



DESTINATION MARKETING AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF CROSS RIVER STATE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Nigeria's Cross River State, one of the travel destinations with a wealth of resources, does not seem to have made the most of them to effectively compete with other African and global travel destinations. Thus, the rationale behind this research was to investigate how destination marketing influences tourism development. In light of this, the study's specific goal was to investigate the impact of advertising sales promotion and direct marketing on tourism development. The study, which was conducted in Nigeria's Cross River State, used a survey research approach. Using the Yamane (1967) sample size calculation procedure, a sample size of 65 respondents was calculated from the study population of 77 managers and employees of three tourism centres in the study area who were chosen at random. Nonetheless, 45 respondents' responses were deemed legitimate and utilized. Descriptive statistics were used to examine the replies. The multiple regression model used to test the hypothesis was tested for significance using the F-statistics. It was determined that advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing as destination marketing tools had significant influence on tourism development. It was therefore recommended that tourism marketing staff should be trained on the use of effective destination marketing tools to enhance tourism development. It was also recommended that government should make efforts to effectively address the security challenges in the country, to attract more tourists and enhance their safety.

Keywords: Destination marketing, advertising, sales promotions, direct marketing, tourism development

Introduction

Tourism has become a major segment for economic revitalization across countries especially developing countries, (Awodele & Ayeni, 2011; International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2023). In essence, the labor-intensive nature of the tourism industry generates employment, revenue, and foreign exchange

earnings. (Adaora, 2010). This is obviously an outstanding benefit to the economy of a nation and the local economy as well, through multiplier effects. Tourism has continued to experience growth and expanding diversification; and has become one of the fastest growing sectors of many

economies the world over (Wijesekara et al., 2022). Countries interested in pursuing fast economic growth and development, now among other strategies invest in tourism development and encourage investors in the sector as well. These dynamics have actually helped in turning tourism into one of the main forces for socioeconomic advancement (Blanke & Chiesa, 2013).

At the moment, the tourism industry's overall business volume is on par with or even higher than that of food, oil, and vehicle exports. It has grown to be one of the most important areas of global industry, making it a reliable source of revenue for many developing nations. (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2014). In Nigeria, for example, the tourism potentials are quite enormous (Otuya-Asohro, 2024); therefore, saying that if the sector is properly developed the economy of the country would experience a boost would be an understatement (Anyamenkhue, 2010). Nigeria has several tourist attractions, including beaches with ocean views, swimming-friendly water sports, fascinating animal locations, and a wealth of unspoiled natural features (tropical woods, waterfalls, new, fast-growing cities, climate, etc.), very conducive for holiday relaxations. There are also special attractions offered by the traditional ways of life in Nigeria as have been carefully preserved by the different local customs and traditions of the indigenous localities. It is also not surprising to note here that the rich and varied handicrafts; and the colourful products showcasing the native arts and lifestyles of some parts of Nigeria are part of the attractions for tourists.

Given that it has been noted that the tourism industry significantly affects the economy of a nation if properly developed, it should be very obvious that tourism marketing and tourists' destinations sustainability should be

subjects for critical research (Pyke et al., 2016). In the meantime, "tourism" and "marketing," two essential concepts, make up the concept of tourism marketing. Despite the fact that tourism is a fundamental social phenomenon that involves people leaving their normal locations of residence to places of temporary stay for specific leisure activities and back (Huang et al., 2019, Sharpley & Pearce, 2007, Sharpley, 2014), contrarily, marketing is viewed as a management process that focuses on recognizing, foreseeing, and profitably meeting client needs (Chartered Institute of Marketing, 2015). A critical examination of the tourism marketing concept therefore showcases it as an essential element for tourism development. When tourism marketers promote tourist products, consumption is thus increased, creating room for depletion, pollution and destruction of species combined with climate change in tourist destinations (Sharpley, 2014). Accordingly, if sustainability components are left out of the tourism marketing process, it may endanger the sustainability of the travel destination. (Mwimika, 2017). So, tourism managers, marketers and other stakeholders have critical responsibilities in helping to make tourist places more sustainable, and enhancing the behaviour of all concerned in this regard, in the entire tourism marketing process (Jamal & Camago, 2013). It is therefore ideal for tourism workers and owners of investments in the tourism sector to show adequate concern for the sustainability of tourist destinations by providing quality tourism services and environments as well to enhance tourists' experiences (Santos et al., 2022), and help create chances for locals and visitors to enhance their quality of life at tourists' destinations (Pyke et al., 2016).

