



INFLUENCE OF DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY ON THE INTERNATIONAL TOURISM DEMAND IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research was to investigate on the distribution strategies that can effectively market the country as a tourist destination. The researcher used cross sectional research design where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied. The study adopted a structured questionnaire to collect data from a total of 250 respondents consisting of tourists leaving the country from Jomo Kenyatta international airport. Reliability testing was carried out using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha test. Descriptive and inferential Analysis was carried out. Inferential Statistics used the regression models and ANOVA. The study found out that distribution strategies had a positive and significant influence on international tourism demand in Kenya. The beta coefficients revealed that distribution strategy was ranked as the highest marketing strategy. Results further revealed that government regulations moderated the relationship between distribution strategies and international tourism demand in Kenya. The study recommended that the destination management organizations in Kenya should put more emphasis on distribution strategy since it had the greatest impact on level of international tourism demand. More emphasis should be laid on internet content especially photos and video and social media content that inspire diverse tourists and consequently influenced majority of the tourists' decision to travel to Kenya.

Key Words: Distribution Strategies, Government Regulations, Tourism Demand in Kenya

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a key landmark in human activities with the recent figure on international tourist arrivals indicating 1.1 billion (WTO, 2014). With this trend, it is believed that tourism has become a popular activity of mankind engaging more than one-seventh of the world population. Despite terrorism, natural disaster and fluctuating oil prices, tourism is still the most patronized and popular global leisure activity (Rudrappan, 2010). Accordingly, the importance of tourism marketing as reported by Kumar (2010) was in recognition of the emerging challenges posed by the growing number of competing destinations which are placed at the tourists' disposal.

Krippendorff (2011) asserts that marketing strategy decisions have to be converted into marketing allocations of budget and manpower for the marketing tools of the marketing mix. The development of a successful strategic marketing plan should determine the existing and forecast market characteristics for the destination; identify trends and influences that may impact on the target markets of a destination; and finally the plan should understand the visitor markets' information-searching and decision-making process and factors that influence destination choice and product selection. An examination of the tourism literature suggests that a variety of strategic marketing tools have been undervalued or misrepresented by tourism policy makers and practitioners alike (Roger, 2002). This situation has led to a general misunderstanding about the nature and role of marketing strategies for the tourism industry. This research sought to find out if there is a relationship between the marketing strategies employed by Kenya in various tourism source markets and the tourism demand derived from those countries.

Tourism is vital for many countries, due to the income generated by the consumption of goods and services by tourists, the taxes levied on business in the tourism industry, and the opportunity for employment in the service industries associated

with tourism. Tourism is sensitive to the world economic and political conditions (Andreas & Perry, 2000). It can occur on a large scale where the great majority of people enjoy some prosperity and security. Tourism and holiday making on global as well as national scale is a manifestation of prosperity and peace. The enormous expansion of tourism has thus taken place, primarily in the advanced industrialised countries, where tourism has become a part of life style and consumption pattern of most people. These countries are both the main tourism generating and tourism receiving areas.

The performance of Kenya's tourism industry has been erratic since the beginning of the 21st Century (KTB, 2016). As the graph below shows, over the past 19 years the value for international tourism in terms of arrivals reached a maximum value of 1,750,000 in 2011 and a minimum value of 792,000 in 1998 (KNBS, 2016). Outbreaks of violence following the 2007 elections sent international arrivals tumbling 40 percent to 1.12 million visitors (GOK, 2009).

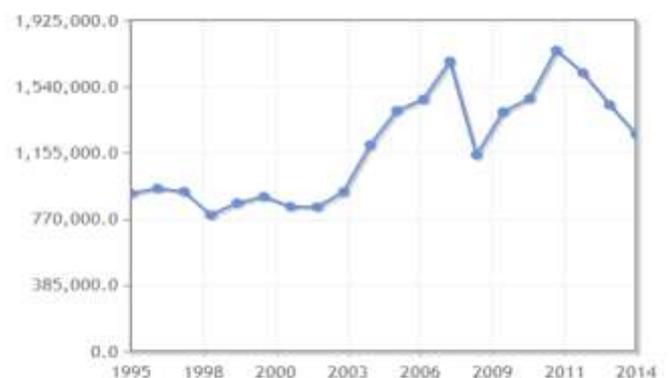


Figure 1: Kenya International tourism, number of arrivals

Source: **Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, KNBS (2016)**

These events served as a wake-up call. Kenya responded by engineering a dramatic turn-around led by the minister of tourism, who adopted an aggressive marketing campaign coupled with investments in new products such as the Conference and business facilities and in the MICE

(Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, And Exhibitions) environment (Ngugi, 2009). In late June 2009, the Kenya Tourist Board received US\$ 2 Million from the European Union (EU) to market Kenya as a travel destination (KTB, 2010). A great deal of effort went into exploring new markets in China, India, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and the United Arab Emirates (Ndivo, 2013), putting Nairobi's airport to good use. Tourists' arrivals were at peak in 2011, but since then, there has been a steady decline in numbers until the time of writing this paper.

