

**ASSESSING THE CHALLENGES AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES OF YANKARI  
GAME RESERVE AS A STRATEGIC TOURISM ASSET IN NIGERIA.**

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## ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's Tourist Destination for Economic Development. The study adopted an interpretivism philosophy and inductive research approach. From a population of individuals working at the Yankari Game Reserve, the purposive sampling method was used in the selection of participants. Also, data was collected using the semi-structured interview approach. The data collected was analysed using a thematic analysis where themes were recognised and interpreted.

The study revealed that generating revenues, improving the quality of various components of infrastructure and creating jobs or opportunities for employment are how the Yankari Game Reserve contributes to national economic development. Also, the study revealed that Yankari Game Reserve can contribute to national economic development through diversifying tourism offerings, engaging in partnerships and collaborations, as well as sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore, the challenges faced by the Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development include insufficient funding and resources, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, marketing and promotion, and conservation and sustainability. Finally, the policy document to advise the local government on improving the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve include financial support and infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, community engagement and capacity building, sustainable tourism practices and collaboration and partnerships. The study therefore recommended that the local government should establish stronger collaborations with local communities and businesses to ensure their active involvement in the Reserve's operations leading to the creation of job opportunities and foster a sense of ownership.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

The tourism sector consistently proves to be a key player in propelling economic progress and advancement, whether through the introduction and enhancement of attractions or infrastructure (Nguyen, 2021). Advocates of this industry tirelessly lobby for financial backing and support (Becker and George, 2011; Liasidou, 2012). Besides contributing to local economies through revenues, there are advocates for this industry because of the need to preserve resources for future generations. Key elements of tourism, destinations, exploit their unique natural and cultural resources to attract tourists to stimulate local economies. Game reserves, for instance, are such notable destinations in the realm of tourism.

Game reserves, historically, were national parks, especially in the majority of African colonies (Meer, 2010). Although the concept of nature as a wilderness may have originated in the United States, the British were responsible for the spread of game preservation throughout the colonial world (Meer, 2010). Nearly all of the protected areas around the turn of the century were game reserves, later combined into national parks (Meer, 2010). The largest and most well-liked parks were located in Eastern and Southern Africa as a result of the arrival of a relatively substantial white minority.

Game reserves, vast tracts of land providing a haven for wildlife or regulated hunting grounds also serve an important role in tourism. Balmford et al. (2009) view these reserves as integral to nature-oriented travel, encompassing visits to national parks and wilderness regions. They function as an avenue for tourists and city-dwellers to reconnect with nature and wildlife. Particularly in Southern

and Eastern Africa, game reserves enjoy immense popularity and reportedly yield revenues comparable to industries like fishing, farming, and forestry (van Hoven, 2011).

This is not surprising considering the importance placed on wildlife. Humans and other animals have coexisted peacefully all across the world for aeons (Senyael, 2015). While this balance is interdependent, it is worth mentioning that it has its challenges and benefits or opportunities. Studies by Gumede (2019) and Price (2017) underline their economic significance, suggesting they stimulate local development, which encompasses initiatives enhancing community living standards and well-being. Concerning game reserves, these benefits manifest as foreign exchange earnings, governmental revenues, and job creation, often linked to hotel construction for tourists (Price, 2017). Also, Nsukwini (2015) identifies a range of opportunities such as job opportunities through the expanded public works programme, good working relations and joint problem solving, especially for staff and management of parks and game reserves and people willing to be involved in the sector. The sale of handicraft products, job opportunities and cultural activities, leading to the generation of income, are also some of the socio-economic benefits associated with game reserves (Nsukwini, 2015).

However, challenges such as resource scarcity, poaching, overpopulation, inadequate infrastructure, insecurity, conflicts, and land degradation hinder their full potential, as indicated by Onchawati et al. (2010) using the example of the Masai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. Further, some consequences may occur when a protected area is not large enough for a certain population to maintain itself, including a decrease in population size, formation of breeding depression, sinking population, decreased genetic diversity, and ultimately extinction due to human activities.

Again, due to interference from the land use system with wildlife corridors that causes the loss of essential wildlife regions or extinction, certain protected areas or game reserves turn into ecological islands (Stuma, 2020). Given the foregoing, this research will investigate the challenges and opportunities of game reserves.

## **1.2 Game Reserves in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, game reserves hold substantial economic importance. The country boasts numerous game reserves and national parks like Old Oyo National Park and Yankari Game Reserve. The south-central region of Nigeria's Bauchi State is home to the sizable wildlife park known as Yankari Game Reserve. A large diversity of flora and wildlife may be found there, together with various natural warm water springs, which occupy an area of roughly 2,244 square kilometres (866 sq mi) (Dele et al., 2018). Primate species, waterbucks, bushbucks, oribi, crocodiles, hippopotamuses, roan gazelles, wild cattle, and several monkey species are all found in the Yankari Game Reserve. Unquestionably, Yankari Game Reserve is one of the richest reserves in Nigeria. With an estimated 350 animals, including endangered species, Yankari Game Reserve is home to one of West Africa's largest remaining elephant populations. (Dele et al., 2018) This herd of elephants may be the only one still alive in Nigeria. A force of about 80 rangers guards the reserve's significant populations of lion, buffalo, hippo, roan, and hartebeest. One of Nigeria's most well-liked tourism destinations is Yankari Game Reserve. Even though the reserve welcomes tourists year-round, November to May are regarded as the finest months to go since there is more entertainment to be had because the foliage has dried out and animals have started to parade across the canals. The Wikki Warm Spring, another intriguing aspect of the reserve, is a wonderful place to relax and cool off (Dele et al., 2018) and thus is a popular tourist attraction. The preservation of wildlife is the main reason for establishing the Yankari Game Reserve.

The goal of judicious use of the resource (reserve) as a tourist resort for leisure activities such as game viewing, boating, and swimming, among others, emanates from this core aim (Dele et al., 2018).

The preservation of genetic diversity and presentation, the preservation of flora and soil, the creation of jobs, and watershed management are some of the intrinsic benefits of wildlife conservation. Even though just a small percentage of the Yankari Game Reserve's tourism potential is now being utilised, it has enormous potential. According to a Nigeria Tourism Board (NTB) report from 2016, more than 39,000 tourists visited the game reserves throughout, with more than 1,000 foreign visitors contributing to an estimated revenue of ₦40,135,223.85 since 2009. The lowest amount of revenue from foreign visitors was estimated to be ₦1,705,524.00 in 2009 (Dele et al., 2018).

Given the economic and social relevance of Yankari Game Reserve, several researchers, including Okochi et al. (2016) and Habu and Muhammad (2017), have explored its economic impact on local communities and the national economy. However, while these studies acknowledge the contributions of Nigerian game reserves, they do not delve into the specifics of how these reserves aid national development. This leaves a knowledge gap concerning the role of tourism, specifically game reserves. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to close this gap by showing how the Yankari Game Reserve helps national growth and outlining the issues they pose to the Nigerian economy.

### **1.3 Aim and Objectives**

Based on the above, the study aims to examine the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's Tourist Destination for Economic Development.

### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

To achieve the aim of the study, the following specific objectives will be addressed:

1. To investigate how Yankari Game Reserve has been contributing to national economic development
2. To examine how Yankari Game Reserve can contribute to national economic development
3. To identify and discuss challenges that are faced by Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development
4. To outline a policy document to advise the local government on improving the contribution of Yankari Game Reserve to local government.

### **1.4 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this study was principally centred on the Yankari Game Reserve in Bauchi State, Nigeria, reflecting on its significance as a critical national economic driver in terms of tourism. The geographical concentration of the Yankari Game Reserve was due to its notable economic and touristic potential and its capacity to represent the broader context of game reserves within Nigeria.

The study's content delved into how the Yankari Game Reserve contributes to national economic development and the challenges impeding these contributions. Moreover, it explored potential opportunities for bolstering these contributions. The analysis considered various opinions of individuals working with the Yankari Game Reserve. By involving the staff (both lower level and higher level) to obtain a diverse range of information, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

From a temporal perspective, this research employed a cross-sectional time horizon, centring on the present situation at the Yankari Game Reserve. The intention was to capture a contemporary snapshot of the current contributions, challenges, and potential opportunities related to economic development. Thus, the conclusions drawn and recommendations made in this study were based on these parameters, providing specific insights for policy and practice improvement.

## **1.5 Organisation of Study**

**Introduction:** The introduction provides an overview of the research topic, elucidating the importance of Yankari Game Reserve as a tourism destination for national economic development in Nigeria. This section outlines the study's aim and specific objectives, along with the significance of the study for policy, practice, and the research community.

**Literature Review:** This section delves into existing academic and professional literature relevant to the study. The review critically analyses and synthesises research on game reserves' contributions to economic development, challenges faced by them, and potential strategies for optimisation. The literature review identifies gaps in current knowledge and highlights how this study aims to fill those gaps.

**Methodology:** This part describes the study's research philosophy, approach, strategy, and time horizon. It also details the techniques and procedures used for data collection and analysis. The chosen population, sample size, sampling technique, and data collection instrument are discussed. Ethical considerations associated with the research are addressed.

**Results, Analysis, and Discussions of Findings:** Here, the gathered data is presented and analysed, and the findings are discussed concerning the study's objectives. Thematic analysis is used to uncover patterns within the data, facilitating an in-depth understanding of Yankari Game Reserve's contributions and challenges in the context of national economic development.

**Conclusions:** The final section summarises the study's findings, delineates the implications of the results, and makes recommendations for future policy, practice, and research. This section also reflects on the study's limitations and proposes potential directions for future research in the field.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Chapter Introduction**

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of game reserves as it relates to tourism and economic development. The chapter begins with a definition of key terms and concepts and reviews existing theories and models that have been connected to the challenges and opportunities of game reserves as tourist destinations for economic development. Further, the chapter presents a review of existing works related to the study, along with identifying and addressing the gaps in these works or studies. Finally, the chapter presents the conceptual framework and the summary of the main points in the conclusion section.

