

## Tourism Development Potentials and Challenges in Sudan

Ayat Mohamed<sup>1</sup>, Aynur Gülenç Birsen<sup>2</sup>, Yasin Bilim<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

Objectives such as generating ideas about the tourism future of destinations, getting maximum benefit, minimizing negative effects, shaping physical development are possible by revealing tourism resources, potentials and obstacles. Otherwise, it may not be possible to talk about the sustainability of destinations. Considered as one of the most important countries in the world in terms of its tourism potentials, Sudan has many opportunities like geographical location, climate, natural structure and touristic potentials. Unfortunately, due to some challenges, it cannot get the share it deserves from tourism. In this study, it is aimed to reveal the tourism potentials of Sudan, to evaluate the current situation, to identify the obstacles in front of tourism development and to offer solutions to these obstacles. Semi-structured interview technique as a research method was preferred. At the end of the study it was concluded that an effective tourism planning infrastructure supporting tourism development in Sudan hasn't been established. As a result of the findings, suggestions were made for the planning of the sustainable tourism development in Sudan.

### ملخص

يمكن تحقيق أهداف مثل بلورة أفكار حول مستقبل السياحة فيما يتعلق بالوجهات، والحصول على أقصى فائدة، وتقليل الآثار السلبية، وتشكيل التنمية المادية من خلال الكشف عن الموارد والإمكانيات والعقبات السياحية. وخلاف ذلك، قد لا يكون من الممكن التحدث عن استدامة الوجهات. يعتبر السودان من أهم دول العالم من حيث إمكانياته السياحية، فهو يستأثر بعدد من

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Tourism, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey. Email: [ayatosman@hotmail.com](mailto:ayatosman@hotmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Tourism, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey. Email: [abirsen@erbakan.edu.tr](mailto:abirsen@erbakan.edu.tr) (Correspondence Author)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Tourism, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey. Email: [ybilim@erbakan.edu.tr](mailto:ybilim@erbakan.edu.tr)

الفرص مثل الموقع الجغرافي والمناخ والبنية الطبيعية والإمكانات السياحية. ولسوء الحظ، بسبب بعض التحديات، لم يتمكن البلد من الحصول على الحصة التي يستحقها من السياحة. وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى الكشف عن الإمكانات السياحية في السودان، وتقييم الوضع الراهن، والتعرف على المعوقات القائمة أمام التنمية السياحية، وتقديم حلول ممكنة لهذه المعوقات. وتم اختيار أسلوب المقابلة شبه المنظمة كطريقة بحث. وفي نهاية الدراسة تم التوصل إلى أنه لم يتم إنشاء بنية تحتية فعالة لتخطيط السياحة تدعم تنمية السياحة في السودان. ونتيجة لهذه الحصيلة، تم تقديم اقتراحات لتخطيط التنمية السياحية المستدامة في السودان.

### ABSTRAITE

Objectives such as generating ideas about the tourism future of destinations, getting maximum benefit, minimizing negative effects, shaping physical development are possible by revealing tourism resources, potentials and obstacles. Otherwise, it may not be possible to talk about the sustainability of destinations. Considered as one of the most important countries in the world in terms of its tourism potentials, Sudan has many opportunities like geographical location, climate, natural structure and touristic potentials. Unfortunately, due to some challenges, it cannot get the share it deserves from tourism. In this study, it is aimed to reveal the tourism potentials of Sudan, to evaluate the current situation, to identify the obstacles in front of tourism development and to offer solutions to these obstacles. Semi-structured interview technique as a research method was preferred. At the end of the study it was concluded that an effective tourism planning infrastructure supporting tourism development in Sudan hasn't been established. As a result of the findings, suggestions were made for the planning of the sustainable tourism development in Sudan.

**Keywords:** Tourism development and planning

**JEL Classification:**

## 1. Introduction

According to World Tourism Organization (2019), tourism is one of the sectors with the highest growth rate in the world providing an export income of 1.7 trillion dollars, despite various problems, when compared to many other sectors. It is a sector where an increase of approximately 5% in both touristic demand and revenues, and 3-4% in general annual averages, was experienced in 2018. While this makes the sector a true

global force for economic growth and development for the countries, it is also known that tourism increases its importance by creating innovative and entrepreneurial employment areas, contributes to a sustainable development and helps build better lives for millions of individuals around the world. As a result, tourism can be accepted as an important development, improvement and growth tool for all societies (WTO, 2019). However, in addition to all these contributions, the most important feature that makes tourism different from others as a sector is that it has the potential to destroy its own resources (Plog, 1973). For this reason, tourism planning is an issue that should be handled with sensitivity in international, national, regional and local terms in order to achieve success in tourism development and management. In fact, when considered in the long term, it has been stated in many studies that a planned tourism approach eliminates obvious problems and increases tourist demand, increases the quality of the visitor holiday experience, and positively affects the tourism perception of the local people (Hanafiah et al., 2013; Mason, 2003:117; WTO, 2002: 10). On the other hand, regions where tourism development progresses haphazardly, face a number of economic, environmental and social problems over time. While these problems negatively affect both the tourism perception of the local people and the perception of the destination image of the tourists, they also negatively affect the tourism sustainability of the destinations (Mason, 2003:119).