Tourism growth was again affected by the Ebola outbreak in West African countries that elicited wide spread fear of travel to Africa, coupled by the negative travel advisories due to terrorist attacks in various parts of the country. Consequently, tourism promotion budget was increased six-fold to boost tourism in the 2015/2016 budgets (KNBS, 2016). But the question that has been lingering on is the extent to which these resources have been efficiently utilized to produce a positive outcome on the performance of the industry. What Marketing strategies have positive results and therefore should be emphasized; and which strategies have been proofed to be futile?

Kenya receives tourists from various source markets and the Ministry of tourism through its various government organisations which work closely with each individual source market to develop a deep understanding of the consumers of the Tourism product.

It is with this background that the study sought to examine how tourism distribution strategies have propelled the international tourism demand in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Empirical studies that have investigated about the marketing strategies and their role in international tourism demand in Africa and Kenya in particular, are limited. Seetanah, Padachi and Rojid (2011) studied 40 African countries (including Kenya) over

the period 1990–2006 to establish the relationship between tourism and output in terms of remittances. Arabi (2007) investigated the effect of E-Tourism promotion and leveraging on internet technology by destination marketing organisations (DMOs) on Tourism competitiveness. Previous studies in Kenya have mainly focused on tourism development in Kenya (Ondicho, 2003); choice of attractions, expenditure and satisfaction of international tourists to Kenya (Odunga, 2005) and the factors affecting international tourism demand in Kenya (Ngugi, 2009). Furthermore, most research studies were carried out during a period when the tourism industry was experiencing high growth and less adverse external environmental factors such as the ones in the current global scenario.

According to Akama and Kieti (2003) study on the evolution and development of tourism in Kenya, marketing is not only a major part of the problem of tourism decline, but it is also an integral part of the solution. Kumar (2013) research study established that a large proportion of Kenya's tourism marketing centers on only three major tourism products; safari tourism, coastal tourism and Business/conference travel success, clearly leading to the problem remarkably low and high tourism seasons. Another study by (Mutinda & Mayaka, 2012) established that much of Kenya's enchanting product dimensions still remained unexposed and recommended the need of well-designed marketing strategies in addition to effective product development. These studies did not however identify specific marketing strategies and their role in stimulating international tourism demand. The study attempted to fill this gap by examining five marketing strategies by way of analyzing the level, quantity and quality of information offered to foreign tourists about Kenya as a tourist destination at the macro-level. The study was therefore an earnest attempt to identify the marketing strategies' influence in promoting international tourism demand in Kenya.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of the distribution strategies on the international tourism demand in Kenya. The specific objectives were:-

- To examine the influence of Distribution strategy on the international tourism demand in Kenya.
- To determine the moderating effect of government regulation on the relationship between marketing strategies and international tourism demand in Kenya

Study Hypothesis

H₀₁ There is no significant relationship between distribution strategies and international tourism demand in Kenya

H₀₂ Government regulation does not moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and international tourism demand in Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Theories of Motivation

Page and Connell (2006) stated that motivation acts as trigger which stimulates the chain of events in the tourism process. Understanding motivation enhances understanding of tourist behaviour thus helping understand why people travel. The tourism, travel and event tourism literature is replete with tourist motivations studies and articles (Cohen, 1974; Dann 1981). Tourist motivation studies embody an amalgam of ideas and approaches, but in the psychological process, motivation can generally be defined as the desire and willingness to do something and the inner force that helps individual to achieve their own goals in purpose to enhance their own life and society (Witt & Wright, 1992). Through a review of the relevant literature, theoretical approaches to tourist motivation are based on some of the distinguished theories of behavioral approach to motivation namely the

Abraham Maslow "Hierarchy of needs theory", McClelland's need Theory, Vroom's Expectancy theory of human motivation and Porter and Lawler's Expectancy Theory.

The Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory developed in 1943 is the best known theory of motivation and its application to tourism will be discussed in this paper. Maslow (1943) grouped individual needs hierarchically into five categories as physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs. According to Maslow theory a person has different needs which he wants to satisfy and these needs motivate a person to act. As each of these needs is significantly satisfied, it drives and forces the next need in the next level to emerge. Maslow's hierarchy of needs provides insight into ways in which a trip may satisfy disparate needs (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003). According to Page and Connell (2006), Maslow's hierarchy of needs can be used to explain the source of the tourist's initial needs and wants, where the satisfaction of these needs may lead to purchase of a holiday. For instance tourists visiting friends and relatives may be considered to show need for belongingness and love while those choosing a holiday to keep up with friends and neighbor's show need for self-esteem. Horner and Swarbrooke (2001) noted that when the tourist self-actualization needs are satisfied, it may lead to positive word of mouth recommendation of a destinations' tourism products to friends and families, which in turn brings in new tourists.

