ABSTRACT

Until recently (the late 1980s) Kenya has been an important tourist destination, receiving over 6% of the total tourist arrivals to Africa. In 1989, the country received over 800,000 international tourists, and it was being predicted that if similar trends continued, the country could receive over 1 million tourists by the turn of the century. However, defying expert projections, Kenya's tourism industry experienced abrupt and unforeseeable decline in the 1990s, and currently the future of the country's tourism industry is uncertain. This paper provides a historical and contextual analysis of the evolution and development of tourism in Kenya. In order to put the evolution of tourism in Kenya in proper and broader context, the product life cycle model is used as an analytical tool. The model provides a conceptual framework to explain the complex processes of tourism development in Kenya over the years. However, as the study shows, while the product life cycle model is useful in explaining the development and evolution of tourism in retrospect, it is not a useful tool for focusing future trends in tourism development.