

INFLUENCE OF MARKETING STRATEGIES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF TOUR OPERATOR FIRMS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Tour operator firms face the challenge of increased competition, which results in more choices for customers who demand to get value for their money. The study sought to determine the influence of marketing strategies on the performance of tour operator firms in Kenya. Marketing mix theory provided support for the research. Using a descriptive cross-sectional study methodology, the research was conducted using a positivist philosophical perspective. All 271 categories A-E tour enterprises that were registered with the KATO as of the 31st of December in 2018 were included in the target audience. Utilizing a stratified sampling approach, a sample size of 159 individuals was determined to be appropriate. The main data for this research was obtained via semi-structured questionnaires. In order to analyze the data, statisticians used tools including inferential statistics, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis. The results showed that the tour operator firms' total performance was greatly affected by their marketing strategies. The study findings provide important information for policy makers with regard to how effectively manage tour operator firms by leveraging on various marketing strategies in order to realize improved performance in these companies. The managers of travel and tourism businesses gain insights into customer preferences and behaviour. By adopting the best marketing mix strategies, they can deliver on destinations, types of travel experiences, and pricing preferences, companies can tailor their offerings to match what consumers' needs and wants for competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Distribution Strategy, Firm performance, Marketing strategies, Price Strategy, Product Strategy, Promotion Strategy, Tour Operator Firms*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Aremu and Bamiduro (2012), marketing strategies are defined as the activities that are planned and coordinated by a company in order to promote its goods or services, serve the demands of its customers, and accomplish the specific business goals that it has set for itself. According to Kotler et al. (1999), it is also a collection of marketing techniques that a firm use in order to ensure that its marketing goals are met within the target market. These tactics include a variety of components, including product creation, price, distribution, and marketing, among others. According to Kumar et al.'s research from 2020, successful marketing strategies are designed to provide value for consumers, distinguish the firm from its rivals, and increase customer acquisition, retention, and satisfaction. The primary objective of marketing strategy is to acquire new consumers and to remain loyal to those who have already purchased from them. Companies use a variety of different marketing methods. The marketing activities such as promotions, offering after sale services, use of coupons, gift cards, and advertisements as used to attract and retain customers (Ghouri et al., 2011). The aim of these different types of marketing strategies is to develop lasting customer relationships (Berry, 1995).

According to Njeru (2013), the majority of firms adhere to the conventional strategies that comprise the marketing mix, which include pricing, promotion, product, and location. Product strategy involves the process in which goods and services are developed and managed. Price entails the amount a firm charge to offer specific goods or services. Place strategy is the distribution channels developed by a firm to ensure that the goods and services produce reach the end consumer. Lastly, promotion strategy in the ability of the firm to create a value perception of a product/service to a customer via marketing communication tools (Ghouri et al., 2011). Market strategies that are successful in acquiring and maintaining consumers are an essential component in driving the performance of a company. As an instance, Kumar et al. (2020) conducted research in which they discovered that businesses that engaged in customer-centric marketing strategies obtained greater levels of customer loyalty as well as financial success.

Firm performance refers to the measurable outcomes or results achieved by a company in relation to its objectives and goals (Agustian, Maksum, Zen, Sekarini & Malik, 2023). Firm performance influenced by various internal and external factors, including leadership, strategy, organizational culture, industry dynamics among others (Dornier & Selmi, 2012). This study adopted marketing strategies, organizational culture and industry environment as factors that can influence firm performance. Firm performance encompasses various aspects of a firm's operations, financial measures, profitability, competitiveness, and overall success (Tang, 2018).

Literature suggests that there are three elements of measuring performance: financial, effectiveness and operational (Tang, 2018). This implies that the measurement of performance is financial and non-financial. With regard to the various modes of measurement, performance argued to be a difficult multi-dimensional variable. Often, firm performance applied by organizations to measure performance, as it addresses a firm's financial indicators. Njeru (2013) argues that there is relevance in adopting financial measures of firm performance.