Maslow hierarchy theory can also be used to explain demand for travel and can help to determine which distribution strategy play a vital role to effect on person decision to visit destination and practice some activities (Page & Connell, 2006). Thus understanding tourists' needs can help the tourism enterprises come up with different branding for facilities and services with features that address certain tourist's needs. Two main marketing applications and purposes of tourist motivation theories and research can be identified. Firstly understanding why consumers behave as

they actually do and two, as a bases for market segmentation of tourist markets which is primarily undertaken for the further purpose of enabling the development of more efficient and effective tourism marketing especially communication, promotional strategies, advertising campaigns and product positioning.

The main criticism of the Maslow’s Pyramid is that there is no empirical evidence to validate the theory that needs follow a definite hierarchical order (Witt & Wright, 1992; Dann, 1981). The need priority model may not apply at all times in all places. Researchers show that man’s behaviour at any time is mostly guided by multiplicity of behaviour and therefore when it comes to travel, tourists travel for different needs and not only leisure (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2001). Business travel, medical and sport tourism are also popular types of tourism in recent years. Page and Connell (2006) laments that the use of Maslow hierarchy of needs theory in explaining tourism motivation is limited since motivation only acts as a trigger which stimulates the chain of events in the tourism process.

Maslow hierarchy theory of motivation was used in the study to help the researcher to understand what motivates tourists to choose certain destinations and how the tourists select activities and experiences to suit their psychological and motivation profiles. The motivation theories, hence, enhanced understanding of the personal characteristics of tourists visiting Kenya. Motivation, therefore, is an essential concept in the explanation of international tourism demand and consequently the influence by various marketing strategies.

Conceptual Framework

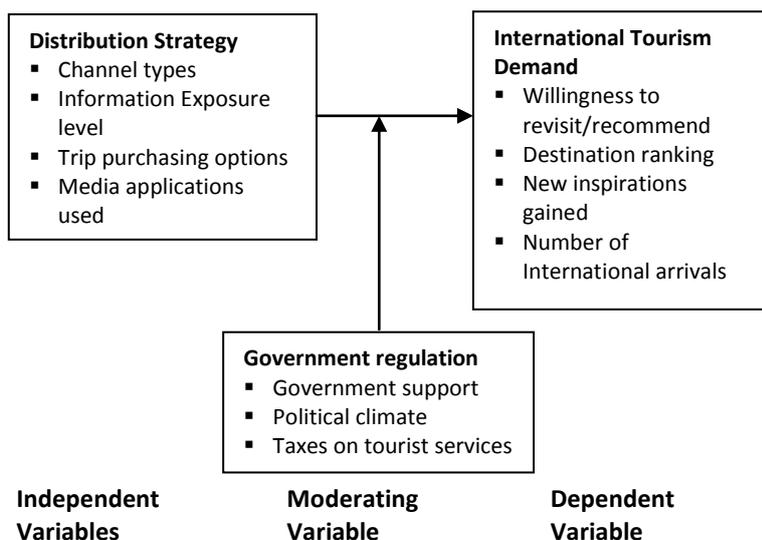


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework

Source: Authors (2019)

Review of Literature

Distribution Strategy

Efficient and effective distribution is important if the marketing organisation is to meet its overall marketing objectives (Andreas & Perry, 2000). A distribution strategy stipulates how an organization will distribute the product or service to the end user at the right time and at the right place (Grewal & Levy, 2010). The most important decisive element in the distribution strategy relates to the issue of location of the services, to attract the maximum number of consumers. According to Williams, C. and Page, A. (2010), the first decision variable in planning the distribution strategy relates to the location of the service. The inseparability characteristic of the tourism products and services poses a distribution constraint since it necessitates the customer to go the service location, and not the other way. The second decision variable is whether to sell directly to customers or through intermediaries. Most of the tourism product and services such as hotels, airlines and attractions operate through middle men. The third variable is how to provide the service to a maximum number

of guests in the most cost-effective manner (Williams *et al.*, 2010).

Distribution concerns where and when products are offered for sale, whereas logistics addresses how they get there (Joaquin, 2006). Distribution strategies should enhance both distribution and logistics to create more ways to get the product to customer. Understanding consumer's expectation is also paramount to delivering the type of tourism experience that will bring repeat business and earn excellent word-of-mouth recommendations. These expectations are driven by various modern cultural trends, according to Levin (1988), founder of Avant-Guide. For example, the need for control and consumer transparency whereby consumers want to feel they are in control of their hospitality experience, whether it be regarding price comparison sites, placing live phone pictures online for others to see at websites or posting review of services on a website or through Social networking.

