
EFFECTIVENESS OF VISA FACILITATION AND INTERNATIONAL OPENNESS AS STRATEGIES FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIA AND SELECTED AFRICAN COUNTRIES

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined the effectiveness of visa facilitation and international openness as strategies for tourism development with focus on Nigeria and other selected countries in Africa. Visa/international openness involve the policies of the government of a particular country to be more open to citizens of other countries through visa facilitation. A longitudinal survey was carried out to collect data on international tourist arrivals, international tourism receipts and index on Nigeria visa requirements from the database of World Bank and World Economic Forum. The data were collected for a period of 14 years from 2006-2019. Pearson Correlations was used to examine the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. Meanwhile, a cross-sectional analysis was done to compare the position of Nigeria and other African countries. The study found that there was a weak relationship between visa requirements and international tourist arrivals, and international tourism receipts. The positions of Nigeria in Africa and globally show lack of efforts by the government in visa requirements and international openness which is negatively affecting international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts.*

KEYWORDS: tourism; visa facilitation; international openness; development; Nigeria; Africa

INTRODUCTION

The travel and tourism industry has continued to expand and diversify over the past six decades; it is now one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the World (World Tourism Organization, 2010). The industry continues to make a real difference to the lives of millions of people by driving growth, creating jobs, reducing poverty and fostering development and tolerance (World Economic Forum, 2017). Tourism industry also contributed US\$7.6 trillion to the global economy (10.2% of global GDP and generated 292 million jobs (1 in 10 jobs on the planet) in

2016 (world Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). Globally, international tourist arrivals in 2018 grow by 6% which is a consolidation of a strong result of 2017 (+7%). An estimate of 1.403 billion international tourist arrivals were received by destinations around the world, in 2018, some 74 million more than 2017. All regions enjoyed an increase in international arrivals led by the Middle East (+10%) and Africa (+7%). This shows a significant increase in tourist arrivals in Africa (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2019). The past three decades witnessed an increased contribution of tourism sector to Africa's growth, employment and trade. During the 1995 – 2014, international tourist arrivals to Africa grew by an average of 6 percent per year and tourism export revenue, 9 percent per year. The average total contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) increased from \$69 billion in 1995 – 1998 to \$166 billion in 2011 – 2014, that is from 6.8% of GDP in Africa to 8.5% of GDP (UNCTAD, 2017)

Nigeria's economy is equally benefiting from the rapid growth of travel and tourism. The total contribution of the industry to GDP grew from NGN1, 339.5bn in 2013 (3.2% of GDP) to NGN 3,859.3bn (4.0% of GDP) in 2015, and it is expected to rise by 6.0% per annum to NGN 6,908.8bn by 2025 (WTTC, 2015). Tourism has also contributed to employment generation, infrastructure development and poverty alleviation. In order to fully reap the socio-economic benefits international tourism can generate for a country, it is necessary to put in place conditions that make the country competitive, the most important of which is to make destinations easy to visit (UNWTO, 2016). Making it easy for tourism to visit a particular destination depends on visa policies of the country. Visa policies are among the most important governmental formalities influencing international tourism. The development of policies and procedures for visas, as well as for other important travel document such as passports, is closely linked to the development of tourism.

Despite the fact that Nigeria is naturally endowed with rich tourist sites across her geopolitical zones, blessed with richness and diversity in culture, the industry has not received adequate attention in policy formulation and implementation. The prioritization of the sector by the government, the marketing and branding strategy, international openness/visa openness continue to record low ranks in the international tourism over the past years. These have equally affected the number of international tourist visiting the country.