However, this approach is limiting since the financial dimensions can be distorted or manipulated to depreciate the value and there is no standardization. Additionally, overreliance of financial indicators can be misleading especially when intangible assets were being measured such as human resources. Scholars argue that performance can be measured by applying human, environmental and non-financial organizational factors (Mehralian et al., 2018).

Tour operator firms are institutions that offer travel and accommodation services to customers visiting a tourist destination site (Odiko, 2018). The tourism industry has gained attention of entrepreneurs and businesspersons because of its performance. This has seen the development of more hotels and restaurants, tourists' sites, and tour companies. Tour firms in particular ensure smooth operations in the tourism industry by creating different packages suited for their customers (Odiko, 2018). There are 271 tour firms on the KATO register; 38 are listed under category A, 6 in the B category, 11 in category C, 40 under category D, and 176 under category E. Tour firms contribute greatly in the country's GDP (KATO, 2020). In 2018, the tourism industry contributed approximately 8.8% of the GDP thus drawing attention from service providers and tourism marketers.

During the year 2018, the tourist sector saw a remarkable growth rate of 5.6%, which was much higher than the anticipated worldwide growth rate of 3.3%. According to the WTTC, the tourism sector generated around 1.1 million employment and contributed Kshs. 790 billion in 2018. The Kenyan tourist industry is thus not something that can be ignored. However, tourism industry is vulnerable to acts of terrorism or environmental risks, government policies and international travel sanctions that really impact the industries performance. For instance, during the 2020 to 2022 COVID 19 pandemic, the tourism sector suffered severely due to restricted travelling to Kenya and around the world. As a result, it is essential for all stakeholders in the business to devise the most effective marketing mix methods in order to maintain a competitive advantage over their rivals and to guarantee that visitors will continue to visit the nation throughout the year. In essence, the tourist sector has a significant impact on the economy of Kenya (Odiko, 2018); hence, improved methods are necessary in order to maintain the industry's performance at a higher, more consistent level. The purpose of this study is to fill in this vacuum by determining whether or not marketing techniques, organizational culture, and the industry environment have an impact on the success of tour operator companies in Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Insufficient data exists to draw any firm conclusions on the impact of marketing strategies on business outcomes. Some studies have shown a favorable association between marketing strategy and firm success (Potokina, 2015; Abdi, 2015; Muthee, 2016). Nevertheless, research conducted by Fraj, Martínez, & Matute (2011) and Kurtz and Boone (2011) has shown that marketing techniques do not correlate with company success. Considering the expansion in the tourist business as well as the increasing level of competition in the sector, the contradictory results advised that further study should be carried out in the tourism industry.

As a consequence, the purpose of this research was to investigate the impact that marketing tactics have on the performance of businesses in order to generalize the findings. In order for a company to successfully execute a marketing plan and contend with performance challenges, it is necessary for the company to build a strong organizational culture. According to Harrower (2011), a robust organizational culture leads to long-term stability in the behavior of stakeholders inside the company who contribute to the organization. Since the economy is more complicated now, businesses are under more pressure than ever to develop effective marketing tactics, foster a positive company culture, and make sure these two things don't conflict. Empirical research was conducted by Kurtz and Boone (2011) to ascertain the correlation between the efficacy of marketing mix strategies and the quantity of rules imposed, which consequently impact the performance of American companies. The findings indicate that the degree to which a marketing plan is put into action impacts the company's success. Contrarily, certain variables, like company characteristics and the operating environment, may moderate or mediate the interaction of the dependent variables; however, this was not considered in the research by Kurtz and Boone (2011). With these factors in mind, we should be able to deduce the nature and direction of the relationships that affect the organization's performance.

Tour operator firms over the past decade have faced the challenge of increased competition and a change in customers' preferences. Currently, customers pay for services and products of high quality. Increased competition in the tourism sector has resulted in more choices for customers who demand to get value for their money. Although, tour firms contribute to the tourism industry, a key pillar of attaining Kenya's Vision 2030 (Njeru, 2013) a poor choice in marketing can result in collapse. This was evident after the collapse of the Thomas Cook tour company, a 178-year-old tour operator in 2019 (Mwita, 2019). Moreover, with respect to the global environment, formulation and implementation of marketing strategies are not sufficient for tour operator firms to sustain performance. Taking into consideration the aforementioned context, the purpose of this study was to provide a response to the following question: what is the link between marketing strategies and the performance of tour operator enterprises in Kenya?

