

Tourism: Its Profitability, Its Uniqueness, Its Fragility – Should Not Be the Sole Source of Revenue or a Significant Source of Foreign Exchange for any Country or Region: The Barbados Situation

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Abstract: Tourism is defined as the activity of individuals visiting places and attractions for purposes such as leisure, business, health or other reasons (Soteriodes and Van Zyl, 2016). Tourism can be internal or external, that is visits within a country or visits to a foreign country. Tourism's profitability is well established and countries/regions embark on to a tourism journey to obtain foreign exchange, generate employment and create economic activity. The life cycle of a tourist destination helps to determine the current situation with visitor arrival and possible estimates of revenue, the profitability and success of a tourist destination depend on its unique attributes, accessibility, accommodation, human resources, availability of facilities, attractions, motivation of tourists for the destination, marketing strategies and government involvement. The uniqueness of a destination is associated with its tangible and intangible attributes. The fragility of a tourist destination refers to its vulnerability to negative impacts from both internal and external factors. Although tourism offers significant economic benefits, it is generally considered not wise to make tourism a country's or region's sole source of revenue or a major foreign exchange earner due to the various risks and drawbacks. This article reviews the profitability, uniqueness, fragility of tourism as well as the dangers of relying too heavily on tourism as an economic driver. The Barbados Situation is reviewed as a case study. Barbados is too reliant on tourism and there is need for the diversification of the economy.

Keywords: Tourist destination, revenue, uniqueness, profitability, success, visitors, travelers, attractions, resilience, accessibility, leakage, attributes.

INTRODUCTION

According to Soteriodes and Van Zyl (2016) tourism is defined as the activity of individuals visiting different places and attractions for purposes such as leisure, business, health or other reasons. It refers to the action of people journeying to a foreign country or destination that is different from their typical surroundings, motivated by personal or business or professional objectives (United Nations Statistical and World Tourism Organization, 2010). The human beings mentioned are commonly known as visitors, encompassing tourists, travelers, and both local and non-local residents. Tourism encompasses a range of activities engaged in by individuals, including expenditures directly related to tourism (United Nations Statistical and World Tourism Organization, 2010).

In the classification of tourists by their country of origin, they can be divided into two groups, which are

international tourists and local tourists (Sihite, 2000; Yoeti, 2008). International tourism is defined as the act of individuals travelling to and from a destination outside their usual living and working environment crossing national borders with the purpose of leisure and enjoyment (Sustrisno, 2024). Sustrisno (2024) stated that domestic tourism is the act of individuals going to and from a destination within their own country while being outside their location of residence and job.

Regions/countries which are highly dependent on tourism often experience the unique economic structure characterized by high proportions of jobs in the hospitality, entertainment and service sectors (Wallace, 2024). These jobs although they are abundant are usually associated with low wages when compared to other industries (Wallace, 2024). Workers in hotels, restaurants, and tour services are often paid minimum wage which may also lack benefits such as health insurance and retirement plan (Wallace, 2024). It should

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be noted that many tourism related jobs are seasonal, leading to periods of unemployment or under employment during off-peak seasons (Wallace, 2024). The employment instability associated with tourism can make it difficult for workers to achieve long-term financial security and upward mobility (Wallace, 2024).

Tourism significantly contributes to the global gross domestic product and there is a forecast that it will grow at an annual rate of 4%, hence it will outpace many other economic sectors (Lenzen et al, 2018). According to Tourism Teacher (2025) and Statista Research Dept (2024) the following is recognized on the world forum:

- (a) The tourism economy represents 9.1% of the world GDP
- (b) Tourism contributes somewhere between 6-7 % of global employment
- (c) International tourism ranks fourth -after fuels, chemicals and automotive products-in global exports.
- (d) The tourism industry is value at US \$ 9.9 trillion a year (2023)
- (e) Tourism accounts for 30% of the world's exports of commercial services
- (f) Tourism accounts for at least 6% of total global exports
- (g) The United Nations World Tourism Organization recorded that there were 1.4 billion international tourists in 2018
- (h) In more than 150 countries, tourism is one of the top five export earners.
- (i) Tourism is the main source of foreign exchange for 1/3 of developing countries and 1/2 of the less economically developed countries (LEDCs).

Governments pursue tourism as an economic policy because (a) it brings in foreign exchange, (b) it generates employment and (c) it creates economic activity (Tourism Teacher, 2025). There are independent, franchised, or multinational investors who play a significant role in the tourism industry (Tourism Teacher, 2025). These entities normally own hotels, roads or land inclusive of other assets that are important contributors in the overall success of the tourism industry. A large number of businesses and individuals will take out loans to help fund their initial ventures (Tourism Teacher, 2025).

A tourism destination's image consists of a complex concept that influences the customer's perception of the tourist destination and his/her behavioral intention (Lai and Li, 2016). It includes the perceptions or attitudes of customers towards the destination, as well as the mental representation of beliefs, feelings, and global impressions regarding the destination (Tasci et al, 2007; Kim and Richardson, 2003). Traditionally, information regarding a tourist destination was obtained by word of mouth (WOM) through the inner circle of visitors -friends, relatives,

work mates, etc. (Toral et al, 2017). Word-of-mouth is considered to be face to face information exchange and there are studies that have concluded that there is a high influence of WOM on the image of a destination (Toral et al, 2017; Brown and Getz, 2005; Litvin et al, 2008; Jalilvand, 2016).

The emergence of user generated content over the internet is causing a broader exchange of information beyond the inner circle of visitors (Toral et al, 2017). It is reported that more than 30% of tourists made use of online booking, and booking websites are known to include reviews and ratings of previous customers (Toral et al, 2017; Bhatiasevi and Yoopetch, 2015). Therefore, travel and tourism websites provide plenty of information that can reshape the mind of potential visitors, influencing or even modifying their purchasing decisions and hence whether or not to visit a particular tourist destination. Booking and travel websites represent a more pervasive and widespread form of word of mouth known as electronic word of mouth (eWOM), which has been reported to more cost effective than other marketing tools and even more influencing than other information resources in the case of the tourism industry, mainly because of the intangible nature of tourism services (Toral et al, 2017; Cantalops and Salvi, 2014; Casalo et al, 2015).

Electronic word of mouth helps consumers (potential visitors to the destination) reduce risk and uncertainty when making a purchase decision which determines whether or not they will visit the particular destination (Bickart and Schindler, 2001). Social media and online communities offer the opportunities for sharing experiences, feelings and exchange information (Toral et al, 2017). They transform consumers, societies, and companies with widespread access to information, enhanced communication and improved social networking (Toral et al, 2017). Online consumer reviews represent a valuable source of information that affects brand perceptions and customer relations as they increasingly influence travel related decisions (Papathanassis and Knoll, 2011; Toral et al, 2017).

