

Promotional Strategies of Domestic Tourism in Lagos State: Practices, Problems and Prospects

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ABSTRACT

This study centered on promotional strategies of domestic tourism in Lagos State, assessing its practices, problems and prospects. The objectives were to identify promotional strategies of domestic tourism in Lagos State, their effectiveness, challenges bedeviling the industry and ways of moving it forward. Survey design employing questionnaire was adopted to obtain data from 200 industry players purposively selected who completed the questionnaire from the 250 selected. Frequency distribution was used to analyse the data collected for the study. The result revealed that media (94%), advertising (67%), the internet (57%), public relations (48%) and direct marketing (33%) are the most effective strategies employed for promotion of domestic tourism in Lagos State. Also, 84% reported that these promotional strategies are effective enough. Challenges to the sector were identified and suggestions made on moving the industry forward by both government and private investors which included more publicity and awareness made, with the inclusion of seminars, workshops, exhibitions and discounts as promotional strategies, establishment of more tourist centres of higher standards and easy accessibility. It was concluded that it is of great necessity for the government to contribute maximally to domestic tourism promotion through funding the sector as well as renovating old attractions with full facilities and infrastructures and training the sector players on new media.

Keywords: Domestic tourism, Promotion, Strategy, Marketing, Media

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism entails all the processes, activities, and outcomes arising from the relationships and the interactions among tourists, tourism suppliers, host governments, host communities and surrounding environments that are involved in attracting and hosting visitors (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006). Tourism has continued to grow and expand all over the world. Nkari (1985) noted that the marketing of tourist services and attractions can be done at the national level with an overall marketing of a country's or region's attractions in totality by national organisations in conjunction with individual firms in the industry stationed locally and abroad. Marketing can also be done at the micro level which involves the individual firms in the industry marketing their individual attractions.

Tourism is an important source of foreign currency for Lagos State and creates employment for other industries. Over the past few years, tourism has been one of the fastest-growing sectors. Tourism remains a leading earner of foreign exchange for the state. Due to its many linkages to other sectors (including agriculture, manufacturing, banking and finance, wildlife, entertainment and handicrafts), tourism has great potential to generate employment and wealth.

Promotion for tourism activities according to Karoki (2011) is designed to create demand for a tourism and include advertising, personal selling, public relations, publicity and sales promotion such as giveaways, trade shows, fairs, point of purchase, store displays, etc. To sell a product, it is necessary to attract attention, create interest, desire and finally get action. Advertising or personal selling supplemented by publicity and sales promotion is very effective (Nkari, 1985). Domestic tourism involves activities like business, holiday and leisure, visiting friends and relatives or being on the move to another point.

There are so many benefits of tourism and several constraints to the development of domestic tourism in Lagos State. The challenges associated with poor publicity and available promotional strategies in the domestic tourism in Lagos State is the focus of this study. The study among other things identified the main approaches used in promoting domestic tourism in Lagos State, evaluate the effectiveness of available promotional strategies, identify the major challenges facing the promotion of domestic tourism and suggest ways of improving such strategies for better domestic tourism in Lagos State.

The study intended to help the state government understand the state of promotional strategies available and used, as well suggest more strategies that could be introduced to improve domestic tourism in Lagos State. This in turn enables Lagos State generate more revenue, enlighten host communities on best strategies to adopt for promoting domestic tourism in their communities and add to the scanty literature on promotional strategies in the tourism industry.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries as well as the major source of foreign exchange earnings and employment for many developing countries. It is one of the top three industries that constitute the force of the economics of services in the twentieth century and is unique because its growth process is the fastest and the biggest. According to the UNWTO (2012), in the first eight months of 2006 international tourist arrivals went up 4.5% against same period in 2005 and the growth is expected to continue in 2007 at a pace of around 4% worldwide.