Developing countries in the world are also aware of the growth potential provided by the tourism industry. One of these countries is Sudan. Considered one of the largest countries in the world in terms of tourism potential, Sudan has many opportunities with its geographical location, climate, natural structure and touristic resources. However, these do not constitute an importance for the economy, society and development. Because there are some obstacles in front of Sudan's economic development and growth. Like other developing countries that make great efforts to benefit from the opportunities of the tourism sector and make an economic contribution, the development of the tourism sector in Sudan can make significant contributions to the country's economy. However, despite the tourism potential of Sudan, the government unfortunately could not show the necessary interest in this sector due to not understanding the sector and its role in the economy (Gerasimov & Bogdanov, 2020 (UNWTO, 2018). Besides, the war environment in the

last twenty years has taken Sudan under its influence. Therefore political instability and security crisis are the biggest obstacles to tourism activity and implementation of development plans in Sudan (Ritter, 2015). However, with a good tourism planning, Sudan can reach the point it deserves in tourism and provide maximum economic benefit like other developing countries. But planning studies for the evaluation of tourism potentials of Sudan are scarce in the literature. From this point of view, in this study, it is primarily aimed to reveal the tourism potentials of Sudan, to evaluate the current situation, to identify the obstacles to tourism development as an underdeveloped country, to offer solutions to these problems and to present a tourism planning suitable for Sudan. It is thought that the study will close this gap and contribute to the literature in terms of both theory and practice. With the suggestions made at the end of this research, the study can conduce to the development of Sudanese tourism and national development.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Tourism Planning**

According to Hall and Page (2006), planning for tourism has traditionally concentrated on land zoning, touristic area development, control of destination tourism development, the use of cultural, historical and natural tourist attractions for tourism, and the provision of infrastructure resources such as highways and sewerage. However, with the globalization, the scope of tourism planning has been expanded in recent years and issues such as local, regional and national economic development, environmental and socio-cultural effects have been included in the scope of tourism planning (Hall & Page, 2006:394). Therefore, it is very difficult to define planning as a term, as it can be evaluated at different scales and in different groups such as individual, group, institution, government, rural, urban, local, regional or national (Mason, 2008: 89). Much emphasis is placed on the definition and importance of destination planning. Among them, Williams (2003), uses the expression "the irregular and random course of tourist movements in destinations where tourism planning is not made carries the risk of negative economic, social and environmental impacts". According to him, tourism planning is defined as "the set of actions designed to achieve one or more conflicting goals and carried out in a certain order". For this

reason, planning is the design of actions for predictable results obtained through a process to predict and control possible changes, seek the most appropriate solutions to future problems and aim to provide the destination with maximum benefit from tourism. (Williams, 2003).

## **2. 2. Issues Affecting the Tourism Planning Process**

According to Williams and Lew (2015), the objectives of destination planning for tourism can be physical, social policy making, economic, environmental, service delivery, infrastructure improvement, business or marketing based. For the researchers, destination tourism planning is made within a process and must take into account these issues;

- Anticipating and sequencing changes,
- Being future oriented,
- Generating optimal solutions to anticipated problems,
- Making maximum use of physical, economic, social or environmental aspects,
- Predicting the results (Williams & Lew, 2015:257).

Williams (2003) summarizes the general objectives of tourism planning as;

- to shape and control the physical development of destinations,
- 
- to protect the scarce tourism resources,
- to create an active advertising and marketing plan,
- to integrate tourism with other sectors (Williams, 2003).

Therefore three aspects are of great importance in the planning process. The first of these is the decision-making process. The decision-making process should not be perceived as a straightforward and unchanging process. In this process, there are systematically interrelated, complementary and non-individual decisions (Mason, 2008: 90). The second important point is that planning is related to policies (Mason, 2008: 91; Willson, 2012). According to Mason (2008), planning includes action and policy covers the implementation of action. Policy, or in other words, public policy is formed by a public institution or organization. Governments promote tourism as a development tool because they see

tourism as a good thing. But it is also governments that set the agenda for the development of tourism. Public policy, by definition, is a public property and affected by social, economic, environmental factors, the political structure of the country, policies, and the values of society. Therefore governments may need to make some interventions to manage tourism development in accordance with the social, political and economic characteristics of the destinations and their development needs (Sharpley, 2008: 14). However, planning should not be seen as a government-run process alone. Private sector organizations prepare plans and produce policies to implement their plans, just like the government. But the policies of individual private institutions are usually shaped by commercial concerns (Hall & Page, 2006: 396; Mason, 2008: 91). The third important point about the planning process is community values. The effects of the tourism perception and attitudes of the society on tourism development are inevitable (Andereck & Nyaupane, 2011; Devine et. al, 2009; Sharpley, 2014). Therefore, tourism policies should reflect the values of the community as an important stakeholder (Veal, 2002).

