



## ROLE OF MARKETING IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p><b>Received:</b> 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026 <b>Accepted:</b> 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026</p>	<p>The multidisciplinary nature of tourism has succeeded in associating the growth, study and development of tourism with several subject areas such as management, history, geography, economics, marketing, sociology, etc. This development has created confusion in several areas which has impacted negatively in the study and practice of tourism including the faculty housing the department of hospitality and tourism management in Nigerian Polytechnics and Universities. This current study identifies the role that marketing plays in the practice of tourism and hospitality, to include influencing tourism demand, communicating value, attracting visitors to destinations, enhancing moment of truth, developing internal marketing strategy, tourism product development, building brand identity, delivering memorable touristic experiences, competitive positioning, foreign market entry strategies, promoting tourism sustainability, etc. The study therefore concluded that making marketing the focal point for tourism growth and development is the key to achieving tourism sustainability. The study implications in the context of academia, practitioner and policy are provided.</p>

**Keywords:** Tourism Demand. Tourism Motivation. Memorable Touristic Experiences. Tourist Behavioural Intentions. Marketing Strategy. Hospitality Marketing. Tourism Sustainability

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become a global trade where destinations compete for tourist arrivals. Tourists travel to destinations of their choice for recreation, business and other purposes. The choice of destinations depends on several factors such as destination attributes, cost of travel and the purpose of travel by the tourists. The economic value of tourism to nation states has engendered destination competitiveness at the global scale as nations with various visitor attractions compete for tourist arrivals (Ekeke & Olori, 2021).

The need to ensure that tourists that travel to destinations of their choice gains memorable touristic experiences, motivates tourism service providers to turn to Marketing as the appropriate instrument to achieve tourist satisfaction and positive tourist behavioural intentions in the tourism market. This is achieved through tourism marketing by performing three specific functions; understanding what tourists want, creating and communicating value and enabling an exchange of value.

Destinations that are capable of delighting customers through delivering touristic experiential value ultimately achieves competitive advantage. This development engenders more tourist arrivals with the accompanying economic multiplier effects and other benefits. Identifying the needs of the target market, developing the services to meet tourist needs, communicating value and attracting tourists in the process to a specific destination and ensuring that destination experience is co-created with tourists makes it possible for destinations to achieve their pre-stated marketing goals.

With the rapid increase in tourist arrivals across world destinations (WTO, 2016), tourism is becoming the largest industry in the world. As observed by Arasli (2014), the increase in cross border movements in the context of tourism has become an important motive for globalization when viewed in terms of cross-border economic, social and cultural relations. The benefits associated with tourism, continues to motivate individual countries to seek ways to attract potential tourists to enable them earn tourism-related gains.

Marketing has emerged over the years as, 'a way of doing business', thus making its application in tourism a *sin qua non* for achieving national tourism development objectives. As noted by Benghadbane, and Khreis, (2019), several countries have in recent decades "heavily depended on the tourism sector for promoting economic development and have hence taken major steps to develop it". Developing tourism means improving the destination attributes and by

extension promoting the destination attractiveness and appeal. The essence being to attract more tourists to such a destination.

From the foregoing, it could be argued that tourism marketing constitutes a principal factor in achieving tourism development as a result of its role in tourism product development, destination promotion and marketing, experiential marketing, and the overall promotion of tourism and provision of services. The quest by tourism stakeholders to attract tourists to a particular destination and the creation of motives for consumption of tourism product rests with the appropriate application of marketing strategies (Benhaddou, 2017). This current study, attempts to validate the fact that the application of marketing in tourism provides the framework needed to deliver tourism value (memorable touristic experience), capture value in return and achieve tourism sustainability.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Conceptual Clarifications

##### Marketing

Marketing is very vital in the quest to understand any kind of business because it helps to deliver value in the marketplace and capture value in return (Kotler, 2001). The implication being that any business that excludes the appeals of marketing is not complete and may not survive the competition and unstable business environment. As noted by Whalley (2014, p.8), "at the highest levels, marketing becomes an integrating holistic culture that drives integrated co-ordinated and focused business practices with the interests of the customer as its heart- a combination that makes such businesses difficult to beat in the market".