Regardless of the marketing strategies and how potential visitors get their information the decision to visit a tourist destination depends heavily on its uniqueness. A destination's image considers the common versus its unique dimension which refers to those common characteristics shared by many destinations versus those characteristics that distinguish the destination from its competitors (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; 2003). Those attributes strongly related to the tourist destination according to customers' perception as well as the other attributes that are objectively unique to the destination and are able to differentiate it from its competitors should be placed in first consideration for an effective positioning of the tourist destination (Ibrahim and Gill, 2005). Kim et al (2012) suggested that experiencing something new, unique or different leads to

a strong memory of the travel experience. Now-a-days, many travelers demand to go beyond the typical forms of tourism (Toral et al, 2017). Tourists desire to have a unique experience at the destination, enjoying the atmosphere, and local people in addition to their living environment (Brown, 2005). The unique attributes can be determined as those that satisfy the tourists the most (Ibrahim and Gill, 2005). Unique attributes do not only refer to the physical tangible attributes but also the intangible and effective attributes (Toral et al, 2017). For most destinations these attributes are related to the experience at the destination (Kim, 2014). Tung and Ritchie (2011). reported conclusively that positive emotions and feelings associated with tourism experiences such as happiness and excitement were critical components of memorable tourism experiences.

In addition to reviewing the unique attributes of a tourist destination, this article explains the profitability of a tourist destination, the fragility of tourism, the dangers of relying solely or too heavily on tourism for income/ foreign exchange, the life cycle of a tourist destination and the Barbados situation as a case study. Before embarking on the development of a tourism industry all concepts relating to tourism should be reviewed in an attempt to assess the risks in the tourism industry.

The Life cycle of a Tourist Destination

Figure 1 shows the life cycle of a tourist destination modified after Butler (1980). The stages are as followed.

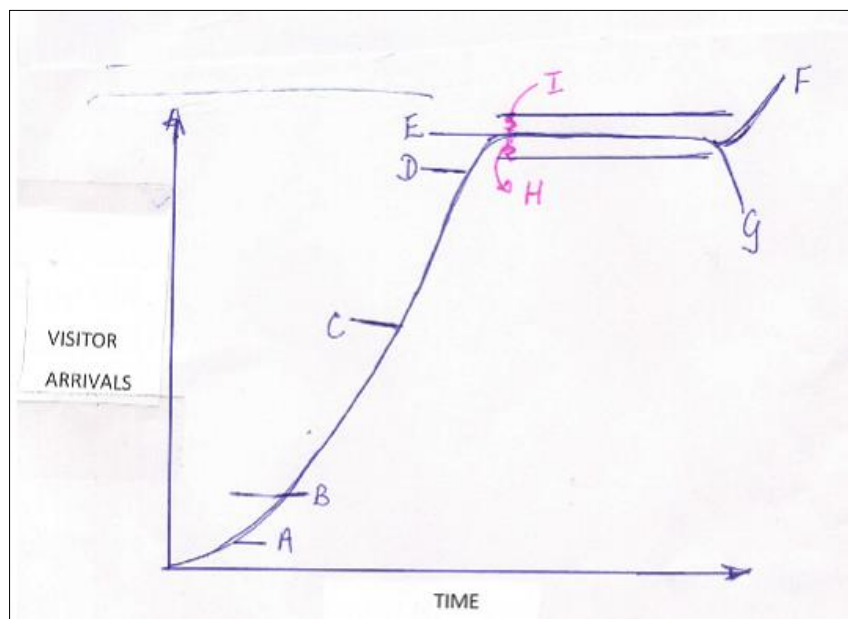


Figure 1: The Life Cycle of a Tourist Destination adopted after Butler (1980).

The Profitability of Tourism

The profitability of tourism stems from significant contribution to a country's GDP and

Stage A; represents exploration where a small number of tourists visit the destination with few facilities. The local impact on the local economy is minuscule.

Stage B: represents involvement where visitor numbers increase, and there is the beginning of the development of tourist specific facilities and infrastructure to attract more visitors. It is plausible that a distinct tourist season will emerge.

Stage C: represents development and is characterized by rapid growth of visitor arrivals with significant physical and economic impact on the destination. The accommodation facilities are on the increase, infrastructure improves and local control may diminish if external investment increases.

Stage D: In this stage of consolidation tourism has become a major part of the local economy and there is a slower rate of growth. The capacity of the tourist destination is reached and it may begin to lose some of its original charm due to over tourism or competition.

Stage E: This stationary or stagnant phase (stage) occurs when visitor arrivals reach a constant level between upper and lower statistical limits (H and I). The destinations attractiveness has declined due to overcrowding, over use or competition. The visitor arrivals may fall and the tourist destination faces challenges in maintaining its appeal.

Stage F: represents the phase of Rejuvenation. The destination reinvent itself through the use of new attractions, renovating old ones and there is investment to appeal to new visitors, possibly restarting the cycle.

Stage G: In this stage of decline there is a drastic reduction in tourist numbers and the destination may suffer economic hardship, and would therefore have to rely on other industries or loans.

employment driven by visitor spending that generate revenue for some business, create new jobs, as well as stimulate the local economies. Exports due to tourism

creates a valuable chain of income with direct, indirect, and induced impacts, promoting growth in the economy and supporting livelihoods. Tourism can also generate significant foreign exchange for a nation (Boyea, 2024; Truyols, 2023; World Bank, 2025). Tourism can reduce poverty (Truyols, 2023).

The economic drivers behind the profitability of tourism are as follows:

- (a) The revenue earned due to the visitor's arrival and spending is a major source of profitability (Boyea, 2024).
- (b) The profitability of tourism is enhanced by linkages to other sectors for example, handicraft, retail, food services, and the creation of jobs at numerous points of the tourism chain of value (World Bank, 2025; Boyea, 2024).
- (c) The tourism sector generates foreign exchange and attracts additional investments further increasing the profitability of the local community, - region or country (World Bank, 2025).

The factors that influence the profitability of a tourist destination according to Ngugen et al (2019) are:

1. A quality infrastructure and effective marketing which are crucial for attracting visitors and boosting the economic impact on the destination.
2. A destination's attractiveness-natural, cultural and historical-or entertainment/amusement opportunity are fundamental to drawing visitors. Built beauty is also important to attracting tourists.
3. The profitability of a tourist destination is affected by numerous factors due to the specificity of the tourism business activities, for example, the season, resources, and local policy.

The five A'S of tourism are considered essential to the success of a tourist destination. These are;

- (a) Attractiveness
- (b) Access
- (c) Accommodation
- (d) Amenities
- (e) Activities

A tourist attraction is considered a place of interest which tourist visit (SCRIBD, 2025). This may be due to its inherent or exhibited cultural value, historical significance, natural or developed beauty or amazing amusement opportunities (SCRIBD, 2025). Example include historical places, arc monuments, zoos, museums, art galleries-craft centers- botanical gardens, buildings and structures, libraries, former prisons, national parks, carnivals (festivals) (SCRIBD,2025). Natural attractions include beaches, rock formations, and underground caves.

Transportation is necessary to physically move tourists from where they live to the destination they are visiting (SCRIBD, 2025). From a global perspective the international air transport dominates the movement for international visitors. In the Caribbean roads and private as well as public transportation take tourist around the islands. They are also package tours by tour operators using coaches. These alternative modes of transportation are necessary for tourists who prefer not to transport themselves.

All tourist destinations need nearby accommodation otherwise the tourist will have no place to sleep (SCRIBD, 2025). It should be noted that investors will only invest in accommodation infrastructure if there is a sufficient economic return (SCRIBD, 2025). The development of successful accommodation depends more than ever before, on building the appropriate type of facility to suit the needs of a profitable segment of the tourist market (SCRIBD, 2025).

