

Challenges Facing Zimbabwe's Aviation Sector in Promoting Accessibility of Domestic Tourist Destinations

Tendayi Makwara^{1*}, Brendon Mukarati², Nabars Makwara³

¹Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Sciences, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

²Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure Sciences, Midlands State University, Zimbabwe

³AFC Holdings, Gweru, Zimbabwe

ABSTRACT

There are growing fears that Zimbabwe is missing out on the potential benefits that may be derived from a more defined participation of the aviation sector in improving accessibility of tourist destinations in the country. This research sought to establish the challenges being faced by the aviation sector in improving the accessibility of tourist destinations in Zimbabwe. The research utilised a qualitative research approach. In-depth interviews were conducted with the key informants in the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Development, Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe and airline representatives. Convenience sampling was mostly used in the research whereby respondents were selected based on their availability. The challenges identified were that there is a lack of proper policy coordination between tourism and aviation authorities, inadequacy of operational airports near tourism destinations and limited financial resources on part of the ministries in charge of the tourism and aviation sectors. The research recommended an improvement in policy coordination between the aviation and tourism sectors and intensified efforts in sourcing finances for the aviation sector rehabilitation program.

Keywords: accessibility; domestic tourist destinations; challenges; aviation sector; Zimbabwe

INTRODUCTION

The aviation industry has arguably been the backbone in the development and growth of the global tourism and hospitality industry. Air transport facilitates people's mobility, making long distance travel faster and safer (Mangwiro, 2022). Air transport has an important role in connecting rural areas and islands with urbanized areas of a country (Rocha, 2017). The development of connectivity and improved transportation facilities is one of the key strategies for a government to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor (Yeoh *et al.*, 2013). According to Guiver & Stanford (2014) good accessibility has the tendency to improve a destination's attractiveness to tourists and increase arrivals.

Researches have shown that governments around the world are implementing different policies to improve air connectivity to their less developed areas. A research done by Vasiliy *et al.* (2019) shows that the aviation sector in Russia has excelled in boosting connectivity over the country's vast geographical expanses. Warnock-Smith & O'Connell (2011) also found out that the Carribean Islands which are inaccessible by land have been made accessible by air.

The United States of America is also one such country which demonstrates how the aviation sector through a high level of participation by airlines fosters tourism destination accessibility. The United States of America has a very high volume of airlines from small commuter airlines and regional airlines to major hub airlines that connect the country to every continent on the planet. These airlines also have partnerships with smaller regional and commuter airlines which then connects passengers from any part of the globe to many tourism destinations within the country such as the Yellowstone and Yosemite national parks, Walt Disney park, Grand Canyon national park, Hawaiian Islands, Rocky Mountains, Lake Michigan and the South

Beach in Miami just to mention a few (Dennis, 1994; Goetz & Vowles, 2009; Ashford et al, 2013).

Regionally, Botswana has benefitted a lot from its active aviation sector. Botswana does not have a large national flag carrier like its neighbors but the efforts of the small Air Botswana are complemented by smaller commuter airlines which have ensured that every tourism destination in the country is accessible. Air Botswana and other airlines like Mack Air provide air connectivity to tourist centers and many tourist hotspots through-out the Okavango Delta. Good air connectivity has helped Botswana to become one of the most sought after destinations in Southern Africa (Otiso et al., 2011 Leechor, 2017).

In Zimbabwe a research done by Nyaruwata & Runyowa (2017) established that less than 1% of the visitors to Zimbabwe use air transport internally. The lack of use of air transport for internal movements of tourists was mainly due to the national carrier's operational challenges and poor market viability. This lack of internal air connectivity led to uneven geographical distribution of tourists in the country. Kabote *et al.* (2019) also posit that the few air transport users within Zimbabwe were business travellers that were sponsored by their employers. More so, these air trips were only used to connect Harare to Bulawayo and Harare-Bulawayo to Victoria Falls routes. Whilst there were a few flights to Victoria Falls, there was virtually no air transport available to all other destinations in the country. Thus, despite tourists wanting to use this transport mode, its non-availability forced them to look for alternatives with the majority using cars and buses. The researchers recommended either a policy shift or a serious need to capacitate Air Zimbabwe by replacing the old fleet with smaller aircrafts to ply the domestic routes (Kabote et al., 2019).