Marketing is the most visible important and dynamic aspect of a business. It is the academic discipline required to understand customers' needs and the benefit they seek. Due to the controversial and pervasive nature of the subject, the academic does not have one commonly agreed upon definition of marketing. Even after a better part of a decade, the debate continues. Our working definition is the one given by Professor Gazie Okpara;

*"Marketing is the individual or institutional activities designed to create customer satisfaction and relationship by striving to make offers and acceptance mutually easier and favourable." (Okpara 2002, p.6).*

Apart from being contemporary in nature, it captures the quest by marketers to create mutual relationships with key customers as a way of ensuring continuous streams of revenue which translate to sustainable profit making.

**Tourism marketing** is defined by Roday, Biwal and Joshi (2013) as "a continuous sequential process in which the management plans, researches, implements, monitors, and evaluate activities which has been designed for satisfying the needs and wants of tourists and for fulfilling their own organizational objectives". Tourism Marketing will help in harnessing the tourism potentials of tourism destinations in the following ways;

- (i) Marketing plays critical role in the planning process for tourism planning and development.
- (ii) Marketing research helps in proper articulation of tourism product development
- (iii) Tourism marketing facilitates the role of Destination Management Marketing Organisation(DMMO)
- (iv) An effective promotional programme developed to market a particular country as a destination.
- (v) Marketing ensures that value is created and delivered to the targeted audience.
- (vi) Marketing crafts destination branding strategy that is capable of creating a distinct destination image for a tourism destination?

**Tourism:** Tourism has evolved into a global phenomenon with tremendous impact on all spheres of life. This chapter of the introducing text explores the concept of tourism with a view to creating easy understanding of the multi-dimensional concept. Tourism is defined as the activities of a person travelling outside his or her usual environment for less than a specified period of time and whose main purpose of travel is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from the place visited (UNWTO, 2021). Another definition describes tourism as the temporary movement of people to destination(s) outside their normal places of work and residence, the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs (Mathieson & Wall 1982). Main characteristics of the definition of tourism includes activities people travelling for tourism, displacement outside usual environment, purpose of the trip, and duration.

### MARKETING AND TOURISM

#### The role of marketing in tourism manifests in the following ways;

- i. **Tourism Demand:** Tourism motivation describes the reason why people travel touristically. It is categorised into two principal factors: pull and push factors. Pull factors (internal factors that will cause people to leave their home for tourism destinations) include rest & escape, status & self esteem, novelty & adventure, social interactions, health & wellness. On the other hand, pull factors (external factors that draw people to a particular tourism destination) includes natural attractions, cultural attractions, infrastructure, events, image & reputation of the destination.