Tourist attractions are also supported by a range of activities such as a beach attraction with water sports and tours to underground reefs. Other activities might include nature walks and bird watching (SCRIBD, 2025)

The amenities of a tourist destination are the services that are required to meet the needs of the tourist while they are away from home (SCRIBD, 2025). The amenities of importance include public restrooms, street signs, retail shopping - inclusive of duty-free shopping-restaurants and cafes, visitor centers, telecommunications-inclusive of WiFi and emergency services (SCRIBD, 2025). Since many of the amenities are known government services, a high degree of cooperation is needed particularly where tourist services may appear to be competing with the needs of the local population (SCRIBD, 2025).

Success of a Tourism Destination.

Researchers have complied nine conditions that must be in place for the success of a tourist destination. These conditions are:

1. The participation of the local community
2. The quality of human resources
3. The availability of facilities and infrastructure
4. The accessibility of the destination
5. The attractiveness of the tourist attractions
6. The uniqueness of the tourist location
7. The motivation of the tourist for the destination
8. The effective marketing and strategies for promotion
9. The support of the government

A successful tourism destination is contingent upon the active engagement of the local communities in fostering and advancing popular tourism localities in the destination-country or region- (Kasim et al, 2023; Yan et al,2021; Strydom et al,2019; Akbar and Hallak, 2019;

Dutta and Dutta, 2023). The active participation of the local community plays a significant role in shaping the image of the destination (Han et al, 2023; Moriche et al, 2021). The involvement of the local community influences the management of the tourist destination, which in turn has an effect on the overall experience of tourists and length of stays (Gemar et al, 2022). The view of the local populace on the local authorities' role also has an impact on their assessment of the worth of the tourism attractions in their vicinity (Saghin et al, 2022). The friendliness of the local populace is a very important aspect which implies that favorable engagements with them impact tourist evaluations of the quality of the destination (Muresan et al, 2019).

It is important to prioritize the satisfaction and loyalty of tourists in a tourism destination (Gemar et al, 2022). Therefore, the business of tourism necessitates proficient human resources to deliver high quality services to the visitors (Sutrisno, 2024). Enhancing capacity, providing training and fostering skills development is emphasized (Baipal et al, 2023). It was determined that service quality and host personality are the primary elements by which tourists are influenced (Kulcsar, 2015). The friendliness and hospitable demeanor of the hosts in addition to their exceptional service standards ensures a delightful experience for tourists (Sutrisno, 2024). Muresan and colleagues (2019) reported that the caliber of cuisine and service staff is an influential element that can enhance the entire visitor experience and the excellence of the tourist destination. Having skilled and competent human resources in the tourism business are very important in the development of the tourism destination (Sutrisno, 2024). Such trained and skilled workers provide high quality services that enhances the satisfaction of the tourists and their loyalty (Sutrisno, 2024).

It is crucial for the ease of the tourists for a tourist destination to provide supporting services and infrastructure, such as, lodging, dining establishments and restrooms for the public (Sutrisno, 2024). For a successful sustainable tourism development there is a heavy reliance on the extent of infrastructure development, which includes both tourism related and technical aspects (Sutrisno, 2024). An effective infrastructure plays a very important role in the achievement of a tourist destination by the attraction and the accommodation of tourists (visitors) (Saghin et al, 2022; Moriche et al, 2021). It is suggested that natural tourism areas necessitate a road network that is accessible year-round (Dutta and Dutta, 2025). It is recognized that high quality infrastructure, that includes well maintained and well illuminated roadways, would enhance the expansion of tourism and bolster the appeal of the destination to visitors (Sutrisno, 2024). Strydom and colleagues (2019) determined that improving infrastructure, such as roads and lighting is necessary to enhance tourist's accessibility and allows for a better overall tourist experience in the tourism destination.

A tourist destination must be readily reachable by public or private transportation (Sutrisno, 2024). The success of the tourist industry of any destination is influenced by its strategic location and ease of accessibility (Moriche et al, 2021). Improving accessibility and visitor experience necessitates the improvement of infrastructure, such as roads and lighting (Strydom et al, 2019). The prosperity of a tourist destination hinges not only on its tourist allure but also the accessibility it offers. International tourists not only appreciate the ease of getting to the location-through Jet or Cruise Line travel-but their ability to travel around the location. The allocation of funds towards the enhancement of infrastructure and transportation systems could substantially bolster the appeal and success of the tourist destination (Sutrisno, 2024).

A tourism destination necessitates captivating tourist attraction that include natural landscapes, captivating events, historical landmarks, and enticements (Sutrisno, 2024). Attractions centered on cultural heritage have the potential to enhance the appeal of the destination to tourists (Al-arab et al, 2023). Biodiversity, appealing coastal areas, and the vibrant culture of the local residents are conditions that are acknowledged to contribute to the attractiveness of a tourist destination (Dutta and Dutta, 2024). Saghin and colleagues (2023) suggested that the presence of a well-developed infrastructure will enhance the appeal of the tourist destination. It should be noted that the duration of tourists is influenced by the conditions of lodgings and the effective marketing of the destination (Gemar et al, 2022). According to Sutrisno (2024) an effective strategy for the development of a tourism destination should acknowledge the crucial role of tourist's attractions in providing an overwhelming and inclusive experience for the tourists and in facilitating the sustainable expansion of the tourist destination.

An exceptional and captivating setting of the tourist destination might serve as a significant lure for visitors to visit the location (Sutrisno, 2024). The implementation of distinct heritage-focused tourism offerings that high lights the tourist destination historical aspects has been proven to be a successful method for the enhancement of visitor appeal (Al-arab et al, 2023). The uniqueness of a tourist destination encompasses its natural beauty, air quality and exclusive resources that can only be found in that location (Sutrisno, 2024). Such factors play a tremendous role in enhancing the appeal of the tourist destination and promoting the development of sustainable tourism (Akbar and Hallk, 2019; Mi et al, 2019). It has been shown through analysis, that the geographical position (location) has a crucial role in the growth of a destination's tourism (Dutta and Dutta, 2023; Thaothampitak et al, 2023; Moriche et al, 2021).

A tourist's (visitor's) perception of existing tourism products, including the tourist attractions and

support services, will influence the motivation of tourists to visit the tourist destination (Sutrisno, 2024). Identifying the motivation of the tourist is crucial as there exist a strong correlation between motivation and length of a tourist visit (Sutrisno, 2024). When tourists experience a strong emotional connection to a particular destination they are more likely to prolong their visit in the destination (Gemar et al, 2022). Understanding the critical incentives of tourists can help in designing programs or products that are pertinent and appealing to the tourists (visitors) (Gemar et al, 2022). Additionally, the pleasant emotions and experience of tourists could serve as a catalyst to encourage repeat visits to the destination and their inclination to promote it to others (Mi et al, 2019).

The efficiency of the marketing and promotion of a tourist destination are very important in heightening the tourist's awareness and fostering their interest in the tourism destination (Sutrisno, 2024). Thaothampitak et al (2023), in their research have shown that tourism organizations that prioritize crucial success criteria, such as financing, marketing activities and business partnerships are more likely to have a significant growth of business. The tactics used in marketing and promotion have a crucial role in the identification of targeted visitors, determining the conditions that facilitate different durations in the length of stay and enhancement of the tourists visits (Gemar et al, 2022). Jones and Beresford (2014) reported that effectively promoting regional cultural events and attraction of cultural visitors relies on the cultural marketing strategies that involve the understanding of the communication of the message to different stakeholders. It is important that an integrated marketing strategy in attracting visitors to a tourism destination be highlighted that involves implementing marketing planning techniques that promote the local community products within the context of the tourism (Yan et al, 2021; Strydom et al, 2019). In creating a successful promotional strategy, it is essential to involve the different stakeholders from the public and commercial sectors (Campiranon and Scott, 2014). It is importantly emphasized that proficient marketing and promotion are important factors in the triumph of tourist's destinations as they enhance the awareness and interest of travelers in visiting the location (Sutrisno, 2024).

