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Keywords: *tourism, governance, modernity, heritage.*

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TOURISMGOVERNANCEINCAMEROONANDTHECHALLENGESOFMODERNITYANOVERVIEW

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Tourism Governance in Cameroon and the Challenges of Modernity: An Overview

Dorothée Tsogo Akoa [α] & Marie Pierrette Nnomo [σ]

Abstract- This article looks at tourism governance in the light of the challenges of modernity. It is set against a rapidly changing global backdrop. In a world where today's realities are rapidly being overtaken by tomorrow's hazards, where modernity is replacing the classical. As tourism is part and parcel of this world of multiple uncertainties, the problem arises of how to adapt. So, looking at the case of Cameroon, we asked ourselves what kind of tourism governance is needed to meet the new challenges of modernity? The method we chose to answer this question was a documentary analysis, based on a review of the literature on the subject. The synthesis of the contributions consulted leads us to believe that a multi-stakeholder approach to tourism governance (public and private, central and local) would be better suited to meeting the challenges of modernity.

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I. Introduction

Governance contributes to the development of the tourism sector. With this in mind, a number of countries, like Cameroon, have made governance one of the priority levers in their tourism development strategy, by implementing mechanisms that help to create synergies between stakeholders and contribute to their effectiveness. However, the tourism sector is in rapidly evolving, to the point where it is sometimes referred to as 'post-tourism' (François-Lecompte & Prim-Allaz 1, 2009), or'tourism transition' (Duhamel, 2018). This debate is taking place in a context where tourism has become an integral part of a rapidly changing society. The rise of uncertainty (Latour, 2017), climate change and its socio-economic and political consequences (Latour, 2017), the scale of the phenomenon itself and the prospects for the future mean that the question of adapting tourism and adapting to tourism has to be considered in the context of the 'anthropocene' (Hollenhorst et al., 2014) imposed by the challenges of modernity. Tourism governance is therefore called upon to try and deal with this state of affairs.

With this in mind, this article sets out to address this issue by attempting to take stock of the situation in the context of Cameroon in particular. The first part of our argument presents the main concepts of the subject. In the second, we examine the issue of tourism governance at both international and national levels. The third section attempts to establish the link between tourism and modernity in Cameroon. The fourth and final section looks at the type of governance required to meet the challenges of modernity.

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II. Conceptual Issues

In order to carry out this reflection, it is first necessary to clarify a number of major concepts relating to the issue in question: governance, tourism and modernity.

a) What does Governance Mean ?

Governance refers to the diversity of players involved in defining public action (Hounmenou, 2003). It is "a process of coordinating actors, social groups and institutions to achieve collectively discussed and defined goals in fragmented and uncertain environments" (Bagnasco & Le Galès, 1997). The notion of governance requires us to take an interest in the plurality of players. Indeed, the complexity of tourism governance is inherent in the involvement of a multiplicity of players with no leader, and in the cross-cutting nature of this activity.

The governance approach to tourism highlights the link between economic opportunities, political issues and social practices. In this study, governance refers to all the rules and decision-making, information and monitoring bodies that ensure the smooth running and management of a site or area. Its aim is to provide strategic direction, ensure that objectives are achieved, that risks are anticipated and managed, and that resources are used responsibly. It integrates and includes all stakeholders (public authorities, citizens, private partners, etc.), ensuring that their points of view, approaches and needs are taken into account.

b) The Concept of Tourism

The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) defines tourism as all the activities carried out by people during their travels and stays in places outside their usual environment for a period not exceeding one year, for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of a remunerated activity in the places visited. This definition is the most commonly used. It is an operational definition which enables tourism statistics to be produced and is used for these purposes.

In fact, the tourism industry brings together all the structures whose main activity relates to the

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production of one or more services characteristic of tourism: travel agencies and similar activities, tour operators, tourist guides, leisure establishments, hotels and similar establishments, properties and secondary residences, restaurants and similar establishments, air, road, rail and water transport, vehicle rental (Cameroon Holidays, 2011). This involvement of a multitude of actors in the tourism sector has led authors such as Knafou and Stock to define this phenomenon more in terms of a systemic approach: "tourism is a system of actors, practices and spaces which contribute to the "recreation" of individuals through temporary displacement from everyday places" (Gay et al., 2003).