#### **2.2 Definition of Terms and Concepts**

This section organises and defines the terms or concepts important to the investigation of the challenges and opportunities of game reserves as tourist destinations for economic development. Thus, this section explains game reserves, examines tourism as a concept, economic development as a concept and game reserves as tourist destinations for economic development in that order.

##### **2.2.1 Tourism and Game Reserves**

Some of the main concepts linked to tourism are entertainment, leisure, recreation and hospitality. This suggests that tourism is a complex phenomenon only understood by adopting a multidisciplinary approach (Candela et al., 2012).

In other words, defining tourism is difficult, as there is no consensus about it. Leiper (1979, as cited in Ma and Law, 2009) mentions that the definition of tourism falls under three categories, which include economic, technical and holistic. The economic definition of tourism focuses on a recognisable, nationally significant industry that includes a diverse range of component activities, such as the provision of travel, lodging, leisure, food and associated services (Ma and Law, 2009). In the case of the technical definition of tourism, the focus is on the provision of instruments for legislative, statistical and industrial purposes. Statistics are crucial since the tourism industry uses a lot of data. The United Nations proposal for the most widely recognised technical definition of tourism from 1963 states that a person is considered a "visitor" if they have travelled to a destination other than their typical abode or home for any reason other than to accept a paid job there (Ma and Law, 2009).

The holistic definition of tourism embraces the whole essence of the concept of tourism. Thus, what appears to be a common definition of tourism is the fact that it is an intentional activity that serves as a means of interaction between people inside a country or beyond its geographical demarcations. Thus, tourism specifically refers to people's short-term, transient travel to locations other than their usual places of residence and employment, as well as the activities they engage in while in these locations (Dilek and Dilek, 2018).

One of the aspects of tourism is nature-based tourism. The term "nature-based tourism" generally refers to leisure travel that depends on the natural environment or natural resources, either as a backdrop for activities or as the focus. By no means an entire list, nature-based tourism encompasses such diverse pursuits as mountaineering, snorkelling, wildlife viewing and photography, fishing, downhill skiing, hunting, motorcycling, paddling or rafting, and ecotourism (Musika et al., 2022).

Fundamentally, nature-based tourism—also referred to as just "nature tourism"—is reliant on the natural features and attractions offered by an area, and this is exactly what game reserves are about. Firstly, game reserves are a type of nature-based tourism, and the attractions they offer are wildlife or animals. Thus, in defining game reserves, they are types of protected places for animals that have been established for conservation (Musika et al., 2022). Specifically, game reserves are large areas of land set aside for either viewing or hunting wildlife. This means that at game reserves, animals live and roam freely.

### **2.2.2 Game Reserves as tourist destinations for economic development**

Economic development (ED), sometimes known as economic growth or advancement, refers to the creation of money for the benefit and betterment of society. Economic development can also be found in the general advancement of the economy in terms of things like educational attainment, resource accessibility, and living standards (Todaro and Smith, 2009). From a public perspective, economic development includes dispersing scarce resources, such as land, labour, capital, and entrepreneurship, to improve business activities, income, income distribution patterns, employment and fiscal solvency (Todaro and Smith, 2009). ED is a crucial element in what creates a thriving economy, and to achieve this, the creation of new job opportunities and making it possible for current and future citizens to have easier access to opportunities are often the way (Feldman et al., 2016). Overall, this shows that economic development pertains to the well-being of populations.

As noted, game reserves are nature-based tourism, and as nature-based tourism, this means that game reserves play significant roles in economic development, just as tourism does in general. Given that tourism has, for many years, been vital to the success of economies around the world, game reserves, which are aspects of tourism, can influence economic development or progression (Kontsiwe and Visser, 2019). For instance, besides their impact on the environment, especially in creating environmental awareness, game reserves provide direct financial benefits for conservation. The operation of game reserves actively puts money towards further conservation efforts, which may be in the form of protection, research or resource management (Kontsiwe and Visser, 2019). Also, game reserves provide financial benefits and empowerment for the local people. Successful game reserves require the efforts and support of residents (Su et al., 2014). The game reserve efforts involve substantial cooperation and collaboration with residents if the effort is not itself a project of locals (Su et al., 2014). Furthermore, through the game reserves, locals are empowered through leadership positions and employment.

### **2.3 The Contributions of Game Reserves to National Development**

The term national development is holistic in approach, which means that it entails every aspect of the life of an individual and the nation. Also, this implies that it includes an expansion and full growth of industries, agriculture, education, and health, social, cultural and religious institutions. Thus, in defining national development, it is about a country's capacity to improve the living standards of its residents. In short, national development is about the development of a country as a whole. It can be done by giving people the necessities for a basic livelihood, including giving them work. This suggests that the contributions to national development are many, and among them are game reserves. Game reserves can be managed by both individuals and the government,

and the proceeds obtained from managing the reserve can be used to finance development projects that benefit the public.

Giampiccoli et al. (2014) showed that in their study on the impact of private game farms on local community development. Specifically, the study investigated the current role and contributions of private game farms to community development, using South Africa as a case study. The study employed telephonic interviews for the collection of data from owners of private game farms. The results obtained showed that private game farms contributed to community development through game viewing, hunting, music, and arts and craft. Further, the results showed that the purchase of food from the local community, especially for the management of the private game reserves, was crucial in terms of contributing to the economy of the local community. Likewise, Dele et al. (2018) assessed the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to the economic growth of Nigeria. The findings from the secondary data collected established that income or foreign exchange generation and job or employment opportunities as the national economic contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve. Again, Adamu et al. (2015) examined the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to Nigeria's economic development. The findings showed that the game reserve generates income from tourists who visit and spend time at the place and at the same time support the growth of the business.

Outside of the positive contributions of game reserves, where the study by Ayivor et al. (2020) found improvements in livelihoods in the form of activities such as beekeeping, shea butter production and livestock raising, there were also negatives. The study by Ayivor et al. (2020) on protected area governance and its influence on local perceptions, attitudes and collaboration showed that. The study specifically explored the extent to which local communities collaborate in the management of protected areas and how the governance regime of these areas influences local

perceptions and attitudes in Ghana. Further, for data collection, the study used interviews and focus group discussions. The results demonstrated that the goals of state-managed protected areas, including game reserves, typically exclude people and have a negative impact on local perceptions and attitudes. Further, the results revealed that collaboration was an issue within the community, along with conflicts between people and wildlife and officials' harsh punishment of offenders in protected areas.

Other studies examined how Game Reserves can contribute to national economic development. In Manaf et al. (2018) study in Indonesia, community-based rural tourism in inter-organisational collaboration was examined. Information was obtained from the youth in Nglanggeran Tourism Village, Gunungkidul Regency, Yogyakarta through observations, in-depth interviews and a review of documents. The study established that partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders as well as community-based tourism activities as how game reserves can contribute to national economic development. Furthermore, the study conducted by Eshun and Tichaawa (2020) examined how Bobiri Forest Reserve and Butterfly Sanctuary can contribute to national economic development via local communities. The purposive sampling approach was used to choose 387 participants in six communities in Ghana using interviews and questionnaires. The results indicated that ecotourism initiatives are a way of contributing to national economic development. Additionally, these studies (Samal and Dash, 2022; De Zoysa, 2022) revealed that wildlife conservation and protection, as well as ecotourism initiatives, are ways of how forest reserves can contribute to national economic development.

Overall, the studies (Giampiccoli et al., 2014; Ayivor et al., 2020; Metilelu et al., 2021) examined the contributions of game reserves to national development. The results of these studies established that the contributions could be either positive or negative. The positive contributions included contributions to the local economy of communities through the purchase of food by operators of game reserves, the creation of jobs in the form of game viewing, hunting, music, arts and craft, and the general improvement in livelihoods through activities such as beekeeping, livestock raising and shea butter production. The negatives included the exclusion of people, conflicts between people and wildlife and officials' harsh punishment of offenders in protected areas, and the inability to produce gains for communities due to the western-centric pressure of conservation without alternatives to the host community.

#### **2.4 The Challenges Associated With the Operation of Game Reserves**

Nature-based tourism, which includes game reserves, has been touted as the solution to many social and economic issues, particularly in less developed nations (Hoffmann, 2022). However, whatever how socially and environmentally conscious game reserves may be in theory, in practice, they still have their roots in the travel and tourism sector. Game reserves exert a series of impacts similar to industrial activities. Game reserves consume scarce resources, produce waste and require specific infrastructure. Therefore, effective management and conservation are necessary, as well as the protection of biodiversity, the atmosphere, and other ecosystems through the development of appropriate regulations and public awareness (Hoffmann, 2022). All of this suggests that there are challenges associated with the operation of game reserves, such as local people and tourists competing for scarce resources. For instance, there is a lot of energy consumption in the tourism

industry, including game reserves. Heating, lighting and moving tourists by land requires a lot of energy (Abdallah and El-Shennawy, 2013).

This high electricity and fuel consumption can strain the local energy system, not to mention that it produces carbon emissions that fuel the world's climate change (Abdallah and El-Shennawy, 2013).

In an earlier study by Kettles and Slotow (2009), which focused on the management of free-ranging lions on an enclosed game reserve in South Africa, they found that over-population, in-breeding depression, the decline of prey and other predators species, as well as conflicts with neighbouring communities, were the challenges associated with the management of the game reserve. Nimmak et al. (2020) also identified some challenges in their study on the environmental challenges of ecotourism in the Pandam Game Reserve in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study employed questionnaires, field surveys, interviews of key informants and administrative records for the data collection process. Further, the study analysed the data obtained using correlation and Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Based on the analysis, the study found that the destruction of wildlife species, unauthorised deforestation and inadequate infrastructure were major challenges associated with the Pandam Game Reserve. With issues of unauthorised deforestation affecting game reserves, economic development issues in the form of threats to livelihoods are likely. This is because deforestation causes a significant decline in rainfall, which has always been crucial in determining how fast crops grow, which is crucial to livelihoods (Damette and Delacote, 2012). In the case of inadequate infrastructure, it hinders development because it causes an economic deficit, which, in turn, leads to low living standards (Vilko et al., 2011).