Amodu, Omole, Olanibi and Emmanuel (2013) carried out a study to identify the tourist potentials of Ondo State, Nigeria and make a case for the marketing and effective development of the state. The study concluded that inadequate marketing and the inability of people to know the tourist sites were among factors limiting the tourism participation in the state. The study recommended proper funding of the tourist centres by the state government, as well as appropriate product packaging and marketing of the potentials of the tourist centres to meet international standards. The current study goes beyond the identification of the tourist potentials and identify the role of distribution strategies in the global scenario. Data was collected from tourists leaving the country to establish the effectiveness of marketing strategies in different source countries. Kenya tourist information is available from the official tourist offices maintained locally and internationally by Kenya's ministry of Tourism. International offices for Kenya are located in France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, UK and USA (KTB, 2016). These offices provide information about destinations,

parks, things to do, accommodation, sometimes by way of mail, phone and email.

Tourists generally look for a high volume of information when they travel, especially when visiting historical and cultural sites. For customers searching on the Internet for the lowest room rates, the websites of travel agents and reservation agents are likely to be the best choice (Lin, 2005). This strategy has changed further as virtual reality via the Internet becomes has hence become an essential tourism marketing tool (Budi, 2016). A comparison of websites with different business models revealed that the websites of local travel agents offer better room rates than online websites (Cooper *et al.*, 2008). This is addressed my "best price guarantees" offered by most international hotel chains. However, mid-segment hotels still rely on traditional distribution channels due to their lack of knowledge of electronic distribution (Buhalis, 2007).

In the Internet era, search engines also play an important role in information searching, and the Google search engine in particular is perceived to be the most important tool (Leo, 2011). More recently, mobile technologies that provide a new and convenient way for tourists to gather information from any location have been introduced. Mobile technologies support location based services, interpretation at the destination and dynamic interaction with tourism suppliers (Buhalis & Kaldis, 2008). Interestingly, although tourists can locate travel information on the Internet, one study showed that only three percent of tourists surveyed ate at a restaurant that they had found on the Internet (Litvin, Blose, & Laird, 2005).

Distribution strategy normally goes hand in hand with the market development strategy (Cravens & Piercy, 2009). Market development is used where the business seeks to sell its existing products into new markets. There are many possible ways of approaching this strategy, including new geographical markets; new product dimensions or

packaging; new distribution channels and different pricing policies to attract different customers or create new market segments. More recently, Geographic Information Systems [GIS] has been used to track the tourists' movement pattern within a destination (Budi, 2015). Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008) argue that these internet techniques can have great benefits for tourism marketers to understand consumer behavior whilst at the destination and to develop new marketing strategies and tourism experiences.

Finally, tourists use different data sources such as blogs, online travel magazines, review sites, travel websites, and official tourism websites. These often project different destination images, often chaotic and uncoordinated, because they bring content from different sources and target different audiences (Kumar, 2010). Review sites such as Trip advisor or Holiday-check and blogs are popular digital platforms for travelers to express their feelings and to rate their experience (Leo, 2011). Williams *et al.*, (2010) assert that marketing managers need to closely monitor the digital society to know their customers' views and what is being discussed about their brand online. They further argued that Blog content strongly affects readers' perception of the image of a destination.

Government Regulation

The tourism industry operates within a developed legal and regulatory framework which the players in this industry need to adhere to in the course of offering their services (Cateora & Graham, (2007). The Authority strives to deepen and broaden tourism by developing and implementing a regulatory framework that ensures fairness, orderliness and high quality service in the industry. The regulatory framework of the Authority comprises the following: the tourism act 2011 and the tourism regulatory authority regulations 2014. The Tourism Act No. 28 of 2011 was enacted to provide for the development, management, marketing and regulation of sustainable tourism and tourism related and services and for connected

services. Pursuant to Section 122 of the Tourism Act 2011, Tourism Regulatory Authority Regulations 2014 were formulated and gazette to prescribe matters related to regulation of the tourism sector and operations of the Authority.

According to Ashley (2006) many governments in Eastern and Southern Africa have declared their policy to harness tourism for poverty reduction. The impacts of tourism on the poor depend very much on the behaviour of private companies and individual tourists. Yet these are strongly influenced by Government, through its policies, regulations, public investment, expectations, and actions, not only in tourism but in other sectors too.

Vujko and Tamara (2014) also conducted a study on the government policy impact on economic development of tourism. The study argued that that tycoons and politicians are the main players of tourism in most parts of the world, and they often use tourism as a tool for gaining economic and political power, and creating a positive, albeit propagandized, image of their country. The conclusion was that there is a direct positive relationship between residents' perceptions of the benefits of tourism and their political support.

