich in tourist attractions of various types and distributed throughout the Country. The Country is endowed with, beautiful geographical landscapes, plenty of wildlife living in natural habitats, spending coastal beaches, and beautiful sceneries. Besides, Kenya has a rich and diverse culture that is drawn from the 45 ethnic communities that live in Kenya. Tourism contributes significantly to the Kenyan economy. According to WTTC (2020), the travel and tourism sector in Kenya contributed 8.2% to the Country's Gross domestic product and 1.6 million jobs representing 8.5% of the total jobs in 2019. Besides, Kenya has the third largest tourism economy in Sub-Saharan Africa, behind South Africa and Nigeria (GOK, 2020a). Despite such a rich endowment with tourist attractions, Kenya has largely relied on two main tourist products to exclude the rest, i.e. Coastal beach tourism and wildlife tourism. The main objective of this study was, therefore, to assess the state of tourism in Kenya by evaluating the role and impacts of emerging issues in the tourism sector of Kenya and to examine the social, economic, environmental, and political problems that could be attributed to tourism development in the Country. The study mainly relied on the previously collected data on tourism in Kenya and the analyses of research literature like academic articles, government reports, conference papers, and international organizations reports. Being a dynamic and overly dependent dynamic and overly dependent sector on external factors, an understanding of the currently prevailing conditions both locally (in Kenya) and globally would be important in making policy decisions about the tourism sector. These include the global economic environment, security and political stability, social and environmental impacts, global pandemics, and so forth. Knowledge of the social, economic, environmental, and political problems related to economic activities in the Country is also important to policymakers, especially when devising the best tourism strategies that are sustainable. An analysis of the tourism situation in the Country therefore revealed the downsides of the sector, thus providing a window to recalibrate the current approaches. Figure 1 below is an illustration of the location of Kenya in African context.

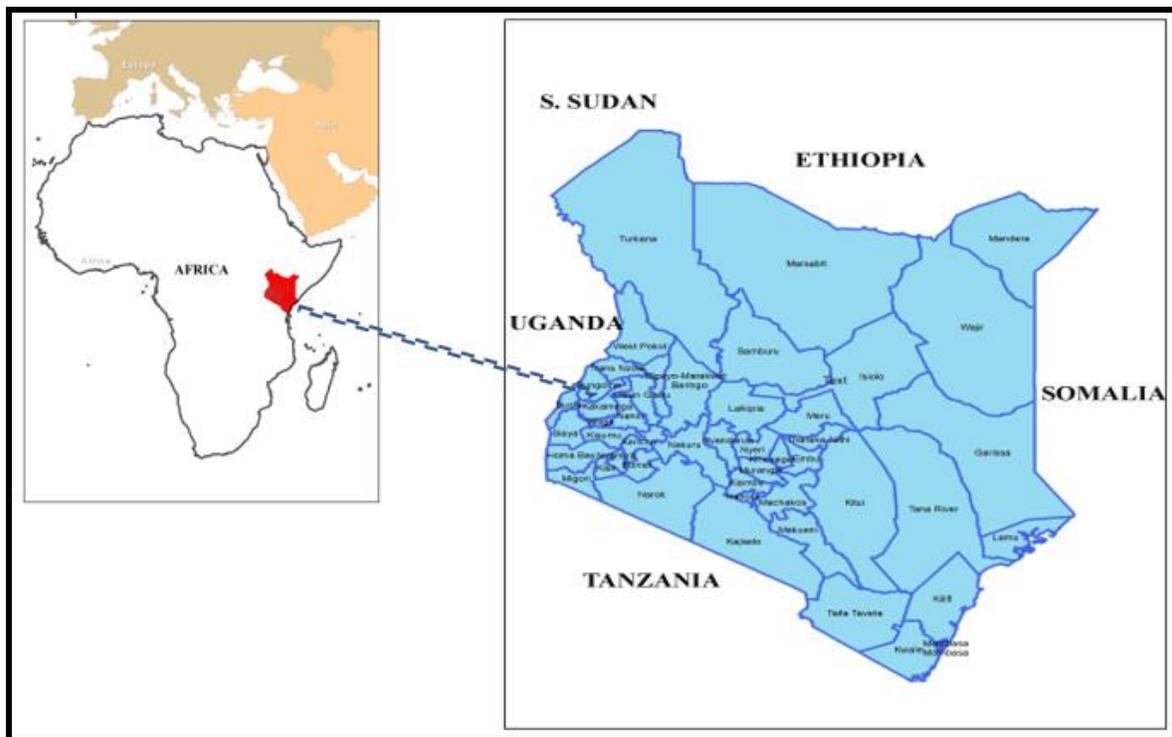


Figure 1. A map of Kenya showing the location of the Study Area (Author, 2020).