Studies have shown that prioritization of tourism industry and visa openness lead to development of tourism for any destination (UNWTO, 2016; AFDB, 2017; WEF, 2017; Volker, 2018; Adinegara, 2018; Upadhyay, 2016; Bertoli & Moraga, 2018; Jayswal & Jaiswal, 2016; Pandit, Khan & Manoharsajnani, 2017), while Visa restrictions affect international flows (Artal-Tur, Pallardo-Lopez & Requena-Silvente, 2012; Czaika & Neumayer, 2017). Though there are studies on the effect of visa facilitation and international openness, studies that examined the relationships between visa facilitation, international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts in Nigeria are lacking. Thus, this study seeks to examine the nature of relationships that exist between visa facilitation and tourism development in Nigeria, and also to compare Nigeria's position on international/visa openness with selected African countries.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism in Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the destinations of the world with abundant tourism resources ranging from waterfalls, cultural and religious festivals, heritage sites, beaches etc. (Aiyamenkhue, 2010), but has not been able to package these resources and compete favourably with other destinations in Africa, and the world in general (Agina, 2018). Nigeria's inability to develop and promote her tourism resources to compete with other nations was described by World Travel and Tourism Council as a missed opportunity for economic growth and development (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2015). Despite the abundance of tourism resources and the existence of tourism boards at state levels and Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation, it is worrisome that country is not performing well in terms of international inbound tourists' arrivals and tourism receipts for direct spending by the tourists. Available records from the database of the World Bank shows a fluctuating trend of both the international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts (World Bank, 2019). In 2019 World Economic Forum report, Nigeria recorded only 1,889,000 international tourist arrivals, received in revenue US\$2,549.1 million from international tourism inbound receipts, with 1,234,400 jobs contributed which is 1.7% of total jobs (World Economic Forum, 2019).

One of the major factors that determines who might visit a destination is access (Yip & Pratt, 2018). Most times access to destinations is restricted by government rules and regulations. Governments impose barriers such as passport and visa requirements that are obstacles to travel (Liu & McKercher, 2016). While visa restrictions impede international tourists' arrivals and tourism receipts, liberalization visa policy can result in significant increase in visitor-numbers (Balli, Balli & Cebecchi, 2013). In Nigeria, government has not given much attention to tourism development and it is evident in her rating on the prioritization of travel and tourism over the years. Besides, there is inconsistency in visa policy and bilateral agreements with other nations, many tourists find the application process cumbersome and costly. This has resulted in some tourists switching to other developing countries with tourism potentials. Zengeni and Zengeni (2012) recommend that passport holders from emerging markets such as China should be targeted with liberal visa policies, as this would encourage more visitors from such countries to visit. Tour operators in Nigeria experience much disappointment due to harsh visa policies in Nigeria, below is a post on the Facebook wall of one of the tour operators in Nigeria; Nne Tomato Jos Unachukwu - Okaro by her client;

"Hello Janine, unfortunately, because of the incredibly difficult and lengthy visa process for Nigeria, we have decided to reroute to Ghana to see Benin and Togo. I do apologize, but keep my payment and apply it to lobbying the government to become more tourist friendly (or at least less unfriendly) as it is a deterrent to travel to your country. It is by far the most difficult visa process I have seen in the world and I've been to 150 countries, Thank you for your help"

This is one of many such experiences of intending visitors to Nigeria. Meanwhile, as many destinations in Africa are liberalizing their visa policies to attract visitors from top spenders' countries, Nigeria is either increasing the visa fee or introducing some stringent measures to

applicants from top spenders' countries. Below is the table showing World's top 10 spenders and visa charges in Nigeria to citizen of these countries who wish to visit Nigeria.

Countries	Single entry (US\$)	Multiple entry (US\$)	TWP fee (US\$)	STR Visa (US\$)
China	64	64	64	64
United State	160	160	160	160
Germany	88	110	110	110
United Kingdom	144	472	472	472
France	88	110	110	110
Australia	141	176	176	176
Canada	75	150	180	150
Russian Federation	84	200	100	100
Korea	30	80	30	30
Italy	88	110	110	110

Table 1: World Top 10 Spenders and Nigeria Visa charges

Visa Facilitation and Tourism Development

Policies on visa facilitation are part of the strategies used by governments of various nations to influence international tourism. The formulation and implementation of these policies regarding the acquisition of international passports, visa applications and other documents needed for travelling correlated with tourism development in any nation (UNWTO, 2016). According to Karaman (2016), "visa policies have been important instrument of control for the movement of people and what they effectuate depends on their character. They impede the flow of people when they are restrictive; they facilitate the entry and admission of people, when they are liberal". The requirement for a visa or entry permit can be applied as a tool to manipulate demand artificially, either to encourage, it (for example, undertourism) or restrict movements (for example, overtourism), (Timothy, 1995; McKercher & Zhang, 2017). Visa policies are aimed for securing the country and her citizens, controlling the movement of people in terms of purpose of visit, number of days to stay and activities to perform during stay, and generation of funds, visa policies also affect the development of international tourism (UNWTO/WTTC, 2012).