In another study, Burton et al. (2020) examined the ongoing planning and difficulties of a distinctive tourism development project for the building of a "Big 5" wildlife reserve located on the outskirts of Gauteng province in South Africa. The study used interviews to collect data from owners of game reserves. Based on their responses, the study identified insufficient funding and resources resulting in delayed processes in finalising land claims, confusing signage on the routes such that many people get lost, visitors driving onto private land and too much traffic to control during peak seasons as the challenges faced by the owners of the game reserves. When there is traffic congestion, productivity usually declines, and this motivates firms and businesses, including managers of game reserves, to relocate to less congested areas (Sweet, 2011). Further, when there is low productivity, economic output or GDP stunts or declines in the process, affecting development.

Habu and Muhammad (2017) examined threats to biodiversity conservation in Yankari Game Reserve in Nigeria and the study found that insufficient funding, poor salary and lack of equipment are some challenges faced by Yankari Game Reserve. Also, Afriyie et al. (2021) study found insufficient funding as a challenge of Strict Nature Reserve, Gbele Resource Reserve and Kalakpa Resource Reserve while lack of research and staff as well as poor community relations were other challenges which contradicted the results of the present study. Again, Colua de Oliveira et al. (2021) conducted a study to tackle the challenges for the co-management of natural resources in Limpopo, Mozambique. The study focused on the national park of the community council. The study employed fieldwork for the collection of data from administrators, park committee members, and district and village committee members.

Based on the responses obtained, the study found that lack of clarity about responsibilities, dependency on park administration, absence of community benefits, lack of accountability to

residents and low educational level of members were challenges associated with the management of the national park. All of these challenges underlie incompetence, which suggests that people managing the game reserves or parks are unable to do their job properly. This causes a decline in productivity, which, in turn, leads to a decline in economic output, affecting development in the process (Sweet, 2011).

Metilelu et al. (2021) assessed the socio-political and economic implications of national parks and game reserves in Nigeria. The study employed quantitative methods for the data collection procedures. The data obtained were analysed using a quadratic model. Based on the analysis, the results established the socio-political and economic implications of the national parks and game reserves were negative. Specifically, the study found that national parks and game reserves produced little gains for the communities, and this was because of the Western-centric pressure of conservation without alternatives to the host community.

## **2.5 A policy document to advise the local government on improving the contribution of Yankari Game Reserve to local economic development**

Chan et al. (2021) on recommendations to improve ecotourism contribution to local economic development using Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah. In the process of data collection, the study adopted mixed approaches such as survey questionnaires and focus group interviews and analysis performed. The findings indicated that community engagement and participation as well as practices of responsible tourism are some ways of improving ecotourism's contribution to local economic development. Also, Saidmamatov et al. (2020) conducted a study on employing ecotourism opportunities for sustainability in the Aral Sea region. Survey questionnaires were used to collect the data from 86 stakeholders via social media platforms and analysis was performed.

The study found that establishing strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders like private investors, increased training and capacity building and organisations and providing funds for infrastructure development are ways of increasing ecotourism contributions to local economic development.

Additionally, Wondirad et al. (2019) studied ecotourism and its contribution to economic development using evidence from Africa, Ethiopia. Using a qualitative research procedure, information was obtained from NGOs and analysed. The findings showed that establishing collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders and providing financial support to improve infrastructure work can enhance the contributions of Reserves to local economic development. Lastly, Kunjuraman et al. (2022) studied community-based ecotourism as a social transformation tool for rural communities in the state of Sabah, Malaysia. The qualitative research method via interviews was used to collect the data and analysed through thematic analysis. The study revealed that promoting the awareness of the conservation of nature as a way of marketing can enhance its contributions to rural community development.

## **2.6 Theory of Modernisation**

The theory of modernisation is also known as Rostow's theory of growth and development. The theory outlines and describes the various stages of developing tourism initiatives until they become widely accepted for what they are meant for (Ukabuilu and Igbojekwe, 2015). Walt Whitman Rostow developed this theory, and its premise is that societies become highly developed through increased investments and increased exposure to modernity, including changes in traditional culture and values. This assertion or premise implies that modernisation is a crucial process or phenomenon, and that is because it introduces change into the system in a methodical and

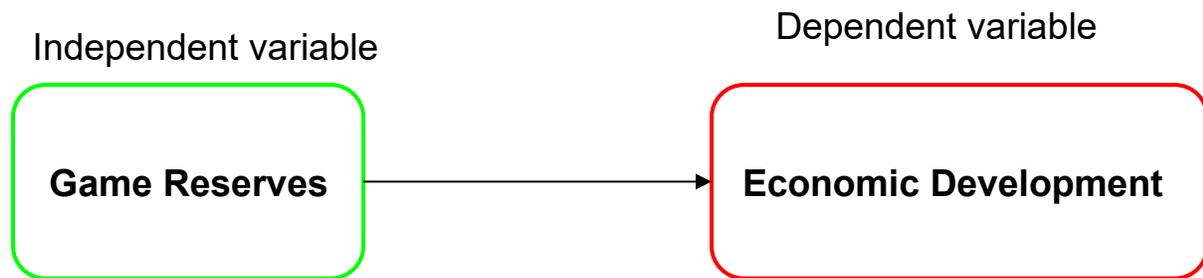
revolutionary manner. Public policy and the economy have been two of modernisation theory's main uses.

Nonetheless, the central concept of modernisation theory is that self-sustained development cannot occur unless natural inertia is overcome (Fayos- Sola et al., 2014). They include improved transportation, investments that improved agricultural organisation and production, and a surge in imports, particularly of capital.

For any economy, being on the path of self-sustained steady growth is inevitable once these pre-conditions for take-off are met (Ukabuilu and Igbojekwe, 2015).

The application of this theory to the current study, therefore, shows the importance of investments when it comes to game reserves, as they are tourism projects for development. It is through investments that improvements can be made to game reserves at all levels. Specifically, the standard stated in these improvements or developments may include the provision of infrastructure, making provisions for tourists coming and interacting with communities with good roads, social amenities, banks, health facilities and other developments to sustain the game reserves and the area in general.

## 2.7 Conceptual Framework



Source: Author's construct (2023)

*Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's Tourist Destination for Economic Development*

## 2.8 Conclusion

The chapter has reviewed all theoretical and empirical literature used in the study of investigating the challenges and opportunities of game reserves as they relate to tourism and economic development. Specifically, the review focused on explaining the meaning of game reserves and tourism, as well as the concept of economic development.

The review of the theory focused on the modernization theory before identifying and reviewing existing studies related to the objectives of the study. Further, the review identified the gaps in the existing studies relevant to the topic. Next, the review focused on the conceptual framework, which

showed the existing relationship between the variables (game reserves and economic development). Game reserves are necessary for economic development. On the other hand, economic development is likely to slow down if game reserves are operated ineffectively. This relationship between the variables is supported by several studies (Kettles and Slotow, 2009; Giampiccoli et al., 2014; Nimmak et al., 2020; Ayivor et al., 2020; Burton et al., 2020; Colua de Oliveira et al., 2021), which demonstrate that the operation of game reserves either positively or negatively contribute to economic development.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Chapter Introduction**

The research methodology followed the methodology proposed by Saunders et al. (2015), which includes the research philosophy, approach and methodologic choice, research strategy, time horizon, technique and procedures, data analysis and ethical consideration.

#### **3.2 Research Philosophy**

The research philosophy in this study aims to clarify the fundamental assumptions and beliefs that underpin the research approach (Melnikovas, 2018). For this particular study, an interpretivism philosophy was adopted. Interpretivism was chosen due to the need to gain a deep understanding of the meanings that research participants attribute to the challenges and opportunities associated with the Yankari Game Reserve as a tourist destination for economic development. Interpretivism recognises that individuals construct their subjective realities and that these subjective meanings are important in understanding social phenomena (Mertens, 2010). In the context of this research, it acknowledged that the experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of the participants were valuable in comprehending the dynamics of the Yankari Game Reserve as an economic entity.

By adopting an interpretivist perspective, the study focused on capturing the diverse and nuanced perspectives of the individuals involved in the Yankari Game Reserve. It acknowledged that multiple viewpoints exist and that by exploring and understanding these perspectives, a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities could be achieved.

However, it is worth mentioning that research conducted on the challenges and opportunities associated with game reserves and tourism, in general, are quantitative in nature. The studies by Kettles and Slotow (2009), Giampiccoli et al. (2014), Nimmak et al. (2020), Ayivor et al. (2020), Burton et al. (2020) and Colua de Oliveira et al. (2021) are examples. An important strength of these studies (Kettles and Slotow, 2009; Giampiccoli et al., 2014; Nimmak et al., 2020; Ayivor et al., 2020; Burton et al., 2020; Colua de Oliveira et al., 2021) reviewed, is the involvement of more participants, which ensured the extension (generalisation) of results to the initial populations the sample was taken from.

On the other hand, it is important to acknowledge the limitations or gaps of this study. First, like all studies that use quantitative methods, the results were not detailed, and this is because of the focus on numerical data. As a result, there was not much insight into the thought process and behaviours of the respondents regarding the subject. Thus, this was why the current study adopted the interpretivism philosophy.