As part of tourist destinations marketing strategies, environmental quality and

sustenance should be of paramount importance to ensure competitiveness and business continuity. Issues relating to tourism destinations are therefore very critical issues in the tourism business; as the sustainability of the destinations could automatically create opportunities for tourists' repeat visits to some destinations (Kozak & Kozak, 2016). The recognition of the roles of tourism in enhancing economic development should be key to achieving the dividends from the industry. In Nigeria, where there seems to have been an over dependence on oil over the years, portraying a situation of negligence to the prospects offered by other sectors (tourism inclusive), this should lead to the raising of strong questions. Presently, as survival has become very difficult and thus an issue of concern to many Nigerians, citizens are beginning to canvass for diversification of the economy as the prices of petroleum products are determined to a reasonable extent by industrialized nations (Ashikodi, 2010).

Though tourism in Nigeria is picking up gradually but much of the opportunities offered by the sector seems untapped due to poor infrastructure, poor funding, insecurity, and a high level of corruption among other problems (Amanawa, 2022). So, this study focused on destination marketing and tourism product development, with a view to examining how destination marketing, being the independent variable, reflecting the use of marketing communication techniques (direct marketing, sales promotion, and advertising), influences tourism development in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria, a popular travel destination, has a wealth of tourism resources, including the ocean, beaches, and other water features, as well as rare fauna and large areas of pristine wilderness, new rapidly growing cities,

special attractions, such as new yam festival, fishing festival, coronation ceremonies among others offered by the traditional ways of life in Nigeria as have been carefully preserved by the different local customs and traditions of the areas, rich and diverse handicrafts as well as other vibrant goods (baskets, canoes, drums, mats etc.), showcasing the nature arts and lifestyles of some parts of the country (Esu, 2013; Basse & Egon, 2016). Though tourism in Nigeria is gradually picking up but much of the opportunities offered by the sector seems to be untapped. The dependence on oil and the rising corruption across the polity may however be contributing to the relatively low development in the sector. Based on this narrative, the rationale for this investigation was to look at how destination marketing influences tourism development in Cross River State, Nigeria. Therefore, the study's specific objective was to investigate the impact of advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing on tourism development taking the Cross River State of Nigeria as a case study. The following is the hypothesis that this study developed and tested:

H₀₁: Advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing does not have a significant influence on tourism development.

Conceptual and Theoretical Review on Destination Marketing and Tourism Development

Destinations are an amalgamation of tourist products providing different tourists integrated experiences. The major objective of a tourist destination is to offer tourists appealing and high-quality services, as well as to ensure the quality of each of the services is sustained over time (Ispas & Saraga, 2011). A destination being a complex network including numerous co-producing organizations that offer a variety of goods and services (Buhalis, 2000) must ensure that

the interests of the tourists who visit are adequately provided for and as well as sustained overtime; to make them enjoy their stay to warrant a revisit (Kozak & Kozak, 2016). Understanding its dynamics is also essential for a healthy computation (Nakayama, 2024). The industry has affected lives positively over the years by stimulating growth, creating jobs and reducing poverty (Okocha et al, 2021). Destination marketing is defined as "a proactive, strategic, visitor-centred approach to a location's economic and cultural development." (Destination Marketing Association International, 2009).

The Concept of Marketing Communication

Marketing communication refers to the application of various marketing tools and channels simultaneously by a business to communicate effectively with its desired market. Marketing communication is one of the most challenging yet crucial elements of contemporary marketing and is even veering into an unprecedented change of era of new digital media options, making it more complicated (Keller, 2016).

The pre-selling, selling, and post-selling phases of a business's relationship with its current and potential clients constitute the marketing communication mix (Trehan & Trehan, 2011). Kotler and Keller (2009) separated the marketing communication mix into six categories: public relations and publicity, events and experiences, sales promotion, advertising, direct marketing, and personal selling.

i. Advertising:

Advertising is a sponsored, impersonal promotion for a company and its goods that is shown to a target audience (Pride et al., 2012). With advertising practice and research, the definition of advertising with time

may also need certain significant reforms (Kerr & Richards, 2020).

ii. Sales Promotion:

Sales promotion represents another element of marketing mix; relating to discounts, coupons, etc. (Dudovskiy, 2013).

iii. Events and Experience:

Events and experience encompass a variety of marketing strategies, such as offering entertainment, sponsoring different charitable initiatives, planning festivals, promoting the arts, etc. (Dudovskiy, 2013).

iv. Public Relations and Publicity:

Building strong commercial ties with the company's numerous publics through positive publicity, enhancing the company's image, and skillfully managing negative rumours, stories, events, etc. is referred to as public relations and publicity. (Dolak, 2003).

v. Direct Marketing:

Direct marketing refers to marketing of a company's products and services directly to customers without intermediaries (Dudovskiy, 2013).

vi. Personal Selling:

Personal selling is a face-to-face selling method involving a salesperson trying to persuade a customer to purchase a product. The sales person while applying the personal selling strategy applies his/her selling skills to convince the customer/potential customer. For this study, however the marketing communication mix variables

considered and used were advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing.

