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| Bachelor Thesis Research Proposal |
| **BASc in International Business Management** |

# Subject area / preliminary project title

How to encourage the rise of tourism in Benin among international travelers?

# Relevance to your Minor

Understanding the needs of the customers and adapting tools based on the complexity of the market is very important in this project. There will be database decision making to know which data will best fit this project. And finally, it is the creative thinking part. It’s also important to think out of the box. And these are only some examples of what will be done. This research is strongly linked to the Minor Business Decision (*2021 minors business decision - YouTube* 31 March 2021).

# Statement of problem / rationale

Benin is a French speaking country in west Africa with a population of 12 million people in 2020 according to the World Bank. (*Bénin Présentation* 22 April 2020) It is a very good place to visit because of its historical past. The country is the birthplace of voodoo arts which could be interesting to know more about. Benin also played a key role in the African slave trade development. For instance, Ouidah: it’s located about 40km away from Cotonou (the economical capital) and has museums exploring slavery and voodoo. It also has more relaxed beaches in contrast to Cotonou. Although Benin is a small nation of 114’763 km2, it has many memorable places such as architecture and markets that are worth exploring.

Despite having so many beautiful places it’s not a place many people visit. According to the National Agency for the Promotion of Heritage and the Development of Tourism (ANPT), only 2 to 5 percent of Benin’s tourist potential has been tapped.(*Benin: A competition to transform the country’s tourist sites into a laboratory for innovation*)

The objective of this research is to first understand the reasons behind the poor visit in Benin from travelers. After understanding the barriers, the next step would be to come up with possible solutions in how to increase tourism in the country among adventurers.

# Literature review / State of the art

Why Benin is not well known, not popular?

Travel and tourism are best prospect industry sector for Benin which is the fifth largest tourist destination in West Africa and has great potential for further development in this sector.(Benin - Travel and Tourism)

And to point out a few places we have:

* Cotonou: economical capital of the country with plenty of paradise beaches with golden sand and palm trees (*15 Best Places to Visit in Benin* 2016).
* Ouidah: it’s located about 40km away from Cotonou and has museums exploring slavery and voodoo. It also has more relaxed beaches in contrast to Cotonou.
* Porto Novo: administrative capital of Benin. It has a Royal Palace and gardens as well as the museum of Porto Novo kings.
* There are also cities such as Abomey, Grand-Popo, Natitingou, Bohicon, Tanguieta, Parakou, Lake Nokoue, etc (*LES 10 MEILLEURES choses à faire à Bénin : 2021 (avec photos)*).

The country has a very rich cultural background. Economically, however, the picture is less positive: Benin is severely underdeveloped, and corruption is rife. Although the country has experienced economic growth in recent years and is one of Africa’s largest cotton producers, it is among the poorest countries in the world.

Even though Benin is considered a peaceful country, known for its kind, warm and welcoming people, petty thefts and violent crimes like muggings and robberies can occur here and there. The percentage of international tourists visiting Benin remains small (30 percent) compared to regional tourist (70 percent), who mostly come for work and stay in the surroundings of Cotonou.

The government of Benin sees tourism as a way to diversify its economy, attract more foreign investment, and reduce Benin's dependence on its agricultural industry. Although the government has a national tourism development policy, it has not made significant efforts to improve tourism facilities or to market Benin as a tourist destination.(*Tourism in Benin* 2020)

# Research Question(s) &/or Hypotheses

How to encourage the rise of tourism in Benin among international travelers?

# Research methods

Although we can see some answers to why Benin struggles with its tourism sector, it’s still far from enough to jump to conclusion. Therefore, to have more understanding about the situation, it’s important to do a survey. In our case we will focus only on people living in Switzerland and our target segment will be international travelers.

This will be a quantitative survey. We want to survey international travelers and adventurers because they correspond to our target market and only in Switzerland because it would be technically difficult, expensive and time consuming to spread the survey to others international countries. During the survey, respondents will be asked questions such as do they know Benin, if yes have they ever been there, and if no, would they like to visit Benin, etc.

Regarding ethics, each participant will be given information about the ins and outs of the experiment. We will also add a confidentiality clause that will guarantee to the person that their data will be anonymized. We will ask the participant to sign the document to attest that he/she has read it and accepts the terms defined.

The survey is an appropriate tool to get an overview of the situation and the actual awareness of the perception of Benin from the respondents.

Step 1: design the survey questions

Step 2: decide the channels for the survey distribution

Step 3: test the survey on a few people to detect any issues and correct them if needed

Step 4: release the survey and conduct the data collection

Step 5: consolidate findings, analyze the results of the survey

Step 6: Compare actual results with expected results

Step 7: draw conclusions from results

We plan to analyze the data by looking for trends in thinking depending on different variables such as the age, the profession, education level for the survey. Other variables could be used depending on the need for understanding.

# Expected outcomes

We expect to see trends and categories of groups in the results of our survey. It will not be a surprise that some people might have never heard of Benin even though many people have heard of voodoo arts. It will also be interesting to learn from people who heard of Benin from the first time and see if the country were a place they would like to visit. We also think that we will find people to be reluctant to visit a country in West Africa because it is not trendy or popular on social media.

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