Adopting a systems approach, (Christie & Morrison, 1985) define tourism as a system involving four links: the market, the journey, the destination and marketing. Considering that the fourth component identified by Mill & Morisson is an action variable which facilitates the functioning of the system, (Demers, 1987) considers that the tourism system, taken in its global sense, actually comprises three major components: the market, transport and the product. Similarly, (Gunn, 1988) defines the tourism system in terms of demand and supply (major components). Demand includes the population interested and able to travel, i.e. tourists; and the supply side includes transport, attractions, services, information and promotion. All these elements are highly interrelated, and their dynamics shape the way the system works, which can be influenced by various factors: natural resources, cultural resources, entrepreneurship, finance, etc.

Tourism is considered to be a sector of activity with a strong contribution to territorial development. The UNWTO, for example, sees it as an engine for socio-economic growth, helping to reduce poverty and create jobs, which has led to its international status as a development tool that helps to improve local living conditions (Jeddi, 2022). Each spatial configuration works and seeks to improve its attractiveness by developing its tourist assets and economic potential, while at the same time relying on the development and promotion of its assets and potential as factors of attractiveness (Raif & Zouiten, 2021).

c) An Understanding of Modernity

To understand modernity in a general way, we need to lay the foundations for the term modern, which first appeared in the philosophical sciences. In the nineteenth century, its optimistic nature was characterised by ideas of progress and the emergence of changes in social structures ((Bendix, 2002). For the founding fathers, such as Marx Weber and Durkhein, the term modernity was used to describe the changes underway, contrasting the modern with the traditional. Traditional being the characteristic of poor countries, i.e. those with the lowest index of economic development, in contrast to developed countries, which enjoy a high quality of life.

For them, modernity refers to connotations of a new experience of the world determined by a world reconstructed thanks to the active and conscious intervention of actors and a new sense of self. Thus, modernity is characterised more in terms of change in the headings that imply the liberation and increasing autonomy of action associations in almost all areas of society (Berger, 1982). This materialises more in terms of innovations in economic and social organisation, political relations and cultural characteristics that become the symbols of modernity (Habermas, 1985).

In fact, modernity in the tourism industry is a sum of changes and even specific innovations in social, political, economic and cultural terms, carried out with the aim of revolutionising the tourism sector. This is implemented more through the use of a new good or service, or a considerable improvement in terms of its characteristics or uses. This includes a substantial improvement in materials, operation and practical specifications, integrated software, user-friendliness and other working characteristics (Martín-Rios & Ciobanu, 2019). Let's not lose sight of the fact that product innovations are likely to involve new technologies or even rely on new uses or combinations of new knowledge. Thus, modernity in the tourism sector implies the introduction of new services and goods which differ considerably in some cases from previous products, or which have undergone significant improvement.

In fact, modernity can be observed and even materialised in the tourism sectors by the fact that those in charge are able to develop mechanisms enabling them to adapt to new trends by constantly listening to these potential customers, with the specific aim of capturing and seducing them, in order to satisfy them (Caccomo & Solonandrasana, 2001).

III. Institutional and Political Framework for Tourism Governance

While the overall growth of the tourism sector is positive, public authorities are increasingly concerned with devising policies to maximise the economic, environmental and social benefits of tourism while reducing the tensions that arise when its growth is neither planned nor managed. Measures to achieve this have become a priority. Indeed, it appears that the development of a tourism strategy can incite authorities, the tourism industry, local communities and other stakeholders to work together to developand other stakeholders to develop a vision and a course of action for the development of tourism. Public-private cooperation is becoming increasingly important in tourism strategies. This section aims to identify tourism

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governance practices at international and national levels.

a) Tourism Governance at International Level

Governance in tourism remains a laborious task because it involves a plethora of elements that need to be brought together in order to ensure its survival. It also involves a variety of players who sometimes have little understanding of what tourism is all about. This arduous task observed throughout the world is due to the fact that, the tourism industry cannot be governed as an isolated entity, because it is an organised set of interactions from which emerge the functional properties of the whole exceeding the parts.