Visa Restriction and Tourism Performance

Having access is one of the factors that determines who might visit a destination and the profile of the visitors (Yip & Pratt, 2018). Meanwhile, access to destination is most times, restricted by government rules and regulations. Government imposes barriers such as passport and visa requirements that are obstacles to travel. (Liu & McKercher, 2016). It is also argued that

government policies on travels, not only affect the ability of the tourists to travel, but also affects the development of other travel – related services such as transportation, hotels, attractions and tour operators (Ascher, 1984). Visa requirement may also be bad for tourism as it discourages spur – of – the – moment, and even planned decisions to travel; whether for business or pleasure, especially if the requirement involves much effort or cost to potential traveler (Boratynski & Szyborska, 2006; Tchorbadjiska, 2007; Whyte, 2009).

Various studies have been conducted on the effect of visa restriction of tourism performance and there are evidence that visa restrictions could affect international tourist arrivals, international tourism receipts and other multiplier effects as a result of international tourism arrivals such as employment and knowledge exchange. (Artal – Tur, Pallar do – Lopez & Regnena - Silveate, 2012; Czaika & Neumayer, 2017; Volker, 2018; Czaika & De Hass, 2016). In the study of Enemu and Dim – Jacob (2018) on the major forms of visa restrictions experienced by the academic and senior staff of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Nigeria, they found that visa denials, ineligibility to apply for a visa, being allowed limited time within the host country and outrageous visa requirements are the major forms of restrictions experienced in their quest to travel outside Nigeria, mostly for academic conferences. Song, Gartner; and Tasci (2012), with the study of Li and Song (2013) found that enhanced visa restriction in the lead up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics adversely affected both international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts. Bendell and Ghoshal (2015) in their study also observed a 20% decline in day trip visitors from the state of Mexico since their introduction of much stricter identification protocols.

Pham, Nghiem, and Dwyer (2017) studied the economic impacts of a changing visa fee for Chinese tourists to Australia and found that the introduction of the visa fee caused a 21% reduction in Chinese visitors, and this drop is equivalent to a reduction of 0.4% in total exports. As the export dropped, the Australian dollar depreciated. The net loss of exports as a result of reduction in Chinese tourists' visits directly affected employment negatively and lowers its demand by 0.07%. Consequently, the real wage is reduced by 0.06%. This equally affected household income and consumption by 0.1%. Karaman (2016) studied the impact of visa restrictions on inbound tourism in Turkey, and found that the visa restrictions imposed on a country have a detrimental impact of 29% on average on inward mobility and imposition of visa restrictions divert tourist flows to visa – free destinations with tourism potentials. Czaika and Neumayer (2017) argue that the introduction of a visa restriction by a destination country for citizens from a particular origin country deters tourism inflows by about 20% and visa restrictions also reduce bilateral trade and foreign investment. Kuzey, Karaman and Akman (2019) argue that coercive visa policies are meant to deter unwanted individuals, such as terrorists, illegal aliens, drug and human traffickers, etc but are also of the opinion that this actions have a deterring impact on ordinary tourist flows.

Visa Liberalization and Tourism Performance

Visa liberalization is the government's policy of relaxing the restrictions or requirements for obtaining visas by citizens of other nations. Most developed countries have waiver policies for visitors on short–visit and these policies have improved tourism development in these destinations (Tretheway & Mak, 2006; Douglas, Lubbe & Kruger, 2012). Countries that fail to provide visa

privileges to nationals of its key markets is unlikely to remain competitive unless if the destination has a special attraction (Enright & Newton, 2005). Easing visa requirements effectively reduces market access barriers and, in doing so, has the potential to increase the number of international arrivals (Lawson & Roychowdhury, 2013). Visa liberalization and visa waiving policies are undoubtedly among the key factors affecting more tourists to a destination (Karaman, 2016). Visa liberalization programmes such as visa policies of G20 countries, USA visa waiver programme Expansion (2008), Australia ETA programme, the visa policy of the United Kingdom for South Africa and Taiwan, the policy of the Canadian government for Mexico and Czech Republic and that of Korea Republic's policy for China, resulted to an increment in the number of foreigners arriving to these countries, revenues from the foreigners and the number of jobs created by their arrivals (UNWTO/WTTC, 2012).

Various studies have been carried out to ascertain the impact of visa liberalization on tourism and it is evident that visa liberalization facilitates international tourist arrivals and tourism receipts. The study of Adinegara (2018) on the impact of free visa policy on the number of foreign tourists to Bali, found that the policy led to an increase in the number of foreign tourist arrivals to the country by 10.29% in 2016. Yip & Pratt (2018) studied the evolution of Chinese mainland visitors to Hong Kong and found that the introduction of the individual visitor scheme (IVS) and multiple Visa policies increased the number of leisure visitors to Hong Kong from China due to increased access. Pujiharini and Ichihashi (2016) expressed the same view on the influence of free-visa policy on the number of international tourist arrivals to Indonesia.