1.2 Research Objective

To determine the influence of marketing strategies on the performance of tour operator firms in Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

H₀: Marketing strategies has no significant influence on performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

Borden (1964) introduced the marketing mix theory. Marketing mix theory is the basis for the formation of product price, promotion and distribution, which later were defined as the 4p's of marketing strategies (Aremu & Bamiduro, 2012). The promotion element of marketing mix was often implemented through advertising. Companies advertise their services through social and mass media to attract new customers and share information on the services they are

offering (Ghouri et al., 2011). The marketing mix theory assumes that the customer does not need contact with the retailer/seller (Goi, 2009). This assumption was addressed by incorporating the service marketing theory, which posits that customers need to interact with sellers throughout the process of purchase to delivery. The adoption of the theory facilitates steady production and service delivery by an organization. The theory integrates the research output of a brand and the marketing activities conducted facilitating the conversion of sales into revenue. Moreover, the theory helps in attaining both short- and long-term objectives.

Goi (2009) critiqued the marketing mix theory for not emphasizing on customer relationship. The theory perceives a customer as a passive buyer. It does not consider that customers would prefer a product where interaction with the seller allowed. For its effectiveness in this research, the theory backed by service marketing theory that posits that people (customers) need to understand the process of service delivery for better performance (Barney, 1991). The theory of marketing mix ensures that the appropriate marketing strategies implemented in order to develop long-lasting customer relationships.

Moreover, following the 4p's, a firm and in this context, a tour operator firm is able to maximize on its current marketing activities to have a lasting influence on its targeted customers. Attracting indifferent customers to accept and become loyal to a specific good or service is at the epicenter of any marketing strategy adopted by a firm (Ghouri et al., 2011). This is the case for the tour firms in Kenya that acknowledge that a marketing mix must be put in place to ensure effective operations in a competitive industry. For this study, the marketing mix theory is essential, since it holds that product, place, price and promotion strategies are critical for improved performance. For this study, the four strategies assessed to analyze their influence on tour operator firms' performance. Moreover, in support of the theory the study will measure which of the three strategies has a stronger correlation with firm performance among tour operator firms in Kenya.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework helps the reader to quickly see the proposed relationships between the variables in the study and show the same graphically. In this study, marketing strategies was the independent variable while firm performance was the dependent as shown Figure.

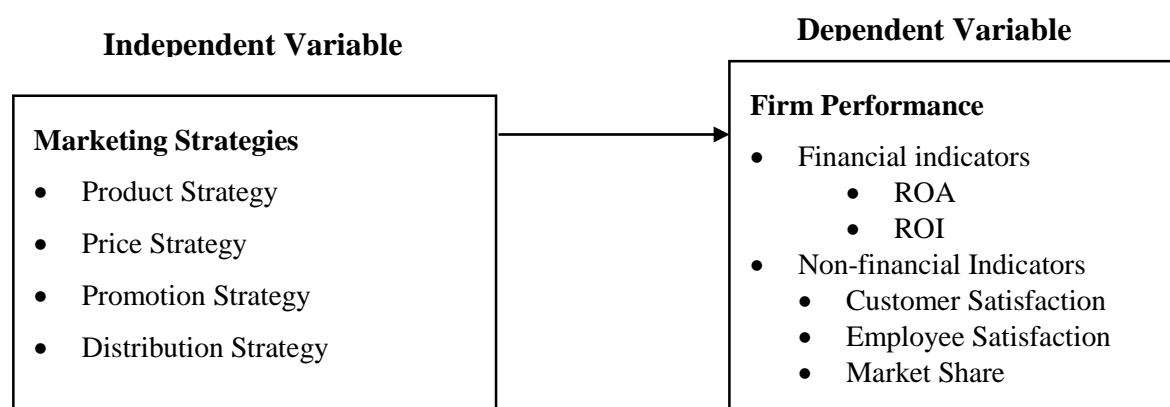


Figure 1:

Conceptual Framework

2.3 Empirical Studies

In Russia, Potokina, (2015) found that marketing strategies were essential in improving travel agencies' performance. The study found that customers have become more specific to the packages they like; hence better marketing strategies are needed to attract such customers. Further, the study revealed that customers and in particular the young people may in the future turn to using online materials to create their own packages, making travel agencies obsolete. The study however, did not reveal a moderating variable between strategies of marketing and performance. The research was also situated in Russia; hence, the research cannot be used to generalize in other states such as Kenya.

A study by Dzisi and Ofosu (2015) in Ghana found that through effective implementation of marketing strategies a firm is able to surpass the expectations and needs of customers. Effective marketing strategies result in repeat purchases, free advertising through word of mouth, and customer loyalty (Kotler, 2003). The study was comprehensive since it used both questionnaire and interview guide to gather data. However, the study did not indicate whether there is any moderator variable that impacts on the link between strategies of marketing and performance.

In Nigeria by Oyedijo et al., (2012) showed that strategies in marketing significantly influence performance of 160 small scaled businesses in Lagos. The research measured performance on the grounds of customer retention and satisfaction. Similar to the current study, Oyedijo et al., (2012) adopted marketing mix factors to emphasize on the need of marketing strategies in improving performance. The study situated in Nigeria, hence, the study recommended for more research to be conducted in the field to increase empirical literature. Moreover, the study measures the non-financial indicators of performance while the current study will not only measure non-firm performance but also firm performance in form of turnover.

In Kenya, Abdi (2015) established that electronic marketing strategies positively impacted the performance of Kenyan tour operator firms. However, the research is five years old, implying that a current study that accommodates the new tour operator firms in Kenya recommended. At the time, the study targeted only 116 tour firms while the current study will target 271 tour operator firms. This is an indication of the tourism sector growth, hence increased completion in the industry. Moreover, the research only focused on electronic marketing while there are other means of marketing such as the use of written pamphlets and brochures.

According to the findings of a research that Muriithi (2021) conducted on the topic of marketing strategies and organizational performance, the link between marketing mix strategies and organizational performance was shown to be favorably and considerably regulated by company characteristics and the competitive environment. After conducting an experiment to determine the combined effect, it was discovered that marketing mix methods, company characteristics, and the competitive environment all had an impact on performances. However, the moderating influence of organizational culture was not included in the research. Therefore, this research set out to address a gap in the literature by investigating how tour

operator businesses in Kenya's organizational culture affects the connection between marketing techniques and company performance.

III. METHODOLOGY

Positivism is a philosophical school that is founded on the principles of reason, truth, and validity, as well as a preference for facts that are obtained by direct observation and experience, and then experimentally assessed through the use of quantitative techniques and statistical analysis. Positivist researchers use on variables, hypotheses, and operational definitions based on conventional theory to infer and build their study. Following the tenets of positivism, this study drew its conceptual framework from the literature on strategic management and marketing and then tested its empirical hypotheses based on predictions of phenomena in an unbiased manner. Quantitative and descriptive cross-sectional research designs were used in the study. Due to the fact that it makes it easier to describe the research variables, such as marketing tactics, organizational culture, industrial environment, and performance of tour operator businesses, the descriptive cross-sectional design was chosen to use.

The population of the study consisted of tour operating companies that were registered with the KATO. These companies might be either local or multinational enterprises. All 271 categories A-E tour businesses that were registered with the KATO as of the 31st of December in 2018 were included in the pool of potential customers. A stratified sampling strategy was used in the research project in order to determine a sample size. By using this method of sampling, each specifically targeted respondent in each category is provided with an equal chance to be selected for participation in the study. During the computation of the sample size, the research used the formula developed by Krijcie and Morgan (1978). The method of disproportionate probability sampling was used in order to pick the 159 individuals that participated in the investigation.