According to (Banengaï-Koyama et al., 2021), throughout the world, the tourism sector is very complex, as it brings together interdependent and inseparable activities, both tangible and intangible, such as transport networks, accommodation, catering, guided tours, not forgetting related services such as banking, insurance and security. In many countries, responsibility for tourism lies with central government. As such, its role in the governance of tourism should not be overlooked. Central government seeks to harmonise regional tourism policies to ensure that all sectors are not faced with different policies in the regions in which they operate. It is also generally involved in the development of many important policy areas such as border control or aviation arrangements, and in the development of a national brand which can provide a kind of umbrella under which sub-national brands can operate.

Indeed, given the complexity of the tourism sector, in Europe, for example, the emphasis is on the stability of political institutions, because it is this ultimate stability that attracts tourists, who will then feel safe (Neumayer, 2004), unlike in African countries, where corruption and political instability cause tourism revenues to fall and reduce the number of visitors (Banengaï-Koyama et al., 2021). In terms of tourism governance, Europe continues to dominate. But new destinations, such as Croatia, the Dominican Republic and Vietnam, are emerging on the market with remarkable growth over the last decade.

A study by the OECD (2010) on tourism governance in member countries reveals that governance applicable to tourism proceeds through a planning process involving many parts of the administration at national ministry level, as well as partnerships with industry and with the private sector, whose representatives are often best placed to determine the areas in which government intervention is most needed. Tourism strategies are therefore increasingly driven by the need for an integrated approach to tourism development (OCDE, 2010).

In France, for example, the State implements a national policy and establishes the guiding framework for the tourism sector. The tourism sector is organised at national level by the Ministry of the Economy, Industry and the Digital Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development. The sector is steered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development via the Directorate General for Globalisation and Partnership Development, which is responsible for promoting France as a destination, and by the Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Digital Technologies via the Directorate General for Business, which has a sub-directorate specifically dedicated to the sector : the Tourism Sub-Directorate. These entities therefore help to guide tourism policy (Allias-Denis & Baroin, 2016).

In some Asian countries, such as Japan, a cultural tourism programme has been set up based on the rationale that, in order to attract and keep more tourists coming back, it is important to provide information that is interesting and easy to follow, and to offer an experience that awakens a deep interest in the country's history and traditional culture (OECD, 2010).

Let's not lose sight of the fact that nowadays, thanks to globalisation and the digital economy, many countries around the world have opted to digitise the tourism sector. The advent of the Internet has fundamentally changed the international tourism sector and its relationship with consumers. All tourism services positioned in the value chain can communicate directly with their customers. As a result, consumers are now at the heart of the value chain, rather than outside it. Consumers now have direct access to what's on offer, thanks to the websites of tourist offices, which feature advertising and the presentation of different tourism offers classified by unifying themes (cultural and historical heritage, hotel accommodation, campsites, bed and breakfasts, regional and local culinary and craft specialities, sporting and cultural activities, ecotourism, seasonal events, folklore, festivals and so on) (Mandou, 2002). A wide variety of means are available to help them make their choices. They can switch from a direct to an indirect travel distribution network, benefit from relative cost transparency online, make informed comparisons and sometimes even specify the price of the tourism product they are looking for (OECD, 2010).

b) In Cameroon in Particular

The purpose of the tourism sector is to stimulate a country's economic growth by creating jobs and combating poverty, on the one hand, and to preserve the cultural and natural heritage while promoting the empowerment of local communities, on the other (UNCTAD, 2017). Some emerging and developing countries have made tourism their primary export activity. For this reason, governments are creating a legal framework to support and develop this sector.

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In Cameroon in particular, the tourism sector is a complex one, involving a number of socio-political and cultural players. Faced with a plethora of tourism sectors in Cameroon, the state was obliged to organise it by creating a Ministry of Tourism and Leisure, which succeeded the National Tourist Office, with 03 external services: the European, Asian and American information offices, not forgetting several other organisational and trade union partners.