On the other hand, it is essential to consider some other issues affecting the tourism planning process in destinations. Because many different components are required for tourism which is a highly diverse industry to be a complete product. Therefore an absence in any one component can damage the complete product. In addition, strategic planning and management of components at the national, regional and local level strengthens the total tourism product. Any deficiency and a wrong application of a component may cause to some problems related to tourism planning and the destruction of the complete product.

According to UNCTAD (2017), one of these components is the political stability of a country. Political unrest and conflict can seriously harm the tourism sector. Especially in terms of economics the impact may be critical and long lasting, causing a negative image of a destination. The conflict and political instability can negatively affect the image of the country, decrease the investments and marketing decisions of the investors due to the loss of confidence and security concerns. Finally tourism demand, tourist profiles (especially wealthier and security sensitive tourists) and tourism receipts can decline (UNCTAD, 2017: 149).

The second is the level of development in tourism infrastructure. But both the level of economic development of a country in general and the level of tourism-related development in particular determines the relationship between tourism and development. For example developed countries have better infrastructure, a greater potential to diversify and to increase tourism spending. In other words the less developed countries have deficiencies in infrastructure to develop tourism (Mihalic, 2014: 89).

The third important issue affecting tourism planning is the negative images of destinations. Although some countries have many natural and cultural tourist attractions, they can not attract international tourists to their countries at a desired level. The reason for this problem is not only the lack of infrastructure, the economic structure of the country or its marketing. The negative perception of destinations in the media can negatively affect the destination preferences of international visitors. The outbreak of a health crisis, travel bans or restrictions imposed on tourists by destinations, travel warnings made by countries to ensure the safety of their citizens due to some concerns such as war, tension, violence or political instability may cause destinations to be negatively affected for a long time. For example, the number of international tourists, tourism employment and tourism revenues may decrease significantly (UNCTAD, 2017: 159).

Other important factors affecting tourism planning in destinations are due to the mismanagements of certain elements within the country. These are; ensuring inter-stakeholder coordination; the fact that tourism, having the physical, social, economic, environmental and business aspects of tourism planning; and the issue of the sustainability of the natural environment. The third of these problems is that the increasing pressure against the use of natural environmental resources creates conflict between various interest groups. The problem of disagreement between those who care about the sustainability of the natural environment and those who think that environmental protection is seen as a threat to the economic and social development of destinations, once again reveals the fact that tourism planning is a political process (Barros et al., 2015; Chavez, 1993; Mason & Leberman, 2000 Watson, 1995).

### **2. 3. Sudan and Tourism**

Sudan which is the third largest country on African continent is located in the Northeast. The country has a total area of 1,879,358 km<sup>2</sup> (725,623 mi<sup>2</sup>) and a total coastline of 853 km (530.0 mi). This land area is approximately 270% of the area of Texas. (<https://www.worlddata>). It is bordered by Ethiopia and Eritrea in the east, Chad and the Central African Republic in the west, Egypt and Libya in the north, and South Sudan in the South. Its population is around 34,850,000. While its official languages are Arabic and English, there are hundreds of languages by the people due to their ethnicity (Ritter, 2015). Sudan is divided into 18 states. The country's real GDP growth was estimated at 4.1% in 2018, up slightly from 3.3% in 2017. Quite dependent on oil for a decade, Sudan was forced by the secession of South Sudan to revert to the non-oil sector for growth opportunities and to diversify its economy (UNWTO, 2018). Tourism has little impact on the country's economy. About 2.4 % of Sudan's economy was generated by its travel and tourism industry. Compared to other African countries Sudan is infrequently visited due to internal conflict. The number of international tourists was approximately 591,000 in 2013, an increase from 29,000 as of 1995. The percentage of tourism employment was 1.3% of the Sudanese labor force in 2013. (<https://en.wikipedia.org>). The variety of natural attractions is complemented by landscape parks, volcanic highlands of Jebel Marra, the Red Sea coast, jungles, the Nile, rainforests and rolling deserts. National Museum in Khartoum, archeological sites such as the pyramids of Meroe, the Karmah Tombs and the temple of Sdeinga are frequently visited tourist attractions in Sudan. Rafting, kayaking, traveling along the river Nile on a cruise boat to rainforests, the jungle and savanna trekking, wildlife safaris and Red Sea diving are among the most popular activities (Mohamed, 2020; Ritter, 2015).