In order to address the downward spiral in Zimbabwe's aviation sector, the Government of Zimbabwe has embarked on a rehabilitation, expansion and modernisation program of its aviation infrastructure, a move that is expected to drive Zimbabwe's travel and tourism industry. Noting the critical role played by the aviation industry in the facilitation and growth of the tourism and hospitality industry, government has committed itself to the provision of a "reliable, safe and world-class air transport infrastructure and services". In its National Tourism Recovery and Growth Strategy Vision 2025, the Government of Zimbabwe targets to increase tourist arrivals to over 5,5 million by 2023, as well as grow tourism receipts from US\$1 billion in 2017 to US\$3,5 billion by 2023 (National Tourism and Growth Strategy, 2021).

According to Mangwiro (2022) the Victoria Falls International Airport has started reaping benefits of the expansion and modernisation drive. The Buffalo Range Airport has had its terminal building refurbished and its runway redeveloped. The project at the Robert Mugabe International Airport is expected to be complete in the first half of 2023. Though there is notable progress on the refurbishment of airports, it can be argued that much concentration is on the international airports. Mangwiro (2022) also added that most domestic airports in the country are not yet renovated. The slow progress in resuscitation of domestic airports prompted the researcher to investigate the challenges which are being faced by the aviator sector in promoting accessibility of Zimbabwe's domestic tourist destinations. The main objectives of the research were to examine the challenges facing the aviation sector in promoting accessibility of Zimbabwe tourism destinations and to suggest a set of recommendations on how the aviation sector can improve destination accessibility in Zimbabwe.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination accessibility defined

Accessibility is the means by which a tourist can reach the point of service delivery. The special feature of the tourism industry is the immovability of the product meaning the consumer has to be physically present at the site in order to receive service thus accessibility can also be defined as the possibility to receive tourism service (Chin *et al.* 2018). Due to the uniqueness and the intangible pleasures which tourist attractions bring to travellers, tourists are motivated to travel to them but that process must be affordable

financially and physically (Lam & Zhang, 1999).

Good accessibility denotes a case where the location of tourism destinations or attractions is linked to the more relevant transport corridors that connect the tourist to their desired destination (Toth & David, 2010). Accessibility is related to the possibility to visit, to feel, to see or watch special events, to realize or understand and experience (Pizam, 2009). It is related to fulfilling the desires or wants whose creation is inspired by tourist attractions (Kumar *et al.*, 2012). Even though transport can be an attraction in itself, accessibility is not tourism but rather a means of arriving at the point of tourism satisfaction (Yu *et al.*, 2019). Conclusively, tourism cannot occur without accessibility.

Importance of destination accessibility

Destination accessibility enhances destination competitiveness even without the existence of social media marketing. Good accessibility at a destination informs and improves destination attractiveness. When a destination is relatively accessible it creates tourist satisfaction which influences revisit intentions thus increasing the frequencies and volumes of tourist arrivals (Law 2021).

Destination accessibility at its best improves the service quality that is enjoyed by tourists when they come to visit the attractions in a destination (Adebukola & Fagbemi, 2019). If the travel process is smooth or characterised of less hurdles such as long queues at airports and poorly maintained roads, tourists enjoy their travel more and tend to give positive word of mouth inviting others to visit the attraction. It can therefore be said that when there are negative sentiments in a destination due to low levels of visitor satisfaction, improving the degree of accessibility will increase positive visitor sentiments (Natalia *et al.*, 2019).

Additionally, when accessibility is improved in a destination, it improves the economic success of that particular tourist destination. The ease of accessibility to destinations spurs the growth of tourism at a destination. This generally begins a chain reaction where the derived increase in tourism incomes will allow for further investment towards tourism projects which creates more capacity for a destination.

Air transport and destination accessibility

Nyaruwata & Runyowa (2017, p.1) says, "...transport plays a critical role for the success of the tourism sector, provides the umbilical cord that binds tourism destinations and their source markets and ensures that tourists can be dispersed geographically within a destination". Since the introduction of passenger flights during the years succeeding the Second World War the air travel has been an integral and inseparable part of tourism. It can therefore be said that air transport is one of the most importation transport modes in tourism.

The aviation sector also improves tourism destination accessibility in the form of the actions of other players in the aviation sector such as government aviation regulators and private operators. Investment in the construction of improved aviation infrastructure by civil aviation authorities is yet another chief factor to note since they upgrade or construct new airports which open up a destination to airlines which bring tourists to a new or previously inaccessible tourism destination (Lohmann & Vianna, 2016). The industry regulators also engage into bilateral agreements with aviation industry regulators of other countries which allows airlines from their respective countries to fly between them (Lohmann & Vianna, 2016).