- ii. **Communicating Value:** Marketing concerns itself with the communication of benefits of ideas, people and places as it concerns selling of products and services in the marketplace. Thus marketing is a proven set of a continuous developing set of management techniques for influencing behaviour, developing and communicating product benefits such as tourism products. The destination products which makes up the pull factors are appropriately communicated to the target market/potential tourist in order to influence their destination choice.
- iii. **Attracting Visitors to a Destination:** Marketing plays significant role in attracting tourists to destinations of their choice. This is done through marketing communications whereby the unique attractions, services and experiences are showcased during advertisements. Marketing campaigns that prove effective assists in generating tourists' interest towards such destination. The advantage here is that such promotional campaigns assist in helping destinations to stand in the competitive tourism market. The campaigns include the showcasing of the various attractions in the destination, the hotels, Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs), airlines, local cuisines, etc., through channels like destination websites, social media, email marketing, and influencer collaborations, etc. Tourism marketing creates awareness about tourism services and destinations, thus informing the potential tourists about destination offerings and experiences. By so doing, marketing allows potential tourists to engage with the destination brand before visiting through content marketing, experiential promotions and interactive campaigns.
- iv. **Moment of Truth:** Moment of truth describes the exact point when a customer comes in contact with a brand. At this point a customer forms a make-or-break opinion about a brand. What marketing does is to control the conditions that customers encounter since the organisation can not control what the customer thinks. By training the service employees on quality service delivery and the quest to deliver or over-deliver on the promises made during marketing communications puts the brand on the right track to delight the customer. For tourists, marketing ensures that every encounter with the service brand including the destination brand resonates with good experiences.
- v. **Internal Marketing:** In the quest to enhance quality of service delivery, marketing develops and implements internal marketing strategy. This connotes the practice where service employees are treated as internal customers in the context of employee engagement, satisfaction and loyalty. In the tourism internal marketing environment where service employees are very visible, the goal of internal marketing is to align employees with the company's mission and values. When successfully implemented, the service employees feel highly valued and motivated to contribute to the achievement of the overall organisational goals/performance. Satisfied tourism service employees will be more committed and productive (enhanced employee engagement), and influence tourists/guests and external stakeholders through every touchpoint/interaction.
- vi. **Tourism Product Development:** Tourism marketing identifies the needs of the tourists and goes ahead to develop appropriate products to meet such needs satisfactorily. Tourism product is composite in nature, managers and managers of tourism organisations and destinations
- vii. **Building Brand Identity:** Marketing helps destination brands and tourism service providers to create a very strong brand identity. This is achieved by developing Unique Selling Propositions (USP) brand values, and brand experiences. By so doing, marketing helps to differentiates a destination and tourism service providers from competitors. While destination brands and tourism service providers gain competitive advantages in the process, it grants tourists the opportunity to make purchase decisions appropriately.
- viii. **Enhanced Tourist Experience:** In addition to tourism product development, destination and tourism service promotion,, marketing also creates and deliver customer/tourist experience. This is achieved through tailoring market offerings to the delight of tourist based on understanding tourists' preferences and segmenting market audiences. This strategy helps tourism marketers to meet specific customer needs such as eco-tourists and wellness tourists.
- ix. **Foreign Market Entry Strategies:** Marketing strategies ensures that tourism service organisations are capable of entering lucrative foreign destinations where their products/services are needed. For example, QSRs could enter new destinations through well established franchise arrangement, while hotels could enter new foreign markets through management contracts.
- x. **Economic Impact:** By delivering memorable touristic experiences at destinations Marketing is able to achieve tourist satisfaction and the positive tourist behavioural intentions towards the destination and tourism service providers. This accounts for new tourist arrivals to destinations and the resulting economic

- multiplier effect. This results in increase in new business developments, increased revenue to the government and increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- xi. **Competitive Positioning:** For destinations and tourism service providers, marketing makes it possible for them to strengthen competitive positioning in the competitive tourism global markets. This is achieved through delivering of unique and memorable touristic experiences, affordable destination products, sustainability initiatives and promoting cultural heritage.
  - xii. **Electronic Tourism Marketing:** The integration of technology into tourism marketing has enabled tourism service providers to leverage on digital tools and technologies to enhance tourist experiences at destinations. The use of social media, metasearch engines, online advertising, and data analytics enable precise targeting and optimization of marketing campaigns.
  - xiii. **Tourism Sustainability:** tourism sustainability works towards ensuring that tourism activities provide long term benefits to the environment, local communities, and the economies of destinations, while minimising negative impacts. This is a derivative from sustainable development. Marketing achieves this by ensuring that they influence and control tourism demand and supply. By making sure that the right tourists visit a particular destination, in the right numbers, at the right time and behave responsibly marketing is able to promote tourism sustainability.

### DISCUSSION

Tourism provides the opportunity for tourists to seek and obtain recreational value during leisure. The quest by nation states to gain from tourism engenders tourism planning and development at strategic locations called tourism destination. Each tourism destination is made up of destination attributes such as accessibility, activities, amenities, accommodation, visitor attraction and affordability. The services offered by the tourism service providers and the destination enhances tourist satisfaction.

Tourist satisfaction is a consequence of tourism marketing planning and implementation. To delight the tourists further, tourism marketing ensures that the visiting tourists leaves a destination with Memorable Touristic Experience (MTE). Kim, et al., 2012; Sthapit & Condounaris, 2018). As noted by Oh, et al (2007), tourist experience connotes everything a tourist goes through at a particular destination such as perception and behaviour., cognition and emotion that is either repressed or implied.

