



**INNOVATION STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE OF MEETING INCENTIVES CONFERENCES AND EXHIBITION
TOURISM IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY KENYA**

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TOURISM IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Kenya's primary source of foreign exchange is tourism. Policymakers are losing ways of successfully encouraging growth, capacity building and improving the beneficial impacts of income meetings and tourism as a complex business, without information on its linkages to other sectors of the economy and how it is strategically marketed. In order to be successful in targeting meeting incentives conferences and exhibition tourism, market players in enhancing this industry in Nairobi County must distinguish themselves in a proper and appropriate manner from their rivals and continually position their services in customers' mind. The objective of this study was to investigate the effect of innovation strategy and performance of meeting incentives conferences and exhibition tourism in Nairobi City County Kenya. Resource based view theory and game theory were used to anchor the study. The study adopted a descriptive research. The target population was 348 of employees from all the cadres of meeting incentives conferences and exhibition tourism Centre in Nairobi City County Kenya. To choose 104 respondents from the target population, a stratified simple random sampling approach was utilized. The data for the study was collected using structured questionnaires. To augment the original data, secondary data was employed. With the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Science, descriptive and inferential statistics was utilized to analyze quantitative data. Percentages and frequencies were included in descriptive statistics. Correlation and regression analysis were employed in this study to determine the effect of continuous improvement and customer focus on performance of meeting incentives conferences and exhibition Tourism Centre in Nairobi City County Kenya. Data findings were presented in tables. The results indicated the maintenance of product innovation in tourism industry was done regularly. The amount of innovation in place has tremendously aided the MICE in putting initiatives into action and that adoption of technology cuts costs of operation and increases on returns in the Hotel industry. The study showed that the system of continuous improvement and innovation management were important determinants of MICE tourism performance. On this basis, the researcher came to the conclusion that innovation had a significant influence on organizational performance. The Study further recommends that the MICE tourism Centre should in the Hotel industry should focus on utilizing modern technology in marketing their products as well as innovative service delivery.

Key Words: Innovation Strategy, performance, meeting incentives, conferences and exhibition tourism

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a highly competitive sector; travelers have many options and want good value for their money. Lack of quality infrastructure, uncompetitive prices, indifferent or bad product quality, difficulties accessing travel and tourist destination information, and untrained service providers all have a significant negative impact on the tourism product's competitiveness. For all of these reasons, the tourist sector must develop and implement plans that incorporate the entire business goals. The World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2015) predicts that the travel and tourism industry will continue to grow at a rate of 4% per year, outpacing financial services, transportation, and manufacturing (Crotti and Misrahi, 2015). Tourism has had progressive expansion and diversification over the past six decades, according to Meke (2016), making it one of the world's leading, biggest, and fastest expanding economic sectors. For example, Chinese visitors spent \$102 billion on foreign travel in 2012. According to the United Nations World Tourist Organization, China now ranks first among international tourism spenders, ahead of Germany and the United States for the first time. International travelers from these two nations spent around \$84 billion (U.S.) between them (Awake, 2014). In Nigeria, tourism has made a substantial contribution to the country's development in a variety of ways, including creating jobs, improving brand image, generating money, reducing the country's balance of payment deficit, raising gross domestic product, and increasing per capita income (Egbaji, 2017).

Corporate performance may also be classified into three categories: financial performance, non-financial internally, and non-financial external performance (customer satisfaction). Private sector organisations, whereas public groups, like the delivery of good public services to residents, seek for strong financial outcomes. The tourist business has been recognized by emerging economies such as Kenya as a growing phenomenon, whose influence may be considerable. The World Travel

Fair in China held in April 2008 in Kenya was said to have won the accolade "Best Leisure Destination" which would certainly enhance exposure as one of Africa's most popular tourist destinations, as Gachenge (2016) says. Likewise, the International Congress and Conference Association rated the country second to South Africa in 2016 as the Oxford Business Group, with the attractiveness of MICE travel in Africa (2017).