2. Tourism Evolution in Kenya and the Emerging Issues

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Tourism is an integral sector of the Kenyan economy by contributing to the Country's Gross Domestic Product, employing many Kenyans in hotel industries and other tourism-related sectors. However, the sector faces challenges that affect the optimum performance of the sector and need to be addressed for successful operations. The historical development of tourism in Kenya and the sector's emerging issues are discussed in this section.

2.1. Evolution of Tourism in Kenya.

That tourism is an important part of the Kenyan economy is reflected in its contribution to the Country's economy by creating job opportunities for many and foreign earnings. According to Letoluo and Wangombe (2018) tourism is the third-largest important sector in Kenya's economy just behind agriculture and manufacturing by accounting for at least 13% of Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) also the third-largest foreign exchange earner after tea and horticulture sectors. At the moment, the Country's main tourism products include; (a) Safari tourism – that is based on the wildlife assets and nature, the former which is seasonal and depends on the migration patterns of wild animals, whereas the latter is highly inaccessible due to its remote nature – (b) Coastal tourism that relies on the long coastlines of Kenya with beautiful beaches and luxurious resorts for tourism and the rich coastal culture and (c) Business and Conferences that International, regional and local tourists for specific business activities (World-Bank, 2010). Development of the sector has a long history dating back to 1898 when Kenya was still under East African Protectorate, with the establishment of game reserves and control of hunting through an enacted legislation and formation of a game department in 1907 by the British for effective management of wildlife and control of hunting activities throughout the Country (Masau & Prideaux, 2003). While at first Kenya specialized in-game hunting tourism and attracted upper segments of oversea visitors to Kenya for hunting expeditions, an opportunity to diversify into beach tourism was grasped in the 1960s to increase the Country's foreign earning thus attracting many middle-income segments to Kenya especially Europe and North America in 1970s and early 80s. According to World-Bank (2010), the Country's foreign earnings from tourism had reached approximately US\$220 million by 1980s and the figure tripled further to US\$630 million by 1994 representing about a fifth of the total foreign earnings by Kenya. The tourism sector experienced several challenges (both internal and external) after the 1990s that affected its performance and international arrivals declined rapidly. Kubo (2004) lists the devastating effects of El Nino rains of 1997, ethnic clashes as a result of elections in 1997, world economic recession, threats of terrorism especially attack the American embassy in 1997 and corruption in the government as major factors that contributed to decline of the tourism sector. The political stability that followed the change of regime in 2002 through the election, macro, and micro-economic reforms introduced among other factors were credited to an increase in the number of tourists visiting Kenya between 2002 and 2006. Another wave of political violence following a disputed election in 2007 saw a decline of foreigners visiting Kenya. However, according to GOK (2017), the underperformance of the Kenya tourism sector can be attributed to security issues and lack innovation, overreliance on the international tourism market, poor tourism infrastructure, and the general perception about the safety of Kenya, and poor marketing. The general emerging issues in the tourism sector and the current state of affairs are discussed in the following section.

2.2. The Emerging Issues in Kenyan Tourism Sector

This section outlines and discusses the general issue that affects the performance of the tourism sector in Kenya. In most cases, the issues identified are responsible for the underperformance of the sector and would, therefore, need to be addressed for a smooth and successful realization of government strategies for tourism in Kenya. The issues discussed include the Overreliance of the tourism sector on the international market, the seasonal nature of tourism, safety and security issues, and the sustainability of the sector.