How Advertising influences Tourism Development

Advertising is the presentation of a company and its goods to a target audience through paid, impersonal communication. (Pride et al., 2012) It is one of the very important factors that help the tourism industry attract tourists from both the domestic and international environments. Naturally, tourists may have several ideas about where to go but advertising helps to narrow such ideas to a minimum number of destinations based on what advertising presents to them in line with what they are expecting. In this regard, tourism advertising helps the tourist to get familiar with the destination even before the visit.

How Sales Promotion Influences Tourism Development

The major objective of most business organizations is to deliver satisfaction to their customers and make profit at the end. In this regard, it remains a fact that profit making is not the first achievement targeted but customer satisfaction. It is only when customers are satisfied that profits can be genuinely made and more profits made through repeated purchases made in the long run. Meanwhile, it should be mentioned that for profits to be made at the first instance, sales must be maximized by adopting relevant promotional strategies. Promotion is most times the function of the sales or marketing department; and it includes all the tools available to the business to effectively communicate with its customers for sales enhancement outside personal selling, advertising and publicity (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008).

How Direct Marketing Influences Tourism Development

Direct marketing as highlighted earlier refers to marketing a company's goods and services to clients directly, bypassing middlemen (Dudovskiy, 2003). Direct marketing could also be carried out by the tourist destination's sales staff who may be empowered to use the different sales promotion media/tools available, to promote the activities and programmes of the destination, to attract more customers.

Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)

With a concentration on convention sales, tourism marketing, and services, a destination marketing company works to increase the number of visitors to a town, city, region, or nation during particular times of the year. (Ford & Peeper, 2008). DMOs offer pertinent details on a place's accommodations, food, events, museums, art and culture, history, and leisure; some also offer bus services, insider information, blogs, photos, and more. They use trade associations, marketplaces, websites, advertising, promotional material distribution, direct sales and marketing, familiarization trips for journalists and other travel industry staff, and sponsorship of other hospitality events to accomplish their marketing goals. (Destination Marketing Association International [DMAI], 2009). The Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) is in charge of marketing, promoting, and organizing travel-related events in Nigeria (Ajadi, 2012).

Theoretical Framework Guiding the Study

The theorem that served as a guide to this study was based on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion.

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of Persuasion was created by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). The model is fundamentally a summary of the many cognitive processes identified by past research. The model serves as a broad framework for classifying, arranging, and comprehending the fundamental mechanisms that underlie the efficacy of persuasive communication. For this study, persuasive communication implies advertisements, sales promotion and direct marketing being carefully selected marketing communication mix variables (Kotler & Keller, 2009) as have been earlier discussed. According to the paradigm, attitudes can be influenced or even altered in two ways. It is known as the centre route for the first one and the periphery route for the second.

The Central Route: Attitudes are mostly affected through this route. When an individual has the opportunity, capability and incentive to carefully process the information of a certain product or brand, attitude may be influenced towards the product or brand (being the tourist's potential destination in this case). It involves a situation where a consumer exhibits a high involvement as the tourist in this case has to critically consider several issues relating to a destination before taking a decision to visit.

The Peripheral Route: Attitude may be less affected through this route but more through indirect subconscious variables than through active thought (stimulus below the threshold of conscious perception that may however produce some minimal responses indirectly). This is more likely for low involvement products like bottled water, sweeties, etc., where a tourist may not face much stress to obtain product information before making a purchase decision. Situations with high

engagement have a high likelihood of elaboration, while those with minimal involvement have a low likelihood of elaboration. (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Implication of the ELM to this Study

Persuasive communication takes place one way or the other when a tourist watches an advertisement about a destination on television, listens to it on radio or reads it in newspapers or magazines. Persuasive communication may also occur when a potential tourist is exposed to sales promotion or direct marketing activities of a tourist destination. If the tourist is driven and capable of processing the information, it can cause a shift in perspective either positively or negatively. If favourable thoughts predominate, a positive attitude change may occur. However, a shift to a negative mindset could happen if negative thoughts take precedence. Through all of these, a tourist is able to analyze his decision criteria and is able to decide on which destination to visit; at what time, and what services to purchase.