International Tourism Demand

In 2001, the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) issued its first World Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Monitor, which is a databank of indicators and indices that provide a representation of the extent to which over 200 countries offer a competitive environment for Travel & Tourism development (WEF, 2011). There are eight indicator indices: Price Competitiveness Index, Human Tourism Index, Infrastructure Index, Environment Index, Technology Index, Human Resources Index, openness Index, and Social Index. These indicators were based on the results of collaborative research between WTTC and an international Travel Research Institute (WTTC, 2003). Research conducted in Kenya has shown the various key tourism indicators and are proving to be very useful for monitoring performance and for deciding on

strategic marketing issues (Wadongo *et al.* 2010). These indicators include YTD international arrivals, Financial Performance which is the total revenue achieved, profitability ratios, total operating costs, turnover ratios, liquidity ratios by firms operating in the tourism business. Another indicator is the competitiveness index which is measured by sales growth, customer satisfaction surveys, relative market share and position, measure of the customer base (Porter, 1990). Indicators of tourism performance were indicated as service quality, flexibility, resource utilization, innovation and supplier performance.

Indeed, much of conceptual debate on performance indicators of tourism destinations link competitiveness and sustainability (Hassan, 2000). Hassan cited community/environmental perspectives, corporate sponsorship, community service projects, environmental/conservation projects undertaken as some of the key construes of sustainability. Other indicators as per research conducted for the island of Rhodes' local destination management organization included Tourist traffic, Source markets, income, capacity utilization, Seasonality and Average length of stay (World Bank, 2010).

In a service industry such as tourism, Cooper, Fletcher, Flyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008), observed that marketing mix helps destination management organisation to understand where marketing actions can be initiated in order to improve the acceptability of tourism product and stimulate demand. It is with this background that this study sought to examine how tourism distribution strategies influence tourists' demand for the Kenya destination.

Empirical Review

Nuade and Saayman (2005) also carried out a study to explain the determinants of tourism arrivals in 43 African Countries taking into account tourists' country of origin. The study used both cross section data and panel data largely obtained from the WTO for the period 1996 to 2000. Data analysis applied

single-equation regressions using three different estimators namely OLS, random effects or fixed effects and first step general method of moments-difference estimator. The total number of tourist arrivals per year to a particular destination was used to measure the demand for tourism to Africa. To measure the effect of Tourism marketing efforts, the number of internet users in a country obtained from World Development was used as a proxy to capture the effects of networks and information on tourist flows. The results of the study showed that Marketing and information, Political stability and tourism infrastructure were key determinants of travel to Africa. The level of income in the country of origin, the relative prices and the cost of travel were not significant in explaining the demand for Africa as a tourism destination.

A tourism marketing and promotion research study was carried out for Ontario, Canada to investigate the effectiveness of marketing approaches in the tourism sector (Ministry of Tourism Canada; MTC, 2009). Primary survey work was undertaken with 10 selected stakeholders and industry experts to gather their insights on marketing trends, media mix options, and to integrate varied perspectives on Ontario's current standing as a travel destination in regard to its marketing approaches. The organizations were analyzed for their promotion and advertising Expenditures, Marketing Budgets of specific Campaigns, Return on Investment of initiatives and effectiveness of strategic distribution channels and intermediaries.

The study identified various effective marketing approaches that hinged on traditional marketing programs such promotion, branding, offline and online marketing and non-traditional and emerging marketing approaches. The study recommended that selecting specific strategies for marketing of Ontario tourism product was not a straight forward task, especially in light of the economic downturn. Nevertheless, the study recommended marketing efforts that could optimize on distribution channels and a Product strategy that could take advantage of diverse ethnic communities within the domestic

market. The study argued that the communities had the capacity to stimulate tourism activity in two ways – by tourists exploring the cultural experience and by acting as hosts to family, friends and relatives visiting. The recommendations made by the Ontario research study can be appreciated and implicated by other DMOs such as Kenya.

Ashok and Kumar (2008) in their research paper titled “Adequacy and Effectiveness of Indian Tourism Websites for International Tourism in India” undertook to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the official websites of various tourism development corporations of India. The websites were evaluated based on the variety of information, online accommodation, travel booking and other facilities and services offered by the websites. The study revealed startling inadequacies and gaps in the websites that needed to be bridged. Given so many inadequacies observed during the study, the investigators found it difficult to measure effectiveness of the websites as they were not very sure whether the objective of the websites really was to promote tourism potential of India amongst international tourists. The study highlights the need to manage international tourism with a lot more clarity and focus if a country wants to benefit from potential of International Tourism. The main finding of the study was that tourism websites are not just an online channel for providing information about tourism potential but also a distribution strategy for generating desired tourism business.