### **3. Data and Methodology**

The study is mostly a qualitative study aiming to identify the obstacles to the development of Sudanese tourism. Since there is no satisfactory level of resources in the field, the interview technique is thought to be the most appropriate. The interview technique, which is the most widely used method in the field of social sciences, is an effective method used to obtain information about the experiences and opinions of individuals



(Desai, 2002; Marvasti, 2004). As Jennings (2005; 99) says, “interviewing is becoming a global research method for understanding and making sense of the lives of the peoples of this world”. Desai (2002) emphasizes that researchers’ experiences and research skills allow them to make good guess and this is a more realistic approach in predicting the future. And the researcher implies that the postmodern condition makes it very difficult for researchers to predict future trends. From the researchers’ viewpoint, it is needed to use some data sources to develop and support research results. But some research ideas have limited sources and are very limited conditions to receive exact outputs. Qualitative research approaches provide rich information about relatively few cases and limited research conditions (Veal, 2006).

Kelly (1980), mentions that tourism has a face-to-face interaction nature and qualitative approaches are well suited to investigate this. As a kind of qualitative data collective technic, interview was chosen to collect first hand data for this study. After reporting the interviews, a general analysis on was hold to show exact results of the study. After deciding the methodological approache, Sewell’s (2006), Turner’s (2010) and Montoya’s (2016) interview process was followed like; (i) data were transcribed, (ii) analyzed, (iii) confirmed for validity, and (iv) reported.

In the research, semi-structured interview method is used as a qualitative data collection tool. Purposeful sampling method was used to determine the participant group of the study. In purposeful sampling, which is widely used in qualitative research, there is a sample selection that is thought to have deep knowledge in the field (Turner, 2010; Walliman, 2006). Therefore purposeful sampling was chosen in this study because the questions created before the semi-structured interview were thought to be answered by individuals who have a certain knowledge and experience on the subject. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar and Fontenot (2013), conclude that no studies have cited qualitative methodologists for an appropriate sample size. But, they emphasize that saturation, like theoretical, data, conceptual, is a critical issue for sample size.

Based on purposive sampling technic, researchers listed the area of professionals related to Sudanese Tourism industry and evaluated the potential contact persons. The minister who is responsible for tourism, the mayor and people from the private sector related to tourism were included

in the study as sample. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at the date and time preferred by the participants and lasted for about 30 minutes. In order to avoid data loss during the interviews, audio recordings were made by getting permission of the participants. At the last stage, the data obtained were analyzed with descriptive analysis technique and presented in sub-titles. The purpose of descriptive analysis is to structure raw data in a way that readers can understand and use. In these analyzes, after the obtained data are firstly put into a logical order, descriptions made are interpreted and results of future estimations are reached (Turner, 2010).

To provide the reliability and validity of the interview questions (Smith, 2003), researchers reviewed the related literature to select alternative interview questions. Then, these questions were discussed to eliminate and to conclude final decision with experts from university members. Because of simplicity and certainty of the questions, feedbacks of the experts and managers were so positive. Completing the question selection process, the questions asked to the participants are listed in the table 1.

**Table 1:** Interview questions

<b>Q1</b>	What are the obstacles to tourism development in Sudan?
<b>Q2</b>	How do you evaluate tourism planning and infrastructure activities you carry out?
<b>Q3</b>	Is there an important attraction area that you see as potential for tourism development in Sudan, if so, can you explain?
<b>Q4</b>	What kind of promotional and marketing activities do you carry out in terms of the tourism development of Sudan?

During the analysis process participants' answers were first converted into texts by quoting and summarizing under specific headings.

#### **4. Empirical Results**

The participants' answers to the questions are summarized in the tables 2, 3, 4 and 5;