Air transport policies such as airspace liberalization and 'open skies' agreements underpin growth in air travel (Zhang & Findlay, 2014; Álvarez-Díaz, 2019). Also the existence of agreements between airlines themselves may also improve the accessibility of tourism destinations because they mostly result in the formulation of dense air transport networks between a tourism destination and various source markets as well as countless travel promotions which exposes the destination to new groups of travellers who previously could not access that particular destination. The aviation sector is therefore highly instrumental in

improving destination accessibility because it facilitates the movement of travellers from source markets to their destinations.

Challenges faced by the aviation sector in improving destination accessibility

The aviation sector has a lot of strategic advantages in promoting tourism destination accessibility as highlighted above. However, the sector is also burdened with a myriad of problems which tend to stall its progress in fostering seamless destination accessibility. Sylva & Amah (2021) pointed out that the global airline industry is full of challenges related to airport infrastructure, finance, safety and security, geography and country's regulatory and economic frameworks.

According to Sylva & Amah (2021) the infrastructural challenges being faced by the domestic aviation sector include poor quality of infrastructure, inadequate provision of power, inadequate number of fleet and poor technology. Phillips (2015) noted that Nigeria does not have modern landing aids such as adequate airfield lighting and instrument landing systems to allow planes to land at night. Adebukola & Fagbemi (2019) added that governments in Sub Saharan Africa are negligent to provide reliable power hence airport authorities resort to use of alternative power sources like diesel which is very costly and non-sustainable. Still on infrastructural challenges, Adebukola & Fagbemi (2019) posits that most airlines in Sub Saharan Africa do not have adequate number and sizes of fleets to service domestic routes. This has resulted in most operators preferring to service more populated routes leaving the less popular destinations unserved.

Serrano & Kazda (2020) admit that financing the airport facilities expansion is a major challenge to governments and the aviation industry. In some cases the funding of the airport renovations may come from the public purse but in some cases a larger share will have to be financed by carriers and the public through higher airport taxes and user fees. Most aviation regulatory authorities have no obvious source of funding to upgrade and modernise airport facilities. Xu & Dioumessy (2019) also observed that the operational cost of African carriers is higher than most carriers in other parts of the world. Fuel for airlines is very expensive and in most African countries it is 20% more expensive compared to other continents. Faajir and Zidan (2016) submit that inspite of monetary interventions from governments, the resources cannot meet the aviation industry's financial demands. Additionally, most African governments have huge debts which makes it difficult for them to borrow funds for the development of the aviation sector.

Policy and regulatory challenges are also rampant in the aviation industry. The aviation industry in African countries suffers setbacks due to lack of good strategies that that can address the peculiarities of the sector (Omoleke, 2012; Pam, 2012). In some cases the policies are not properly implemented. Further, there is a lack of cooperation between tourism regulators and aviation sector regulators. This lack of cooperation results in misalignment between policies of ministries that oversee various aspects of the aviation industry. In most cases, supervising ministries impose conflicting directives to the regulatory bodies, thus creating sub-optimal outcomes in the sector (Omoleke, 2012). Ndlovu (2013) also added that continued lack of compliance with ICAO requirements is a major concern. The aviation as a whole faces the risk of having major airports and aircraft maintenance entities closed owing to failure to meet international regulatory requirements. Such action would undermine efforts to rebuild the tourism trade and to attract potential private investors.

Additionally, corporate governance and managerial challenges also cripple the efforts to improve destination accessibility by air. These challenges mainly include uncontrolled corruption, poor project planning skills. Isah (2018) highlighted that opines that poor corporate governance and bad management has led to the proliferation of unethical practices and dubious activities which end up stunting the growth of the airline industry. He added that transparency and accountability only exist in the theoretical realm. Pam (2012) also added that some systems in the aviation sector are devoid of proper checks and balances thereby opening a floodgate of financial malpractices. This resulted in the rapid depletion of human resource capital and

encouraged some management staff who anticipated their unwarranted exit to loot the system to coma (Pam, 2012).

Moreover, according to Palmer (2013) the aviation industry is strangled by unfavourable human resource practices such as neglect of training and personnel development. This has resulted in deficiency in skilled manpower. Over the years, dearth of skilled personnel has been a major constraint to Africa's ability to meet its safety oversight functions in the aviation industry.

