Climate Change and Potential Impacts on Tourism. Evidence from the Zimbabwean Side of the Victoria Falls World Heritage Site

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Background and Introduction

Tourism is one of the major economic sectors globally (WTTC, 2018)

It is fastest growing economic sectors

Most important in growing economies such as Zimbabwe (Dube & Nhamo ,2018)

- Employs vulnerable members of the community
- Major Forex earner
- Assist in fighting poverty, inequality and unemployment

Under serious threat from climate change

Climate change set to alter attractions and travel patterns across the world (Fang et al., 2018)

Tourism and climate change

Dual relationship between tourism and climate change Sub Saharan Africa particularly vulnerable

Fair amount of research in the global North

Vast knowledge gaps exists in global South

IPCC called for more research

Scott et al (2016) called for research in SSA on tourism and climate change

Hoodoorn and Fitchettgen (2016), also called for similar research Is there evidence of climate change in Victoria Falls Zimbabwe? How will climate change affect tourism sector in Victoria Falls Zimbabwe?

Research Question?

Track evidence of climate change in the context of climate change and climate variability in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe Highlight potential implications of climate change on the tourism sector in Victoria Falls Zimbabwe

Objectives



Materials and Methods

Research Design



Geographic Location of Victoria Falls

- largest curtain of falling water in the world
- Receives more than 500 00 tourists a year
- Part of the Kaza Tourists Region
- Africa's adventure capital
- Central to tourism economy for South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Zambia
- Important birding site





Study Area

Rainfall pattern 1976-2016

- No significant changes in average rainfall amount over the period in question
- Extreme swings in rainfall patterns
- Prolonged drought periods
- An increase in drought occurrence
- Change in rainfall season
- A delay of one month
- Rainfall season shorter by a month
- 10 years out of the past 16 years were drought years



Findings and Discussions

- 1.4 degree temperature increase was reported over the period in question /0.35 degree Celsius per decade
- Three summer months had outstanding temperature particularly October



October witnessed largest temperature increase



October

Zambezi Discharge pattern over the past 40yrs









Implications on Tourism

Potential Impact of Climate change on tourist arrivals to Victoria Falls

Would you come to Victoria Falls if it dries up?





Adaptation and mitigation



Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on findings there is ample evidence to suggest that global warming is taking place

> Need to continuously monitor the impact of climate change on tourism across the SADC region

> > Need for more focused research on World Heritage Sites across Africa to assess the impact of climate change

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