This research philosophy allowed for flexibility, open-ended exploration, and the recognition that individuals' interpretations contribute to the overall understanding of the topic at hand. Through the interpretivism philosophy, the research aimed to go beyond surface-level observations and quantitative data to uncover the underlying meanings, motivations, and perceptions that shape the economic development of the Yankari Game Reserve. It acknowledged the complexity and social construction of reality and sought to provide a rich and nuanced exploration of the participants' viewpoints, contributing to a more holistic understanding of the research topic.

### **3.3 Approach and Methodological Choice**

The approach and methodologic choice focus on the procedures used for collecting, analysing and interpreting data (Saunders *et al.*, 2015). The study adopted the inductive research approach. The choice of the inductive approach is due to the limited knowledge of the role of game reserves, and therefore, research would have to be conducted to gain information, leading to the formation of theories. Further, the earlier adoption of interpretivism philosophy, which emphasises uncovering and understanding situations through people's thoughts and opinions, suggests that qualitative research is appropriate for this study.

### **3.4 Research Strategy**

Research strategy describes how, depending on the objectives of a study, research can be conducted. While several strategies, such as experimental research, action research and archival research, exist, the study adopted the case study research strategy. A case study research strategy refers to a comprehensive study of a single subject or topic (Hancock *et al.*, 2021). In this kind of research, the subject or topic was examined in-depth to understand issues in a practical situation or real-life setting.

Thus, the need to capture the context and reality of workers of Yankari Game Reserve in terms of the challenges and opportunities for national economic development informed the choice of the case study research strategy.

### **3.5 Time Horizon**

Time horizon in research refers to the length of time over which a study or project is conducted or analysed, and it falls under two areas or options, which include the cross-sectional time horizon and the longitudinal time horizon. The study adopted a cross-sectional time horizon for its data

collection, and this was because of the need to obtain current information on the situation at the Yankari Game Reserve (Setia, 2016).

### **3.6 Techniques and Procedure**

#### **3.6.1 Population**

The population of the study were workers of the Yankari Game Reserve. These workers were individuals with diverse backgrounds that were relevant to the objectives of the study.

#### **3.6.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

To obtain the sample size, individuals working at the Yankari Game Reserve were selected. In gaining access to these individuals, an ethics form was submitted for review and approval under the auspices of the Ethics Review Committee of the university. This was necessary because the study dealt with people (participants), and for the people (participants), this meant that their data were protected. Further, informed consent forms were provided to the participants, and they (informed consent forms) contained all the information the participants needed to decide to be involved in the study. Upon reading the informed consent form, those who volunteered for the study were 15, implying that 15 interviews were conducted. The interviews involved participants who occupied job positions such as finance manager, maintenance manager, field guide, relief front desk attendant, housekeeper and workshop manager. The participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher uses their judgement or discretion to choose from a sample population (Etikan *et al.*, 2016). This sampling technique was appropriate for the study because the sample population involved participants who

are best fit to provide better insights and knowledge on the challenges and opportunities of the Yankari Game Reserve as a tourist destination for economic development.

### **3.6.3 Data Collection Instrument**

In this study, the primary instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview. The interview was chosen as the data collection tool due to its ability to facilitate a more personalised and interactive approach to gathering information. Unlike other methods, such as surveys or questionnaires, the interview guide enabled the interviewer to probe further, ask follow-up questions, and delve into the participants' unique perspectives and experiences (Turner III, 2010). The study utilised a semi-structured interview guide to ensure a balance between flexibility and structure in data collection. Semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable when dealing with participants who possess diverse characteristics and viewpoints (Kallio et al., 2016), as was the case in this research on the challenges and opportunities of the Yankari Game Reserve as a tourist destination for economic development.

By employing a semi-structured interview guide, the researcher could exercise control over the flow of the interview, ensuring that all relevant topics were covered and preventing the interview from veering off-topic. The guide consisted of a set of predetermined questions and topics that were covered during the interview. However, the interviewer had the freedom to explore additional areas of interest and ask follow-up questions to gain deeper insights into the participants' perspectives.

The semi-structured interview guide offered a balance between providing a framework for consistency across interviews while allowing for flexibility and adaptability to individual participant responses. This approach allowed the researcher to capture a wide range of perspectives

and generate rich, qualitative data that contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the Yankari Game Reserve.

The use of the interview guide as the data collection instrument aligned with the research philosophy of interpretivism, as it enabled the exploration of the meanings and interpretations that participants brought to the topic. It fostered a more in-depth exploration of participants' viewpoints, experiences, and insights, generating a nuanced understanding of the economic development dynamics of the Yankari Game Reserve as a tourist destination.

#### **3.6.4 Data Collection**

At the start of the data collection process, the participants were contacted through emails containing details of the research and by telephone with the interview particulars. The interview was conducted via Zoom meeting with the employees and management of Yankari Games Reserve in English as the official language of interaction to ensure that communication was not hindered. The interview began with questions about the participants' experiences regarding game reserves before moving on to focus on the Yankari Game Reserve, asking questions about how it contributed to economic development in the area, the challenges it faced and measures to improve its contributions to economic development. The interview lasted for 90 minutes, and the final sample was 15 participants.

#### **3.6.5 Data Analysis**

The study employed thematic analysis to uncover the complexities of meaning in the data set. This method was used to analyse the descriptions, perspectives, and reflections of the research participants and identify themes within the data.

The process involved six steps, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006): becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, looking for themes, reviewing the themes, defining and naming the themes, and producing the final report. The data were meticulously transcribed and read multiple times before initial codes were assigned, and the extracted information was organised into broad categories and topics. The themes were examined to ensure they answered the study questions, and ongoing analysis was carried out to refine the specifics of each theme. The final report presented the accepted themes and provided a comprehensive and engaging explanation of the study topic.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

The study ensured that ethics remained a priority throughout the process by first seeking approval from the ethics committee of the university. Ethics is the study of good and wrong within a moral framework that is based on responsibility and obligation (Arfin, 2018).

Before the interview, the participants received early notification, a general description of the topic covered, details about the kind of information needed from them, the goals of the study, and how the data they supplied were used. Further, the length of each interview was disclosed to the participants before the interview began, and enough time was provided before and after the interview for the participant to ask any questions about the study's topic.

Following the methods outlined in this chapter, an informed consent form was given to every participant before the interview session. This was after it was made clear to the participants that

their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. While conducting the study, the participants were advised that they were under no obligation to answer any question they felt uncomfortable with.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data collected on the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's tourist destination for economic development. The study employed a qualitative method, using a case study approach, hence, using face-to-face interviews in gathering data. Interpretive paradigm guided the analysis of the data, where the researcher aimed to view the narrative (interview responses) against the context in which it was set and the subjective viewpoints of the participants. Thus, the chapter presents the results under the bio-data of the participants and the research questions or objectives that guided the study.

#### **4.2 Results**

This section presents the results derived from the qualitative analysis of the specific objectives related to the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's tourist destination for economic development.

##### **4.2.1 Bio data of participants**

This section presents the demographic profile of the participants and this covers their age, role or job title, level of education and years worked in the Yankari Game Reserve. Before the bio-data or demographic profile, the participants were 15 and they included a park ranger, a tour guide, the general manager, the wildlife research officer, the park manager, two administrators, a visitor service assistant, the lodge operator, two interns and a visitor.

Among these participants, the general manager was the oldest (late 50s) and three participants, including two interns and the visitor service assistant were the youngest, as they were in their early 20s. Further, the visitor was 45 years old, whereas the park manager was in the mid-40s and the park ranger was in the late 40s. One of the two administrators indicated an age range of 35 and 40 years, and the other administrator was 39 years old. The lodge operator was 36 years old and the wildlife research officer was in the mid-30s. Finally, the tour guide was in his early 30s.

The results also showed that three participants (the general manager, the wildlife research officer and the park manager) had the highest level of education. Both the general manager and the wildlife research officer had a Master's degree in Wildlife Conservation and Management. The park manager, on the other hand, had a Master's degree in Conservation Biology. While all Master's degree certificates are postgraduate qualifications, it is worth mentioning that not all postgraduate qualifications are Master's degrees. This explained why the results did not consider the two administrators' postgraduate qualifications as part of the highest level of education. Further, four participants, including the park ranger, the two interns and the visitor had a Bachelor's degree, although the visitor was not specific about the type of university degree. The park ranger had a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and the two interns had a Bachelor's degree in Biological Science. The tour guide and the lodge operator, on the other hand, had a Diploma in Hospitality and Tourism Management and Hospitality Management respectively. The visitor service assistant had the lowest level of educational qualification with a high school diploma.

Regarding the working years at the Yankari Game Reserve, the results showed that the general manager had worked for the reserve for 25 years. This was the longest work experience at the reserve. The visitor service assistant had the shortest work experience at the reserve, with two

months. Further, the park ranger had worked at the reserve for 20 years, whereas all two administrators, as well as the park manager had worked at the reserve for 12 years. The results also showed that the wildlife research officer had worked at the reserve for seven years. Both the tour guide and the lodge operator had worked at the reserve for five years and the two interns had only been working at the reserve for nine months. Finally, the visitor was not an employee at the reserve, implying that his work experience was irrelevant to the study results.

*Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of the interviewees*

Interviewee (s)	Age Range	Job Title	Roles/Responsibilities	Years in Current Role	Years with the Organization	Level of Education
PD 001	34	Procurement	Responsible for sourcing and acquiring raw materials, equipment, and services needed for rubber production	3 years	8 years	Bachelor's degree
HS 001	42	Health and Safety	Ensures a safe working environment, implements safety protocols, and monitors health and safety compliance	5 years	12 years	Master's degree
PD 002	38	Manager	Oversees daily operations, staff management, and strategic planning	4 years	10 years	Bachelor's degree
AC 001	29	Accountant	Handles financial transactions, budgeting, and financial reporting	6 years	8 years	Bachelor's degree
MK 001	31	Marketing	Develops and implements marketing strategies and campaigns	2 years	5 years	Bachelor's degree
PR0 01	37	Production	Manages the manufacturing process, ensures quality and efficiency	3 years	7 years	Diploma
SL0 01	33	Sales	Responsible for sales activities, client management, and negotiations	4 years	9 years	Bachelor's degree

HR 001	35	Human Resources	Handles recruitment, employee relations, and HR policies	5 years	11 years	Master's degree
QC 001	36	Quality Control	Monitors product quality, conducts inspections, and maintains standards	4 years	6 years	Bachelor's degree
AD 001	39	Administrator	Manages administrative tasks, coordinates schedules and resources	3 years	12 years	Post-graduate degree
IN0 01	20	Intern	Assists in various tasks, learning about the operations of the reserve	9 months	9 months	High school diploma
CR 001	45	Customer Relations Officer	Handles customer inquiries, resolves issues, and maintains customer satisfaction	9 years	11 years	Bachelor's degree
LD 001	36	Lodge Operator	Manages a lodge within the reserve, providing accommodation services	5 years	5 years	Diploma
RS0 01	43	Researcher	Conducts research on wildlife and environmental conservation	4 years	8 years	Master's degree
TG 001	29	Tour Guide	Guides tourists, provides information about the reserve and wildlife	7 years	7 years	Diploma
CV 001	32	Conservationist	Focuses on wildlife conservation and environmental protection	6 years	10 years	Bachelor's degree

#### 4.2.2 Contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development

As part of the interview with the participants, the first research questions asked about the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. The participants identified income or revenue generation, job or employment opportunities, growth of businesses,

entrepreneurship, infrastructure development, community development and sustainability as the national economic contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve.

However, out of the 15 participants, it was worth mentioning that ten participants indicated income and revenue generation, as well as job or employment opportunities, suggesting a recurring or common theme of revenue generation, infrastructure development, and employment opportunities as the contributions of the reserve to national economic development.

*Table 4.2: Contributions of the reserve to national economic development*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Major Theme</b>	<b>Minor Theme</b>
Contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development	Revenue generation	i. Tourism expenditure ii. Business growth
	Infrastructure development	i. Roads and access ii. Visitor facilities
	Employment Opportunities	i. Job Creation ii. Indirect Employment

As shown in Table 4.2, the major themes identified are revenue generation, infrastructure development, and employment opportunities. Under revenue generation, the minor themes were tourism expenditure and business growth. In the case of infrastructure developments, the minor themes identified were roads and access, and visitor facilities. Regarding employment opportunities, the minor themes were job creation and indirect employment.

#### **A. Revenue generation**

While the objectives of any business are multi-dimensional, its (business) nature as an economic activity often suggests that the primary objective of any business is profit or generate revenues (Schmitt and Van Zutphen, 2012). Thus, it is not surprising that generating revenue happens to be the major theme associated with the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national

economic development. The game reserve generates income from tourists who visit and spend time at the place and surrounding businesses or other local support services get a fair share of the income through the services they offer to tourists around the game reserves. Thus, the minor theme identified under the major theme (revenue generation) were tourism expenditure and business growth.

**i. Tourism expenditure**

The participants identified tourism expenditure as the contribution of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. Even though there were other responses regarding the contributions of the reserve to national economic development, the majority of the participants indicated how the total consumption made by visitors during their trips and stay at destinations generated revenues. Which were crucial to national economic development. While these views were expressed in many ways, some have been captured and presented. A participant, for instance, said that:

*“It provides a significant source of income for local businesses, particularly those in the hospitality sector”. (PD001)*

In support of participant one, participant two also said that:

*“The Reserve brings substantial revenue through visitor spending, stimulates local businesses such as souvenir shops and accommodations”. (TG001)*

**ii. Business growth**

Again, the participants indicated business growth as the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. The majority of the participants mentioned how the reserve brought in money not only for the reserve but also for support services and neighbourhood businesses, despite the fact that there were various responses addressing the reserve's contributions

to the development of the national economy. Thus, one of the participants indicated:  
*“From park staff to tour guides, and it also supports businesses like local restaurants and*

*Hotels”*. (PR001)

Another participant stated:

*“The Reserve plays a significant role in generating income for the growth of auxiliary businesses that cater to tourists”*. (PD002)

## **B. Infrastructure development**

Infrastructure development is about enhancing the standard of the numerous infrastructure elements, including the roads, power, ICT, water, and sanitation (Srinivasu and Rao, 2013). Based on the responses of the participants, the game reserve has contributed in that aspect. Thus, the minor themes were roads and access, as well as visitor facilities.

### **i. Roads and access**

The participants indicated roads and access as the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. The majority of the participants mentioned how the reserve’s construction of roads to provide access routes to the reserve indirectly benefited the communities around the reserve. Although there were various responses addressing the reserve’s contributions to the development of the national economy, one of the participants indicated:

*“It (reserve) provides a significant source of infrastructure development”*. (AD001)

### **ii. Visitor facilities**

Further, visitor facilities were among the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. The majority of the participants mentioned how the reserve catered to the needs of visitors and by doing so, it invited more tourists and visitors, which meant more revenues

crucial to the growth of the reserve and businesses around. In one of the responses, one participant specifically stated that:

*“The Yankari Game Reserve has the potential to bring significant economic benefits to the local community, including growth of local businesses that cater to visitors’ needs”.* (LD001)

### **C. Employment opportunities**

Employment opportunities are about making provisions for new jobs, especially for previously unemployed or inactive (Aynalem et al., 2016). According to the results of the study, this was the case for Yankari Game Reserve. It created jobs for the people in the community. This was a major theme associated with the contributions of the reserve to national economic development. Under this major theme, the minor theme identified job creation and indirect employment.

#### **i. Job creation**

The participants identified job creation as the contribution of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. Consequently, the majority of the participants indicated how the reserve brought jobs, despite the fact that there were various comments addressing the benefits of the reserve to national economic development. Affirming these views expressed, a participant indicated that:

*“The Reserve plays a significant role in generating income for the local community through employment opportunities”.* (PD002)

Another participant added that:

*“The Reserve provides employment opportunities for local guides, support staff, and craftsmen”.*  
(RS001)

#### **ii. Indirect employment**

Again, the participants identified indirect employment as the contribution of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. Specifically, the majority of the participants indicated that the reserve created opportunities for businesses to provide services and products that the reserve, including its tourists and visitors may need. In showing this, one of the participants indicated that:

*“The Reserve creates job opportunities, both directly and indirectly, by employing individuals as security officers, healthcare providers, drivers, and supporting the growth of local businesses”.*

*(IN001)*

#### **4.2.3 How Yankari Game Reserve can contribute to national economic development**

As part of the interview with the participants, the second research question asked about how the Yankari Game Reserve can contribute to national economic development. The participants identified community-based tourism activities, eco-tourism initiatives, wildlife conservation research partnerships, wildlife-based educational programs and local festivals as the specific ways in which the Yankari Game Reserve could contribute to national economic development. However, the majority of the participants indicated diversification of tourism offerings, partnerships and collaboration, and sustainable tourism practices, implying a recurring theme in the tourism industry as how the reserve could contribute to national economic development.

*Table 4.3: How the reserve can contribute to national economic development*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Major Theme</b>	<b>Minor Theme</b>
How the Yankari Game Reserve can contribute to national economic development	Diversification of Tourism Offerings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Ecotourism initiatives</li> <li>ii. Cultural tourism</li> <li>iii. Specialised tours and activities</li> </ul>

	Partnerships and Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Public-Private Partnerships</li> <li>ii. Research and educational partnerships</li> </ul>
	Sustainable Tourism Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Conservation and environmental protection</li> <li>ii. Community-based tourism</li> </ul>

As shown in Table 4.3, the major themes identified are diversification of tourism offerings, partnership and collaboration, and sustainable tourism practices. Under diversification of tourism offerings, the minor themes were ecotourism initiatives, cultural tourism and specialised tours and activities. In the case of partnerships and collaborations, the minor themes identified were public-private partnerships and research and educational partnerships. Finally, under the major theme of sustainability tourism practices, the minor themes were conservation and environmental protection and community-based tourism.

**A. Diversification of tourism offerings**

Tourism offerings include the services and products offered primarily to tourists (). At the Yankari Game Reserve, its offerings are limited and this explains why the majority of the participants indicated the need for the reserve to enlarge its range of products and services. Consequently, diversification of tourism offerings becomes the main theme and under this theme, ecotourism initiatives, cultural tourism and specialised tours and activities are the minor themes.

**i. Ecotourism initiatives**

Ecotourism involves responsible travel to natural areas, conservation of the environment and improvements of the well-being of people (Turobovich et al., 2020). In short, it is about ensuring the responsible and sustainable operation of holidays and visits to natural areas and sites. The

reserve can contribute to national development if it values long-term prosperity. A participant, for instance, indicated that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve could explore and promote wildlife photography workshops and training courses”. (PD002)*

Participant eight added that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve is a prime example of an ecotourism destination. It is home to a variety of wildlife, including lions, elephants, buffaloes, and antelopes. The reserve also has a number of natural attractions, such as waterfalls, hot springs, and caves. Ecotourism is a growing industry, and there is a growing demand for sustainable tourism experiences. Yankari Game Reserve could tap into this demand by developing ecotourism products and services”. (IN001)*

## **ii. Cultural tourism**

Cultural tourism is where the main motivations of visitors or tourists are to discover, learn, experience and consume a destination’s cultural attractions or products (Richards, 2018). By allowing visitors the chance to learn about new and unique cultures, attracting wealthy investors or travellers who can contribute to the growth of an economy in diverse ways is inevitable. Thus, in affirming these views, a participant stated that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve needs to consider the local festivals in the areas and how these contribute to the economic prosperity of the place. Among the festivals that are common in the area is the annual gaming competition. This could be incorporated into the tourists activities of the place”. (AD001)*

Another participant stated:

*“... Moreover, collaborating with local communities to promote cultural tourism and offering unique experiences can also enhance the reserve’s appeal and economic potential”. (IN002)*

### **iii. Specialised tours and activities**

The participants identified specialised tours and activities as a way the reserve can contribute to national economic development. Consequently, the majority of the participants indicated how short outings and trips and accompanying activities could generate income for the reserve and surrounding businesses , all of which benefit national economic development. A participant, for instance, indicated that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve can organise specialised wildlife tours that cater to specific interest groups”. (CR001)*

Participant three added:

*“Yankari Game Reserve could explore wildlife photography tours”. (CV001)*

## **B. Partnership and collaboration**

Partnerships and collaborations are about working together to achieve a common goal or objective. Based on the responses of the participants, partnership and collaboration are a major theme, and they suggest if the reserve and surrounding businesses work together, they can contribute to national economic development significantly. Under this major theme, the minor themes include public private partnership and research and educational partnerships.