Another challenge being faced by the aviation sector in promoting destinations accessibility is the ever-changing consumer needs which can result in airlines being unable to meet the expectations of their target markets. In the airline industry, meeting the expectation of the customer in service quality and price is an important role to identify the success of the airline companies. According to Abdelghany & Abdelghany (2016), traveller anticipation is one of the challenge faced by the airline companies, where expectations of the customers are mounting at a faster pace. Every airline has to comply with the expectations of the target market for long term survival. Sometimes this ends up leading airlines off the path of fostering accessibility because by trying to improve their service quality, the airfares end up being expensive and a destination becomes financially inaccessible to tourists.

Literature reviewed above evidence that most countries especially in Africa fail to develop their aviation sectors due to a myriad of challenges which exist. Challenges like corruption, ill-informed legislative policies and frameworks as well as mismanagement are some of the reasons why the aviation sector fails to fully show its prowess in the improvement of tourism destination accessibility in some regions. This research therefore seeks to unearth the challenges of the Zimbabwean aviation sector in the implementation its aviation infrastructure rehabilitation, expansion and modernisation program.

METHODOLOGY

The research was a qualitative research. The respondents relevant for this study were the Zimbabwe's tourism and civil aviation sector regulators as well as airline representatives. To select the actual respondents for the study, key informant and convenience sampling techniques were employed. According to Elmusharaf (2012) key informant sampling is when respondents are selected as a result of their personal skills, or position within a society, are able to provide more information and a deeper insight into what is going on around them. Convenience sampling is when respondents are chosen because they are close at hand and can be easily accessed (Emerson, 2015). The researchers therefore selected 4 destination marketing managers from the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, 4 marketing executives from the Civil Aviation Authority of Zimbabwe, 2 representatives from the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure Development and 12 airline country managers. The 12 passenger airlines used for the research were those that fly to and within Zimbabwe and these were Air Zimbabwe, Fastjet Zimbabwe, Halstead's Aviation Company, South African AirlinK, Comair T/A British Airways, Air Namibia, Air Tanzania, Malawian Airlines, Rwandair, Kenya Airways, Ethiopian Airways, Emirates Airlines. In total, the sample size used for the research was made up of 22 respondents and this was deemed appropriate for the aim of the research.

This study utilized in-depth interviews as its main data collection instrument. Due to the restrictions brought by the Covid 19 pandemic, both face to face and telephone interviews were utilised so as to minimise face to face interactions. The interviews were semi structured in nature. Semi structured interviews typically consists of a dialogue between researcher and participant, guided by a flexible interview protocol and supplemented by follow-up questions, probes and comments (Melissa & Lisa, 2019). An interview guide was used and all responses were recorded. Each interview session lasted for at most 25minutes. Permission and consent to carry out the research was first sought from the organizations and data collection was done for 2 months from early February to mid-March 2022. The interviews allowed the researchers to explore

participant thoughts, feelings and beliefs about the challenges being faced in improving air accessibility of tourist destinations in Zimbabwe.

In terms of data analysis, the thematic data analysis method was used in this research. Thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within data (Braun & Clarke 2006). It organises and describes data in rich detail and interprets various aspects of the research topic. Using thematic data analysis, the researchers prepared summaries from the data collected and organized them into categories. The main categories derived were on the state on the aviation sector, challenges faced in improving accessibility of tourist destinations and the future of the Zimbabwe's aviation sector. The study participants were more than willing to participate in this research as they felt that the research was of much relevance to them. Out of the 22 scheduled interviews, 21 were held successfully resulting in 95% response rate. A detailed data presentation and analysis is shown in the findings section below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The state of the aviation sector in Zimbabwe

The interviewees were asked about the state of the aviation sector in Zimbabwe. It was found out that in terms of the aviation infrastructure available to foster tourist destinations accessibility, the country had 13 local airports which included both international and domestic airports. Out of these 13 airports which had been put under study only 3 that is Harare R.G Mugabe International Airport, Bulawayo J.M Nkomo International Airport and the Victoria Falls International Airport were practically available to commercial airlines for them to conduct daily scheduled flights. The other 10 airports were either out of commission or simply not attractive because of them not being well maintained or serviced enough to generate and support sufficient air travel demand. These were Buffalo Range Airport, Bulawayo J. Nkomo International Airport, Centenary Airport, Charles Prince Airport, R. G. Mugabe International Airport, Hwange National Park Airport, Hwange Town Airport, Kariba Airport and Masvingo Airport.