**Table 2:** Participants' answers to the 1st question

Questions	Participants' Answers
<p><b>What are the obstacles to tourism development in Sudan?</b></p>	<p><i>"There is a capital problem for the investment of tourism projects and tourism incentive policies are insufficient."</i></p>
	<p><i>"There is an inflation problem in the country. So, there is a serious migration trend in the country due to political or economic reasons"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Air transportation is faced with many economic problems and obstacles. The privatization process in air transport faces economic obstacles"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Due to political instability and security concerns, tourism companies direct consumers to other countries and destinations. And, domestic and foreign companies do not want to make tourism investments"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Tourism taxes set by the state are very high. Visa procedures for tourists take a long time and the pricing is high. Therefore they don't want to stay in the country. Besides they think that they are restricted in their movements. Because it is with permission for tourists to travel easily from one city to another within the country"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Social insecurity and political instability are the biggest obstacles causing to image problem. The image of war in the last two decades hinders the implementation of tourism development plans. There is almost no water, electricity and health services and banking market in touristic facilities in South Sudan"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Tourism and environmental awareness of the state and local society is insufficient. Even the members of official institutions do not have sufficient knowledge and awareness about destination tourism attractions. They do not have knowledge in planning and management"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Tourism is seen as a department affiliated to ministries such as information, communication and aviation. Therefore there is a confusion regarding the duties and roles of ministries"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Women are not welcome to work in the industry. For a large part of society, tourism activities are considered dangerous and sinful. Also, working in tourism is an unprofitable, empty service and is only suitable for tourists"</i></p>
	<p><i>"The local and traditional products such as handicrafts and antiques are not valued enough for in the global market tourism purposes. Elements of our culture are not used for tourism purposes, for example, festivals are not encouraged"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Tourism data is hidden deliberately. There is no statistical information about the tourists"</i></p>
	<p><i>"Scientific research in the field of tourism is insufficient"</i></p>
	<p><i>"The number of faculties and institutes in the field of tourism is low."</i></p>
<p><i>"Despite the diversity of tourism resources Sudan has, there is no particular focal attraction for which it is famous in the world"</i></p>	

According to the participants, the problems damaging the development of Sudanese tourism are due to the political and economic instability of the country, negative image in the international arena, deficiencies of the level of knowledge and awareness of tourism on society and even on officials, insufficient tourism infrastructure and strategic planning and management errors. According to them, the political instability and conflict situation in the country cause a loss of confidence and security concerns among visitors. At the same time, this situation, which damages Sudan's international image, causes a decrease in demand. In addition, travel bans and restrictions, taxes and visa procedures applied to visitors negatively affect the number of visitors and accommodation demands. Another issue the participants imply is about the tourism awareness. They think that there is a lack of tourism awareness and knowledge among locals and even officials. This problem creates the problems of planning and managing tourism resources and creating tourism infrastructure. According to them this problem not only creates a negative perception against Sudan, but also causes problems in planning and managing tourism resources and creating tourism infrastructure.

**Table 3:** Participants' answers to the 2nd question

Question	Participants' Positive Ideas
<b>How do you evaluate tourism planning and infrastructure activities you carry out?</b>	<i>"The tourism marketing activities of the Ministry of Tourism are insufficient and mostly aimed at the outbound tourism movement".</i>
	<i>"There are no introductory and guiding elements such as maps, brochures, booklets that define the travel points of destination attractions".</i>
	<i>"Accommodation facilities of different degrees for tourists are insufficient".</i>
	<i>"Tourism destinations and attractions unfortunately lack even basic touristic infrastructure such as accommodation, health services, electricity and water".</i>
	<i>"Touristic places are located in the extreme regions of the country where transportation is difficult".</i>
	<i>"One of the problems that we encounter in the acceptance of tourists is the problem of transportation".</i>
	<i>"Railway transportation is faced with many economic problems and obstacles".</i>

	<i>“Sudan airlines have lost their position in the global market”.</i>
	<i>“There is a dependency on leased planes”.</i>
	<i>“Tourism employment is insufficient and there are problems in training the personnel working in the sector”.</i>
	<i>“State support for developing Sudanese tourism is insufficient and there is a clear lack of strategy for the development of tourism in Sudan”.</i>
	<b>Participants’ Negative Ideas</b>
	<i>“Although everything there are also some good efforts to develop tourism. For example, in terms of the role of the private sector in tourism, the ministry attaches importance to investment in tourism”.</i>
	<i>“Projects and support packages for investors are ready”</i>
	<i>“We have, a marina project for touristic resorts, tourism and entertainment centers touristic yacht and a fish market project for future”.</i>
	<i>“The existence of airline lines between world cities and Port Sudan and the proliferation of these lines encourage tourists to come to Sudan”.</i>
	<i>“Relations with Saudi Arabian airlines have improved and there are now four weekly flights between Jeddah and Port Sudan. These flights have attracted domestic tourism to us due to the increase in ticket prices from Khartoum to Jeddah.”.</i>
	<i>“Saudi Arabian airlines are connected to Europe with more than sixty daily flights that enable European tourists to reach Port Sudan via Jeddah.”.</i>
	<i>“From an economic point of view, 60% of the state's population works on ferries, coastal routes and in other supplementary services”.</i>
	<i>“Many guides have completed their trainings on how to present the touristic opportunities in their region and then attract tourists to the destination”.</i>
	<i>“The supervision of the hotels and the services are given importance, and penalties and sanctions are applied for those who oppose the hotel managements”.</i>
	<i>“For promotion outside of Sudan, the ministry has agreements with many world companies to organize touristic trips to the province.</i>
	<i>“We are also working in coordination with our embassies abroad to promote the tourism of the state. For example, we participate in global exhibitions”.</i>