The primary data for this research was collected via the use of questionnaires that were semi-structured. The research topics were taken into consideration while developing the questionnaires. A total of 159 questionnaires were sent out to the marketing managers of the tour operator companies that were selected for sampling. Due to the size of the sample, the researcher decided to seek support in the collection of data from research assistants who had received special training. Following a comprehensive examination of the current theoretical and empirical literature on market strategies, organizational culture, industrial environment, and company performance, the measures of each research variable were developed as a consequence of this review. The reliability testing was conducted to determine whether or not each individual question that was used to build the variable was measuring the same element. Content, face and convergent validity employed for the study. A pilot test was conducted to check content validity, in ensuring that all study variables exhaustively covered the research instruments. Face validity was established by consulting with the academic supervisors on the research instruments. Feedback from the academic supervisors used to make relevant corrections of the instruments.

In order to produce summaries of the variables that were examined, the research used narrative statistics and regression models. With regard to the data that was evaluated, the mean

and the standard deviation were used as measurements. Tables and graphs were used to display the quantitative data, while narratives were used to report the qualitative findings. The objective was analyzed using linear correlation analysis, where the correlation between marketing strategies and performance was assessed. An approach known as simple linear regression was used in order to test the hypothesis H1, which stated that marketing techniques did not have a substantial impact on the performance of the company. Following that, the composite score of firm performance was regressed against the composite score of product, price, promotion, and location (all of which are aspects of marketing techniques). A composite score is a single score that is created by adding together all of the items that measure the variables in question and then dividing that amount by the total number of elements.

IV. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

The study evaluated how marketing strategies impact the performance of tour operator firms in Kenya. The marketing strategies were tested on eighteen (18) items. The respondents were asked to rate the statements relating to marketing strategy as applicable in their respective tour companies using a Likert scale. The responses from the question items were analyzed and summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

<i>Marketing Strategy</i>				
Product Strategy	N	Mean Score	SD	CV (%)
We develop new products and services after conducting thorough research	154	3.48	1.122	32
The tour operator firm is able to develop new services	154	2.91	1.196	41
All our products and services are successfully launched	154	2.78	1.162	42
All the services and products developed by the firm are aimed at meeting the demands of potential and target clients	154	2.71	1.199	44
Overall Mean Score		2.97	1.17	40
Price Strategy	N	Mean Score	SD	CV (%)
We quickly respond to prices changes in the market	154	2.81	1.148	41
We monitor price changes in the market	154	3.16	1.244	39
We are aware of the pricing techniques used by our competitors	154	3.10	1.222	39
We price our products and services after careful analysis	154	2.97	1.196	40
Overall Mean Score		3.01	1.203	40
Distribution Strategy	N	Mean Score	SD	CV (%)
We maintain strong relationships with our distributors	154	2.96	1.267	43
We value business with our distributors	154	3.27	1.273	39
We recruit and maintain highly skilled Distributors	154	2.53	1.289	51
We support our distributors	154	2.93	1.200	41
Overall Mean Score		2.92	1.257	44
Promotion Strategy	N	Mean Score	SD	CV (%)

We have a highly skilled marketing team	154	3.19	1.415	44
We offer sales personnel training prior to job assignment	154	2.55	1.273	50
We develop and execute quality Promotions	154	3.06	1.271	41
We offer service support to our sales Personnel	154	3.30	1.406	43
We use internet marketing	154	3.32	1.395	42
We have and effective and running public relations program	154	2.82	1.281	45
Overall Mean Score		3.04	1.34	44

Source: Field Data, (2024)

The results in Table 1 reveal that mean score for the four statements used to measure product strategy was 2.97 with a coefficient of variation of 40%. In addition, “All the services and products developed by the firm are aimed at meeting the demands of potential and target clients” recorded the lowest mean score (mean score=2.71, C. V=44%). On the hand, “We develop new products and services after conducting thorough research” recorded the highest mean score (mean score=3.48, C. V=32%).

The results in Table1 reveal that mean score for the four statements used to measure price strategy was 3.01 with a coefficient of variation of 40%. In addition, “We quickly respond to prices changes in the market” recorded the lowest mean score (mean score=2.81, C. V=41%). On the hand, “We monitor price changes in the market” recorded the highest mean score (mean score=3.16, C. V=39%).