2.2.1. The sensitivity of Kenyan tourism to External Factors

The Kenyan tourism sector's backbone is the international markets making it so vulnerable to global fluid events. These factors may be economic, political, environmental, or social. Before the global health pandemic (Covid-19) outbreak, the international arrivals in Kenya were on an upward trajectory rising from 2,025,206 in 2018 to 2,048,334 in 2019 representing a 1.2% increase (Irindu, 2020). According to GOK (2019b), a majority (63.15%) of the visitors came for a holiday, 13.5% for business trips, 10.6% to visit families and friends while the remaining 12.75% visited for education, medical and shopping reasons. While the increase in numbers of tourism is important to the economy as it contributes hugely to the Country's GDP, (1.9Bn US\$ in 2011) according to Njoroge (2014), and KSh 157.4 billion in 2018 according to government figures (GOK, 2019a), the tourism sector becomes so much exposed to global

phenomena that could affect the traveling of tourists leading to the collapse of the sector. Kenya has been a victim of these global events that weaken the tourism sector as it has weak domestic tourism but a very thriving international market. Irandu (2020) reveals that revenues from tourism and travel in Kenya are expected to decline by at least 60% this year due to the global pandemic as it has strongly hit Kenya’s top tourist markets outside East Africa like the USA, the UK, India, China, Germany, France, and Italy. The international market's dependence exposed the sector further to the COVID-19 pandemic compared with the domestic and local markets. A government of Kenya report on the impact of covid-19 on tourism in Kenya (GOK, 2020b) revealed that the international tourism market had the highest cancellations at 81.3%, followed by the domestic market at 64.2% and the regional market at 38.3%. This was besides other negative impacts reported like an eviction from business premises, increased financial borrowing by tourism organizations, closure of business among others. In the past, unpredictable global events have also had an impact on tourist arrival thus affecting the economy. The 2008 global financial crisis, the threat of terror attacks, political instability in Kenya, and diplomatic wrangles are some of the factors that could lead to automatic cancellation of flights or upon issuance of travel advisories against nonessential traveling to Kenya. The external factors that have previously affected the tourism industry in Kenya are summarized in table 1 below.

Table 1. External forces affecting tourism in Kenya

Categories of crises	Type of External Crises
Global Health Crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Covid-19 pandemic (2020) ▪ Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (2003) outbreak. (SARS) ▪ The 2004 Ebola Scare ▪ The outbreak of H1N1 Flu in 2009
The threat of terrorism in Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nairobi DusitD2 Hotel terrorist attack in 2019 ▪ Garissa University terrorist attack in 2016 ▪ Westgate Mall Terrorist Attack in 2013 ▪ The bombing of Paradise Mombasa Hotel in 2002 ▪ The terrorist attack on the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998 ▪ The kidnapping of foreign tourists in Lamu (2011) and Cuban doctors (2019).
Global Economic Crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Great Recession (2007-2009) ▪ Oil crises
Political Instability and uncertainty in Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2007 post-election violence and uncertainty after every election. ▪ Coup d’état in Kenya in 1982 ▪ Travel advisories

Source: Author (2020).

2.2.2. Political Instability and Insecurity

The general security and stability of a host country is an important factor for tourism as many countries rely on international tourists to support their sectors. Stability in a country is therefore crucial to foreign tourists and determines their choice of a destination. Any form of instability or civil unrest in a country or part of a country would, therefore, be a repelling force to tourists planning to visit any place. In Kenya, moments of instability like prolonged electioneering periods or civil unrest after the election in 2008 and 2017 compelled key players in the tourism industry like embassies to offer travel advisories to tourists, thus slowing down the tourism market development (De Sausmarez, 2013; GOK, 2018, 2019b; World-Bank, 2010). In 2007/08, when Kenya experienced the worst form of post-election violence, the international tourist arrivals reduced significantly from 1,817,600 in 2017 to 1,203,200 in 2008 at the peak of the violence, therefore affecting hotel occupancy in Kenya (Kariuki, 2018). Similarly, threats of terror attacks have had a huge impact on the Kenyan economy by discouraging tourists from visiting the Country for

fear of abduction or murder by terrorists. According to Repeated terrorist attacks at influential places frequented by tourists like Westgate Mall and other public places and threat of attack by terror organization like Somali-based Al Shabab has also caused the embassies of leading tourist market to issue travel advisories against non-essential visits to Kenya in a number of occasions resulting into cancellation of many flights (Cannon & Ruto Pkalya, 2019). This has had a devastating effect on the economy when hotels are closing, and thousands of jobs are lost. Between 2011 and 2013, when Kenya witnessed an increased number of terror attacks and fatalities, the international arrivals declined significantly with a 1% increase in a fatality, resulting in a 0.132% decrease by arrivals, causing Kenya to lose approximately 157.1 million Kenya Shillings (Buigut & Amendah, 2016).