The concept of tourism refers to the broad framework that identifies tourism's essential characteristics and distinguishes tourism from similar, often related but different phenomena. The two terms 'travel' and 'tourism' can be used in isolation or together to describe three concepts: the movement of the people, a sector of the economy or an industry, and a brand system of interacting relationships of people, their needs to travel outside their communities and services that attempt to respond to these needs by supplying products. According to the WTO (2011), tourists are people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". People who experience tourism usually need at least disposable income, i.e. money to spend on non-essentials, leisure time, tourism infrastructure, such as transport and accommodation and other factors such as health and motivation to travel. The tourism industry generates employment opportunities, contribute to the gross domestic product, and provide hard currency.

The income from increased as a result of the international tourism expenditure, and reached 12.45 billion US dollars in 2014 and the World Tourism Organization predicted that the number of international tourist arrivals will reach about 1.6 billion tourists by 2020 (UNWTO, 2014).

Tourism Economics (2017) and Al-Omari, Mahmoud, & Jawabreh (2015) studied the impact of social media in stimulating domestic tourism in Greece and found that social media is directly contributing to the increase in the market share. Social media is creating tourism awareness, especially about the archaeological sites available in Greece and work to strengthen their respect for these sites. In a study on the role of tourism information in the promotion of tourist product in Tunisia, Othman, Salleh, & Sarmidi (2012) found a prominent effect for the tourism media where its main purpose is to attract the largest possible number of tourists on the local and global level and enhances the tourist's perspective about the benefits gained by developing the Tunisian tourism product.

2.1 Promoting Domestic Tourism

Domestic tourism encourages public and private travel organisations to create the receptiveness, accommodation, attraction and entertainment facilities needed to compete in key travel markets at home and abroad. Some of the key to developing domestic tourism include: promoting the lesser known attractions in Lagos by using the print and electronic media, establishing a good travel culture among the Lagos travelers, making the domestic tourist aware of the facilities that are available at Tourist Resorts and improving the standards of facilities at tourist attractions, e.g. accommodation & comfort facilitates, water & sanitation, emergency medical services, transport, guiding services.

Due to its income redistribution effect (from tourists to local populations) and its various multiplier effects all throughout the value chain, domestic tourism is an excellent tool for territorial development. It is an excellent instrument for easing social tensions by allowing social categories of modest income to gain access to holidays. From the macroeconomic point of view, domestic tourism makes it possible to amortize national spending on international tourism on physical investments: transport, accommodation, development and protection of public spaces.

The tourism industry is important to the social and economic growth of any country as Coker (2018) noted that tourism generates over \$10.8 trillion globally and Nigeria must be ready to invest in tourism assets to attract tourists and partake in the benefits that abound in the industry. The main task and objective of promotion is to create awareness and profitability of an organization's products or services (Oluigbo, 2017) while the specific objectives of domestic tourism promotion are: promotion of national unity and integration, distribution of benefits from the government expenditures on national parks and game reserves to local people, closing seasonality gap created by international tourism and helping in dealing with the fragile nature of international tourism (FMIC, 2018; Onochie, 2017).

They players in the tourism industry include the government, the private sector, intermediaries as well as educational institutions (Kumar, 2000 cited in Karoki, 2011) and the approaches they used to promote tourism included advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and publicity, direct marketing, trade fairs and exhibitions as well as direct marketing (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005 cited in Karoki, 2011). Other factors or drivers that facilitate the development of the tourism industry which moderate the approaches used to promote tourism include consumer characteristics, product characteristics, climatic conditions, political-legal environment, as well as economic environment (Kotler & Armstrong, 2005; Kumar, 2000).

However, literatures does not provide adequate details on the best approaches of domestic tourism promotion specifically for Nigeria or Africa at large. Hence, the need for this study to identify the best approaches to promote domestic tourism as well as mitigate the various constraints identified in literature. Nigerian tourist destinations are quite diverse, with various niches of tourism situated in different regions. Game parks abound in the northern and southern Nigeria like the Okomu and Yankari reserves, Waterfalls and springs in the Western part of Nigeria, with some special spots of sceneries in the North where there are plateaus and rocks to name a few while ethnic tourism is found all over Nigeria due to its diversities.