Empirical Review

A study by Bello et al. (2014) was considered relevant to this study. The study looked at how economic growth and tourism are related. It was a comparative study that looked at how tourism helped Nigeria, South Africa and Seychelles economies flourish. Relevant areas of economic growth considered were employment, revenue generation and Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The analysis made use of secondary data from the World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2013 Travel and Tourism Competitive Index Reports, the World Bank's number of international arrivals, and the 2014 Travel and Tourism Economic Impact Reports for Nigeria, South Africa, and Seychelles. Data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics. Findings from the study indicated that marketing programmes

and strategies enhanced the promotion and development of tourism in Nigeria but at a level lower than those of the two other countries (South Africa & Seychelles). The findings also revealed that a positive relationship existed among employment generation, public revenue and tourism marketing.

Methodology

Using a survey research approach, this study employed a questionnaire to gather relevant information from the respondents in related organizations of the tourism industry in the study area. The study was carried out in Cross River State, Nigeria, which is notably endowed with numerous natural and man-made tourist attractions. Sixty-four was chosen as the sample size from the study population of 77 randomly selected from managers and staff of three tourism centres within the study area. The Taro Yamane Sample Size determination formula was used to determine the Sample Size (Yamane, 1967).

Thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample Size
 N = Population of Study = 77
 e = Margin of Error = 5%
 1 = Constant

Therefore:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{77}{1 + 520(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{77}{1 + 77(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{77}{1 + 0.1925}$$

$$n = 64$$

The research instrument was given to two measurement and evaluation specialists in the College of Education at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria, and one in marketing at Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, Abia State, Nigeria, for validation. A few errors detected were fixed before putting it to use. The test-re-test method was used on some members of the population to test reliability and Cronbach alpha used to ascertain the reliability coefficient of the test. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze demographic data generated and multiple regression used to test hypothesis. The model is thus presented as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + e$$

Where: Y = Tourism development
 x₁ = Advertising
 x₂ = Sales Promotion
 x₃ = direct marketing
 β₀ = intercept
 β₁ – β₃ = parameter
 e = error term = 0.05

Presentation of Results and Discussion

Table 1 below presents the social demographic characteristics of respondents. The result from the table revealed that 15 (33%) of the respondents were within the age bracket of 21 – 30 years; while 20 (45%) were within 31 – 40 years, and 10 (22%) were 41 years and above. All the respondents were graduates: 35 (78%) had HND/B.Sc. while 10 (22%) had M.Sc. and above.

The result also revealed that 20 (45%) of the respondents had worked in the tourism industry between 1 – 5years; 15 (33%) had worked in the industry between 6 – 10 years; and 10 (22%) had worked 11 years or more.

Table 1: Social Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Items	Frequencies	Percentage (%)
Age Bracket in Years:		
21 – 30	15	33
31 – 40	20	45
45 and above	10	22
Qualification:		
HND/B.Sc.	35	78
M.Sc./Above	10	22
Years of Service:		
1 – 5	20	45
6 – 10	15	33
11 and above	10	22

Source: Field Survey (2021).

Analysis of Responses of Questionnaire Items

Table 2 below presents the outcome of the research in line with the responses of questionnaire. The result in the table revealed that 14 (31%) of the respondents strongly agreed that advertising influences tourism development positively; while 20 (45%) agreed; 5 (11%) disagreed; 5 (11%) strongly disagreed and 1 (2%) undecided.

The table equally showed that 20 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed that advertising influences tourism sustainability positively while 15 (33%) agreed; 5 (11%) disagreed and 5 (11%) strongly disagreed. It also revealed that 20 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed that advertising influences tourism development positively; while 20 (45%) agreed; 2 (4%) disagreed; 2 (4%) strongly disagreed and 1 (2%) undecided.

According to the result, 18 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed that sales promotion influences tourism sustainability positively; while 18 (40%) agreed, 4 (9%) disagreed; 4 (9%) strongly disagreed and 1 (2%) undecided. In terms of influence of direct marketing on tourism development, 20 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed that direct marketing influences tourism development positively while 15 (33%) agreed; 5 (11%) disagreed and 5 (11%) strongly disagreed.

In addition, 20 (45%) of the respondents strongly agreed that direct marketing influences tourism sustainability positively; while 20 (45%) agreed; 2 (4%) disagreed; 2 (4%) strongly disagreed and 1 (2%) undecided.