### **i. Public private partnership**

Public-private partnerships are collaborations between a government organisation and a business from the private sector that can be used to fund, construct, and run projects like parks, convention centres, and public transit systems (Hodge and Greve, 2017). Thus, it was not surprising when the majority of the participants indicated the importance of the reserve working with local businesses

and private companies. While these views were expressed in many ways, some have been captured and presented. For instance, a participant said that:

*“Maybe collaborating with local artisans to promote and sell their traditional crafts to visitors”.*

*(SL001)*

Another participant stated:

*“Yankari Game Reserve has untapped economic potential, such as creating partnerships with local entrepreneurs to offer unique experiences to visitors”.* (MK001)

## **ii. Research and educational partnerships**

Research and educational partnership involves the collaboration between stakeholders of education and education. The study identified this as among the major themes associated with the potential contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. Thoughts on research and educational partnership were conveyed in a variety of ways, but some of them have been captured and presented. Specifically, a participant stated that:

*“There is also potential for wildlife research partnerships and wildlife-based educational programs”.* (PD002)

Another participant indicated that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve is a valuable resource for education and research. The reserve is home to a number of endangered species, and it is a valuable site for scientific research. Yankari Game Reserve could collaborate with universities and research institutions to develop educational and research programs. This would help to raise awareness of the reserve’s importance and generate revenue from educational and research fees”.* (AD001)

### **C. Sustainable tourism practices**

Sustainable tourism practices entail environmentally-friendly practices. Specifically, it is about ensuring that activities related to tourism do not undermine the environment, natural resources and the ability of societies to meet their needs (Amerta et al., 2018). This was a major theme identified in the responses of the participants. Under this major theme, conservation and environmental protection and community-based tourism were the minor themes.

#### **i. Conservation and environmental protection**

The participants identified conservation and environmental protection as among the potential contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development. The participants emphasised this minor theme in many viewpoints. For instance, one of the participants stated that:

*“The Reserve can focus on eco-tourism initiatives, such as wildlife conservation programs and nature-based activities, to attract more tourists and generate additional income”. (IN002)*

#### **ii. Community-based tourism**

The Yankari Game Reserve has the potential to contribute to national economic development in the areas of community-based tourism, according to the participants. This minor theme was pointed out by the participants from many different perspectives. For instance, one of the participants stated that:

*“Maybe collaborating with local artisans to promote and sell their traditional crafts to visitors”. (MK001)*

To add, one participant stated that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve has untapped economic potential, such as developing ecotourism programs, promoting community-based tourism initiatives, and creating partnerships with local entrepreneurs to offer unique experiences to visitors”. (LD001)*

#### 4.2.4 Challenges faced by Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development

The third research question, addressed during the participant interviews, focused on the challenges faced by the Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development.

The participants identified insufficient funding and resources, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, marketing and promotion, as well as conservation and sustainability as the recurring themes despite many and different responses from the participants regarding the challenges.

*Table 4.4: Challenges faced by the Yankari Game Reserve*

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Major Theme</b>	<b>Minor Theme</b>
Challenges faced by the Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development	Insufficient funding and resources	i. Limited financial support ii. Resource constraint
	Inadequate infrastructure and facilities	i. Outdated facilities ii. Accessibility challenges
	Marketing and promotion	i. Limited awareness ii. Marketing strategies
	Conservation and sustainability	i. Balancing conservation and tourism ii. Sustainable practices

As shown in Table 4.4, the major themes identified were insufficient funding and resources, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, marketing and promotion, as well as conservation and sustainability. Under insufficient funding and resources, the minor themes were limited financial support and resource constraint. In the case of inadequate infrastructure and facilities, the minor themes identified were outdated facilities and accessibility challenges. Regarding market and promotion, the minor themes included limited awareness and marketing strategies. Finally, under

the major theme of conservation and sustainability, the minor themes were balancing conservation and tourism and sustainable practices.

#### **A. Insufficient funding and resources**

Funding and resources are budgetary resources for projects and activities, and they can come in many forms such as grants, savings, donations, venture capital, credit and taxes. While having access to funding and resources often means getting the right tools and having the ability to articulate a market size, this is not the case for the Yankari Game Reserves, according to the participants. Thus, under the major theme of insufficient funding and resources, limited financial support and resource constraint were the minor themes.

##### **i. Limited financial support**

The participants identified limited financial support as among the challenges faced by the reserve in its contributions towards national economic development. The participants brought up this side of the problem from many and different perspectives. For instance, one participant mentioned that:

*“One major challenge has been the lack of consistent funding, which has made it difficult to maintain and improve facilities”. (PR001)*

Another participant indicated that:

*“Insufficient funding has hindered the reserve’s ability to expand and improve facilities”. (TG001)*

##### **ii. Resource constraint**

Further, the participants identified resource constraints as part of the challenges faced by the reserve in its contributions towards national economic development. In showing this, one of the participants stated that:

*“One of the challenges has been limited financial resources”. (PD002)*

In support of this, another participant mentioned that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve has faced challenges such as limited financial resources for infrastructure improvements, competition from other tourist destinations”. (PM001)*

## **B. Inadequate infrastructure and facilities**

Again, on the challenges faced by the reserve, the results identified inadequate infrastructure and facilities as a major theme. Under this major theme, the minor themes included outdated facilities and accessibility challenges.

### **i. Outdated facilities**

Outdated facilities in this context implies that the facilities at the Yankari Game Reserve show signs of physical deterioration and do not meet current standards in terms of efficiency and safety.

The participants affirmed this in their responses. In one of the responses, a participant mentioned:

*“Lack of good and updated infrastructures” (IN001)*

Another participant indicated that:

*“These challenges include the lack of good and updated infrastructures that support the sustainable growth of the reserve” (IN002)*

### **ii. Accessibility challenges**

Accessibility in this context comes in all forms like routes to the reserve, experiences of customers in using the services of the reserve online, including booking, communication and among many others. The results also identified the lack thereof as an issue facing the reserve. To affirm this, one of the participants indicated that:

tourists, the

*“Reserve has faced difficulties in leveraging digital platforms, online booking systems, and interactive visitor experiences. The Reserve’s limited integration of technology has hindered its*

*ability to efficiently manage visitor information, streamline operations, and provide personalised services”. (AD001)*

### **C. Marketing and promotion**

Again, when it comes to the challenges that the reserve faces, the results highlight a major theme of marketing and promotion. Under marketing and promotion, the minor themes included limited awareness and marketing strategies.

#### **i. Limited awareness**

The participants identified limited awareness as among the challenges facing the Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development. Below were some of the responses of the participants.

*“The lack of awareness about the Reserve among potential visitors has affected its economic contributions”. (PD002)*

Another participant mentioned that there was:

*“Lack of awareness among potential visitors” (VA001)*

#### **ii. Marketing strategies**

Further, the participants identified issues related to marketing strategies as part of the reasons for the reserve’s inability to contribute to national economic development. In showing this, one of the participants stated that:

*“One of the challenges has been limited financial resources to undertake necessary marketing activities” (PD002)*

Another participant indicated the issue of the need for effective marketing strategies to increase visitor numbers, suggesting a problem of limited promotional activities. Below were the comments:

*“Yankari Game Reserve has faced challenges such as inadequate promotion” (VI001)*

#### **D. Conservation and sustainability**

Conservation and sustainability were also major themes identified in the responses on the challenges faced by the Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development. Under conservation and sustainability, the minor themes were balancing and conservation tourism, as well as sustainable practices.

##### **i. Balancing and conservation tourism**

The participants identified balancing and conservation tourism as contributing to the reserve’s inability to foster national economic development. To affirm this, one of the participants stated that:

*“Yankari Game Reserve has faced challenges such as inadequate investment in wildlife conservation efforts”. (VI001)*

In support of this, another participant stated that:

*“Another challenge is the limited availability of skilled personnel for specialised roles, such as wildlife research and conservation management”. (RS001)*

##### **ii. Sustainable practices**

Also, the participants identified issues related to sustainable practices as contributing to the reserve’s inability to play a part in national economic development. In showing this, one of the participants indicated:

*“The absence of comprehensive policies that support the sustainable growth of the reserve”.*

*(IN001)*

#### **4.2.5 A policy document to advise the local government on improving the contribution of Yankari Game Reserve to local economic development**

Policy Document: Enhancing the Contribution of Yankari Game Reserve to Local Economic Development

##### **I. Introduction**

Yankari Game Reserve holds significant potential for contributing to local economic development. As a renowned natural attraction, it can generate revenue, create job opportunities, and foster community growth. This policy document aims to advise the local government on strategies to improve the Reserve's contribution to the local economy and maximise its impact on the surrounding communities.

##### **II. Objectives**

The objectives of this policy document are:

- To establish clear goals for enhancing the Reserve's contribution to local economic development.
- To align these goals with the priorities and vision of the local government.