The prosperity of a tourist destination is significantly impacted by government assistance and collaboration for sustainable management, regulation and advancement of its tourism industry (Strydom et al, 2019; Al-arab et al, 2023; Jones and Beresford, 2014; Dutta and Dutta, 2023). The efficacy of a destination's tourism relies heavily on the implementation of a strategic management system by the government and the destination's management organizations (Sutrisno, 2024). For the collaboration to be fostered between the public sectors and private sectors, safeguarding the environment and cultural heritage, and developing

policies that promote sustainable tourism it is necessary that they collaborate and a comprehensive framework (Baipai et al, 2023; Zhu et al, 2021). The government should be responsible for the formation of policies that promote the preservation of culture heritage, effective environmental management and encouraging the local stakeholders to participate actively in the development of sustainable tourism (Sutrisno, 2024). Due to receiving robust government backing a tourism destination can attain sustainability in its developmental endeavors (Sutrisno, 2024).

The Uniqueness of a Tourist Destination

The uniqueness of a tourist destination is associated with its distinctive combination of tangible and intangible attributes (assets). The tangible (physical) assets of a tourism destination are the physical, visible and touchable resources that attract and serve tourist. The physical components of a destination form the core of its offering and provide the physical goods and services the tourist experience. Siregar et al (2023) concluded that tangible assets are linked to competitive tourist destinations. The success of a destination depends on its tangible assets (Lemelin et al, 2014). Examples of tangible assets are:

- (a) Natural attractions which refers to the physical features such as beaches, mountains, forests, and national parks that draw tourists
- (b) Man-made attractions which includes constructed element's theme parks, cultural heritage sites, boardwalks, museums, and landmarks that provide entertainment and educational knowledge.
- (c) Accommodation which refers to physical structures such as hotels, hostels, resorts, motels, in addition to home stays which offer lodging for tourist.
- (d) Transportation infrastructure which is associated to the physical network that allows the visitors to the destination the ability to move within the destination, such as roads, airports, sea ports, railways, buses, rental vehicles and rented bicycles,
- (e) Food and beverage is noted to the use of establishments like bars, restaurants, coffee shops, and cafes that provide drinks and food to the tourist during their visit
- (f) Recreational facilities are structures and places designed for leisure activities, inclusive of boardwalks, esplanades, recreational parks, sport facilities and amusement centers
- (g) Cultural elements are the tangible aspects of culture that include historic buildings, local architecture and unique local decor.
- (h) Support facilities are the needy services such as shops, markets, hospitals and telecommunication infrastructure which support the visitor experience.

The intangible attributes of a tourist destination include (a) its cultural heritage, (b) traditions, (c) crafts, (d) performing arts and festivals, (e) the unique atmosphere and identity, (f) attitude of residents, (g) the quality of service from trained staff directly or indirectly associated with the tourism industry and (h) its reputation or the image of the brand. Such non physical attributes are immensely tied to the local identity, enhancement of its competitiveness and the provision of a unique, memorable experiences that are difficult to replicate, ensuring that they are crucial for attracting tourist and therefore maintaining a sustainable tourism growth,

Cultural heritage includes the living culture of the destination, in addition to the performing arts, traditional crafts, festivals and rituals (Song et al, 2019; Filipovic, 2018). The entire mood, feeling and uniqueness of a destination that can contribute significantly to the experience of the visitor and that can be shaped by the culture of the destination and its people are important (Scorrano et al, 2018). The intangible cultural heritage is of great importance for the development of a tourist destination (Filipovic, 2018). It is manifested through the customs, celebrations, music, songs, stories, dances, myths, traditions, legends, old crafts, aesthetic, spiritual and social systems that the local community values (Filipovic, 2018). A tourist destination's values are presented on the spot as well as at festivals, carnivals, concerts and food service facilities, Culture and tourism are becoming more and more connected as time goes by and therefore represents an inseparable whole (Filipovic, 2018). The tourist's choice to visit a particular destination depends mainly on the cultural heritage in the area of the destination.

Hospitality and quality of service refers to the quality of interaction and service the local people provide inclusive of courtesy, friendliness, helpfulness, as well as the overall quality of service in hotels, restaurants, and other visitor services (Mid-Valley International College, 2025).

Safety and Security refers to the awareness and known level of safety and security for the tourist while visiting the destination.

Creativity and innovation relates to events, festivals and other creative spectacles which are a direct result of local creativity and attract tourists (visitors).

Uniqueness and Authenticity refer to the specific attributes that make a tourist destination distinct from other offering unique experiences and a strong sense of place.

The destination reputation and image refers to the perception and brand of the destination among potential tourists.

The tourist experience are the subjective memories and feelings created by a visit to any

destination with the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the visit often stored in long-term memories.

The Role of Intangible Assets are:

- (a) Enhancing the destination appeal by adding depth and uniqueness to a destination's offerings, differentiating it from its competitors, and helps to foster stronger visitor loyalty
- (b) Boosting competitiveness by developing and promoting its unique intangible assets such that the destination can establish a competitive advantage in the global tourism market
- (c) Creating memorable experiences by which the intangible assets contribute to the emotional and psychological aspects of the tourist's journey leaving memories and satisfaction
- (d) Economic Benefits due the generation of new jobs and boosting tax revenue through intangible cultural heritage and creative industries (Arcos-Pumarola et al, 2023). When the tangible and intangible assets of a destination have been thoroughly marketed and its uniqueness established, then there will be a differentiation with its competitors and a niche will be established in the global tourism industry. A competitive edge will hence be established.

The Fragility of a Tourist Destination

The fragility of a tourist destination refers to its vulnerability to the negative impacts from both internal and external factors, economic downturns, political instability in the location, natural disasters, and health crises and over tourism. Such disruptions can harm the environment, strain local infrastructure and erode cultural integrity, making the tourist destination's economic and social fabric susceptible to collapse which can disrupt tourism flows and harm local communities and the environment. Fragility become more intense by over reliance on a single market, lack of economic diversification, political environmental damage, cultural commercialization, an inadequate management of visitor numbers, (which helps to determine the stage in the tourism life cycle of the destination), leading to the deterioration of sites and infrastructure.

Because of fragility of tourism resilience is needed. A tourist destination can build resilience by adopting a diverse mix of attractions, fostering community involvement, implementing smart tourism frame works in addition to adapting to market changes to withstand shocks and maintain stability (Rodriguez, 2025). It is common knowledge that the tourism sector, which is recognized as one of the world's most dynamic industries, is highly vulnerable to economic, political social shifts and epidemics (Rodriguez, 2025; Zibanai, 2014). In order to build resilience a destination must diversify its offerings, develop sustainable tourism practices, and create a balanced infrastructure and services,

Causes of fragility are economic dependence, environmental pressures, social and cultural vulnerabilities, and institutional vulnerability. When a destination is over reliant on tourism it becomes vulnerable to global economic crises, downturns, changes in tourists preferences and seasonal fluctuations (Wallace, 2024). Too much tourism can lead to environmental degradation, pollution, habitat loss, and the rapid deterioration of natural sites and landmarks that are cultural (traveltradereadhy.net, 2025). The overcrowding and cultural erosion from tourist's demands as well as reliance on low wage or marginalized workers is perceived to strain a tourist destination's social fabric (Rosen College of Hospitality Management, 2025). When destinations are situated in areas prone to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, tsunamis, fault lines and coastal erosion they are at physical risk (Rosen College of Hospitality Management, 2025). The lack of understanding by governments and their agencies about the tourism system, inadequate funding or lack of political will is suggested to be a hindrance of effective management and mitigation efforts (Alvarez et al, 2022).