	<i>“Soon there will be tourist boats for tourism on the island of Mukawwer”.</i>
	<i>“It has also been agreed to build a glass ship that will sail to Sanganeb, where coral reefs and colorful fish can be viewed”.</i>
	<i>“Diving tourism in the Red Sea has managed to attract a large number of tourists from Europe, America and Asia.</i>
	<i>“Many companies are working in the field of diving tourism. The promotional companies support diving tourism in European, American and Asian states. These offices organize diving trips for tourist groups.</i>
	<i>“Flights to Port Sudan are organized from foreign states via Cairo and Dubai without passing through Khartoum airport. The ministry is trying to create touristic places for tourists in addition to diving tourism”.</i>

According to the participants there are some tourism infrastructure problems in transportation, accommodation, employment, education and the usage of supplementary elements. They indicate that the infrastructure to develop tourism in Sudan is insufficient and more effort is needed. On the other hand they think that government is now aware of the importance of tourism and its support on the economy. They also indicate that, there are some good efforts to develop tourism infrastructure, promotional and marketing in the country.

**Table 4:** Participants' answers to the 3rd question

<b>Question</b>	<b>Participants' Answers</b>
<b>Is there an important attraction area that you see as potential for tourism development in Sudan, if so, can you explain?</b>	<i>“The Red Sea Region is important for Sudan's future”.</i>
	<i>“After the Red Sea State government prepared a good environment for investment and completed infrastructure and services, it has become the focus of attention of investors”.</i>
	<i>“The majority of Sudanese pilgrims pass through the Red Sea State during the pilgrimage season. This feature activates transportation, hotels and restaurants in addition to other service sectors”.</i>
	<i>“Likewise, the presence of a shopping and tourism festival provides economic contributions to the Red Sea Province”.</i>

Related to the focal tourism attraction question, the interviewers point out that the Red Sea Region destination is increasingly becoming popular in Sudan.

**Table 5:** Participants' answers to the 4th question

Question	Participant's answers
<p><b>What kind of promotional and marketing activities do you carry out in terms of the tourism development of Sudan?</b></p>	<p><i>"The local heritage has developed through cultural exhibitions. Especially for traditional culture and folk culture, markets have been established to develop the local industry".</i></p>
	<p><i>"Investment culture has entered hotels, hostels, hotel apartments".</i></p>
	<p><i>"Umrah expeditions organized many times a year also increase the province's additional revenues".</i></p>
	<p><i>"Festivals are held on the coastal roads, in the parks, in the first, second, third quarters of the year and annually. For this reason, many visitors and tourists flock to the province for touristic festivals".</i></p>
	<p><i>"Domestic tourism is stimulated through coastal routes, various services and cultural festivals".</i></p>
	<p><i>"Seafarers and tourists are exempt from taxes, and tourists from Europe are treated with a counter-visa system".</i></p>
	<p><i>"An annual holding of the Port Sudan festival is permitted".</i></p>
	<p><i>"Ministry of Environment and Tourism participates in World Tourism Day".</i></p>
	<p><i>"A memorandum of understanding was signed with the Russian company Kilimanjaro for the promotion of touristic products specific to the province".</i></p>
	<p><i>"The First Red Sea Environment Conference was held".</i></p>
<p><i>"More than 70 tourist guides are provided with training in different world languages".</i></p>	

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

The fact that a sustainable tourism development provides a competitive advantage among destinations has resulted in countries paying more and more attention to how tourism resources are used, what kind of economic effects it creates and what the tourism development level is (UNWTO, 2018). In this study, it is aimed to determine the tourism potentials of Sudan, to reveal the current situation, to identify the obstacles in front of tourism development and to present solutions for a suitable tourism planning. As a result of the data obtained in the study carried out in line with these purposes, the following implications were obtained in terms of theory and practice;

### **5. 1. Theoretical Implications:**

- An accurate and reliable statistical system is needed in order to systematically monitor tourism development in destinations. In the past years, data such as the number of foreign tourists, hotel occupancy rates and tourist expenditure rates were mostly limited to the sources such as visitor surveys. However, today, countries are increasingly realizing that tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world and that much more comprehensive information is needed to plan and properly manage tourism development (UNWTO, 2018). However, although the Sudanese government has determined tourism as a priority sector in its economic policy, it is necessary to remove the obstacles to tourism development and to create tourism plans in this direction. In the research, it has been concluded that one of the obstacles to the development of Sudanese tourism is the inaccuracy of tourism statistics and not being based on reliable foundations.
- There are hardly any scientific studies on the planning, promotion and marketing of Sudanese tourism. For example, efforts to create a positive perception of Sudan's tourism image internationally are lacking in academic studies. Also a focused touristic attraction or a destination have not been determined and a clear promotion and marketing activity has not been carried out theoretically.
- The fact that the awareness and education level of tourism employment is still not at the desired level is another obstacle to development.