##### **III. Policy Recommendations**

###### **A. Financial Support and Infrastructure Development**

1. Increase funding for infrastructure improvements within the Reserve, including visitor facilities, accommodations, and road networks. This will enhance the visitor experience and attract more tourists.
2. Establish partnerships with private investors and organisations to secure additional resources for infrastructure development. Public-private collaborations can unlock the Reserve's economic potential and foster sustainable growth.
3. Allocate a dedicated budget for regular maintenance and upgrades of facilities to ensure a high standard of visitor services and preserve the Reserve's natural assets.

## **B. Marketing and Promotion**

1. Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to position Yankari Game Reserve as a premier tourist destination. This strategy should highlight the Reserve's unique wildlife, natural beauty, and cultural heritage.
2. Allocate funds for targeted marketing campaigns, both domestically and internationally, to raise awareness and attract a wider audience. Utilise various channels, including digital platforms and social media, to engage with potential visitors.
3. Collaborate with tour operators, travel agencies, and other stakeholders to create attractive tour packages, promote the Reserve's offerings, and facilitate visitor access.

## **C. Community Engagement and Capacity Building**

1. Foster stronger collaborations with local communities and businesses to ensure their active participation in the Reserve's operations. Establish mechanisms for regular dialogue and consultation to address concerns, gather feedback, and foster a sense of ownership.

2. Implement capacity-building programs to enhance the skills of local residents in the tourism sector. Offer training opportunities for tour guides, hospitality staff, and other service providers to improve the quality of visitor experiences.

3. Establish revenue-sharing and benefit distribution mechanisms to ensure that local communities directly benefit from the economic activities generated by the Reserve. This will strengthen community support and ensure a more equitable distribution of economic gains.

#### **D. Sustainable Tourism Practices**

1. Develop and implement sustainable tourism policies and guidelines to minimise the environmental impact of visitor activities. Promote responsible wildlife management practices and conservation initiatives within the Reserve.

2. Encourage eco-friendly practices among visitors and local businesses, such as waste management, energy efficiency, and sustainable sourcing of goods and services. This will help preserve the Reserve's natural resources for future generations.

3. Raise awareness about the importance of sustainable tourism among visitors through educational programs and interpretive materials. Encourage visitors to respect the Reserve's rules and regulations for a sustainable and enjoyable experience.

#### **E. Collaboration and Partnerships**

1. Establish partnerships with tour operators, travel agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance visitor experiences and attract a larger volume of tourists. Collaborate on marketing efforts, product development, and infrastructure improvements.

2. Engage in public-private partnerships to leverage expertise, resources, and investment for the sustainable development of the Reserve. Foster relationships with private entities interested in investing in the Reserve's growth and conservation efforts.

3. Facilitate regular consultations and dialogue with stakeholders, including local communities, conservation organisations, and government agencies, to address concerns, gather feedback, and ensure effective collaboration in decision-making processes.

#### **IV. Implementation Plan**

An implementation plan should be developed, outlining the specific steps and timelines for executing the policy recommendations. The responsible authorities and stakeholders for each action item should be identified, and the necessary resources.

#### **4.3 Discussions**

This segment of chapter four contains a discussion based on the findings from the literature review and findings from previously conducted studies. The discussion is carried out under the specific objectives of the study.

##### **4.3.1 How Yankari Game Reserve has been contributing to national economic development**

Game reserves are types of protected places for animals that have been established for conservation and protection (Musika et al., 2022). Additionally, game reserves often take distinct forms including wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and private reserves thereby preserving biodiversity and providing a secure haven for several animal species like fauna and flora (Sims, 2013). Game reserves are separate from national parks in that they are set aside for viewing or hunting wildlife (Musika et al., 2022). Further, in the practice of managing game reserves, the proceeds obtained

are mostly used to finance development projects that benefit the public (Giampiccoli et al., 2014). Hence, this study sought to investigate how Yankari Game Reserve has been contributing to national economic development. The findings revealed that revenue generation, infrastructure development, and employment opportunities are the national economic contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve. The contributions of the reserve to national economic development was further indicated under minor themes. Under revenue generation, the minor themes were tourism expenditure and business growth. In the case of infrastructure developments, the minor themes identified were roads and access, and visitor facilities. Regarding employment opportunities, the minor themes were job creation and indirect employment.

Similarly, Giampiccoli et al. (2014) examined the contributions of the game reserve to national economic development in South Africa. The results indicated that game reserve contributes to the creation of jobs in the form of game viewing, hunting, music, arts and craft. Likewise, Dele et al. (2018) assessed the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to the economic growth of Nigeria. The findings established that income or foreign exchange generation and job or employment opportunities as the national economic contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve. Finally, Adamu et al. (2015) examined the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to Nigeria's economic development. The findings showed that the game reserve generates income from tourists who visit and spend time at the place and at the same time support the growth of the business. The assessment of the national economic contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve can be highlighted using the theory of modernisation. The theory of modernisation indicates the importance of investments as a modernisation approach to obtaining income, tourism employment and economic growth (Fayos- Sola et al., 2014). Thus, the success of the Yankari Game Reserve in contributing to national economic development is contingent on the collaboration between

governments, local communities and conservation organisations as well as responsible management and sustainable practices in the management of protected areas.

#### **4.3.2 How Yankari Game Reserve can contribute to national economic development**

Game reserves perform an essential function in economic development especially in conserving biodiversity and protecting endangered species while serving as attractions for international and domestic tourists (Kontsiwe and Visser, 2019). Hence, necessitates that game reserves are managed using specific approaches to ensure that it can contribute to national economic development. There are several ways in which game reserves can contribute significantly to national economic development and some are wildlife-based educational programs and local festivals, wildlife conservation research partnerships, eco-tourism initiatives, sustainable practices and community-based tourism efforts or activities (Korir et al., 2013). Therefore, this study examined how Yankari Game Reserve can contribute to national economic development. The findings from the interview data indicated that diversification of tourism offerings, partnerships and collaboration, and sustainable tourism practices are some ways in which Yankari Game Reserve could contribute to national economic development.

Additionally, the ways were indicated under the minor themes of diversification of tourism offerings to be ecotourism initiatives, cultural tourism and specialised tours and activities. In the case of partnerships and collaborations, the minor themes identified were public-private partnerships and research and educational partnerships. Finally, under the major theme of sustainability tourism practices, the minor themes were conservation and environmental protection and community-based tourism. This result is comparable to the study by Manaf et al. (2018) in Indonesia which identifies partnerships and collaborations with stakeholders as well as community-based tourism activities as how game reserves can contribute to national economic

development. Similarly, results from the study conducted by Eshun and Tichaawa (2020) indicated that ecotourism initiatives are a way of contributing to national economic development. Also, studies by Samal and Dash (2022) and De Zoysa (2022) revealed that wildlife conservation and protection of biodiversity as well as ecotourism initiatives are ways of how forest reserves can contribute to national economic development.

Overall, the findings suggest that Yankari Game Reserve can contribute significantly to national economic development through ecotourism initiatives, community-based tourism, public-private partnerships and collaborations, protection of biodiversity, and promotion of cultural tourism. Also, sustainable practices and proper management will be central in guaranteeing the maximisation of these contributions and lead to increased visitor numbers, job creation, improved infrastructure, and the preservation of the Reserve's natural resources for future generations.

### **4.3.3 Challenges that are faced by Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development**

Game reserves exert a series of impacts similar to industrial activities and thus, consume scarce resources, produce waste and require specific infrastructure (Hoffmann, 2022). This study, therefore, sought to examine the challenges that are faced by Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development. The findings indicated that insufficient funding and resources, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, marketing and promotion, as well as conservation and sustainability are the major themes of the challenges faced in contributions towards national economic development. Under insufficient funding and resources, the minor themes were limited financial support and resource constraint. In the case of inadequate infrastructure and facilities, the minor themes identified were outdated facilities and accessibility challenges. Regarding market and promotion, the minor themes included limited awareness and

marketing strategies. Finally, under the major theme of conservation and sustainability, the minor themes were balancing conservation and tourism as well as sustainable practices.

Likewise, Nimmak et al. (2020) study identified some challenges of ecotourism in Nigeria. The findings revealed that inadequate infrastructure is a major challenge faced by Pandam Game Reserve while destruction of wildlife species, unauthorised deforestation identified which were contrary to the study's findings. Also, Burton et al. (2020) revealed insufficient funding and resources resulting in delayed processes in finalising land claims, confusing signage on the routes such that many people get lost, visitors driving onto private land and too much traffic to control during peak seasons as the challenges faced by the owners of the game reserves. Similarly, results from the study by Habu and Muhammad (2017) asserted that insufficient funding and lack of equipment are some challenges faced by Yankari Game Reserve in Nigeria. Furthermore, Afriyie et al. (2021) study found insufficient funding as a challenge of Strict Nature Reserve, Gbele Resource Reserve and Kalakpa Resource Reserve while lack of research and staff as well as poor community relations were other challenges which contradicted the results of the present study. Lastly, Hoffmann (2022) study identified conservation and sustainability as challenges faced in contributions to national economic development.

Overall, the findings suggest that Yankari Game Reserve should adopt best sustainable tourism practices and strengthen marketing and promotion efforts to effectively respond to the challenges faced in its contributions to national economic development.