Domestic tourism is still undeveloped in Nigerian tourism since the planning and promotion of tourism in most African countries is biased towards international tourism. According to WTO projections, the number of domestic tourists could soon be ‘as much as ten times greater than current international tourist arrivals’ (Ghimire, 2001). Countries searching for an alternative, less exploitative form of tourism development than that dominated by the interests of multinational capital, should encourage domestic tourism as this results in greater community ownership of tourism enterprises. (Ghimire, 2001).

Dieke (2000) observed that though domestic tourism accounts for approximately 80 per cent of all tourism activity worldwide, governments of most developing countries promote international instead of domestic tourism because of the much-needed foreign exchange earnings the industry generates for the host country. Ghimire (2013) found that the general trend across Africa is a systematic bias in national tourism development planning towards international as opposed to regional or domestic tourism. Tourism policy in Nigeria, as is true of so much of Africa, gives priority to planning for international tourism.

As international tourism in Nigeria continues to grow, the development of domestic tourism have the potential to bring stability to a volatile industry and create a more sustainable path for tourism development. In the words of Sally Mbanefo, the DG, NTDC “we cannot sell Nigeria to foreigners if we don’t start by selling it to Nigerians themselves” (Udeze, 2016). Domestic tourism forms the basis for a stronger international tourism and bridges the seasonality gap thereby creating jobs and stability in the employment sector which is in line with the government goals of poverty reduction and wealth creation leading to social harmony (FMIC, 2018).

Currently the majority of Nigeria’s tourism products - beach tourism, safari tourism, “roots” tourism, cultural and heritage or ethnic tourism, are geared towards international tourists (FMIC, 2018). While these tourists bring in significant foreign exchange earnings, mass tourism is a highly volatile industry and often seasonal in nature, posing a threat to job security and consistent earnings within the industry. Mazimhaka (2007) observed that diversifying the base of a national tourism economy through domestic tourism can often maintain a country’s tourism industry during volatile periods for international tourism. However, the role of domestic tourism in Nigeria is one of the neglected themes in Nigerian tourism and in developing a sustainable tourism industry (FMIC, 2018).

Domestic tourism cannot be maximally promoted without marketing strategies. Makens (2002) defined marketing as a process used to design a product or service combination that provides a real value to the targeted customers, motivates purchase, and fulfils genuine customer needs. Marketing concept holds that the key to achieve organizational goal is being more effective than competitors in creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value to your chosen target markets (Kotler and Keller, 2009). The marketing task is to find the right product to suite the customers not to find the right customers for the product (Duncan, 2002). Marketing focuses on meeting customer wants and needs.

To be able to satisfy customer wants and needs, it is necessary to consider the marketing mix of the product or service tourism provide. The four basic characteristics that make the marketing of tourism different from the marketing of manufactured products includes intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability (George, 2001) and services such as tourism are intangible. To facilitate promotion of tourism products and services, different market channels are applied which include:

1. **Media:** Media channels through which organisations and industries advertise their products which include newspapers and magazines, television, radio, cinema, transport, outdoor advertising and electronic advertising (Belch & Belch 2001).
2. **Direct Marketing:** Direct marketing, if planned and executed effectively, has the potential to be more cost-effective than any other promotional tool because of the precise targeting that the technique allows. Types of direct marketing include direct mail, telemarketing, direct response advertising and door to door pamphlet distribution (Youell, 1998).
3. **Interactive Marketing:** The two - way media which allow both companies and customers to send and receive messages, are called interactive media. The benefit of interactive media (telephone, e-mail, and personal sales people) is that they allow an instant exchange of information to take place, making it possible for a customer to contact the company and receive feedback. The fastest interactive medium is E-mail (Duncan, 2002).
4. **Personal Selling:** Personal selling is a form of person to person communication, in which a seller attempts to assist or persuade prospective buyers to purchase the company's product or service (Belch & Belch 2001). Personal selling involves direct contact between buyer and seller, which gives the marketer communication flexibility. This means that the seller can see or hear the potential buyer's reactions and modify the message accordingly. Personal selling can be targeted to specific markets and customer types that are the best prospects for the company's products or service (Van Der Merwe, 2003).
5. **Non - person Communication:** Non - person channels of communication carry a message without interpersonal contact between sender and receiver. Non - person channels are generally referred to as mass media, because they are communication channels through which messages may be sent to the "masses", that is, large diverse audiences (Duncan, 2002).
6. **Advertising:** Advertising is the use of paid media by an organization to inform existing and potential customers and persuade them to buy its products (Youell, 1998). Being a non-person form of communication, advertising implies the use of mass media that can transmit a message to large groups of individuals often at the same time (Belch & Belch, 2001). There is no opportunity for immediate feedback from the message recipient so before message is sent, advertiser must consider how the audience can interpret and respond.
7. **Sales Promotion:** The marketing activities that provide extra value or incentives to the sales force, distributors or the ultimate consumer can be regarded as sales promotion (Belch & Belch, 2001). The two categories of sales promotion are consumer-oriented sales promotion which stimulates short-term sales by means of coupons, sampling, premiums, rebates or contests, and trade-oriented sales promotion like trade shows or price deals which encourage the trade to promote and make use of a company's products.
8. **Public Relations:** Public relations involve creating a positive image of the business to its public which include customers, shareholders, employees and suppliers Cronje, Du Toit, & Motlatla (2000). It is the management function whereby public attitudes are evaluated, and a programme of action to earn public understanding and acceptance is executed (Belch and Belch 2001). Public relations and publicity are considered to be supportive, rather than primary factors in the marketing and promotional process (Van Der Merwe, 2003).