2.2.3. Tourism Sector’s Seasonality and the Impacts.

The main tourism product in Kenya is wildlife and coastal beach tourism. While in some instances, Seasonal fluctuations may occur due to the holiday period preferences by the tourists in a tourism generating country, in other cases, the causes may be natural, like climatic changes that may be beyond the control of the host countries. Striking a balance between the two is therefore very important to avoid losses due to underutilization of tourism products, which could have a devastating economic impact, especially among those whose employment is dependent on tourism. Kenya, which largely depends on international tourism for the development of the sectors, is hugely affected by seasonality. The majority of the foreign tourists (Tanzania and Uganda excluded) are from America and European Countries who prefer to visit Kenya in the summer holidays, increasing bed-occupancy rates at that point in the season (Manono & Rotich, 2013). In Kenya, most international tourists visit for a holiday, as was the case in 2018 when holiday visits accounted for 73.9% of the total arrivals while only 12.7% came for business (GOK, 2019a). As demonstrated in table 2, most of the holiday visits occur in the third quarter of the years, corresponding summer holidays in Kenya’s main source of tourism market.

Table 2. The Quarterly visits by tourists in Kenya (2014-2018) The values are in thousands.

Quarter	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
1 st Qtr.	313.8	241.8	280.0	306.1	350.4	1,492.1
2 nd Qtr.	305.4	224.1	248.8	280.8	315.2	1,374.3
3rd Qtr.	309.9	296.6	355.5	335.0	446.1	1,743.1
4 th Qtr.	279.0	280.7	312.6	296.0	386.1	1,554.4

Source: Table compiled based on figures adapted from Economic Survey 2019 (GOK, 2019a).

Besides beach tourism, safari tourism, which is also a backbone of the international tourism market in Kenya, is seasonal as it depends on the migration patterns of the wild animals (World-Bank, 2010). The months of September, October, and November are thus the most important for safari holidays, while heavy rains at the Coast in April, May, and June hinder tourism activities due to unpassable roads and long grasses obstructing the game view (Dieke, 1991). In summary, seasonality is not suitable for tourism and hotel industries that rely on tourists. It renders jobless, the majority of the labor force in the sector, who by nature of the jobs they execute are considered peripheral and could be expanded or contracted easily. This is because they are generally semi or unskilled, less educated, and doing the job on a contract or part-time especially in peak seasons.

2.2.4. Unsustainable Development and Space Utilization.

Overcommercialization of tourism without paying necessary attention to the environments sensitivity often leads to the commodification of space, which could have long-term socio-economic and environmental impacts on areas around. This is particularly true in places a thriving tourism sector with high demands for tourism facilities like hotels and well-managed beaches. This high demand sometimes leads to haphazard development of constructions along the beaches with less regard to the planning rules and regulations. In Turkey, for instance, Tosun (2001) refers to

haphazard construction of hotels along the Aegean and Mediterranean Coastal strips of Turkey with less regard to the construction regulations and laws regulating development along with the Coastal Strips and without the integration of the new architecture with the dominant and traditional ones giving rise to 'architectural pollution'. This is presented as the unsustainable development of tourism.

In Kenya, over-tourism and uncontrolled development for the tourism infrastructure have been experienced at the tourism hotspots, i.e. the Kenyan Coast and National parks. Whereas at the Kenyan Coast there has been haphazard and uncontrolled development of hotels to accommodate the rising number of tourists at the expense of housing for the local populations, other parts of the Country have witnessed oversaturation of tourism infrastructures at specific locations like national parks leading to the destruction of the ecosystem and in some cases rising negative sentiments against tourism by local populations (Maingi, 2020). , uncontrolled development exerts a lot of pressure on the coastal ecosystems, i.e., coral reefs and mangroves, coastal lands, sanitation, energy, and aquatic life, besides exposing coastal residents to potential socio-economic problems.