In Hong Kong, Visa liberalization policies introduced in 2003, followed by the introduction of the same day visit programme from Shenghen resulted in a seven-fold increase in all arrivals from 2002-2014, while same day arrivals grew by 16 times over the same period (McKercher & Zhang, 2017). The liberalization of entry requirements between Korea and Japan resulted in a 12.1% growth in arrivals to Japan in its first year and a 25.0% growth in the second year (Lee, Song & Bendel, (2010). It was also noted by Hu (2013) that the implementation of the visa waiver programme in the United States has encouraged an additional 1.8 to 2.7 million pleasure or business trips generating an additional US\$6.9 to US\$10 billion in direct spending. These studies, show that visa liberalization is one of the key factors for propelling tourism development.

Visa and Visa Openness

African Development Bank (2018) define a visa as “an endorsement (through a certificate or stamp in a travel document) showing a visitor is allowed to enter the country for a specific length of time and for specific activities”. When people travel for business, leisure or other activities, they are required to obtain a visa before departure (Visa required), obtain a visa on arrival in the country (Visa on arrival), or no visa needed (No Visa). Some countries are also issuing eVisa, which means an electronic visa that can be obtained before departure from an official online platform.

Removal or loosening of restrictions on travel has, over the years resulted in the increase in international travels by tourists which is associated with an increase in the amount of money spent by tourists in a destination and jobs created due to their visits (UNWTO/WTTC, 2012). The Visa

policies of any nation determine to an extent the flow of tourists to the country. According to African Development Bank (2017), a visa is “an endorsement (though a certificate or a stamp in a travel document) showing a visitor is allowed to enter the country for a specific length of time and for specific activities”. When a foreigners travels to another destination, a visa may be required before traveling visa on arrival or no visa at all. These options depends on the visa policies of the destination and bilateral agreement between nations. The movement of individuals to other international destinations are regulated by certain policies of the government of the destinations. So far, while citizens of any destinations have rights to freely exit and enter their country, there is no international regulations that requires a particular destination to have free entry and exit by foreigners, thereby making their borders porous. Therefore countries of the world have the authority and powers to regulate, through various visa policies which on their own discretion decides the countries to allow their citizens to enter or not to enter (UNWTO/WTTC, 2012).

Visas of various forms, have many functions they perform and they include: ensuring security of the citizens and properties from would be visitor; controlling the type, number of people that visit, number of days for the visitor to stay and the programmes of the visitor in the destination; generation of funds from visa applicants; and regulate the inflows of visitors to avoid over tourism. In the year 1963, 87 representatives from different countries reached an agreement during the, United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism in Rome, that “Governments should extend to the maximum number of countries the practice of abolishing, through bilateral agreements or by unilateral decision, the requirement of entry visas for temporary visitors” (United Nations Conference on International Travel & Tourism 1964). This resulted in many bilateral and regional agreements among many countries of the world. In Africa, regional integration is making steady progress. In 2016, the measure of free entry by citizens of other nations was at 17%, while those that required visa to enter into other countries stood at 36%. Countries from ECOWAS recorded 100% in visa reciprocity, same as countries from EAC, while countries from UMA recorded 60% and SADC, 52% (AFDB, 2017).

The launching of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) and single Africa Air Transport Market in 2018 by 50 African countries during the AU in Kigali opened up the prospects of free movement of people across the continent. The AFCFTA provides an opportunity for an African market with an estimation of 1.2 billion people, with a gross domestic product of about US \$2.5 trillion. This agreement has the potential to boost trade between different African countries, benefiting the citizens and the entrepreneurs of these countries (African Union, 2018). Today, many countries in Africa are strategizing and improving their visa facilitation processes by adopting free visa to citizens of some countries or allowing the citizens of other countries to obtain visa on arrival to the host country in order to attract more visitors, investment and improve on bilateral trades and relationship. Countries in Africa are opening their borders to each other which makes travel within the continent easier than before (African Union, 2018).The visa openness report of 2018, shows that countries of Africa are opening their borders and welcoming people from other countries, making travel easier in the continent. This shows an improved sign from 2016, 2017 and 2018. People of the continent do not require visa to move within the continent like in previous years and visa requirements are just for fewer countries (AFDB, 2018). The AFCFTA