9. **Internet Marketing:** Nothnagel (2006 cited in Matikiti, 2011) described internet marketing as an umbrella term which encompass the commonly used internet marketing methods which are e-mail marketing, web advertising, online branding, use of search engines and newsletters for marketing hospitality services. Internet gives customers much wider choice of products, services and prices from different suppliers with means to select and purchase items more easily enables the organisations to market their products and services in order to expand into new markets, offer new services and compete on a more equal footing with larger businesses (Dave, Ellis, & Mayer, 2006). Madu & Madu (2002 cited in Mwarania (2012) stated that the potential of using the Internet for marketing activities is derived from its general use as an information exchange system in the digital age which can be stored, indexed, retrieved, restructured and redistributed automatically by software and without human intervention. The Internet connects companies and companies with customers and people with people without regarding time, space and hardware/software platforms.

Palatkova (2012) pointed out that evolution of tourism promotion and marketing started in focus on production and sales towards marketing based on consumer-orientation and later on the societal or sustainability orientation. The consumer behaviour is one core issue of tourism marketing. The growing share of tourists from the emerging economies like China, India and Brazil (lower and upper-middle income countries) forced the traditional and new tourists' destinations and private companies to rethink their promotional and marketing procedures and tools.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study aimed to assess promotional strategies on domestic tourism in Lagos State. It adopted a survey design which involved collection of data from respondents in line with Ndlovu, Nyajuna, & Heath (2010), through the use of structured questionnaire. A sample size of 250 residents of Lagos State including Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) staff, Lagos State tourism board, tourists at the various tourism destinations in Lagos State were purposively selected and involved in the study. The data was collected with questionnaire designed to provide general as well as specific information relevant to the study and administered to the selected respondents. The data collected were analysed descriptively with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and frequency distribution tables was used for data presentation.

4. RESULTS

The results of 200 questionnaires retrieved from respondents and analysed descriptively using frequency distributions with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) is presented in this section. Preliminary result shows that most of the respondents are Yoruba, (44%), Igbos and Hausas were 23% and 9% respectively while other ethnic nationalities were 24% and 86% all respondents are Nigerians. Also, 73.5% of the respondents were Christians, 16% were Muslims, and 10.5% were of other religions. Furthermore, it shows that 10.5% of them have secondary school qualifications, 17% have OND/NCE certificates, 68.5% have a first degree (HND - 34%, B.Sc./ BA - 34.5%) and 4% have Master's Degree.