The ministry in charge of the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure at national level plays a coordinating and harmonising role for the many private and public sector companies. The governance of the tourism industries in Cameroon is defined primarily by the policy of the central power (the Head of State). This is done through Law No. 2016/006 of 18 April 2016, which governs tourism and leisure activities in Cameroon by laying down the framework for legislation on commercial activities, the specific rules applicable to tourism and leisure activities with a view to economic development; the promotion of national culture; national integration and the mixing of peoples; the protection and safeguarding of national tourist and cultural values, as well as the environment; and the enhancement of the national tourist heritage. This specifically concerns any activity that contributes to the provision of accommodation and catering services to meet the needs of people travelling either for pleasure or for professional reasons, as well as the provision of leisure services and any activity organised for the sole purpose of entertainment (Décret régissant l'activité touristique et de loisir au Cameroun, 2016). In this law, emphasis is placed on the need for structures involved in tourism and tourist safety to take out an insurance policy.

Generally speaking, the tourism sector in Cameroon is characterised by weak structuring, a lack of technical and financial capacity, and a lack of support despite Cameroon's abundant cultural heritage. Notwithstanding this deficit, a number of projects are being developed with the aim of highlighting tourism potential and thereby meeting certain modern challenges linked to the tourism sectors. Following the example of West Cameroon, a number of local players, including mayors, traditional chiefs, private promoters and cultural and heritage players, have developed a project through the "route des chefferies" programme, which focuses on three points:

- Improve the conservation and scenography of heritage sites, develop a natural site and support the craft industry with its capacity-building and product labelling initiatives;
- Promote and enhance this diversified and attractive tourist offer to the national public and establish the foundations for the structuring needed to attract international customers;
- Structure and consolidate the governance of the system of tourism players in the regions (chiefs, mayors, private tourism promoters, craftsmen, cultural and heritage players), and strengthen their capacities.

In the same vein, tourism training schools have been set up, such as the (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (EMCCA) regional hotel and tourism school in Ngaoundéré, the wildlife school in Garoua, the fine arts institute in Foumban and many others, which are key to the quality of services offered in the tourism sector. Faced with a changing world, tourism has to compete on several fronts. Competition from tourism markets and competition for labour. This desire on the part of the state to create a framework conducive to tourism training in training schools is proving to be relevant, as it constitutes a lever and even a key instrument in the process of developing the tourism sector.

IV. Tourism and Modernism

The tourism industries are a vehicle for the mobility of individuals, currencies and consumption patterns (Makou, 2016). People's mobility is characterised by their own particular motivations. For the most part, it is influenced by factors that contribute to the process of change in urban and rural areas, such as consumption patterns and standards of quality, comfort and safety in transport infrastructure and accommodation. In this sense, tourism is seen as a strategic development sector for countries, because at a systemic level it affects many sectors of society. In the light of modernity, this new sector is seeking to meet global demand by making itself attractive, in order to be competitive both nationally and internationally, and to implement strategies to retain tourists and attract new ones. The modernisation of the tourism sector as a whole is thus becoming the key to attracting people and developing tourism. Below, we look at how Cameroon is succeeding in consolidating tourism and modernity.

a) The Tourism Situation in Cameroon: Between Heritage Preservation and the Demands of Modernity

In Cameroon, the tourism industry occupies a predominant position and is seen as one of the factors that can contribute to the country's economic development, even if results in this sector are slow to materialise. Cameroon has a wealth of artistic, infrastructural, natural, human and cultural tourism potential which, according to (Tchindjang & Kamdem, s. d.), are important tourism factors that could represent the world's leading economic sector in the future. All the more so since Cameroon is recognised as Africa in miniature, and therefore a land of tourism par excellence.

However, on an institutional level, a number of factors hinder the development of the tourism sector.

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For this reason, tourism is very sensitive to the political environment, more specifically as regards the safety of tourists. Cameroon is confronted with violence and attacks that are reducing the number of tourist arrivals. Unfortunately, Cameroon's image as a tourist destination is suffering. Some tourist areas are described as high-risk destination, prone to violent events, disease and asymmetric conflicts (Neumayer, 2004; Yap & Saha, 2013).