agreement have 52 signatories, but Eritrea, Nigeria and Tanzania have yet to sign. To date, 15 countries have deposited their instruments of AFCFTA ratification with the chairperson of the Africa Union Commission, and an additional four countries have received preliminary approval for ratification. The total number of ratifications approved and deposited now stands at 19. Only twenty two are needed for the agreement to be enforceable (Tralac, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Longitudinal design was used to gather data for this study. Secondary data on Visa Requirements Index, International Tourist Arrivals, and International tourist receipts were collected for Nigeria from 2006 – 2019. Meanwhile, for the comparative analysis, Visa Openness, International Openness, International Tourist Arrivals, and International tourist receipts were collected for 54 African countries from the databases of African Development Bank, World Bank, World Economic Forum and World Travel and Tourism Council, for the period of 2018. Scores for visa openness for African countries range from 0 – 1 highest, as calculated by the African Development Bank, while that of International Openness range from 1 – 7 highest as calculated by the World Economic Forum and World Travel and Tourism Council. Meanwhile, Pearson Correlations was used to analyze and test the data collected for Nigeria from 2006 – 2019. Besides, a cross-sectional analysis was used to assess and compare the performance of Nigeria and the selected African countries based on the visa openness, international openness, international tourist arrivals, and inbound receipts.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 and Figure 1 show the Visa Requirement Index, International Tourist Arrivals and Tourism Receipts for Nigeria from 2006 - 2019. The data shows a fluctuating trend in the visa requirements index and it reflects inconsistency in visa policy development and implementation in Nigeria.

Years	Visa Index (1 - 7)	Requirements	International Tourist Arrivals	International Tourism Receipts \$
2019	3.0		1,889,000	2,549,100,000
2018	3.0		1,276, 000	410,766,300
2017	4.0		1,255,000	403,900,000
2016	4.0		1,889,000	2,611,000,000
2015	2.0		1,255,000	470,000,000
2014	2.0		854,000	601,000,000
2013	3.8		600,000	616,000,000
2012	3.8		486,000	639,000,000
2011	3.5		715,000	688,000,000
2010	3.5		1,555,000	736,000,000
2009	3.7		1,141,000	761,000,000
2008	3.7		1,131,000	959,000,000
2007	3.5		1,212,000	337,000,000
2006	3.5		1,111,000	209,000,000

Table 2: Visa Requirements Index, International Tourist Arrivals and Tourism Receipts for Nigeria from 2006 – 2019.

Sources: Authors' compilation from World Economic Forum and World Bank various Issues

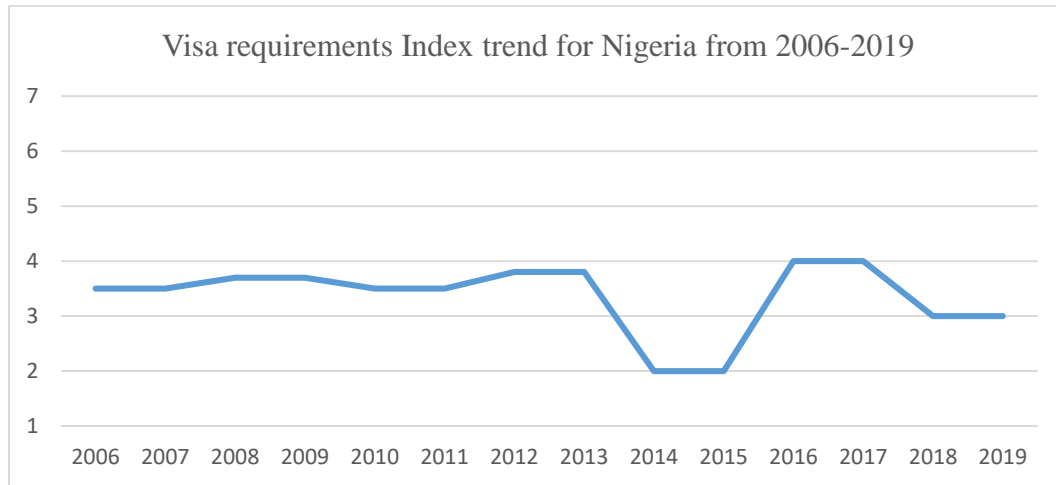


Figure 1: Visa requirements Index trend for Nigeria from 2006-2019

Visa Requirements, International Tourist Arrivals and International Tourism Receipts