The manifestations of fragility are over-reliance, over-tourism, lack of economic diversity, and geopolitical instability and climate change. Regions, countries or destination that derive a large portion of their economic activity from tourism are very vulnerable to economic volatility (Wallace, 2024). The influx of many visitors is reported to lead to environmental damage, the deterioration of the destination's infrastructure and some negative impacts on local life (University of Luxembourg, 2024). When a destination fails to develop other economic sectors it is exposed to any disruptions in the tourism market (Wallace, 2024; Rosen College of Hospitality, 2025). Political conflicts and terrorism have a devastating effect on tourism (Zibanai, 2014; Hall and O' Sullivan, 1996). The facets of political instability according to Hall and O'Sullivan (1996) are civil wars, coups, terrorism, riots and political protests or social unrest or strikes. Hence the political stability of a destination determines its continued success as a tourist destination. External conflicts and travel restrictions due to disease and natural disasters initiated by climate change are also thought to have a negative impact on visitor arrivals (Zibanai, 2014).

Building resilience requires economic diversification, the practice of sustainable tourism, strategic infrastructure development and the promotion of economic diversity. A tourism destination should reduce its dependence on a single tourism market and the development of a wider range of attractions (cultural, historical and gastronomic) and economic activities (Wallace, 2024). Rodriguez (2025) reported that a tourist destination's resilience is dependent on a comprehensive planning strategy that promotes diversification, sustainability, and efficiency. He reiterated that only a long term vision, accompanied by coordinated actions

allows for risk anticipation, adaptation and change and sustained growth. Ma (2023) informed that the implementation of strategies that would prevent environmental degradation, habitat disturbance and decrease visitor are important. Ma (2023) also suggested that strategies must be enforced to protect habitat destruction and pollution. Within the tourist destination's infrastructure there should be designated trails and visitor centers to minimize the ecological impact of tourism (Ma, 2023). Local communities should be involved in tourism planning, management and decision making. This ensures their share in benefits and have a stake in the conservation (Ma, 2023; Supiandi, 2023). Supiandi (2023) reported that to prevent congestion, compromised visitor experiences and the depletion of essential valuable resources there should be strategic investment in infrastructure which is pivotal in sustainable tourism expansion. It should be noted that infrastructure is just one of the significant requirements of the wheel woven by tourism (Rayendra, 2017). However, there should be strong investment in infrastructure that supports a sustainable tourism and enables the management of visitor flows effectively. On a final note, it is emphasized that to reduce the dependence on the tourism dollar, other industries should be encouraged making the local economy (tourist destination) more resilient to the specific shocks of tourism (Waller, 2024; Rosen College of Hospitality Management, 2025).

The Dangers of Relying Solely or Significantly on Tourism for a Country's/ Region income/Foreign Exchange

Although tourism offers significant economic benefits, it is generally considered beyond wisdom to make tourism a country's or regions sole source of income or revenue or a major source of foreign exchange. Some of the reasons for not depending solely on tourism for economic activity-revenue and foreign exchange included-are

1. Economic Volatility and Instability

- (a) Vulnerability to external shocks- The tourism industry is highly susceptible to external factors beyond the local control of any destination, for example, global economic downturns, natural disasters-hurricanes, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods-, political instability, and health crises like the pandemic, exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic (Wallace, 2024).
- (b) Shifting preference of tourists- According to Wallace (2024) the destinations for tourists can easily fall in and out of favor of tourists due to changing trends, competition from emerging destinations, or even negative media coverage, leaving the tourism dependent economies - countries or regions-vulnerable to the loss of revenue.
- (c) Seasonality of demand-Numerous tourist destinations experience seasonal fluctuations in

their tourism visitation numbers leading to unstable job security, unemployment and income streams for locals (Wallace, 2024).

2. Leakage and limited local benefits

- (a) Foreign ownership and profit repatriation- A major portion of the revenue from tourism can leak out of the local economy-country or region. and be repatriated by foreign owned businesses (airlines, tour operators, hotels) to their headquarters, limiting the economic benefits for the host community-country or region (Muller, 2023).
- (b) Low wage and seasonal employment. Most jobs related to the tourism sector are seasonal and are associated with low wages, few benefits, and offer limited career advancement opportunities, particularly for local residents of the destinations-countries or regions (Wallace, 2024).

3. Environmental and cultural impacts.

- (a) According Brajcich (2025) massive tourism can place immense pressure on the natural resources and fragile ecosystems of any destination, giving rise to pollution, waste generation, and the destruction of habitats and the reduction of biodiversity.
- (b) Cultural commodification and erosion. It is reported that the desire to attract tourist can lead to the commercialization and steady erosion of the local culture and traditions of the tourist destination, because authentic practices are replaced by staged performances and experiences that cater to the visitors' expectations (Brajcich, 2025). In some cases, a high influx of tourists can be associated with an increase of crime rates inclusive of petty theft, illegal drug use, and even social issues like prostitution.
- (c) Strain on Infrastructure and resources. It is suggested that over tourism can overwhelm the local infrastructure such as transportation, sanitation and waste management, which put a strain on the essential resources of the destination (water and energy), and contributes to congestion and overcrowding (Republic World, 2024; Greentumble.com, 2024). This can potentially lead to shortage and increased loss to the residents.

4. Neglect of other sectors.

- (a) Stunted economic diversification; When a destination (country or region) have over reliance on tourism it can lead to a neglect of other vital economic sectors (manufacturing, agriculture, and technology) making the economy less resilient and leaving it vulnerable to the risks that are inherent in the tourism industry (Reddit.com, 2025).

- (b) The dependent on external demand. Tourism in any destination is heavily reliant on external demand because its core activity involves attracting visitors from outside the local area or country. In this regard the tourism businesses depend on the willingness and ability of people in other locations to travel and spend money on tourism related goods and services. A decrease in the external demand for a tourism destination, whether due to economic downturns, health crises, or other factors can have a significant effect on the tourism dependent economy. In countries/regions experiencing political unrest or conflicts there is often a sharp decline in tourism

Tourism can be a significant source of revenue and foreign exchange earnings for a country (region), however heavily relying on it as a primary economic driver can create vulnerabilities. Using a diversified economy beyond tourism is crucial to mitigate risks associated with external shocks, economic dependence and potential negative social environmental impacts. Change in visitor preference and competition can leave a country or region vulnerable when tourism declines. Tourism is associated with boom-and-bust cycles which can create economic problems for the region or country. There should be careful management to ensure sustainable benefits and prevent negative impacts (Boyea, 2024; World Tourism Travel Council, 2025; Truyols, 2023). The profitability of tourism is not guaranteed and depends on an effective management protocol, destination attractiveness and stable demand (Boyea, 2024; World Tourism Travel Council, 2024; World Bank, 2025). High costs and competition can also have an impact of the tourism revenue of a tourist destination (Boyea, 2024).