Organizational performance is defined as a company's capacity to acquire and use scarce resources and assets as quickly as feasible in order to meet its operational objectives (Griffins, 2006). The degree to which an organization accomplishes its declared goals and objectives is often referred to as organizational performance (Lee & Choi 2003). The word "organizational performance" is used in this study to refer to employees' capacity to accomplish organizational goals and objectives. According to Sunder and Myers (2009), the success of an organisation, such as total shareholder return and economic value addition, comprises financial performance, product market results and returns from the shareholder. The performance of an organization can also be measured non-financially using delivery time, brand reputation, market share and market position, the level of innovativeness, the manufacturing capacity, yield and resource conservation. In regards to delivery time, if the firm delivers goods and services on time, it implies that the organization is well performing. On the other hand, slow delivery of goods and services signify poor performance (Ittner & Larcker 2001). In regards to brand reputation, if the brand is highly recognized in the market, it signifies good performance. In terms of market positioning, if the firm is well positioned in the market, it signifies good performance while the poorly positioned firms are considered as poor performers

Four essential criteria assuring the effective execution of the plan are outlined by Mwangi (2016). The study showed that technology is one of the main drivers for the implementation and performance of strategies. Research and innovation

is also an element that brings together new ideas, techniques and products that allow the company to accomplish better. Because every business is able to achieve outstanding performance, young or old, huge and small, as long as the leadership, structure, people and non-human resources and technology are given due consideration.

In order to develop MICE tourism in Nairobi County, hospitality players must identify, anticipate, and fulfill consumer demands in a lucrative manner that is realistic and satisfies the customers' orientations and objectives. One of the most successful marketing mix aspects for a MICE product is promotion. (Rogerson, 2015) (Rogerson, 2015) (Rogerson, 2015 In terms of MICE product presentation, the way the product is designed plays a critical part in this business, and efficient use of tourist marketing tools is a critical component for MICE tourism growth not just in Nairobi but throughout the county. The Kenyan government, as part of its efforts, has announced a variety of programs to assist sustain the recovery and boost MICE activity. According to news estimates, the tourist marketing and promotion budget has quadrupled to \$15 million in the previous three years. Over the last several years, hotels in Nairobi County have experienced a steady increase in MICE tourist arrivals. For example, in 2017, the country welcomed 117,630 foreign visitors participating in MICE activities, up 13% from 2016 and accounting for 15.6 percent of overall international tourist arrivals for the year. Kenya has gained international recognition as a result of the changes, with Nairobi being awarded "Africa's Leading Meetings and Conference Destination 2018" by the World Travel Awards in April, after being a runner-up for the previous three years. Other large hotels in Kenya are also investing in increasing conference hosting capacity and hotels, not simply Nairobi County, which is home to the KICC. In Nairobi, there are a number of major new business and city hotels that symmetrically supply or cater to the growing demand for MICE goods.

Statement of the Problem

Kenya's primary source of foreign exchange is tourism. Policymakers will be at a loss as to how to successfully encourage MICE tourism's growth, build capacity, and improve its positive impact unless they have information on how the complex business is linked and promoted strategically to other sectors of the economy. Mwangola (2015). In order to be successful in targeting MICE tourism industry, players in strategy implementation of MICE products in Nairobi County must distinguish themselves in a proper and appropriate manner from their rivals and continually position their services in customers' mind (Gartner, 2014). Although in Vision 2030 tourism is highlighted as the primary economic pillar that may support economic growth in sustainable counties, in most Kenyan provinces its potential remains to be fully exploited. The Kenya policy on tourism underlines the importance of MICE as a contribution to sustainable development, according to Rogerson (2015). But MICE tourism benefits are small, Oduollo (2013). The fact that Kenya has a 2% market share in the MICE sector to compete in other Africa locations shows that Africa likes Agoba (2017). Kenya (via its provinces) still needs to take full advantage of MICE tourism. There is a problem of customer scarcity, facilities not being utilized to the maximum to generate income. Poor leadership where managers and employee stay for short periods and leave. Covid 19 has made it even worse. Workers have been laid off and hotel systems and facilities are not bringing in much needed income.

Objective of the Study

The study established the effect of innovation strategy on performance of MICE tourism in Nairobi City County. The study was guided by the following research objectives;

- What is the effect of innovation strategy on performance of MICE tourism in Nairobi City County?

Significance of the study

The insights gained from the research will help in various ways to policy making and give useful

information for Ministry of Tourism authorities to create policies that improve MICE tourism across the country. The results of this study may be used by the Government and other organizations involved in the design, organization, promotion and marketing of the MICE sector

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

A theoretical framework is useful to a researcher because it helps to narrow the scope of relevant data by focusing on certain variables and points of view. A theoretical framework should demonstrate a grasp of important ideas and concepts to the study issue (Labaree, 2013). Resource-based theory, Competence-based theory, and Game Theory was used to drive the research.