Table 3 shows the correlations results of the relationships between visa requirements and international tourist arrivals, visa requirements and international tourism receipts, and international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts. The correlation coefficient shows a weak relationship between visa requirements and international tourist arrivals [(0.022) with a p-value of 0.942 which is higher than 0.05]. This implies that visa requirements to visit Nigeria has a weak relationship with number of international tourists visiting the country. This is as a result of irregular policies on visa requirements for tourists coming to Nigeria. This confirms the views of Liu and McKercher, (2016), Karaman (2016), Czaika and Neumayer, (2017), that strict visa requirements are obstacles to travel and it affects international tourist arrivals negatively.

On the relationship between visa requirements and international tourism receipts for Nigeria, the correlation coefficient shows a weak relationship between visa requirements and international tourist receipts [(0.128) with a p-value of 0.663 which is higher than 0.05]. This implies that visa requirements to visit Nigeria has a weak relationship with international tourism receipts. The study of Song, Gartner and Tasci, (2012), Li and Song, (2013), Berdell and Ghoshal, (2015), and Pham, Nghien, and Dwyer (2017), confirm that visa restrictions negatively affects not just international arrivals but international tourism receipts of destination countries.

Meanwhile, the relationship between international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts was weak [(0.528) with a p-value of 0.052 which is higher than 0.05]. It is obvious that the more international tourists arrive at a destination, the more spending by the tourists and the more revenues accrue to the destination countries.

		Visa Requirements	International Tourist Arrivals	International Tourism Receipts
Visa Requirements	Pearson Correlation	1	.022	.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.942	.663
	N	14	14	14
International Tourist Arrivals	Pearson Correlation	.022	1	.528
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.942		.052
	N	14	14	14
International Tourism Receipts	Pearson Correlation	.128	.528	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.663	.052	
	N	14	14	14

Table 3: Correlations results**Source: SPSS 20.0**

S/N	Country	Visa Openness		International Openness		International Tourist Arrival (ITA) (000)	International Tourism Receipts (US\$)
		Score	Rank	Score	Rank		
1	Seychelles	1.000	1	-	-	350.00	585,000
2	Benin	1.000	1	1.54	133	281.00	-
3	Rwanda	0.857	3	2.91	81	932.00	616.000
4	Togo	0.857	3	-	-	496.00	-
5	Guinea-Bissau	0.853	5	-	-	-	-
6	Uganda	0.853	5	3.03	69	1,402.00	940.000
7	Ghana	0.849	7	1.92	122	-	919.000
8	Cape Verde	0.845	8	3.15	65	668.00	462.000
9	Kenya	0.838	9	3.01	70	1,364.00	1,564.000
10	Mozambique	0.834	10	3.05	68	1,447.00	164.000
11	Mauritania	0.830	11	2.94	79	-	24.000
12	Mauritius	0.826	12	3.48	59	1,342.00	2,005.000
13	Senegal	0.811	13	2.47	103	1,365.00	-
14	Comoros	0.800	14	-	-	.28.00	-
15	Djibouti	0.800	14	-	-	-	35.100
16	Madagascar	0.800	14	2.97	74	255.00	849.000
17	Somalia	0.800	14	-	-	-	-
18	Tanzania	0.694	18	3.25	64	1,275.00	2,284.000
19	Gambia	0.528	19	2.06	120	162.00	116.000
20	Zimbabwe	0.472	20	2.90	82	2,423.00	158.000
21	Burkina Faso	0.468	21	-	-	143.00	-