The Barbados Situation- A case study

Historically, tourism was associated with Barbados in the Caribbean since the beginning of the 18th century with health tourism (Dev and Stroock, 2023). Wealthy Europeans traveled to Barbados because they believed that the clean air, refreshing salty sea breeze, salubrious sea baths and the absence of malaria could cure illnesses (Gmelch, 2012), Tourism in Barbados became very important in the 1960s when the boom began with long haul plane trips and paid holidays, that allowed a significant amount of middle income holiday makers to reach the Caribbean (Dev and Stroock, 2023). Barbados after independence, welcomed mass tourism as a way to stimulate domestic infrastructure such as roads, sewage treatment plants, electricity and telephone lines (Dev and Stroock, 2023). Tourism at that time generated foreign exchange, created jobs and raised the standard of the entire population and was considered a timely economic alternative to the Barbados declining sugar industry which was no longer competitive on the world market (Dev and Stroock, 2023).

During the 1970s a government ministry for tourism was established along with management and promotional organizations (Dev and Stroock, 2023). To train Barbadians for employment in tourism and hospitality and hotel institute was created (Dev and Stroock, 2023). Incentives were utilized such as tax breaks to encourage direct foreign investment in the tourism sector. This encouraged the development and sales of real estate, hotels and condominiums (it is determined at that time that the construction of hotels boomed and unemployment dropped as the dollars spent by tourists drove up the demand for goods and services (Dev and Stroock, 2023).

Tourism and the Barbados Economy

Tourism today is the corner stone of the Barbados economy. The importance of tourism to Barbados became very severe since the 1980s when

sugar exports began to decline due to the increased competition from sugar extracted from sugar beet and corn and the repeal of preferential tariff agreements with the United Kingdom (Dev and Stroock, 2023). There is also a stagnation in agriculture and manufacturing sectors increasing Barbados's reliance on tourism (Mayers and Jackman, 2012). Before the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic Barbados tourism industry had a record annual revenue of US\$1.63 billion in 2019 which at that time represented 30% of the country's total GDP and 67% of the total export (Dev and Stroock, 2023). It is estimated that at least 37% (more than 100,000) Barbadians work in the tourism related sector directly or indirectly (Dev and Stroock, 2023). It is clear that before the COVID 19 pandemic Barbados's tourism was rejuvenated from the decline in earlier years. Visitor arrivals were on the increase (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 2: Showing the situation with Tourist Arrivals in Barbados from 2010-2024. The trend shows a gradual increase prior to the impact of COVID 19. (Barbados Tourism Statistical Reference Guide (2025))

The tourism industry in Barbados is a major foreign exchange earner generating around 59% of the foreign currency (Jackman, 2012). The World Travel and Tourism Council (cited in Jackman, 2012) estimates that the contribution of tourism to Barbados's employment and GDP is above 45%. It is clear that Barbados is a small tourism dependent island (Jackman, 2012).

In the Barbados situation the revenue earned due to visitor arrivals and spending is a major source of profitability. The profitability of tourism to the island is enhanced by its linkage to other sectors of the economy such as handicraft, retail, food services, entertainment and the creation of jobs at numerous points in the chain of value of tourism. The tourism sector generates foreign exchange and attracts additional investments increasing

the profitability of the island as a tourist destination The Uniqueness of Barbados as a Tourist Destination

The uniqueness of the Barbados tourism is associated with its distinctive tangible (natural or physical) and intangible assets. Barbados offers four ambiances to its tourism package which are West Coast calm, rugged south coast -hip and happening and north coast serene and peaceful (Dev and Stroock, 2023). Barbados' natural resources and attractions includes its beaches climate and geographical location.

Some of the major attractions in Barbados are Hunte's Garden, Carlisle Bay Beach, the eco-adventure park at Harrison's Cave, Bathsheba Beach, the beach and pool club at the Boat Yard, the Animal Flower Cave,

UWI's Ecologico and Biodiversity Programs Site, Dover Beach, Miami Beach (Barbados), the Andromeda Botanic Gardens, Rockley Beach, and Welchman Hall Gully. Barbados' biggest attractions are its 80 white sand beaches, made from finely ground coral forming a clean fine grain and its coral reefs (Dev and Stroock, 2023). Barbados is known for the (3S) sand, sea and sun but its unique attractions place it ahead of its competitors who also have the (3S) although one of the more expensive destinations.

The intangible attractions (attributes) of Barbados includes its cultural heritage, cuisine, festivals, historic buildings, crafts, music, dance, sports, night life and unique tours. Tours include Mount Gay Visitor Center which shows the origin of rum manufacturing, Four square rum distillery and UWL's Ecologico and Biodiversity Programs Site. Barbados has more than 500 restaurants and other dining outlets which serve food influenced by African, Indian, Irish, and Caribbean and English cultures. Some restaurants offer local and international cuisine. Inclusive of the national cuisine is the Oistins' Friday Night Fish Fry. The island is mentioned as the culinary capital of the Caribbean (Dev and Stroock, 2023).

Barbados has cultural music that includes soca, calypso, jazz, spouge, reggae and dance hall. The dance rhythm is inclusive of a combination of African and American music. Local crafts can be purchase at locations in Bridgetown or duty-free shops for which Barbados is well known. Barbados has almost year-round festivals (events) to attract tourists, build resilience and give tourists a sense of the culture that exists in Barbados. These festivals are:

- (a) January: Mount Gay Round Barbados Race Series (Boat Sailing Race)
- (b) February: Holetown Festival (Steel band, Concert, Street fair, parade)
- (c) March: Oistins Fish Festival (Culinary event).
- (d) August: Crop Over (normally 6 weeks of carnival events).
- (e) October: Barbados Food and Rum Festival
- (f) November: Barbados Independence Surf Festival and Independence Celebrations
- (g) December: Run Barbados Marathon

Because Barbados is surrounded by water with different wave conditions it is known for various water sports. The calm west coast and rugged south coast is used for water sports such as swimming, snorkeling, kayaking, paddle boarding in addition to short boat cruises and fishing. The east coast with its Atlantic swells is used for surfing (Bathsheba). The most popular sports in Barbados are cricket, horse racing, golf and polo. Soccer and rugby are also noted sports. Tourists visit Barbados to watch cricket games at Kensington Oval, the oldest cricket playing field (ground) in Barbados dating back to 1882. Tourists also visit Barbados for Saturday's horse racing at the Garrison Savannah -horse racecourse.

Barbados is home to the only professional racetrack in the Caribbean and motor sport enthusiasts visit Bushy Park Racing Circuit to watch car racing,

Barbados' culture is a mixture mainly of African and English alliance. Barbados is known as "little England" with its language being English from its colonial pass, with some distinctive accent words in a West African-English pidgin known as Bajan. Barbados is home to a large variety of historic attractions. Plantation houses and old mansions from its colonial pass are examples. The museum and parliament buildings as well as the President's residence and the Prime Minister's residence deserve mention. The Ministry of Tourism with the help of the Barbados National Trust restored and open to the public former plantation houses including the George Washington House. Barbados' capital, historic Bridgetown, and the Garrison were designated UNESCO World Heritage sites in 2011. Bridgetown is also known to be the site of the Oldest Jewish Synagogue in the Caribbean and Americas which dates back to the mid-17th century. The unique geographical location of Barbados is important as it is easily accessible to cruise ships as a stopover and there are regular air flights.