#### **4.3.4 A policy document to advise the local government on improving the contribution of Yankari Game Reserve to local economic development**

The study revealed specific policy recommendations to advise the local government on improving the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve. These included financial support and infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, community engagement and capacity building, sustainable tourism practices and collaboration and partnerships. This is also in line with results from related studies. One such study is by Chan et al. (2021) on recommendations to improve ecotourism contribution to local economic development in Lower Kinabatangan, Sabah. The findings indicated that community engagement and participation as well as practices of responsible tourism are some ways of improving ecotourism contribution to local economic development. Also, Saidmamatov et al. (2020) conducted a study on employing ecotourism opportunities for sustainability in the Aral Sea region. The study found that establishing strategic partnerships with relevant stakeholders like private investors and organisations and providing funds for infrastructure development are ways of increasing ecotourism contributions to local economic development. Additionally, Wondirad et al. (2019) studied ecotourism and its contribution to economic development. The findings showed that establishing collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders and providing financial support to improve infrastructure work can enhance the contributions of Reserves to local economic development. Lastly, Kunjuraman et al. (2022) studied community-based ecotourism as a social transformation tool for rural communities in Malaysia. The study revealed that promoting the awareness of conservation of nature as a way of marketing can enhance its contributions to rural community development.

Overall, the findings suggest that by implementing these recommendations, Yankari Game Reserve can maximise its contributions to local economic development.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary and conclusion of the results of the study on the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's tourist destination for economic development. Further, the chapter makes the necessary recommendations based on the conclusion of the results.

#### **5.2 Summary**

This section presents a brief account of the main points of the study, including its objectives, methodology and results. All of these are categorised into two areas, which include the general overview and the key findings.

##### **5.2.1 Overview of study**

The overriding purpose of the study was to examine the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's tourist destination for economic development. To achieve this purpose, it became necessary for the study to reach some prerequisite objectives. These objectives included the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development, potential or future contributions of the reserve to national economic development, the challenges faced by the reserve in its contributions towards national economic development and the policy document to advise the local government on improving the contribution of the reserve to local government.

Further, it was worth mentioning that the study was a contextual qualitative study, adopting a case study strategy or approach to achieve its objectives. The study employed qualitative interviews, collecting data from 15 participants, including employees at the reserve, interns and a visitor. The

selection of the participants was done using a purposive sampling technique. The interviews involving the participants were in English, tape-recorded, transcribed and then analysed. The study analysed the results or the responses of the participants using thematic analysis. Specifically, themes and categories that emerged from the responses were augmented with literature in the discussions.

### **5.2.2 Key findings**

The results showed that revenue generation, infrastructure development, and employment opportunities were the national economic contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve. Specifically, the contributions were in the form of tourism expenditure, business growth, roads and access, visitor facilities, job creation and indirect employment.

Regarding the potential or future contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve to national economic development, the results identified diversification of tourism offerings, partnerships and collaborations, and sustainable tourism practices. These future contributions took the form of ecotourism initiatives, cultural tourism, specialised tours and activities, public-private partnerships, research and educational partnerships, conservation and environmental protection and community-based tourism.

Further, the results showed that insufficient funding and resources, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, marketing and promotion, and conservation and sustainability were the challenges faced by the Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions towards national economic development. Specifically, these challenges assumed the shape of limited financial support, resource constraint, outdated facilities, accessibility challenges, limited awareness, marketing strategies, balancing conservation and tourism, as well as sustainable practices.

Finally, regarding the policy document to advise the local government on improving the contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve, the results identified specific policy recommendations. These included financial support and infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, community engagement and capacity building, sustainable tourism practices and collaboration and partnerships.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study concludes that generating revenues, improving the quality of various components of infrastructure and creating jobs or opportunities for employment are how the Yankari Game Reserve contributes to national economic development.

Based on the results, the study concludes that the Yankari Game Reserve can do more for its national economic development despite contributions such as generating revenues, improving the quality of various components of infrastructure and creating jobs or opportunities for employment. The reserve can diversify tourism offerings, engage in partnerships and collaborations, as well as sustainable tourism practices.

Again, the study concludes that despite the operations and contributions of the Yankari Game Reserve, it faces challenges that hinder its efforts to ensure national economic development. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure and facilities, issues related to marketing and promotion, as well as conservation and sustainability.

Finally, based on these challenges, the study concludes that the local government can use a policy document to advise the Yankari Game Reserve in many ways to improve its contributions to national economic development. The policy document may include recommendations such as financial support and infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, community

engagement and capacity building, sustainable tourism practices and collaboration and partnerships.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the contribution of Yankari Game Reserve to local economic development:

**1. Increase Investment in Infrastructure:** The local government should allocate adequate funding for infrastructure development within Yankari Game Reserve. This includes upgrading visitor facilities, improving road networks, and enhancing accommodations. By improving the overall visitor experience, the Reserve can attract more tourists and stimulate local economic growth.

**2. Strengthen Marketing and Promotion Efforts:** Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy to raise awareness about Yankari Game Reserve's unique offerings. Allocate funds for targeted marketing campaigns, both domestically and internationally, utilising digital platforms and social media. Collaborate with tour operators and travel agencies to promote the Reserve's attractions and facilitate visitor access.

**3. Foster Community Engagement and Capacity Building:** Establish stronger collaborations with local communities and businesses to ensure their active involvement in the Reserve's operations. Implement capacity-building programs to enhance the skills of local residents in the tourism sector. This will not only create job opportunities but also foster a sense of ownership and pride, leading to a more sustainable and inclusive local economy.

**4. Embrace Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Develop and implement sustainable tourism policies and guidelines to minimise the environmental impact of visitor activities. Promote responsible wildlife management practices and conservation initiatives. Raise awareness among visitors about the importance of sustainable tourism through educational programs and interpretive materials. Encourage eco-friendly practices among local businesses to create a more sustainable destination.

By implementing these recommendations, the local government can enhance the economic contributions of Yankari Game Reserve to the local community. These steps will lead to increased visitor numbers, job creation, improved infrastructure, and the preservation of the Reserve's natural resources for future generations.

## **5.5 Recommendations for future studies**

Based on the current study, the following recommendations are suggested for future studies on Yankari Game Reserve and its contribution to local economic development:

**1. Assess the Socio-economic Impact on Local Communities:** Conduct a comprehensive study to analyse the direct and indirect socio-economic impact of Yankari Game Reserve on the local communities. This study should explore factors such as income generation, employment opportunities, skills development, and community well-being. By understanding the broader social and economic implications, future studies can provide more detailed insights into the specific benefits and challenges faced by local communities.

**2. Evaluate the Effectiveness of Sustainable Tourism Practices:** Conduct a detailed evaluation of the implementation and effectiveness of sustainable tourism practices within Yankari Game Reserve. This study should assess the conservation efforts, waste management systems, energy

efficiency measures, and community engagement initiatives. By evaluating the impact of sustainable tourism practices, future studies can provide recommendations on how to further enhance the environmental and socio-economic sustainability of the Reserve.

These recommendations for future studies will contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationship between Yankari Game Reserve and local economic development. They will provide valuable insights into the socio-economic impacts and the effectiveness of sustainable practices, enabling policymakers and stakeholders to make informed decisions for the long-term development and management of the Reserve.

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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Introduction

Welcome to this research interview. The purpose of this interview is to gather information on the challenges and opportunities of Yankari Game Reserve as Nigeria's tourist destination for economic development. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of this research. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

#### Section A: Demographic Profile

1. What is your age range?
2. What is your role or job title in the Yankari Game Reserve?
3. What is your level of education?
4. How long have you worked at the Yankari Game Reserve?

#### Section B: Investigating Yankari Game Reserve's Contributions to National Economic Development

1. In your opinion, what economic benefits does the Yankari Game Reserve bring to the local community (e.g., local business stimulation, revenue from tourism)?
2. Do you notice any major change in the economic contribution (e.g., increased tourism, more jobs) of the Game Reserves over the years?
3. Is there an increase in the economic activities (e.g., sales in local businesses, tourist visits) during major tourism events at the Yankari Game Reserve?
4. What are some specific ways that Yankari Game Reserve has contributed to employment opportunities in the region (e.g., direct employment, indirect job creation)?

#### Section C: Examining Yankari Game Reserve's Potential to Contribute to National Economic Development

1. What are some untapped economic opportunities (e.g., new tourist attractions, community-based tourism initiatives) that Yankari Game Reserve could explore to increase its contribution to national economic development (e.g., GDP, job creation)?
2. How can Yankari Game Reserve increase its attractiveness to both local and international tourists (e.g., improved facilities, marketing strategies)?
3. In your opinion, what role can the government play in promoting Yankari Game Reserve as a major tourist destination in Nigeria (e.g., funding, infrastructure development)?
4. What are some potential challenges that could hinder Yankari Game Reserve from achieving its full potential as a major tourist destination in Nigeria (e.g., poor infrastructure, lack of marketing)?

#### Section D: Identifying Challenges Faced by Yankari Game Reserve in its Contributions to National Economic Development

1. What are some specific challenges that Yankari Game Reserve has faced in its contributions to national economic development (e.g., inadequate funding, lack of skilled personnel)?
2. How have these challenges affected the overall economic performance (e.g., reduced revenue, decreased tourist visits) of Yankari Game Reserve?

3. What steps has Yankari Game Reserve taken to address these challenges (e.g., staff training, partnerships)?

4. What recommendations do you have for Yankari Game Reserve to overcome these challenges and improve its economic performance (e.g., strategic planning, government support)?

#### Section E: Outlining a Policy Document to Advise Local Government on Improving the Contribution of Yankari Game Reserve to Local Government

1. What policies do you think the local government should put in place to support Yankari Game Reserve in its contributions to local economic development (e.g., tourism promotion policies, community engagement policies)?

2. In your opinion, what are the most important areas that local government should focus on to improve Yankari Game Reserve's economic contributions (e.g., infrastructure development, marketing)?

3. How can the local government and Yankari Game Reserve collaborate to improve economic performance and sustainability (e.g., joint tourism promotion initiatives, policy alignment)?

4. What specific steps should the local government take to promote Yankari Game Reserve as a major tourist destination in the region (e.g., funding, public relations campaigns, investing in local infrastructure)?