Fazili (2006) PhD thesis entitled “A study of Marketing Strategies of Potential Tourism Products in Jammu and Kashmir” is an explicit analysis of how tourism industry has evolved in this state, what new techniques have been used and developed to strengthen tourism and how far success has been achieved. It emphasizes on marketing strategy adopting seven ‘P’s of marketing mix as variables. Joaquin (2006) working paper titled “Tour Operators’ Price Strategies in the Balearic Islands” analyses the package tours’ price strategies of tour operators. The paper shows the existence of

persistent differences in the mean prices from tour operators, and that the price distributions were linked to the marketing situation and structure.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. Olsen and George (2004) pointed out that in this type of research design, either the entire population or a subset thereof is selected, and from these individuals, data is collected to help answer research questions of interest. Since this study aimed to investigate the response of tourists leaving the country, a cross sectional survey was able to present the researcher with the opportunity of questioning them about their perception and knowledge about Kenya’s tourism marketing campaigns. The research target population was tourists departing from Kenya for a period of three months. According to KTF (2016), the number of tourists arriving to Kenya by air in the year 2015 was 689,686 (Appendix IV). KNBS (2016) records 778,603 tourists arriving Kenya in the last twelve months since March 2016. The target population for the study was therefore 778,603 tourists leaving Kenya per year.

Secondary data from Government Tourism Organisations (GTOs) was also considered in this study. These bodies are KTB, KICC, TRA and Brand Kenya. Key information from the top management personnel of these bodies included the CEOs and Marketing Directors as well as the regional and

international Marketing officers because they are always in charge of strategic decision-making. Purposive sampling technique was used to choose members of population to participate in the study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method in which elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher (Saunders & Thorn hill, 2012). This study adopted a questionnaire as the main data collection method for primary data.

Primary data was collected through two structured questionnaires with both open ended and closed ended questionnaires that were administered through self-administration method with the assistance of research assistants.

RESULTS

Distribution Strategy

The objective of the study was to examine the influence of distribution strategy on the international tourism demand in Kenya. A distribution strategy stipulates how an organization

will distribute the product or service to the end user at the right time and at the right place (Joaquin, 2006). Andreas and Perry (2000) asserts that the most important decisive element in the distribution strategy relates to the issue of location of the services, where and when products are offered for sale to attract the maximum number of consumers. A properly designed and implemented distribution strategy plays a pivotal role in providing information about tourism potential in Kenya and thereby enhancing demand for international tourism.

The study adopted a likert scale of 1-5 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 =Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The key platforms rated by the respondents included; social media networks, tour operator websites, user reviews, videos and holiday pictures, online booking sites and mobile applications. The results were given in form of percentages.

Table 1: Distribution Strategy Descriptive statistics

Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std.Dev
I got information through social media networks	2.40	19.60	2.40	56.80	18.80	3.70	1.06
Business created content available on Tour operator websites	4.40	27.20	1.20	49.60	17.60	3.49	1.19
User generated reviews of entertainment, shopping and recreation facilities	10.80	19.20	9.20	50.00	10.80	3.31	1.21
I was inspired by video content on Kenya's diverse tourist products	5.60	10.80	12.00	54.80	16.80	3.66	1.06
Holiday pictures from travelers on and after vacation.	0.40	15.20	10.00	65.20	9.20	3.68	0.86
I relied on online bookings sites	0.40	26.40	18.40	50.00	4.80	3.32	0.93
I used mobile applications to discover most holiday information	3.20	35.20	8.80	39.60	13.20	3.24	1.16
Average						3.49	1.07

The results revealed that majority of the respondents who were 75.6% agreed with the statement that they got information mostly through social media networks which influenced their decision to travel to Kenya. The results further

showed that majority of the respondents who were 67.2% agreed with the statement that business created content available on Tour operator websites such as tour packages influenced their decision to travel to Kenya. The results further

showed that majority of the respondents who were 60.8% agreed with the statement that user generated reviews of entertainment, shopping and recreation facilities influenced their decision to travel to Kenya. The results further showed that majority of the respondents who were 71.6% agreed with the statement that they were inspired by video content on Kenya's diverse tourist products which influenced their decision to travel to Kenya.

In addition, the results showed that majority of the respondents who were 74.4% agreed with the statement that Holiday pictures from travelers on and after vacation influenced their decision to travel to Kenya. Majority of the respondents who were 54.8% agreed with the statement that they relied on online bookings sites for of flights and hotels which influenced their decision to travel to Kenya. The results also showed that majority of the respondents who were 52.8% agreed with the statement that they used mobile applications to discover most holiday information which influenced their decision to travel to Kenya.

The findings corroborated with findings by Ashok and Krishna (2008) that well managed distribution strategies enhances the tourism potential of international tourism. The study emphasized the

use of tourism websites not online as online channels for providing information but also as an electronic platform for generating desired tourism business. Cooper *et al.*, (2008) noted that reliance on traditional distribution channels due to lack of knowledge of electronic distribution can the hinder demand for a destination.

Buhalis and Kaldis (2008) asserts that more recently, mobile technologies have provided a new and convenient way for tourists to gather information from any location. Mobile technologies support location based services, interpretation at the destination and dynamic interaction with tourism suppliers. In the Internet era, user reviews which contain pictures and videos of attractions have played an important role in information searching, and in particular is perceived to be the most important distribution tool for most travelers (Leo, 2011).