Tourists unique to Barbados visit the island because of fine beaches, its natural beauty, the friendliness of the people and its British heritage (Dev and Stroock, 2023). Barbados is also considered a safe and secure place to visit. The transportation infrastructure is very good with a road network that connects all parts of the country and allows for adequate tours.

The Success of Barbados' Tourism

Sutrisno (2024) outlined nine (9) conditions that are essential to the success of a tourist destination. He mentioned:

1. Participation of the local community
2. The quality of human resources
3. The availability of facilities and infrastructure
4. The accessibility of the destination
5. The attractiveness of the tourist's attractions
6. The uniqueness of the tourist destination
7. The motivation of the tourist for the destination
8. Effective marketing and strategies for promotion
9. The support of the government

Barbados is one of the key destinations for visitors to the Caribbean. The following are associated with the success of Barbados' tourism as outlined by Sutrisno (2024). Barbados' success as a tourist destination is as followed.

- (a) Barbados' success as a tourist destination is enhanced by its engagement of local communities in fostering and advancing popular tourism sectors of the island. The districts where there are active tourism activities (attractions) the locals inclusive of

- the vendors, restaurants, beach front properties etc. are all informed of the importance of tourism to the district, the country and their own livelihood. The locals are all involved in the planning and maintaining the effectiveness of the events.
- (b) The quality of Barbados' human resource is such that they started people focused initiatives to get the population to "buy in" and adopt different approaches to dealing with its visitors and the management of tourism sector resources. Barbados through its human resource development plan has.
 - (c) Created an effective leadership and performance culture that allowed leaders and managers to operate more strategically, while fostering employee engagement and stimulated improvement in service quality linked to higher industry standards.
- i. Through enhancing education training and development Barbados with a vibrant policy framework has increased coordination, enhance sensitivity to accommodate the increasingly diverse visitor mix and expanding the integration of tourism concepts throughout the school system that has proved successful. Barbados also increased practical training for individuals working directly and indirectly throughout the tourism sector (Barbados Tourism Master Plan, 2023).
 - ii. There is encouragement with the resources to develop an entrepreneurial spirit to maximize opportunities within the tourism sector.
 - (d) The availability of facilities and infrastructure are well developed in Barbados. There are public restrooms for visitors, more than 500 restaurants and other dining outlets, and the lodging establishments range from all inclusive hotels, other hotels, condos, guest houses, relative or friend (Dev and Stroock, 2023; Barbados Tourism Master Plan, 2023). The road infrastructure is such that you can reach all points of the island (Personal Observation, 2025). The roads are accessible all year round. There is a hospitality institute to train individuals working in the tourism sector. Additionally, the Barbados Community college offers Associate Degrees in hospitality management.
 - (e) A tourist destination must be readily reachable by public or private transportation (Sutrisno, 2024). The island (Barbados) is strategically located in the Caribbean. Commercial air travel and cruise ships are the most common mode of transport to the island. The most popular commercial airlines travel to Barbados from Canada, the U.K and the United States of America bringing visitors to the island. American Airlines, United Airlines, Jet-blue, Delta airlines, Air Canada, Virgin Atlantic, British Airways and Frontier airline are among the air traffic visiting Barbados. Some airlines have multiple daily or weekly nonstop flights to the island. During the peak winter (tourist) season commercial air traffic increase. There are over 100 flights to Barbados weekly. Due to the strategic location of Barbados it is an important point of arrival for cruise ships. The roads in Barbados are accessible all read round and are well lighted, hence visitors can feel safe and secure in their travel around the island to their numerous attractions. This enhanced accessibility allows for a better overall tourist experience in the destination.
 - (f) A tourist destination necessitates tourist attractions, inclusive of natural landscapes, captivating events, historical landmarks and enticements (Sutrisno, 2024). Barbados' natural resources and attractions includes its beaches, climate and geographical location. Some of the main attractions in Barbados are Hunte's Garden, Carlisle Bay beach, the eco-adventure park at Harrison's Cave, Bathsheba beach, the beach and pool club at the Boat Yard, the Animal Flower Cave, Dover beach, Miami Beach (Barbados), the Andromeda Botanic Gardens, Rockley beach and Welchman Hall Gully. Barbados' biggest attractions are its 80 white sand beaches, made from finely ground coral forming a clean fine grain and its coral reefs (Dev and Stroock, 2023).
 - (g) The cultural heritage of Barbados includes its diverse cuisine, festivals, sports, historic buildings (particularly historic Bridgetown and the Garrison as well as old plantation houses), crafts, music, dance, night life and unique tours. Tours include the Mount Gay Visitor Center which shows the origin of rum, and four-square rum distillery. These cultural activities and historic landmarks enhance the appeal of tourist. Friday Night Oistins Fish fry is unique.
 - (h) An exceptional and captivating setting of a tourist destination might serve as a significant lure for visitors to visit the location (Sutrisno, 2024). Barbados has implemented distinctive heritage focused tourism offerings that has highlighted the destination's historical aspects that has been proven to enhance visitor appeal. The destination's natural beauty, air quality and exclusive attractions (some only seen in Barbados) have shown to play an important role in enhancing visitor appeal, promoting and developing sustainable tourism. The geographical location of Barbados played an important role in its growth as a tourist destination.
 - (i) The motivation of tourists for a destination is very important to increase and sustain visitor

arrivals. A tourist's (visitor's) perception of existing tourism products inclusive of support services, will influence the motivation of tourists to visit the destination (Sutrisno, 2024). Barbados has instituted measures to become a destination of choice globally based on offering of its products, services, rich cultural heritage, affordability and intrinsic value (Barbados Tourism Master Plan, 2023). Barbados has been touted by tourist as a popular destination (Dev and Stroock, 2023).

- (j) Despite the Sand, Sea and Sun which lures visitors to the island most of Barbados' competitors have the same so it is necessary for Barbados to have different attributes. Generally, the visitors consider the beaches, accommodation, water sports, restaurants, tours (excursion) airline connections, taxi/hired cars, environmental/cleanliness and night life to be rated good (Dev and Stroock, 2023). According to Dev and Stroock (2023) the customs, immigration, sales personnel, range of duty-free goods, handicrafts/souvenirs and shopping are rated just below good but more than satisfactory. The price of duty-free goods were rated by visitors as above average. The respect for the services and products, and hospitality of all Barbadians may have led to repeat visitors and increase and maintained sustainable visitor arrivals. These reports suggests that word of mouth in a favorable sense is helping to lure tourists to Barbados. Generally, it seems that the favorable ratings of tourists about Barbados as a tourist destination has created loyalty for some visitors. Loyalty incentives and repeat visitor incentives instituted by the Barbados Tourism Authorities are helping Barbados to maintain sustainability
- (k) Effective marketing and strategies for promotion of a tourist destination are important. The efficiency of the marketing and promotion of a tourist destination are important in heightening tourists' awareness and fostering their interest in the tourist destination (Sutrisno, 2024).