22	Malawi	0.445	22	2.83	86	837.00	35,000.000
23	Zambia	0.426	23	2.90	83	1,083.00	653.000
24	Tunisia	0.415	24	2.95	76	7,052.00	1,782.000
25	Coted'Ivoire	0.396	25	2.62	94	1,800.00	-
26	Mali	0.392	26	1.59	132	193.30	-
27	Guinea	0.377	27	-	-	-	16.000
28	Niger	0.340	28	-	-	164.00	-
29	Nigeria	0.336	29	1.89	124	1,889.00	2,611.000
30	Botswana	0.321	30	2.16	118	-	704,600.000
31	Eswatini	0.321	30	-	-	921.00	13,000.000
32	Lesotho	0.302	32	1.66	129	1,137.00	23,000.000
33	Sierra Leone	0.298	33	1.84	126	-	-
34	South Africa	0.283	34	2.38	110	10,285.00	9,699.000
35	C.A.R	0.264	35	-	-	-	-
36	Liberia	0.264	35	-	-	-	-
37	Chad	0.260	37	1.66	130	87.00	-
38	Namibia	0.245	38	2.66	92	1,499.00	393,000,000
39	Republic of Congo	0.215	39	-	-	206.00	-
40	Morocco	0.170	40	2.66	91	11,349.00	9,086,000
41	Gabon	0.166	41	2.34	111	-	-
42	Angola	0.132	42	-	-	261.00	884,000.000
43	Cameroon	0.132	42	1.80	127	-	543,000.000
44	Sao Tome & Principe	0.132	42	-	-	-	65.900
45	DRC	0.121	45	1.51	135	-	6,000
46	Algeria	0.113	46	1.51	134	2,451.00	172.000
47	Burundi	0.113	46	1.79	128	299.00	3,000
48	Egypt	0.075	48	2.49	102	8,157.00	8,636,000
49	South Sudan	0.075	48	-	-	-	26,000.000
50	Ethiopia	0.053	50	2.59	97	933.00	2,503,000
51	Eritrea	0.034	51	-	-	-	-
52	Libya	0.019	52	-	-	-	-
53	Sudan	0.015	53	-	-	813.00	1,029,000
54	Equatorial Guinea	0.000	54	-	-	-	-

Table 4: Visa Openness, International Openness, International Tourist Arrivals and International Tourism Receipts for the selected countries in Africa.

Source: Researchers' compilation from the databases of the World Bank, World Economic Forum, and African Development Bank.

Table 4 shows scores and ranks of Visa Openness and International Openness, the foreigners that arrived and amount of Tourism revenue of 54 countries in Africa under the period of study. From the table, Nigeria ranks 29 out of 54 in Visa Openness with a score of 0.336 out of 1, and 124 in

International Openness, with a score of 1.89 out of 7. These show that Nigeria is not doing much in the area of visa facilitation and bilateral agreements that reduce barriers to international travels. There are countries in Africa that introduced policies in visa facilitation and felt the impact immediately on their economy. For example, countries like Benin, Seychelles, Senegal, Kenya, Rwanda, etc.

From the Visa Openness Index report of 2018, Republic of Benin performed very well since the previous report. The score of the country increased by two hundred percent, improving from her twenty-seventh position in 2017 to share the number one spot with Seychelles in 2018. She became the second country in Africa to improve on her visa facilitations by offering free visa to all the citizens of African continent and also first from the French colonized countries to implement visa-free policy. This was as a result of the policies and programmes launched by the country's leaders in 2016 that involves the development of seven tourist sites in the nation. The formulation, implementation and supervision of tourism action programme made it possible for tourism sector to contribute 5.7% to the country's GDP in 2017. This is predicted to increase by 3.8% in 2018. The year 2018 saw the country putting different measures to attract more visitors to their country by offering tourist visa to non-Africans that wish to visit the country less than a week. The country offers eVisa to foreigners in another way to ease the stress in acquiring visa from the embassies.

Rwanda is another African country that improved on accessibility to some countries in the continent and moved up to 3rd in the index report. Citizens of the continent have access to the country as fifteen countries enjoy free visa access, while thirty-three countries require visa on arrival. Rwanda's openness to via access has, over the years, influenced many nations in Africa to liberalize and improve on visa facilitation and make their nations more accessible. Due to the liberalization of visa regimes, there is an increment on the number of citizens of the continent that benefit on visa on arrival policy and this has improved from 2013 to 2016. The country was able to attract a high number of foreigners to their country through conference hosting and other tourism programmes, which as a result, contributed immensely in attracting investment and contributing to the growth of the country's GDP.

Rwanda, in order to facilitate movement of people, has improved on the processing of papers and have encouraged movement into the countries by neighbours without passports. Not only that there is a programme in place to allow free movement by her neighbours, Kenya and Uganda with a common passport, the three countries have a single tourist visa as part of their marketing strategies to attract more visitors. As of January 2018, in a bid to open her borders not just for Africans, the country implemented a new visa regime which allows international travellers to come to the country by obtaining a 30-day visa when they arrive the country.