3. Problems arising from tourism in Kenya

Despite the economic benefits that Kenya has been attributed to the strong tourism sector, several negative social, environmental, economic, and political effects could also be attributed to tourism. In an unplanned manner, the mushrooming of tourism facilities has no doubt led to environmental degradation, compromised tourism product quality, and other challenges. Therefore, this section highlights some of the most conspicuous negative impacts that can be linked to increasing tourism activities in different aspects of life.

3.1. Kenya Beach Tourism and Impacts on Environment

Besides wildlife tourism, beach tourism is one of the most popular tourism activities in Kenya. The development of beach tourism in Kenya started in the twentieth century after the establishment of colonial rule in Kenya, with Coastal sandy beaches and warm climate attracting mainly European settlers from the interior parts of Kenya. (Irandu*, 2004). Since then, beach tourism in Kenya has seen a significant rise in both local and international tourists, thus becoming one of Kenya's major tourism products. Kenya has a relatively long coastline covering 536 kilometers of the total 3,500 kilometers national border of the Country. This makes Kenyan coast to be one of the most popular regional tourist destinations in the region for European tourists and constituting the highest bed night stays in the Kenyan tourism sector (World-Bank, 2010). The inconsistent arrival of international tourists at Kenyan Coast due to security, global economic conditions, and political instability has made the government adopt some policy measures that would shift Kenya into a mass tourism destination. The tourism sector in Kenya has thus bounced back to its best performance in terms of international arrivals, with 2018 figures indicating 2,025,206 arrivals compared to 1,474,671, 1,180,500, 1,822,885 and 1,816,800 for the years 2017, 2015, 2011 and 2007 respectively (GOK, 2018). The arrival numbers increased further in 2019 with 1,515,433 arrivals between January and September of that year and representing a 0.017% increase compared to the same period the previous years (GOK, 2019b). While the increase in arrival numbers has had a positive impact on the economy due to the development of tourism and hospitality facilities, less consideration has been paid to the sustainability of mass tourism and its potential long-term effects on the social, economic, and environmental well-being of the host regions. Destruction of coral reefs, for instance, could have far-reaching socio-economic and environmental effects as they are the most biodiverse ecosystem of the ocean, hosting about a third of all marine life and therefore providing proteins and source of livelihood to tens of millions of people living close to the reefs in more than 100 countries coral reefs coastlines (Veron et al., 2009). The Kenyan Coastline has experienced serious environmental degradation besides other social ills introduced due to mass beach tourism. As demonstrated by Akama (2000), the high number of tourists flooding the coastal beaches, especially during peak seasons, has resulted in environmental pollution, degradation, and overexploitation of marine resources like coral reefs and at the same, the haphazard and unplanned mushrooming of facilities like hotels to support tourism at the coast has led to the destruction of the delicate marine ecosystem like the sandy beaches and lagoons. For instance, Hoorweg, Foeken, and Obudho (2000) identified the concentration of coastal tourism near the Southern Coast of Kenya as a heavy burden to the beach and the local reefs leading to their degradation. Also, the increase in tourism traffic has resulted in more waste and sewage generation from the local hotels beyond the carrying capacity of the existing garbage and disposal systems, causing a lot of pollution to the environment (Irandu, 2006). , instance, in Mombasa, tourist hotels that release waste and sewage are known to be a major source of nitrogenous compounds into

the ocean than the industrial effluents livestock waters (Mwaura, Umezawa, Nakamura, & Kamau, 2017). Unfortunately, the sewerage systems and infrastructures in East African Coastal towns and cities that receive a large number of tourists every year are poorly developed to handle sewage pollutants (Okuku et al., 2011). Pollution has also been witnessed in the ocean due to oil spills from ships and boats used by tourists that endanger human life and the aquatic life. In 1988 for instance, there was a major oil spill at Kilindini harbor in Mombasa that had a prolonged an instant and prolonged impact on the aquatic lives as it resulted in the death of many mangroves trees in the ocean and other aquatic lives (Visser & Njuguna, 1992). Besides being a threat to human and aquatic life, spillages in the ocean and sewage contamination could also have an adverse economic effect on the people and general economy when the beaches and fishing areas are closed down thus affecting the tourism and fishing industry respectively.