The results in Table 1 reveal that mean score for the four statements used to measure distribution strategy was 2.92 with a coefficient of variation of 44%. In addition, “We recruit and maintain highly skilled Distributors” recorded the lowest mean score (mean score=2.53, C. V=51%). On the hand, “We value business with our distributors” recorded the highest mean score (mean score=3.27, C. V=39%).

The results in Table 1 reveal that mean score for the four statements used to measure promotion strategy was 3.04 with a coefficient of variation of 44%. In addition, “We offer sales personnel training prior to job assignment” recorded the lowest mean score (mean score=2.54, C. V=50%). On the hand, “We use internet marketing” recorded the highest mean score (mean score=3.21, C. V=42%).

Table 2

Firm Performance Descriptive Statistics

No	Firm Performance (Composite Score)	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
a	Efficiency	154	2.98	1.400	47
b	Firm Effectiveness	154	2.98	1.401	47
c	Firm Relevance	154	3.04	1.459	48
d	Growth of the Tour Companies	154	2.96	1.450	49
e	Customer Statements	154	2.98	1.430	48
f	Financial Viability	154	3.02	1.419	47
	Overall		2.99	1.427	48

Source: Field Data, (2024)

The results in Table 2, show that the mean score of the sub-variables of the firm performance was 2.99 with a standard deviation of 1.427 and a coefficient of variation (Cv) of 48%. Firm relevance had the highest mean of 3.04, S. D=1.459 and C.V of 48%. On the other hand, growth of the Tour Companies had the lowest mean of 2.96, S. D=1.450 with C.V of 49%.

4.2 Inferential Analysis

The null hypothesis of the study was that Marketing strategies has no significant influence on firm performance of tour operator firms in Kenya in western Kenya. This was achieved using Pearson Correlation and Regression analysis.

4.2.1 Pearson Correlation

From the correlation Table 3.0, the correlation coefficient between marketing strategies and firm performance positive and moderate ($r = 0.456$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that improvement in marketing strategies would results to significant improvement in firm performance.

Table 3

Correlation Analysis

		Firm performance
Marketing strategies	Pearson Correlation	.457**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	154

4.2.2 Hypothesis Testing

Simple linear regression analysis was done to determine the influence of marketing strategies on the firm performance of tour operator firms in Kenya. Results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Linear Regression Analysis

Model Summary^b					Std. Error of the Estimate	
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square			
1	.457 ^a	.209	.203			.29020
a. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing strategies						
b. Dependent Variable: Firm performance						
ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.376	1	3.376	40.088	.000 ^b
	Residual	12.801	152	.084		
	Total	16.177	153			
a. Dependent Variable: Firm performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing strategies						
Coefficients^a						

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	1.670	.213			7.833	.000
Marketing strategies	.449	.071	.457		6.332	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Firm performance						

The coefficient of determination (R Square) stands at 0.209, indicating that approximately 20.9% of the variability in firm performance can be explained by variations in marketing strategies. The model, with Marketing strategies as a predictor, exhibits a notable ability to explain variations in firm performance. From the ANOVA table significance of the model had a value ($F(1,152) = 40.088$, $p < 0.05$) this shows that model was significant at 95% confidence level hence the model is feasible therefore good fit for this study. The results suggest that the regression model, incorporating marketing strategies as a predictor, significantly explains the variance in firm performance of tour operator firms in Kenya.

The unstandardized coefficient for marketing strategies is 0.449, indicating that for each unit increase in marketing strategies, firm performance is expected to increase by 0.449 units. The t-value of 6.332 is associated with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the relationship between marketing strategies and firm performance is statistically significant. The regression equation to estimate the firm performance of tour operator firms in Kenya as a result of Marketing strategies was hence stated as:

$$\text{Firm performance} = 1.670 + 0.449 \text{ Marketing strategies}$$

The regression results underscore the critical role of marketing strategies in determining firm performance. The statistically significant coefficients and standardized values emphasize the relevance of marketing strategies as a predictor. The study rejected the null hypothesis that “Marketing strategies has no significant influence on performance”.