Resource based view theory

Penrose created the Resource Based View (RBV) hypothesis (1985). It's a way of assessing and finding a company's strategic advantages by looking at its unique blend of assets, talents, competencies, and intangibles. The RBV's core concept is that each business has a "unique" bundle of resources-tangible and intangible assets, as well as organizational skills to make use of those assets-that distinguishes it in fundamental ways. Each organization builds skills from these resources, and when they are developed particularly effectively, they constitute a source of competitive advantage for the company.

Game Theory

Game theory is the brainchild of John Van Neumann in 1928. Is modeling the strategic interactions between two or more players in a setting with established rules and consequences the same as modeling the strategic interactions between two or more players in a situation with specified rules and outcomes? At the tactical level, game theory aids in

the analysis of dynamic and sequential decisions (Myerson, 2013). The major benefit of game theory in strategy is that it emphasizes the necessity of planning ahead, considering options, and anticipating how other participants in your "game" will react. The reward matrix, extensive form games, and the essence of a game are all important ideas in strategy. New product launch, licensing vs manufacture, pricing, advertising, and regulation are examples of strategy application areas.

Empirical literature review

Innovation Strategy and Organizational Performance

Creating technical capability in a changing context demands not only fresh information but inventive concepts (Teece, 2014). Innovation enables the company to modify its manufacturing processes and functions and helps the company to create its particular technical skills. Innovation at the company level is seen as the implementation of fresh ideas leading to the production of new goods (Rubera & Kirca, 2011). The Nairobi Securities Exchange manufacturing businesses carried out a cost management strategy research in Gichuki (2014) on their financial organisation. The study revealed that innovation influenced organizational performance, leading to well-educated and qualified staff. The study further found out that with innovation automates the manufacturing sector because it led to retrenchment of employees who are not skilled enough to operate the new machines. The retrenched employees are replaced with new employees knowledgeable on the new technologies which lead to increased organizational performance. However, the study didn't establish how performance of an organization was affected by quality of product and customer satisfaction. Moreover, it emphasized on manufacturing companies registered in Nairobi Security Exchange.

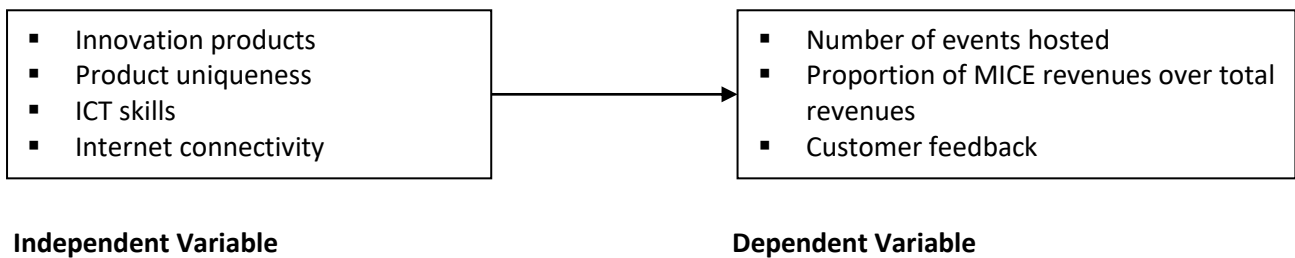


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2022)

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used to carry out the investigation. Employees of Nairobi City County's MICE tourist center were the study's target population. The population size comprised of 348 employees from all the cadres of senior management, middle management and lower management of MICE tourism Centre. *Source: HR Department MICE Tourism Centre, Nairobi City County (2019)*. This survey included 348 respondents from the three levels of management and a 30% of the target population. This research had a sample size of 104 participants. Primary and secondary data were used in the research. Secondary data was gathered from papers received from the MICE tourism center. A systematic questionnaire was used to obtain primary data. To test the Validity and reliability of the instrument, various statistical tools was used. The study also used content validity. Content validity is the degree to which a research instrument provides an adequate coverage of the topic under study. Construct validity of the questionnaire was also achieved through review and guidance from experts who included the university supervisors and other experts in the department of business administration. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha to determine its reliability. Cronbach alpha, a measure of internal consistency, was used to assess the measuring instrument's internal consistency. Lee Cronbach invented this in 1951 as a measure of a test's or scale's internal consistency, and it's usually stated as a number between 0 and 1. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or above is typically considered adequate, and the