3.2. Socio-cultural Problems of Tourism and the impact on Heritage Sites.

Like other countries, Kenya is endowed with cultural heritage sites that attract tourists who are interested in learning or seeing new cultures, heritage, and nature. Cultural and heritage tourism is increasingly becoming popular and important as there is a shift in tourism from nature-based tourism to cultural heritage tourism globally (Nyaupane, White, & Budruk, 2006). In many developing countries like Kenya, these world heritage sites are also seen as sources of cultural pride and a means of economic generation through tourism and other international projects. However, the question lingers about how to make use of these sites sustainably for the benefit of the present generation but without compromising the ability of future generations also to benefit from them. While economic growth, especially in rural setups, could be attributed to cultural tourism, the local culture is at risk of depletion and quality of product compromised if the demand exceeds the supply and the culture left unprotected (Agayi & Gündüz, 2020). The growing number of tourists visiting these sites poses a socio-cultural and economic threat to the sites if they don't pay so many considerations to environmental sensitivity alongside other factors in the host regions. Tourism can alter the host community's day-to-day activities or even their norms, identities, traditions, and values resulting in social and cultural disruption. Several pieces of literature have therefore focused on the potentially negative social-cultural impacts as a result of the interaction between tourists and the host communities (Oppermann & Kye-Sung, 1997). In Kenya as demonstrated by Nyamanga (2008), tourism has deeply eroded the local culture, especially at the Kenyan Coast when the locals imitate foreign cultures like dressing habits, increased drug abuse especially among the youth, a rising number of children dropping out of schools to entertain the tourists, moral decay when the locals participate in prostitution, pornographic production among other social ills in the society. For instance, in the Kenyan Coast towns of Malindi, Mombasa, Mtwapa, Kilifi, among others where the sex trade is becoming increasingly popular, some foreign tourists have taken advantage of the vulnerability of young girls and boys due to unemployment and poverty to introduce them to drug abuse and child sex (Weldon, 2013). Sex trade at the Coast has also significantly led to the spread of HIV/AIDS (Omondi & Ryan, 2017). This has led to social problems in society, like many kids being orphaned due to the spread of HIV/AIDS, school drop-out due to early pregnancy, and young people leaving school to work as tour guides among other jobs.

Overreliance on overseas tour operators and travel agents for marketing and promotion of Kenyan tourism product to the international market has also impacted how Kenya and Africa, in general, are perceived abroad. Tour companies' role is very significant as they influence the tourist's attitudes, behavior, and destination preferences. Also, they play an important role in determining the type and volume of tourists that would visit a particular tourist destination. Relying on these international tour companies to promote a country's image and products would be harmful to the overall performance of the tourism sector because these companies' role is not motivated by the desire to promote a good image of the Country but rather to make maximum profits. For instance, in Kenya, these tour companies have promoted Kenya as a popular destination with beautiful beaches and attractive wildlife (big-five) to raise more profits while ignoring the rich and diverse culture and other environmental attractions (Akama, 1997). This has also allowed international tour companies to advance negative stereotypes about Kenya and Africa.

3.3. Economic Problems arising from Tourism

For a long time, tourism has played a significant role in Kenya's economic development in various ways. The important role tourism plays in Kenya can be best reflected in its contribution to the Country gross domestic product that stood at an average of 12% between 1995 and 2001 and employing about 9% of the total direct employment in the modern private and public sectors in Kenya (Valle & Yobesia, 2009). The performance of the sector continued to