Discussion of the Findings

The assessment of the objective done by first operationalizing marketing strategy into relevant measurable items. As per the present study, marketing strategies measured using eighteen (18) items, which were categorized into four, constructs—product, price, distribution and promotion. Product dimension refers to the process in which goods and services are developed and managed. Price strategy entails the amount a firm charge to offer specific goods or services. Place strategy is the distribution channel developed by a firm to ensure that the goods and services produced reach the end consumer. Promotion dimension is a firm’s ability to create a value perception of a product/service to a customer via marketing communication tools.

Analysis of the item-mean scores showed that respondents highly rated the idea that the tour companies conduct research before launching new products and services. This indicates how the companies are committed to ensure that products and services launched to the market can fit the demands of the prospective clients. Yet another top rated it was the idea that all

products and services successfully launched. This also points to how the companies ensure that all the necessary checks conducted on their products in order to ensure that there is successful launch.

The finding was that marketing strategies significantly influence firm performance. The first hypothesis failed to be supported. This finding corroborated with previous studies for example study by Kurtz & Boone (2011), Potokina (2015) who postulated that marketing strategies improve the performance of the travel agencies. Moreover, the findings were also, contrary to what most observed in Nigeria and Ghana by Oyedijo et al. (2012) Dzisi and Ofosu (2015) respectively, who noted that marketing strategies could influence firm performance from various perspectives. Considering the Kenyan context, studies conducted by Abdi (2015) and Muthee (2016) established how marketing strategies had low impact on tour firm performance. Therefore, the findings of the present study supported what was established in these studies.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study outcomes established that marketing strategies significantly influenced performance of the tour operator companies. This implies that most of the tour operator companies aligned their marketing strategies to achieve improved performance because of various dimensions. As evidenced from various empirical studies from around the world, it is imperative for organizations to put in place marketing strategies, which would guarantee improved organizational performance. Through marketing research, tour firms can keep abreast of the changing customer needs and develop new products and services that will meet the needs and wants of their current and potential customers and adapt to changes in the external environment. The study suggested that tour firms need to be innovative in new product development, marketing communication and in pricing strategies.

5.2 Study Recommendations

Tour operator companies should invest in ongoing marketing research to better understand evolving customer preferences, market trends, and competitor activities. This will enable them to identify new opportunities, refine existing products and services, and tailor their marketing strategies to meet the current and potential needs of customers. Staying informed about the external environment ensures that firms can proactively adapt to market changes and maintain a competitive edge. To sustain growth and improve performance, tour companies should prioritize innovation in product development. This could involve creating unique travel packages, incorporating sustainable tourism practices, or offering personalized services that cater to niche markets. By consistently introducing new and differentiated offerings, companies can attract a broader customer base and stand out in a competitive market. Tour operators should adopt flexible and competitive pricing strategies that reflect the dynamic nature of the tourism industry. By utilizing data-driven approaches to price their services based on factors such as seasonality, customer demand, and competitor pricing, companies can maximize revenue and customer satisfaction. Special promotions, discounts, or loyalty programs can also be used to boost customer retention and attract new clientele.

5.3 Study Implications

The results from the present thesis anticipated to provide the management of tour operator companies in Kenya with critical insights with regard to implementation of marketing strategies. The descriptive statistical analysis provided important insights with regard to the need to conduct research prior to launching of products and services. It also established that among the highly ranked items was the idea that all the products and services were successfully launched. From the managerial perspective, this provides an important insight concerning first the importance of conducting thorough research prior to launching of the product and taking care of factors that would lead to successful launch of products and services in the tour companies and have a competitor advantage over their competitors in the same field.

The study findings provide important information for policy makers with regard to how effectively manage tour operator farms by leveraging on various marketing strategies in order to realize improved performance in these companies. The policy makers therefore need guided that marketing strategies applied by the tour operator companies increase their level of performance but there are other factors study did not consider.

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