After each touristic trip to a destination of choice, all that remain to be relived for a tourist is his or her memory of the tour experience (Braun-Latour, et al 2006), which is "strong enough to have entered long term memory" (Larsen, 2007, p.3). what marketing does is to employ experience marketing strategy such as the seven dimensions of Memorable Touristic Experience (MTE): hedonism (pure pleasure), novelty (new surprises), local culture (real connection to the destination and people), refreshment (leaving the destination mentally and physically restored, meaningfulness (it matters to the tourist personally), involvement (value co-creation with tourists; thus making them active), knowledge (the tourist learns something useful and or surprising) (Kim, et al, 2012). The ultimate goal of a tourist is the MTE, while the development and delivery of the touristic experience remains the responsibility of marketing.

Tourism thrives on a complex set of social and physical resources as well as infrastructure that have significant effect on the production and consumption of tourists experiences which is purchased by tourists. Since tourism is an experience based phenomenon, it therefore means that the quest to understand its intricacies calls for the understanding of its production and consumption components. The fact that service orientation makes it impossible to separate production and consumption implies that a critical component or hallmark of tourism is that the value of the tourism experience can only be determined by both the consumer and the producer of the tourism experience and the tourism product. Marketing plays significant role in balancing this equation by meeting the needs of the tourists profitably.

### CONCLUSION

The role of marketing in tourism presents marketing as a very strategic engine that links destinations and tourism service providers with travelers and tourists, build brand value, drive economic, social and cultural benefits, enhance touristic memorable experiences and promote sustainability. By employing technology, innovativeness, and data driven strategies, tourism and hospitality marketing ensures that tourism service organisations and destinations achieve competitive advantage, remain attractive and promote sustainability in an increasingly evolving global market.

The study therefore concludes that making marketing the focal point for tourism growth and development is the key to achieving tourism sustainability. This is leveraged on the fact that the touristic experience which the tourist seek can only be delivered through the instrumentality of marketing planning and implementation. Purposeful and fruitful implications to both academicians and entrepreneurs (the practitioners) could be provided from this conceptual study.

### Implications of the Study

When customers, tourists, visitors, guests or consumers are satisfied with a tourism or hospitality brand by virtue of the experiential value they receive, they are likely to re-patronise that brand, and as such contribute to a firm's profitability. The implication is that any tourism service provider that want to enhance the degree of customer/tourist satisfaction, the entrepreneurs and their managers ought to invest in marketing strategies that can foster brand satisfaction through the delivery of memorable experiential value.

The current conceptual study is an attempt to examine the role of marketing in tourism and hospitality. To a large extent, the identification of the roles that marketing play in tourism are expected to provide fruitful implications to both practitioners and academicians and policy makers.

On the academic side, this current study makes a significant contribution to the tourism marketing literature by systematically exploring the role that marketing plays in tourism. The role of marketing in tourism manifests in enhancing tourist satisfaction which in turn promotes positive tourist behavioural intentions in the tourism marketplace. Overall, the current study findings therefore provide tentative support to the proposition that tourism and hospitality marketing should be recognized as significant determinant of tourism sustainability.

Closely related to the foregoing, regulatory bodies should consider marketing education as a *sin-qua-non* for certification. Through the lens of policy implications, this study proposes that the Nigerian education ministry should improve on the quality of tourism and hospitality education by making marketing discipline to dominate the curriculum for tourism education in Nigeria. The departments of tourism and hospitality should be compelled to move to faculty of business administration in both Nigerian universities and polytechnics.

On the practitioners' side, the important influence of marketing in in the quest to deliver value to target markets and capture value in return is highlighted. This study therefore argue that entrepreneurs and destinations could benefit from the implications of these findings. For instance, given the robust relationship between marketing strategies and positive behavioural intentions of tourists towards tourism service providers and destinations, stakeholders should make marketing the cornerstone of their overall strategy development and implementation. For example, by improving the quality of marketing planning and making marketing an organization wide instrument for touristic value creation and delivery, tourism service providers and destination managers will be able to satisfy the target market thereby promoting tourism sustainability.

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