Table 1: Promotional strategies for domestic tourism in Lagos State

Parameters	Frequency	Percent
Media	188	94
Personal Communication	66	33
Direct Marketing	48	24
Interactive Marketing	42	21
Personal Selling	32	16
Non-person Communication	16	8
Advertising	134	67
Sales Promotion	48	24
Public Relations	92	46
Internet Marketing	114	57

Table 1 shows the respondents' views about the promotional strategies used for domestic tourism in Lagos State and it revealed that 94% noted the use of Media, 67% chose advertising, internet marketing was chosen by 57%, while the least chosen was non - person communication (8%), personal selling (16%), and interactive marketing (21%). It can be concluded therefore that Media is the best strategy for promoting domestic tourism in the state. Respondents' views of other promotional strategies that can be used to promote tourism included seminars and workshops (12%), exhibitions (22%), use of promotional materials (promos) and discounts (4%).

Table 2: Opinions on promotional strategies

Parameters		Frequency	Percent
Tourist sites in Lagos are currently well promoted	Yes	52	26
Effectiveness of promotional strategies	Yes	168	84
Rating of domestic tourism promotion in Lagos State	Low	94	47
	Medium	78	39
	High	28	14
	Total	200	100
Rating government contribution to promotion of tourist sites in Lagos State	Low	102	51
	Medium	88	44
	High	10	5
	Total	200	100
Domestic tourism is more promoted than international tourism in Lagos State	Yes	56	28

Table 2 shows that 26% of the respondents said tourist sites in Lagos State are well promoted, 28% opined that domestic tourism is more promoted than international tourism in Lagos State than domestic tourism and 84% agreed that the promotional strategies are effective. Also, 47% of the respondents rated the promotion of domestic tourism low, 39% rated it medium and only 14% rated the promotion is high. Lastly, while only 10% of the respondents rated government contribution to promotion of tourist sites in Lagos State high, 44% rated her contribution medium and 51% rated government contribution low.

Table 3: Overview of domestic tourism in Lagos State

Parameters		Frequency	Percent
Reasons for low domestic tourism participation	Charges or fees at the destination	122	61
	Disposable income needed to spend	86	43
	Time	92	46
	Transportation	74	37
	Accessibility of the destination	60	30
	Awareness of the destination	96	48
Channels of tourism destination promotion	Media	52	26
	Advertisements	36	18
	Internet	72	36
	Personal communications	40	20
	Total	200	100%
Reasons people participate in domestic tourism	For entertainment and leisure	86	43
	Change of environment and sightseeing	38	19
	Educational reasons	36	18
	Cultural and exposure to new things	22	11
	Stress escape	18	9
	TOTAL	200	100%

Table 3 shows various reasons for low participation in domestic tourism and revealed that 61% of the respondents noted that low participation is due to the charges fee at the destination, poor awareness of the destination (48%), time constraint (46%), low income (43%), poor transportation (37%) and poor accessibility of the destination (30%).

Also, the channels of tourism destination promotion include the internet (36%), the media (26%), through personal communication with friends (20%), and advertisements (18%) and it can be concluded that get to know about the destinations from the internet. Lastly, people participate in domestic tourism for entertainment and leisure (43%), change of environment (19%), education (18%), culture and exposure (11%) and as an escape route from stress (9%).

Table 5: Challenges, prospects of and government contribution in promoting domestic tourism

Parameters		Frequency	Percent
Major challenges the tourism industry in Lagos State	Low finance	56	28
	Lack of maintenance, security and mismanagement	42	21
	Poor accessibility and infrastructures	54	27
	Low awareness and publicity	10	5
	Low revenue and high maintenance cost	18	9
	Low government support and political instability	20	10
	Total	200	100
Ways of encouraging domestic tourism in Lagos State	Proper information dissemination	66	33
	Improved accessibility and transportation	35	17.5
	Creation of more standard tourist centres	46	23
	Government contribution and funding	53	26.5
	Total	200	100
Government contribution in promoting domestic tourism	Financial support and sponsorship	61	30.5
	Establishment and renovation of tourist centres	70	35
	Introducing tourism as a core course in schools	28	14
	Employment of experienced workers	41	20.5
	Total	200	100

Table 5 enumerated the major challenges of tourism industry in Lagos State as low income (28%), poor accessibility and publicity (27%), lack of maintenance, security and mismanagement (21%), low government support and political instability (10%), low revenue and high maintenance cost (9%) and low awareness and publicity (5%). The result also shows that 33% opined that domestic tourism can be encouraged through proper information dissemination, 26.5% mentioned government contribution and funding, 23% believed creation of more standard tourist centres should be encouraged, and 17.5% noted that domestic tourism can be encouraged through improved accessibility and transportation. Lastly, respondents view on government contribution in promoting domestic tourism included establishment and renovation of tourist centres (35%), financial support and sponsorship (30.5%), employment of experienced workers and staff (20.5%) and introducing tourism as a core course in schools (14%).