- There is a confusion and a lack of coordination between the Ministry and other stakeholders regarding the distribution and assignment of tourism-related roles and responsibilities. The lack of theoretical clarity on these issues causes many problems in practice.
- **5. 2. Practical Implications:**
- Political, economic instability and security concerns in the country damage the image of the country and negatively affect international tourism.
- Basic tourism infrastructure such as accommodation, health, electricity, water, transportation is insufficient.
- The level of tourism awareness of the local people and even the public officials is not at a satisfactory level. While this problem negatively affects the society's perspective and attitudes towards tourism, on the other hand, it causes foreigners not to desire to come to the country.
- Efforts to support domestic tourism are not at the desired level.
- High tourism taxes, long visa procedures, and some other restrictions that prevent foreign visitors from traveling comfortably cause foreign tourists not to prefer the region.
- Since the country's tourism incentive policies are insufficient, domestic and foreign investors are hesitant to invest in the sector.
- The use of cultural attractions as touristic products does not receive enough attention.
- The Red Sea Region is promising for Sudanese tourism, especially in terms of diving tourism. As a matter of fact, there has been a significant increase in the number of visitors in recent years, with the support of investors in the region. Festivals and cultural exhibitions organized in the region also contribute to the increase of visitors. However, the economic contribution of visitors to the accommodation sector is negligible. Visitors who come to the region on a daily basis are hesitant to stay for a number of reasons.

As a result of the findings from the interviews and the information obtained from the theoretical sources, the following recommendations can be given for the planning of Sudanese tourism;

- For a sustainable and competitive Sudanese tourism, it is important to monitor tourism development in every aspect. For this reason, it should be ensured that the data regarding the visitors are kept with a modern point of view, with an accurate and reliable statistical system.
- Sudan should be promoted as a touristic focus in the international arena, security concerns of potential visitors should be eliminated and a positive image should be created.
- Infrastructure deficiencies such as accommodation, transportation, education and services such as health, electricity, water, banking should be eliminated in tourism destinations.
- It is necessary to attract all domestic and foreign investments in the tourism sector, to encourage these investments and to remove all obstacles in front of them. For this; It can be ensured that investments in tourist transportation from tourism exporting states to Sudan, in land and sea transportation, especially in air transportation, can be encouraged. Local and foreign tourism investments should be distributed in a balanced way according to touristic regions.
- Efforts such as education and including the locals into tourism planning process should be made to increase the tourism awareness of the local people and individuals related to tourism.
- Domestic tourism should be promoted through special domestic tourism programs that promote the recognition of the country's important places.
- Tourism development zones should be planned and developed.
- The structure of the Ministry of Tourism should be renewed in order to increase its effectiveness and efficiency and to activate the role of its affiliated institutions. The autonomy of the Ministry should be supported and a hierarchical structure should be established from the lowest level to the highest level.
- Various and new tourism products that reveal the characteristics of each region of Sudan should be produced and the existing cultural tourism products should be evaluated for tourism purposes.

## References

- Al-Bawabh. (2018). Sudan Has Many Tourism Potentials that Support the Launch of the Economy. Available at. <http://www.albawabhnews.com/3093474>. Retrieved February 24, 2022.
- Andereck, K. L., & Nyapane, G. P. (2011). Exploring the Nature of Tourism and Quality of Life Perceptions Among Residents. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(3), 248–260.
- Barros, A., Monz, C., & Pickering, C. (2015). Is Tourism Damaging Ecosystems in the Andes? Current Knowledge and an Agenda for Future Research, *AMBIO*, 44,(2015),82–98.
- Chavez, J. D., Winter, P., & Baas, J. M. (1993). Recreational Mountain Biking: A Management Perspective. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 1(3), 29-36.
- Desai, P. (2002). *Methods Beyond Interviewing in Qualitative Market Research*. SAGE Publications. UK.
- Devine, J., Gabe, T. & Bell, K. P. (2009). Community Scale and Resident Attitudes Towards Tourism. *The Journal of Regional Analysis & Policy*, 39(1): 11-22.
- Gerasimov I.V., Bogdanov D.Yu. (2020). Tourism Industry of Sudan: History and Peculiarities of its Development in the 20th and 21st Centuries. *Asian and African Studies*, 12(4), 579–587. <https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu13.2020.408>.
- Hall, C. M. & Page, S. J. (2006). *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Place and Space*. London and Newyork: Routledge.
- Hanafiah, M. H., Jamaluddin, M. R. & Zulkifly, M. İ. (2013). Local Community Attitude and Support Towards Tourism Development in Tioman Island, Malaysia. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 105(2013), 792-800.