Correlation Results

The study sought to determine the correlation between distribution strategy and international tourism demand in Kenya. Results were presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Correlation between Distribution Strategy and Tourism Demand

		International tourism demand	Distribution strategies
Level of tourism demand	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Distribution strategies	Pearson Correlation	.668**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

The correlation results shown in table 2 indicated that there is a positive relationship between distribution strategy and international tourism demand as indicated by a correlation value of 0.668. This implied that a positive change in distribution strategy causes international tourism demand to change positively. The associated significance level of **0.000** which was less than the threshold of **0.05** indicated that the implied relationship is statistically significant. The findings

agreed with that of Ashok and Krishna (2008) who argued that well managed distribution strategies enhances the tourism potential of international tourism.

Scatter Plot

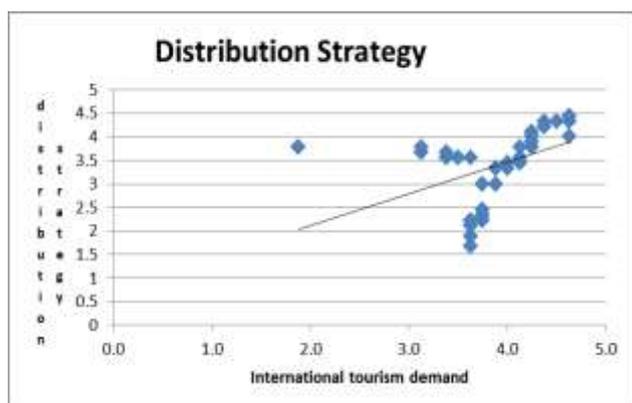


Figure 3: Distribution strategy scatter plot

Figure 3 showed a scatter plot diagram of the correlation of distribution strategy factors versus

international tourism demand. As can be observed in the figure, all the plots are on the first quadrante and the line best fit shows an estimate line that is positively increasing. These findings implied that there is a strong positive correlation between distribution strategy factors and international tourism demand

Regression Analysis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between distribution strategies against International Tourism demand in Kenya

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the significance relationship of distribution strategy against International Tourism demand and the tables below illustrates the results.

Table 3: Model of distribution strategy versus tourism demand

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.668a	0.447	0.445	0.5869

Table 3 presented the regression model on distribution strategy versus international tourism demand. As presented in the table, the coefficient of determination R square is 0.447 at 0.05 significance level. The coefficient of determination R² indicated that 44.7% of the variation on

international tourism demand is influenced by Distributional Strategies. The findings agreed with that of Ashok and Krishna (2008) who argued that well managed distribution strategies enhances the tourism potential of international tourism.

Table 4: ANOVA on Distribution Strategies

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	68.979	1	68.979	200.266	0.000
Residual	85.42	248	0.344		
Total	154.399	249			

Table 4 presents the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on distribution strategy versus international tourism demand. The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant as supported by a p value of 0.000 which is lesser than the critical p value of 0.05. This was supported by

an F statistic of 200.266 which implied that distribution strategies is a good predictor of level of international demand. The findings agreed with that of Ashok and Krishna (2008) who argued that well managed distribution strategies enhances the tourism potential of international tourism.

Table 5: Coefficients of Distribution strategies

	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.
(Constant)	0.888	0.181	4.899	0.000
Distribution strategies	0.692	0.049	14.152	0.000

The study further determined the beta coefficients of distribution strategy versus international tourism

demand. Table 5 thus presented that the relationship between distribution strategy and

international tourism demand is positive and significant ($\beta=692, p=0.000$). The findings agreed with that of Ashok and Krishna (2008) who argued that well managed distribution strategies enhances the tourism potential of international tourism.

Regression model

$$Y = 0.888 + 0.692 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where Y is International Tourism demand and X_1 is distribution strategies

The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis that *there is no significant relationship between distribution strategy against International Tourism demand in Kenya* and concluded that distribution

strategy significantly influence on international tourism demand in Kenya. This is because the p value was less than 0.05 ($p=0.000$). The findings agreed with that of Ashok and Krishna (2008) who argued that well managed distribution strategies enhances the tourism potential of international tourism.

Moderating effect of government regulation on the relationship between distribution strategy and international tourism demand

The study sought to determine the moderating effect of government regulation on the relationship between distribution strategy and international tourism demand in Kenya.

Table 6: Moderating effect of government regulation on the relationship between distribution strategy and international tourism demand in Kenya

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
.772a	0.596	0.591	0.5038		
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	91.962	3	30.654	120.774	.000b
Residual	62.438	246	0.254		
Total	154.399	249			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	-5.642	0.73		-7.733	0.000
Distribution strategy	2.223	0.196	2.147	11.324	0.000
Government regulation	2.285	0.241	2.125	9.481	0.000
X1.M	-0.532	0.06	-3.311	-8.944	0.000

The results revealed that the R squared of distribution strategy after moderation with government regulation was 59.1. This implied that the R squared improved from 44.7 to 59.1 after moderation. In addition, the overall model was significant after moderation ($p=0.000$). This implied that government regulation fully moderates the relationship between distribution strategy and international tourism demand in Kenya.

$$Y = -5.642 + 2.223 X_1 + 2.285 M - 0.532 X_1.M$$

Where Y is level of international tourism demand, M is government regulation, X_1 is distribution strategies

Below is a figurative diagram for the moderating effect of government regulation on the relationship between distribution strategy and international tourism demand in Kenya. The results revealed that government regulation moderates the relationship between distribution strategy and international tourism demand in Kenya.