The findings above demonstrate that Zimbabwe's aviation sector is only 23% capable of providing constant and guaranteed air access between tourism destinations in Zimbabwe. The inaccessibility of most tourist destinations by air have resulted in poor visitor mobility within the country.

Challenges facing the aviation sector in Zimbabwe in promoting tourism destinations accessibility

The greatest challenge cited by all the interviewees was unavailability and inaccessibility of aviation infrastructure in the country. The research uncovered that the 3 functional airports only benefit Harare, Bulawayo and Matabeleland provinces. This is a real challenge because it restricts the aviation sector's contribution towards accessibility to a very small portion of the total number of local tourism destinations. Given how time poor tourists are, if they want to visit Zimbabwe from France to see the Mavhuradonha wilderness area, Lake Kariba and the Great Zimbabwe Monuments they have to spend at least two days at each destination so the itinerary will not be possible in a week's span. Duval and Schiff (2011) concurred that airport based infrastructural challenges can have very negative impacts on the flow of air traffic as well as tourist movements.

Findings obtained from the aviation sector representatives revealed that the major players in the tourism and aviation sectors are suffering from budgetary constraints. The regulators are faced with a lot of financial commitments which are only supported by smaller revenue streams.

It also became evident from the research that the current government's flagship aviation infrastructure rehabilitation and modernisation project at the Robert Mugabe International Airport is being funded by the Chinese government through a loan of US\$153 billion. The lack of funds may therefore derail the aviation

sectors efforts to increase accessibility of the country's tourist destinations.

Furthermore, it was discovered the aviation sector in Zimbabwe is struggling to enhance destination accessibility to its fullest ability because of the harsh economic environment prevailing in the country. The relatively poor performance of the economy characterized by low liquidity, high interest rates coupled with high higher rates of inflation on the back of a devaluing currency has led to there being a growing number of the population which would otherwise represent domestic travel demand losing much of their purchasing power and discretionary incomes limiting their ability to use air transport for their tourism travels. The consequence of this has low demand for air as a mode of transport. Low levels of demand mean the aviation organizations are not receiving sufficient revenues to fund and maintain their equipment as well as their skilled personnel. Therefore, at the end of the day the whole domestic aviation sector is no longer capable of facilitating accessibility to local tourism destinations as a result of the conditions in the local economy.

More recently, it has also been discovered that the impact of unprecedented diseases such as the novel corona virus has also had surprising but major impacts that have hindered the aviation sector's ability to promote tourist destinations accessibility in Zimbabwe. The high rates of infections and casualties at the hand of the virus has resulted in the government like those of other states imposing travel restrictions especially on international travel which as the research found was actually halted for much of the final two quarters of 2020 and the results were that no tourists could be transported from one location to the other.

Another challenge was more to do with the structural constraints within the local tourism industry. It was discovered that the true benefits of tourism to the economy could not be accurately determined given that the country does not have a tourism satellite account as such it was difficult for regulators especially those in aviation to quantify the benefits which the aviation sector obtains from tourism. On this background they had no justification to motivate air operators actively participate in promoting tourist destination accessibility.

The research also discovered that the locally based airlines were facing unique challenges in contrast to others. The previously mentioned economic hardships has meant that the airlines cannot manage to honor their financial obligations with creditors both at home and abroad leading to failure (Polska, 2011). Fly Africa Zimbabwe and Rainbow airlines are examples of local carriers that could not survive the harsh conditions while others such as Air Zimbabwe have been unable to acquire new equipment such as efficient and comfortable aircraft and maintaining reputable safety standards leading to them being blacklisted in Europe. Thus the impact of this on accessibility has been that Air Zimbabwe could not directly provide direct access for European based tourists to Zimbabwean destinations.

A question was presented to the aviation sector respondents and tourism sector respondents on how they are working together to facilitate air accessibility of the Zimbabwean tourism destinations. The responses from the CAAZ, airlines and ZTA representatives indicated that they had some level of cooperation between the sectors for example, ZTA partnered with Ethiopian Airways during the 2019 Sanganai/Hlanganani World Tourism Expo. However, in most instances the level of involvement and collaboration was kept to a relative minimum to avoid conflict of interest as well as to safeguard some corporate strategies and secrets especially from the private sector organizations. The findings are in line with Omeleke (2012) observation that the lack of cooperation between tourism ministries that oversee various aspects of aviation results in misalignment of policies. For example, while the Zimbabwe Tourism Authority is trying to boost the number of visitors flow into the country, the CAAZ is increasing the rates of its taxes and fees which discourage aviation sector players from fully delivering tourists or visitors to the country.