Table 2: Responses of Questionnaire Items

Items		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Undecided
Advertising influences Tourism Development Positively		14(31%)	20(45%)	5(11%)	5(11%)	1(2%)
Advertising influences Tourism sustainability Positively		20(45%)	15(33%)	5(11%)	5(11%)	-
Sales promotion influences tourism development positively		20(45%)	20(45%)	2(4%)	2(4%)	1(2%)
Sales Promotion influences tourism sustainability positively		18(40%)	18(40%)	4(9%)	4(9%)	1(2%)
Direct marketing influences tourism development positively		20(45%)	15(33%)	5(11%)	5(11%)	-
Direct marketing influences tourism sustainability positively		20(45%)	20(45%)	2(4%)	2(4%)	1(2%)

Source: Field Survey (2021).

Test of Hypothesis

Ho₁: Advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing do not significantly influence tourism development

We conclude that advertising has a significant impact on the development of tourism since the null hypothesis is rejected because the probability value of 0.00 for advertising is less than 0.05. We find that sales promotion has a significant impact on the development of tourism since the probability value of 0.049 for sales promotion is less than 0.05, hence rejecting the null hypothesis. Since the probability value for direct marketing is smaller than 0.05 (0.048), the null hypothesis is rejected, and it is thus determined that direct marketing significantly affects the growth of the tourism industry. The regression result in Table 3 below shows the relationship between destination marketing and tourism development. According to the coefficient of

determination R-square of 0.883, the explanatory factors (direct marketing, sales promotion, and advertising) account for 88.3% of the sample variation in the dependent variable tourism development, whereas 11.7% cannot be explained. Other variables or factors not included in the model may be responsible for the remaining 11.7%. An association between the independent variables (direct marketing, sales promotion, and advertising) and the dependent variable (tourist development) is indicated by the R-squared value. The adjusted R² value is 0.877. This demonstrates that, with less than 12.3 percent of the variance in the dependent variable (tourist development) being explained by the stochastic error term, the regression line in Table 4 that represents 87.7 percent of the total variation in the dependent variable is due to variation in the explanatory factors listed in the model. The overall significance of the model was also tested using the F-statistic; the F-value of 141.023

indicates that the model is statistically significant at the 5 percent level of significance at the degree of freedom $df_1 = 1$ and $df_2 = 3$. Lastly, the Durbin-Watson test of autocorrelation reveals that the Durbin-

Watson value of 0.735 is outside the conclusive region of the Durbin-Watson partition curve, thus indicating that there is some degree of autocorrelation.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.940 ^a	.883	.877	.45444	.735

Predictors: (Constant), Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing
Dependent Variable: Tourism Development

Table 4: Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	87.369	3	29.123	141.023	.000 ^b
Residual	11.565	56	.207		
Total	98.933	59			

Dependent Variable: Tourism Development
Predictors: (Constant), Advertising, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing

Table 5: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	-.103	.193		-.534	.596
Advertising	.746	.150	.716	4.975	.000
Sales Promotion	.101	.142	.109	.712	.049
Direct Marketing	.120	.127	.128	.946	.048

Dependent Variable: Tourism Development

Summary of Findings

The following claims were made in light of the study's objectives, results, and reviewed literature: direct marketing, sales promotion,

and advertising all have a major impact on the growth of the tourism industry.

Conclusion

Tourism marketers encourage consumption by promoting tourism items. Furthermore, this creates additional issues at the tourism site by contributing to species destruction, pollution, and depletion in addition to climate change. In this regard, tourism marketing is a crucial component of travel in general since it involves creating profit-generating tactics that are suitable for target markets. Therefore, if tourism marketing does not incorporate sustainability into its promotion of a place, it may pose a threat to the destination's sustainability. Thus, among other things, tourism marketing entails direct marketing, sales promotion, and advertising. Thus, the development of tourism is significantly impacted by these destination marketing strategies.

Recommendations

Relevant advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing strategies should be incorporated into the overall strategies of tourism marketing depending on factors like location, services offered, cost implication among others to attract potential tourists to the activities of the destinations in question. The government (at all levels) should provide a conducive atmosphere that would encourage and guarantee the safety of potential tourists at the various destinations. They can achieve this by addressing security challenges, providing adequate road infrastructure and other social amenities. Organizations (Hotels, Event Centres, Banks, Ministries of Environment, Works, Transport, Trade, Commerce, and Tourism etc.) at the federal and state levels should give adequate attention to the provision of relevant structures to harness and develop existing and viable tourism potentials in the country.

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