- Jennings, G. R. (2005). Interviewing: A Focus on Qualitative Techniques. In Ritchie, B. W., Burns, P. & Palmer, C. (Eds). *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating Theory with Practice*. CABI, 99-118.
- Kelly, J.R. (1980). Leisure and Quality: Beyond the Quantitative Barrier in Research. In T.L. Goodale and P.A. Witt (Eds) *Recreation and Leisure: Issues in an Era of Change*. State College, PA: Venture, 300–314.
- Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A. & Fontenot, R. (2013). Does Sample Size Matter in Qualitative Research? A Review of Qualitative Interviews in is Research, *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 54(1), 11-22.
- Marvasti, A. B. (2004). *Qualitative Research in Sociology*. SAGE Publications. UK.
- Mason, P. (2003). *Tourism Impacts, Planning and Management*. Burlington: Elsevier.
- Mason, P. (2008). *Tourism Impacts, Planning and Management*. New York: Routledge.
- Mason, P. & Leberman, S. (2000). Local Planning for Recreation and Tourism: A Case Study of Mountain Biking from New Zealand's Manawatu Region. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 8(2), 97-115.
- Mihalic, T. (2014). Tourism and Deveoplement Concepts and Issues. In Richard Sharpley and David J. Telfer (Eds.), *Tourism and Economic Development Issues (77-117)*. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Channel View Publications.
- Mohamed, M. H. (2020). Possibilities of Cultural Tourism Development in Sudan, Through Events and Attractions Covering the Most Recognizable Elements of Heritage and Identity (Survey Study on Sudan Tourism). *International Journal of Advanced Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, 7(1).
- Plog, C. S. (1973). Why Destinations Rise and Fall in Popularity. *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Association Quarterly*, 14(4), 55-58.

- Sewell, M. (2006). The Use of Qualitative Interviews in Evaluation. The University of Arizona-Cyfernet, Available at: [www.ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/Intervu5.htm](http://www.ag.arizona.edu/fcs/cyfernet/cyfar/Intervu5.htm).
- Sharpley, R. (2008). Planning for Tourism: The Case of Dubai. *Tourism and Hospitality Planning & Development*, 5(1), 13-30.
- Sharpley, R. (2014). Host Perceptions of Tourism: A Review of the Research. *Tourism Management*, 42(2014), 37-49.
- Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754-760.
- UNCTAD. (2017). *Economic Development in Africa Report 2017: Tourism for Transformative and Inclusive Growth*. New York and Geneva: United Nations.
- UNWTO. (2002). *Tourism and Poverty Alleviation*. Madrid: World Tourism Organization.
- UNWTO. (2018). Advancing Development Through Tourism: Strengthening the System of Tourism Statistics in Sudan. Available at [https://tourism4sdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/4.Sudan\\_STAT.pdf](https://tourism4sdgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/4.Sudan_STAT.pdf). Retrieved February 24, 2022.
- UNWTO. (2019). International Tourism Highlights. 2019 Edition. Available at <https://www.unwto.org/publication/international-tourism-highlights-2019-edition>. Retrieved February 24, 2022.
- Veal, A. J. (2002). *Leisure and Tourism Policy and Planning*. Wallingford: CAB International.
- Veal, A. J. (2006). *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism* (3rd Edition). Prentice Hall. UK.
- Walliman, N. (2006). *Social Research Methods*. London, UK: Sage Publications Limited.
- Watson, E. A. (1995). An Analysis of Recent Progress in Recreation Conflict Research and Perceptions of Future Challenges and Opportunities. *Leisure Sciences*, 17, 235–8.

William, S. (2003). *Tourism Geography*. London and Newyork: Routledge.

Williams, S. & Lew, A. A. (2015). *Tourism Geography Critical Understandings of place, Space and Experience*. London and Newyork: Routledge.

Willson, G. B. (2012). Stories of Practice: *Tourism Policy and Planning*. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), 503–504.

Worlddata. (2022). Sudan. Available at. <https://www.worlddata.info/africa/sudan/index.php>. Retrieved February 24, 2022.

Wikipedia. (2022). Tourism in Sudan. Available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism\\_in\\_Sudan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tourism_in_Sudan). Retrieved February 24, 2022.