In fact, the tourism sector remains diversified, with a heritage linked to a legacy to be handed down from more or less ancient times. It has a collective dimension of a general nature, with a value as a resource likely to contribute to the development of the territory that generated it. In Cameroon, cultural heritage can be understood in material terms and is characterised by housing, crafts, pottery, weaving, sculpture, archaeology and architecture. Intangible cultural heritage, which takes into account certain aspects of human creativity, such as the ability to invent original cultural forms that are not necessarily material (for instance, the manufacture of precious objets d'art) (Brillet, 2000).

In essence, heritage represents the identity of an entire people. It is any form of cultural expression inherited from the past by a society. It includes the spoken language, national anthems, songs, handicrafts, gastronomy, dances, festivals, events, folklore celebrations, accounts, legends, poems, the works of great writers, architectural and artistic works and much more.

Preserving this vitality in the face of the demands of modernity is becoming an arduous task. Thus, the use of certain strategies in response to modernity is based on conservative practices in the light of a traditional perspective, such as the use of architectural elements that have been salvaged and reused in the construction of new buildings. In other words, architectural fragments from another era are incorporated into existing buildings. This combination of the traditional and the modern aims to adapt to modernity without undermining its cultural heritage by making it more attractive to the world (the example of conical-roofed dwellings made of mud bricks or bamboo is becoming rarer in the face of modernisation and is now made of hard or semi-hard materials).

Along the same lines, in the past on Mount Cameroon, trees were felled around mountain refuges to heat the refuges and prepare meals for tourists, but it was realised that this practice was destroying bird habitats and causing erosion, which is why tourists now have their own private portable gas cookers (Sumelong, 2012).

Cities are becoming more cosmopolitan, prompting people to change their habits, which is having an impact on cultural heritage in general. However, efforts are being made to preserve heritage. For example, in Bafoussam, a town in the west of Cameroon, there are still museums in Bafoussam 1er, such as the Ecological Museum of Biodiversity, which conserves and exhibits the medicinal plants of the Bafoussam community.

Moreover, modernity remains a difficult factor to combine with cultural heritage, which is under threat in the Cameroonian context, as several biosphere reserves have not escaped the impetus of modernisation. For example, the pygmy peoples living around the Lobé Falls have seen not only their territory confined, but also their camps transformed into crude villages with the surge of modernity in the area (Tchindjang & Etoga, 2014).

b) What Kind of Tourism Governance is Needed to Meet the Challenges of Modernity ?

As the years go by, tourism practices evolve, constrained by numerous crises but also driven by constantly changing demand, forcing regions to rethink their strategy, but also to demonstrate permanent flexibility in a world that is constantly changing. Governance applied to tourism therefore appears to be an attempt to respond to this need for permanent adaptability, with clear lines to be defined and precise objectives to be built, starting by emphasising the stability of political institutions through the creation of trustworthy institutions focused on collective national interests.

Tourism governance is a complex system which requires a better understanding of the processes involved, since each player influences the system and is influenced by the system (Butler & Waldbrook, 1991). As a result, each element that comes into play in the tourism industry is essential and must be taken into account within the framework of the interrelationships that can exist in this sector. This inseparability stems from an awareness that integrates in a global way the observational data linked to any problem, however independent it may seem. The system in these characteristics is not only made up of relationships and roles, but also has an organisational and structural dimension that can help to bring a new perspective to the improvement of tourism, which is already suffocated by the lack of infrastructure and the conditions that make its management laborious.

In this way, managing the system means developing processes based on open dialogue with all the stakeholders, on the understanding that all the ministries concerned have a role to play, leading to coordinated government action. This approach needs to involve many parts of government across national ministries, as well as partnerships with industry and the private sector, whose representatives are often best placed to identify areas where government intervention would be most useful. This will make it possible to invest in the development of tourist sites and build

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infrastructure. In the sense that the tourism sector depends on a number of related activities that require investment in a stable and secure environment. Borders need to be crossed more easily by reducing transport-related red tape, which could help to create a new dynamic in international tourist flows.