be strong netting in a total of 94 billion Kenya shillings (KES) in foreign exchange, a value that was comparable to the leading foreign exchange sources of revenue like tea and horticulture that earned the Country 104.6 and 89.3 billion KES respectively in 2013.(Buigut & Amendah, 2016). The sector's growth is further reflected in the increased revenue it earns to the country Country despite global economic challenges, the threat of tourism, political instability, and other factors with the sector earning an estimated Kshs.115,131,141,00 between January and September of 2019, representing a rise of 0.6%. in the same period the previous year (GOK, 2019b). However, as Buigut (2018) point out, the number of international arrivals in Kenya has significantly dropped due to the threat of terrorism coupled with the increasing numbers of fatalities thus lowering the revenue earned from the sector. Despite being a very crucial economic driver, tourism in Kenya has faced several challenges some of which have led to significant economic problems. Largely relying on international tourists, the Kenyan tourism sector has become part of the Global Tourism Production Network with the majority of tourists coming from the developed countries of Europe, America and also neighboring countries like Tanzania and Uganda among others (GOK, 2019b). The inter-connection between Kenya and other international actors in the tourism sector has also brought it, international players, besides the local ones. The participation in the national tour operators has increasingly sidelined the local communities of Kenya and increasingly relied on the elite group that include the Europeans (whites), Kenyans of-Asian decent and expatriates due to the existence of an embedded racial network that makes it easy to gain access to international markets than the local actors (Christian, 2016). Besides, most of the foreign earnings from tourism activities in Kenya and other African countries remain overseas or are sent to the wealthy countries like the Netherlands since the tourism industry in Kenya and other African countries are dominated by transnational corporations based in those countries (Kubo, 2004). The economic benefits derived from tourism thus benefit external actors more than Kenyans.

3.4. Socio-economic and Environmental Impacts of Wildlife and Nature-Based tourism in Kenya

Kenya like other countries in the region has rich biodiversity including many unique wild animals and plants and also a very beautiful natural landscape. Therefore, the health and quality of these resources are to ensure that the tourism sector functions appropriately as they act as the main source of tourist attraction besides beaches. However, these nature-based tourist sites continue to face threats of environmental destruction as well as the impacts of climate change. If not well managed, nature-based tourism could be very destructive to the natural environment especially by overstressing the carrying capacity of the host regions, thus becoming a predator to the environment (Krüger, 2005). There is evidence of environmental degradation in Kenya as a result of increased tourism activities related to wildlife and nature, which causes depletion of forest lands, pollution of water, and destruction of the natural habitat (Atieno & Njoroge, 2018). This is besides other impacts like harassment of the wildlife and degradation of local communities' cultures and traditions. Wildlife tourism has also had a social impact on communities living around major wildlife conservation zones. In some instances, communities, especially the Maasai Community, have had to be forcefully evicted from communal lands on short notice without any consultation with the affected communities and with very little compensation (as little as KES 30,000 or USD 300 per household) to create space for coral wildlife conservation zones (Oduor, 2020). The overall effect of such unilateral decision is that it destroys the solidarity and cooperation attitude expected from the local community, some of whom are very significant in the success of tourism activities and leaving out some members in the conservancy compensation programs may increase human-wildlife conflicts as they may embark on retaliatory measures to hunt and kill wild animals that predate on their livestock (Bedelian, 2014).

CONCLUSION:

This study illustrates the significance of the tourism sector and its contribution to the socio-economic and political development and growth of Kenya. However, analysis of the sector reveals that the sustainability of tourism is dependent on addressing the many challenges and emerging issues like security, environment, and economic crises among others. Any adopted strategies to improve the sector performance should, therefore, take into consideration the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the same. This would ensure that the benefits derived from tourism activities in Kenya are long-term and sustainable. Another key factor identified in the study is the reliance of the Kenya tourism sector on international markets at the expense of domestic and regional ones. As discussed, the international market is very much exposed to external and global factors, thus vulnerable to global crises like pandemics, economic recessions, insecurity, and so forth. Encouraging participation by local actors and investors in both local and international tourism is one way of reducing the dominance of foreign actors in the industry and

ensuring that the economic benefits remain in the Country and with the local populations. Besides, additional efforts should be directed at strengthening domestic tourism to offer an alternative way of the sector stabilization instead of overly relying on international and regional markets. In case of the disruption of the international market by external forces identified in this study, strong domestic tourism would protect the economy by preserving many jobs, especially among those who are likely to be rendered jobless due to the emergence of the factors. Importantly, the sustainability of the sector should be safeguarded by ensuring that developments are sensitive to environmental and social impacts. Construction of hotels and all developments related to tourism should therefore comply with construction regulation and environmental impact assessment requirements.

Compliance with Ethical Standard

Conflict of Interests: The authors declare that they have no actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interests for this article.

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