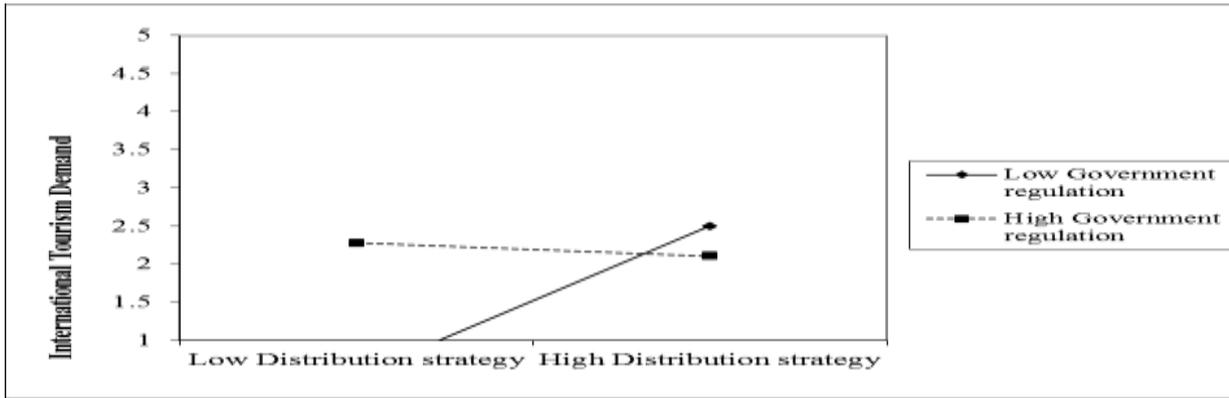


Figure 4: Distribution Strategy

DISCUSSION

Distributional Strategies

Pearson correlations analysis demonstrated that distributional strategies have a positive correlation with implementation of effective distributional strategies. Regression model on distributional strategies versus international tourism demand in Kenya gave a coefficient of determination R square as 0.447 at 0.05 significance level. The coefficient of determination indicated that 44.7% of the variation on international tourism demand is influenced by distributional strategies. This implied that there exists a strong positive relationship between Distributional Strategies and international tourism demand in Kenya.

Wadongo *et al.*, 2010 noted that application of poor distributional strategies is a key impediment towards attracting visitors to East Africa. In a service industry such as tourism, Cooper, Fletcher, Flyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008), observed that a good distributional strategy helps destination management organizations to understand where marketing actions can be initiated in order to improve the acceptability of tourism product and stimulate demand. This study identified mobile applications, online booking sites and tour operators websites are key places where organizations can distribute the Kenya tourism product, in addition to the use of social media networks, user reviews, videos and holiday pictures and images in those sites.

Government Regulation

From regression results government regulation have a positive and significant relationship on international tourism demand in Kenya. From hypothesis results government regulation moderate the relationship between distribution strategies and international tourism demand in Kenya. These findings agreed with that of Ashley (2006) who found that tourism demand was strongly influenced by Government, through its policies, regulations, public investment, expectations, and actions, not only in tourism. The findings were also consistent with that of Vujko and Tamara (2014) who found that government policies have a positive impact on economic development of tourism.

CONCLUSION

From the study findings the study concluded that distribution strategy have a positive and significant relationship on level of international tourism demand. In addition, social media networks and content available on Tour operator websites such as tour packages influence decision of tourists to travel. User generated reviews of entertainment, shopping and recreation facilities also influenced decision of tourists to travel. The study also concluded that video content inspired Kenya’s diverse tourist products which influenced tourists decision to travel to Kenya. In addition, tourists relied on online bookings sites for of flights and hotels which influenced their decision to travel to Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that Kenya's Destination Management Organizations and other Companies that are in the tourism business in Kenya should put more emphasis on distribution strategy so as to boost their level of international tourism demand. This is because distribution strategy was the best marketing strategy that had the greatest impact on level of international tourism demand. In addition, the DMOs should also ensure there is enough content on social media networks, websites and promotional literature. This will ensure that

potential tourists have access to enough information to influence their decisions to travel to Kenya.

Areas of Further Study

The current study focused on the influence of the distribution strategies on the international tourism demand in Kenya. Other study should focus similar study in other African countries for the purpose of making a comparison of the findings with those of the current study. Other studies should also focus on other marketing strategies variables that affect international tourism demand in Kenya.

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