80% of the respondents cited that there is a challenge of high fees and taxes charged at the airports. These high taxes made it difficult for airlines to play their role effectively in providing air transport which translates to the facilitation of tourism destination accessibility in Zimbabwe. Due to the relatively low

volumes which the country's aviation infrastructure can hold the overall costs of managing, maintaining and growing the aviation infrastructure ends up being a burden for a few airlines. This translates to high fees and taxes charged on both the airlines and their passengers which turns the sector into a highly priced system. It was established in the findings that travelers ended up having to pay an extra 50USD as their own share of departure taxes which is too expensive to attract the much needed traveler demand which could promote or enhance the aviation sector's ability to facilitate destination accessibility. Khadoroo (2007) concurs that taxes and levies are necessary but if they are unsustainably high they will only lead to disappointing outcomes as those systems are self-destructive leading to the suffering of accessibility initiatives as well as the aviation regulators as well.

The future of the aviation sector and destination accessibility in Zimbabwe

Despite a myriad of challenges highlighted above, the research established that the Zimbabwean aviation sector is making effort to improve destinations accessibility in the nation. The expansion of the three major airports in the country is a notable development which took place. The sector is also planning to reopen and refurbish all the district and town airports across the country's 10 provinces. The research established that Mutare airport was next on the modernization and expansion projects. It was also established that the Gweru airport was recently reopened allowing room for airlines to provide regular services into the Midlands provincial capital and when other airports across the country reopen, the aviation sector's contribution towards accessibility is poised to improve.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that the aviation sector in Zimbabwe is not in an admirable state as it fails to facilitate accessibility of most tourist destinations in Zimbabwe. Another conclusion drawn from this study is that even though the government is engaged in some projects which may improve the aviation sector's ability to facilitate tourist destination accessibility, the aviation sector's focus is on facilitating visitors flow into the country not primarily improving accessibility of tourist destinations. More so, the researchers concluded that there are lower levels of institutional cooperation between aviation sector and the tourism industry. This was signaled by a mismatch between their goals and the respective strategies which they use to achieve those goals resulting in a situation where the strategies of one sector negatively affects the goals of the other sector.

Another conclusion is that Zimbabwe's aviation sector has also been found to be neglecting its local airlines by not putting in place policies which encourage airlines to fly in Zimbabwe while encouraging fair competition so as to protect the locally founded airlines that are actually important for the development of the domestic tourism.

Another conclusion derived was that even though the challenges which hinder the aviation sector's progress and effectiveness in facilitating destination accessibility in Zimbabwe are many, the sector might perform better in the future given the current changes in policy and infrastructure improvements.

The researchers recommend that the government reduces the taxes, navigation levies and other financial obligations which the airlines operating in the Zimbabwe are paying. This can greatly improve the country's positive image thus attracting more airlines which will make the country's tourism destinations easily accessible by air.

The researchers also recommend that players in the aviation and tourism sectors especially the ZTA and the CAAZ increase their levels of cooperation so as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their policies and strategies. When they work together, their policies and strategies will have less predatory impacts than it would be when they continue working in parallel to each other. Close cooperation in policy formulation will

not only improve destination accessibility but it will also bring revenues to the aviation sector as well triggering economy-wide development.

The researchers also recommend that the government puts in place measures to protect the locally owned airlines from stiff competition from external airlines which might have been granted access to fly into the country due to the adoption of the open skies policy. This is because most of the foreign airlines are much bigger and financially stable such that they may occupy key routes which might erase the main revenue sources of locally based airlines and due to their relative financial weakness they might not be able to react quickly or effectively enough leading to years of unsustainable operations and indebtedness and failure. Resultantly, the market will be left for foreign domination which causes much derails in progressing towards improving accessibility of tourist destinations in Zimbabwe.

Lastly, the researchers recommend that the aviation and the tourism sector must collaborate and come up with policies which address the concerns on the aviation sector and the tourism sector. These dialogues must also involve private businesses such as hotels and airlines to create self-administered cross-sectoral initiatives which can be instrumental in enhancing the aviation sector's contribution towards destination accessibility. Elimination of policy discord can enhance accessibility of tourism destinations in Zimbabwe.

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