Another country that made progress in Africa Visa Openness Index 2018 is Kenya. The country progressed in their ranking by moving up to join the top ten countries in the visa openness index. The improvement was as a result of the new visa policy that guaranteed visa to all citizens of the continent visa on arrival to Kenya. The new policy supports government's efforts to diversify the economy especially in the area of travel and tourism by streamlining the process of acquiring visa

through the provision of an online platform for eVisa application. As a result of the new visa regime and other government efforts in promoting travel and tourism, the sector continues to contribute to the growth of the economy by contributing significantly 9.7% to her GDP in 2017 and expected to increase by 5.5% in 2018. The policy on visa has provided strong support to the country's air transport sector. The country is promoting regional integration in the East African region by allowing citizens from the regional countries to move freely by showing their identity cards. Kenya is also facilitating movement into her territory by granting visa on arrival to citizens of many African countries. These have helped the country in attracting 4.4 billion dollars in foreign direct investment, and thousands of dollars in leisure and business tourism.

Senegal is another African country that is making progress in visa facilitation. The country improved on their ranking, making to the top twenty countries in the index. Senegal, in a bid to promote travel and tourism decided allow citizens from African countries to enter the without paid visa, especially people from ECOWAS region. The policy on visa facilitation contributed to the arrival of international tourists and the travel and tourism sector contributed over 10% to the country's gross domestic product and expected to improve in coming years.

Zimbabwe is another country that made it to top performing countries in 2018. The country improved on her visa facilitation and accessibility since 2016 and the government in a bid to maintain the flow of movement into the country, introduced a policy that offers visa to foreigners when they arrive the country. Citizens of twenty-eight countries all over the world benefit from this policy, including citizens of southern African countries. The contribution of the tourism sector was 7.1% to the country's gross domestic product in the previous year of 2017 and predicted to improve by 2.1% in coming year. In order to maintain its growth and attract more visitors to the country, the country introduced online platforms to facilitate visa applications and processing in order to shorten the time required to get visas.

CONCLUSION

Visa policies and international openness are part of destination's strategies to influence international tourism. The formulation and implementation of these strategies help the government to control movement in and out of the destination. This study found that too much restrictions impede the movement of tourists to a particular destination, while visa liberalization helps to bring in more international tourist arrivals. From the reviews and findings, it is evident that Nigeria's visa policies and international openness have weak relationships with the number of international tourists coming in the country and also the amount of revenue generated through international tourism receipts. Nigeria ranks 29th, with a score of 0.336 for visa openness for Africa and 124th, with a score of 1.89 for International openness. The data collected shows that countries that improved on visa facilitator attracted more international tourists and benefits from it. For example, Benin moved up as joint top with Seychelles due to the government's tourist action programme launched in December 2016, which resulted in travel and tourist contributing 3.7% to Benin's GDP in 2017. Other countries in the top 20 have shown signs of growth as the sector has continued to contribute significantly to the gross domestic products.

The position of Nigeria in Africa visa openness and international openness is worrisome and shows lack of government efforts in tourism and travel development. This equally manifested in the government refusal to be part of AFCFTA. Overdependence on oil sector is negatively affecting policies that would help in developing travel and tourism sector in Nigeria. Based on the findings, there are opportunities for visa facilitations and international visa openness, not just for Nigeria but other African countries as tourism has the ability to create jobs, generate foreign exchange, alleviate poverty especially in rural communities, and infrastructure development. Other opportunities available to countries include:-

1. Improvement in delivery of information: This includes improvement in various ways services are being rendered to the customers and also improved the ways information are dissemination in government agencies; leveraging the internet to deliver information to customers; provision of the information in different languages.
2. Simplifying the visa process: This includes reduction in the requirements for visa documentations and preparation for interview; speedy processing of the visa application; the use of ICT to facilitate the issuing of visa to applicants and also help in increasing the security measures for the country; initiating eVisa can help to facilitate visitor access especially for top spenders tourist countries; and introduction of visa waiver programmes to encourage tourists to visit.
3. Market segmentation and differential treatment to facilitate travel. This includes encouraging policies that allow tourists with visas issued by other countries to have access into the country; extension of validity period for different forms of visas; extending visa facilitation for different market segments, and visa facilitation for specified tourism area in Nigeria.
4. Initiating eVisa programme: This involves the opportunity for potential visitors to process and obtain their visa electronically through an online platform. Actual visitors can equally renew their visas through same platform. This would help in eliminating paper works and processing time.
5. Establishment of regional agreements: This includes visa free regional blocs; regional bloc visas; promoting positive reciprocity.
6. Nigeria in particular, as a matter of urgency should think beyond crude oil and prioritize travel and tourism sector due to its ability to transform the economy and touch lives of those in rural communities.

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