5. DISCUSSION

The outcome of this study shows that various promotional strategies are used on domestic tourism in Lagos State. The most-widely used is the media which agreed with Awofeso (2014) that social media is powerful instrument in promoting local tourism assets. These strategies are effective, because a lot of the respondents got to know about domestic tourism through the media and the internet. This is in consonance with the recommendations of Folarin - Coker (2017) that promotion of domestic tourism should be digital as most people have access to digital media like phones. The challenges pointed out facing tourism industry in Lagos State included poor financing, poor maintenance, insecurity and mismanagement, low awareness, low revenue, high cost of maintenance, political instability, among others aligning with Folarin - Coker (2017). To promote domestic tourism therefore, more publicity and awareness should be made using media and the internet, with the inclusion of seminars, workshops, exhibitions and discounts as promotional strategies, establishment of more tourist centres of higher standards and easy accessibility. This was in line with the

charge by Awofeso (2014) that Nigeria should promote her local/ domestic tourism assets with social media platforms and destination – specific documentaries.

It is of great necessity that the government contribute maximally to domestic tourism promotion. This should be done by funding the sector as well as renovating old attractions with full facilities and infrastructures. This agreed with the position of Folarin - Coker, (2017, 2018) that Nigeria tourism infrastructures are moribund and need holistic turnaround and capital development in the form of trainings on new media and technology and doing away with bureaucratic bottlenecks that hinder access to finance meant for promoting tourism in the country.

The study also agreed with the recommendations of Ndlovu, Nyajuna, & Heath (2010) to identify and prioritise preferred destinations and attractions for the domestic market; the need to ensure accessible and affordable transport to tourism attractions and routes and the importance of ensuring value for money and affordability of the current offerings to current and prospective domestic tourists

6. CONCLUSION

The study identified the important role of promotional strategies in domestic tourism and further revealed the important role played by domestic tourism in Lagos State. Lagos State tourism industry uses various promotional strategies like media, advertising, internet marketing, public relations, personal communication, direct marketing, sales promotion, etc. to market and promote its domestic tourism products. However, poor promotional strategies have led to poor patronage of customers, lack of product development and innovation, poor marketing implementation, and this can affect the tourism business. The implementation of promotional strategies without assessing the effectiveness can contribute to unfulfilled achievement of marketing and promotion of domestic tourism business. The innovation, development and promotion of tourism products can add value and desire for tourists.

Promotion of domestic tourism requires sufficient information about the products marketed since tourism products are not physically seen, measured or touchable but can only be experienced. Hence sufficient information about tourism products and services offered by tour operators can motivate customers to engage and purchase. Successful promotion of Lagos State domestic tourism requires both efforts of tour operators (private sector) and government tourism organizations to work closely to ensure optimal marketing of domestic tourism products and services.

7. RECOMMENDATION

Domestic Tourism is an important sector that contributes to the economic growth and employment opportunities for communities in Lagos State. The outcome promotional strategies on domestic tourism in Lagos State gave birth to the following recommendations to enhance promotion of domestic tourism in Lagos State:

- ❖ Lagos State Tourism Board should identify the efficient promotional strategies to implement in promoting Lagos State domestic tourism.
- ❖ Frequently review and properly analyse the promotional strategies so as to locate effective promotional strategies according to the target population.
- ❖ Promotional course programs should be conducted to facilitate better performance of tour operators and staffs.
- ❖ Improvement of internet and media contents including valuable information details to capture customers and visitor's mind.

- ❖ Government's cooperation with public-private partnership organization as the factor to reinforce development of Lagos State domestic tourism.

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