higher the value, the more trustworthy. The researcher prepared data collected for statistical analysis. Data cleaning was done to ensure that questionnaires were properly completed, clear, clean and accurate and that consistency has been observed. Coding was done to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data and the recording of quantitative data into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Quantitative statistics was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of mean scores frequencies, standard deviation and percentages while inferential was carried out using regression analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study collected data from senior level managers, middle level management and lower level employees which consisted of 104 sampled employees. The completely filled questionnaires were 88 representing 85% response rate. The uncompleted questionnaire were not considered in analyzing the study results. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) more than 80% response rate was excellent. The Alpha score for innovation was .822 and for performance .810 which was acceptable. The demographic characteristics included the gender, work experience and highest education level was recorded. The gender of the respondents was evaluated. According to the data, 49 respondents were male and 39 were female, with males accounting for 56 percent and females for 44 percent, respectively. The findings indicated that both genders were fairly represented in the survey, implying that the sample's opinions were fairly gender-neutral.

The results of the researcher's analysis of the respondents' tenure in office. According to the research, the vast majority of responders (40%) had worked in a MICE tourism center for 8 to 10 years. On the other hand, just 12% of respondents had less than two years of work experience, 18% had worked for three to seven years, and 30% had worked for more than eleven years. These findings demonstrated that the employees who took part in this study possessed the necessary knowledge to provide the researcher with useful data. According to the statistics, 49 percent of respondents had a bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, while 24 percent had at least a master's degree as their highest level of education. The remaining 27% of respondents had earned either a higher national diploma or a diploma. The findings demonstrated that the respondents had the required level of literacy to participate in the study and provided information that was relevant to the research topic.

Embracing MICE tourism and its strategic marketing

Table 1: Innovation Descriptive Results

Statement/s	n	Mean	S.D.
The MICE products and services are available across the branches	88	3.91	.97
The maintenance of product innovation in tourism industry is done regularly	88	4.19	.88
The amount of innovation in place has tremendously aided us in putting initiatives into action.	88	4.22	.86
The implementation of products innovation programs in the industry has taken effect across its branches	88	3.95	.92
Adoption of technology cuts costs of operation and increases on returns in the organization	88	4.11	.83
Innovative goods and new uses for existing items are both examples of product innovation.	88	3.90	.85
Aggregate scores		4.04	0.89

Source: Field Data (2022)

The overall mean score for the innovation was 4.04, which corresponded to a 'Agree' on a Likert scale. Furthermore, the aggregated standard deviation score was 0.89, indicating that many employees' replies converge around the mean response, indicating a low degree of variability. Furthermore, the mean value of the innovation pointer ranged from 3.90 to 4.22 on the high end. Similarly, the

responded were requested to indicate whether they had embraced MICE tourism and its strategic marketing. The results were that all the respondents (100%) agreed that they embraced MICE tourism and its strategic marketing. The helped the study achieve its objectives for the targeted respondents had the necessary know how to respond to the questions related to strategic implementation and performance of MICE tourism centre.

Descriptive Analysis Results

The researcher used the mean and standard deviation to describe the summary measures of the sample that was chosen for data gathering. The descriptive statistics analysis was based on information gathered from the study's variables. In this case, the whole sample's key feature served as the foundation for the study's quantitative data analysis.

Innovation strategy

The data on innovation pointers was analyzed, and the results are provided in Table 1.

standard deviation for responses on key indicators ranged from 0.83 to 0.97, showing a lack of variation in innovation indicator responses. The stated sample mean was a strong and accurate estimate of the population mean due to the low variability, allowing generalizations to be made. The results therefore indicates that innovative products, product uniqueness, information technology skills

and internet connectivity were key to determining the Performance of MICE tourist Centre. According to Teece (2014) innovation enables the company to modify its manufacturing processes and functions and helps the company to create its particular technical skills. Further, Gichuki (2014) revealed that innovation influenced organizational

performance, leading to well-educated and qualified staff.