The marketing and strategies for promotion implemented by Barbados beginning in 2015 have been proven to be successful. In 2015, the newly created BTMI embarked on a mission to diversify its source markets with a focus on the U.S.A and used a marketing strategy by promoting experiences in adventure, culture, wellness and eco-tourism (Dev and Stroock, 2023). The BTMI in the U.S.A market relied on unique selling propositions that amplified connections between Barbados and the source markets (Dev and Stroock, 2023). In their advertising and promotions the BTMI focused on the concept that Barbados is not only sea, sand and sun but that Barbados is the only place George

Washington visited outside the U.S.A and having the oldest Jewish Synagogue in the Western hemisphere. In the Carolinas it was emphasized that the first governor was Barbadian. Additionally, Barbados promoted the island's equestrian tradition and its culinary and rum culture (Dev and Stroock, 2023). At that time the BTMI narrowed its targeted market to affluent guests who were interested in a boutique destination and for whom price is not the main reason for selecting a destination (Dev and Stroock, 2023).

Now-a-days, Barbados' current tourism marketing strategy through the Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. focuses on diversification, sustainability, unique authentic experiences (rum, food, and culture) and digital engagement. Barbados has moved beyond just beaches to attract high value travelers from new markets, for example, Latin America (Brazil), the UAE and niche European countries while solidifying the U.S.A as a key source (Instagram, 2025; Outlook Travel Magazine, 2025).

The key pillars of Barbados Marketing Strategy according (Instagram, 2025; Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc.; Caribbean Today, 2025; Dev and Stroock, 2025) are associated with the diversification of its markets and targeting;

- i. A U.S.A focus through aggressively building on the island's rich narrative, rum birthplace, and factors that are unique to the connections between the U.S.A and Barbados. The U.S.A has now become the number one place from which tourists arrive in Barbados.
- ii. The theme being used is in addition to culinary, there is a focus on events, sports, luxury and heritage.
- iii. Promoting a year-round destination by promoting travel during the slow part of the season to ensure sustainable growth and attract visitors who seek the unique experience with less crowds.
- iv. Developing a tourism model whereby the entire nation benefits and can withstand economic shocks that encompasses the national development plans of Barbados.
- v. Involving the residents of the island as the "chief officers" who welcome tourists to create a warm, authentic experience to the visitors.

The Barbados government is involved in all aspects of the country's -directly or indirectly -in the economy. There is the ministry of culture, the ministry of tourism, the BTMI, hospitality training facilities, all developed by the government. There is government finance for those associated with the sector. The key players in the Barbados Tourism sector are the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, Barbados Tourism Marketing Inc. (BTMI). Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTI), the private sectors and industry associations all working with the government to maintain

sustainability and development of the tourism sector in Barbados.

Concerns of Barbados Tourism to its Economy with Recommendations

- (1) Tourism revenue is not guaranteed, therefore estimates can be wrong and have an effect on planned expenditures with tourism revenue.
- (2) There is too great a reliance on tourism with over 50% of the foreign exchange and GDP above 15%. Over 100,000 individuals work within the tourism industry =directly or indirectly-and most jobs are low income.
- (3) The tourist industry is at risk to external shocks such as the downturns in the economies from whence the visitors come. Therefore, a reduction in tourist's arrivals is possible under such conditions.
- (4) Disasters such as hurricanes and floods which are annual possibilities can severely destroy the infrastructure and cause a great downturn in visitor arrivals due to reduce accommodation etc.
- (5) Health issues such as disease outbreaks, for example, COVID 19 can have a devastated effect on tourist arrivals. All health issues need not to be global to affect the tourism product but they can be localized at the tourist destination (Barbados)
- (6) Over tourism has placed a strain on the water system and the aquifers are getting low. Over tourism and neglect has cause the road infrastructure to deteriorate despite being usable.
- (7) There is no other industry in Barbados to cover any shortfalls in tourism revenues and if such happen monetary institutions like the IMF and banking systems might be the only refuge.
- (8) Shifting preference of tourist could lead to the reduction in visitor arrivals and stay over.
- (9) Leakage occurs in the Barbados economy due to foreign ownership and profit repatriation. All-inclusive hotels, other foreign own hotels, tour operators, Uber, airlines transfer money to their headquarters and therefore out of the island. There are also import leakage in Barbados -food and beverages'
- (10) Barbados is too dependent on external demand for its tourism product. The activity involves attracting visitors from outside the country. In this regard the tourism business depends on the willingness and ability of people from other countries to travel to Barbados and spend money on tourism related goods and services.
- (11) The boom time profits from tourism should not only be used to service debt but also to diversify the economy.
- (12) Barbados needs to diversify its economy beyond tourism to mitigate risks associated

with external shocks, economic dependence and potential social and environmental impacts.

- (13) Barbados needs to diversify its economy through the rejuvenation of agriculture-sugarcane or otherwise-, agricultural research stations, manufacturing- clothes, pharmaceuticals, technology similar to Intel, Health Management systems-retirement homes, old age medical treatment systems and rehabilitation centers for all health-related issues. There should be incentives for foreign investors to help with the diversification of the Barbados economy.

CONCLUSION

It is due to the positive economic impacts of tourism that most countries/ regions embark on their tourism journey (Tourism Teachers, 2025). Although the revenue from tourism is not guaranteed its possible profitability is recognized. Most jobs generated by tourism are minimum wage and seasonal. Regardless of the profitability of a tourist destination its unique attributes have to remain competitive (different from other destinations). Tourism is a fragile industry and there should not be over reliance on the industry. There are inherent dangers in being over reliant on tourism.

Barbados is among the one-third of developing countries where tourism is the main foreign exchange earner. Also Barbados has become a tourism dependent economy and there is a need for the development of other industries to diversify the economy.

The resilience of a tourist destination is important in achieving sustainability, and there should be a continuous analysis using the concept of the theoretical life cycle of a tourist destination to realize the situation with tourist arrivals which can be related to expenditure. Leakage is a common phenomenon in the tourism industry. There is an import leakage and export leakage (UN Atlas of the Oceans, 2025). Import leakage occurs when tourists command standards of equipment, food, and other products that the host country cannot supply or are in a short supply. Tourism income from tourist expenditures leave the country to pay for imports (UN Atlas of the Oceans, 2025). The foregoing situation is also true for Barbados regarding leakage from imports.

A UN study of the Caribbean region revealed that there were 5 major contributors to leakage- Import and Export. These are;

- (a) Imports of materials and equipment for construction.
- (b) Imports of consumer goods, particularly food and beverage.
- (c) Repatriation of profits earned by foreign investors.
- (d) Overseas promotional expenditures
- (e) Amortization of external debt which occurred in the development of hotels and resorts.

Estimates of developing countries like the Caribbean suggests that leakage is in the range of 80%. Additionally, it is reported that on average each US 100.00 spent on a vacation tour by a tourist from a developed country, only approximately US 5.00 stays in the developing country destination's economy (UN Atlas of the Ocean, 2025). The Caribbean is among the most tourism dependent region of the world. It is therefore important for Barbados and other Caribbean islands market and stress their local cuisine to reduce the importation of food and beverage. The importation of food and beverage is one leakage that such islands can reduce.

With the advances in communication, transportation, and population affordability the tourism industry has become one of the most competitive industries in the world. Climate change, over tourism, threats to diversity, security, technology, and labor issues are some of the salient challenges that a tourist destination faces which must be addressed by the destination's government and chief administrative personnel-who has the ambition to lead a responsible, sustainable and competitive destination (Andrades et al, 2023). Rodriguez (2025) concluded that a cautious strategic planning is without doubt the key to ensuring a solid and sustainable tourism future.

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