Cameroon's decentralisation law could be one of the tools used to give local authorities greater responsibility and ownership of tourism projects. As a result, decentralised cooperation will have a leverage effect, encouraging other national and international players to take an interest and invest in safeguarding and promoting this cultural heritage. According to the (Organisation mondiale du tourisme, 2015) Cameroon should put in place innovative strategies for the development and management of tourism activities that respect and preserve natural, cultural and social resources in the long term, and contribute positively and equitably to economic development and the fulfilment of the individuals who live, work or stay in these areas. The emphasis here is on preserving cultural heritage, helping people to fulfil their potential, and taking account of their participation in the development of tourism activities. This means training qualified staff (Organisation mondiale du tourisme, 2015).

Faced with the structural failure of governance of the tourism sector by unqualified staff who are becoming more and more obsolete, thereby damaging the system. The system in general, in its functional capacities in terms of the systemic approach, must opt for self-regulation or even self-productive capacities by arranging more appropriate training school systems to promote innovation and advance productivity in the tourism sector. This includes a number of considerable financial, human and material investments which should motivate and advance the quality of training.

Furthermore, the structures involved in the tourism sector in the face of globalisation need to develop new architectures that attach importance to the introduction of a digitisation system, with new information and communication technologies coming into play with the aim of revolutionising the tourism sector. This will involve the development of websites with the aim of enhancing the value of cultural and natural heritage sites, thereby promoting Cameroon's image as a tourist destination throughout the world.

This new remote system must take the lead and be used in the best possible conditions, and must be one of the main driving forces behind tourism governance. It facilitates dissemination and the creation of exchange and cooperation networks in the service of tourism production. From an ergonomic point of view, this technological and organisational device must promote the optimisation of interactions by adapting to human capacities, as well as preserving the physical, psychological and social integrity of human beings and preventing undesirable consequences. New ways of managing knowledge infrastructures and transforming skills need to be considered. It must bring about changes in people, their work and their environment.

Tourism is not a monolithic activity that evolves in avacuum; on the contrary, it is part of a whole ecosystem that integrates fields as vast as transport, culture, the local economy and, of course, first and foremost, the local people who live these realities. In this sense, it is important to establish open governance, taking into account all the stakeholders, but also bearing in mind that tourism practices have largely evolved. In fact, the tourism professions have completely exploded, and today everyone has to be capable of providing information, welcoming visitors and communicating with them. In addition, there are other factors that can make governance more complex, such as seasonality, which means that an organisation has to be designed to cater for different flows of visitors throughout the year, and overtourism, which raises the issue of acceptability to local residents, etc.

c) Concluding Remarks

The tourism industry is one of the key factors contributing to the social, economic and cultural development of the country. The tourism offer (tangible heritage: housing, handicrafts, pottery, weaving, sculpture, archaeology, architecture, waterfalls, etc.) is abundant in Cameroon and requires appropriate management to make it easier to attract tourists and develop this sector in the face of modernity. It is for this reason that this work is devoted to the study of tourism governance in Cameroon in the face of the challenges of modernity: an inventory.

Indeed, from the outset we have highlighted concepts such as tourism governance, which is a mode of initiative based on a dynamic, flexible organisational mechanism that makes it possible to consolidate the multiple interests of the plurality and diversity of stakeholders involved in the tourism process. We have thus seen that, faced with the diversity offered by the tourism sector, governance remains an obsolete task in view of the demands imposed by the advance of modernity. This is a real threat to the tourism sector. This sector is doing its best to put in place strategies aimed at preserving its cultural heritage and making it more attractive, in order to attract more tourists from all over the world, even if this remains limited.

Faced with this challenge, the tourism industries will have to draw inspiration from tourism governance which, at a systemic level, integrates all the players involved in the tourism sector, as it remains a sector characterised by its diversity and complexity. The policies put in place must promote innovation in tourism and heritage preservation. This can be achieved by promoting behaviour and lifestyles that respect the environment, and by making all stakeholders aware of the need to avoid practices that could compromise the

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future of the tourism industry. Similarly, the proliferation of training opportunities in the tourism sector means that training content can be aligned with the requirements of modern tourism management. With the arrival of ICTs, the world has become a global village, and every nation should draw inspiration from the new technologies to better communicate and promote its product throughout the world.

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