Performance of MICE Tourism

The data collected on the three performance indicators (Number of Events hosted, Proportion of MICE revenues over total revenues, and Customer feedbacks) in MICE tourist centers was analyzed and the findings were provided in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Performance of MICE Tourism

Statements	n	Mean	Std.Dev
MICE tourism events hotel by the hotel have significantly increased	88	3.45	.50
Proportion of MICE revenues over total revenues have increased	88	3.01	.42
Return on investments has improved	88	2.97	.66
Client confidence and willingness to re-consume MICE products is high	88	3.67	.64
Client satisfaction with MICE products offered by this hotel is high	88	3.11	.49
Aggregate score		3.24	.54

Sources: Survey Data (2022)

On a five-point Likert scale, the MICE tourist performance aggregated mean score for the three performance categories was 3.24, compared to 'Moderate'. Furthermore, the 0.54 standard deviation indicated that the variability of responses from the aggregated mean score was low. Employee answers were centered around the aggregate mean score due to the low variability, showing that the sample mean was a credible predictor of the population mean. The MICE tourism performance indicators: number of events hosted, proportion of MICE revenues over total

revenues, and customer feedbacks were moderate in the Hotels and the changes in the three indicators were yet to be reflected after the Hotel industry was hit by Covid 19 pandemic.

Inferential Statistics

To investigate the impact of innovation strategy on Meeting Incentives Conferences and Exhibition Tourism performance, the researcher used multiple regression analysis. To that purpose, the impact of innovation strategy on MICE tourism success was examined in the table 3 below.

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.757 ^a	.573	.568	3.01910

a. Predictors: (Constant), Innovation Strategy

Source: Survey Data(2022)

In table above the R squared of 0.573 indicates that innovation strategy determined/explained 57.3 percent of MICE tourism performance. A number of variables that aren't studied in this study account

for 42.7 percent of the performance of MICE tourism. The average coefficient of determination of the model indicates that it may be used to derive generalizations from data.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA ^a)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	958.528	1	239.632	495.11	.000 ^b
	Residual	40.170	83	.484		
	Total	998.698	87			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of MICE Tourism

b. Predictors: (Constant), Innovation strategy

The whole model was tested using analysis of variance. According to the Table above the F calculated=495.11 was bigger and more significant than the F critical=6.766, indicating that the whole model was significant. At the 95 percent

confidence level, this means that innovation strategy can be used to explain changes in the dependent variable (Performance of MICE tourism).

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.167	1.250		2.532	.015
	Continuous Improvement	.098	.075	.122	1.273	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance of MICE Tourism

As a consequence, the study's model was fitted using the model's Beta coefficients (Column B) in Table above. $Y = 3.167 + 1.434 \text{ Innovation Strategy} + 0.098 + \epsilon$. According to the model, the value of MICE's performance was 3.167 units when the independent factors were held constant.

Innovation and Performance of MICE Tourism

The regression coefficients corresponding to innovation in table 5 was 0.361. The results indicated that innovation had a positive and significant effect on performance of MICE tourism. MICE tourism performance increased by 0.361 units for every unit increase in innovation. The results supports Teece (2014) findings that innovation has a positive significant effect on organizational performance. Gichuki (2014) study revealed that innovation positively influenced organizational performance.

The data on innovation strategy pointers was analyzed, and the results indicated that MICE products and services were available across the branches. The maintenance of product innovation in tourism industry was done regularly. The amount of innovation in place has tremendously aided the MICE in putting initiatives into action and that adoption of technology cuts costs of operation and increases on returns in the Hotel industry.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The specific objective was to investigate the effect of innovation strategy on MICE tourism performance in Kenya. The results of the descriptive statistics analysis indicated that the selected indicators of innovation were used at the MICE tourist center and were deemed essential by the respondents in judging organizational success. Inferential statistics confirmed the perception, finding that innovation was statistically significant in determining performance of the organization, with a unit increase in the indicators of innovation yielding a unitary increase of 0.361 in performance of the organization when all other independent variables were held constant. As a result, the researcher came to the conclusion that the innovation had a beneficial influence on MICE tourism performance.

The impact of innovation on the organization's performance was discovered to be beneficial. As a result, improving innovation indicators leads to improved organizational performance. As a result, it is critical that the company invests in processes that will enable the realization of innovation, creativity, and one-of-a-kind items in the hotel business. The Study further recommends that the Hotel industry should focus.

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