

Marketing Promotional Tools and Competitive Advantage in Selected Tourism Centers in South-West, Nigeria

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Abstract

The tourism industry holds immense importance on both a global and local scale, serving as a powerful driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and job creation. At the macroeconomic level, tourism contributes significantly to a country's GDP, generating revenue through expenditures on accommodation, transportation, food, and various tourist attractions. It serves as a catalyst for social-cultural development, encouraging investments in transportation, hospitality, and entertainment sectors. However, despite these efforts, there are still identified deficiencies in the competitive advantage of the tourism industry. To overcome these challenges and propel the industry forward, marketing promotional tools are deemed essential. This study examined the effect of marketing promotional tools and competitive advantage in selected tourism centers in South-West, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. The population consisted of 431 marketing employees working at the top, middle and lower levels from 10 selected tourism centres in South-West, Nigeria. The total enumeration method was adopted. A structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of constructs ranged from 0.70 to 0.92. A response rate of 98.4% was recorded. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential (multiple linear and hierarchical regression) with the aid SPSS statistical software version 27. A response rate of 98.4%, which is deemed satisfactory. The findings revealed that marketing promotional tools had significant effect on competitive advantage of selected tourism centers in South-West, Nigeria ($Adj. R^2 = 0.224$; $F(4,420) = 25.481$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that marketing promotional tools enhanced the competitive advantage of selected tourism centers in South-West, Nigeria. Given the results of this study, it is recommended that tourism centers in south-west Nigeria continue to prioritize and invest in robust marketing strategies. This could involve a mix of traditional and digital marketing initiatives tailored to the specific characteristics and preferences of the target audience to improve competitive advantage.

Background to the Study

The development of tourism greatly depends on the presence and effectiveness of tourist centers, which serve as hubs for providing information and support services to visitors. These centers play a crucial role in offering a variety of services, including details about local attractions, accommodations, and transportation options. As a result, the expansion of tourist centers has been a key focus for policymakers, stakeholders, and investors. Many countries have introduced reforms, policies, and guidelines within the tourism sector to stimulate its growth. However, despite these efforts, there are still identified deficiencies in the competitive advantage of the tourism industry. To overcome these challenges and propel the industry forward, marketing promotional tools are deemed essential.

The United Kingdom (UK) is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. In 2017, it was ranked as the sixth most visited country, with over 35 million visitors. The United Kingdom is home to some of the world's most popular tourist attractions, including Stonehenge, Big Ben, and Buckingham Palace. The United Kingdom also has a rich history and culture, which attracts visitors from all over the world (Ghosh, 2019). The United Kingdom's tourist industry is worth over £106 billion and employs over 3.1 million people. Tourism is one of the UK's largest industries and makes a significant contribution to the economy. In 2017, tourism accounted for 3.2% of the UK's GDP (Tourism Alliance, 2017). The United Kingdom's tourist industry has grown significantly in recent years. In 2010, the UK welcomed 28 million visitors, which rose to 35 million in 2017. This growth is largely due to an increase in visitors from China and other Asian countries. In 2017, there were 1.7 million visitors from China, an increase of 18% from 2016. The United Kingdom's tourist industry is expected to continue to grow in the coming years. The number of visitors from China is expected to grow by 50% by 2025 (Dogru et al., 2019). Although, the Tourism industry in the United Kingdom is a highly competitive market. Thus, many businesses are vying for a share of the market, which has made customer acquisition difficult (Pappas & Apostolakis, 2020).

The issue of decline in competitive advantage in the tourism industry in Asia stems from a convergence of factors impacting the region's appeal. While Asia has long been recognized for its cultural richness, natural beauty, and diverse experiences, the proliferation of mass tourism and standardization of offerings have led to a blurring of distinctiveness among destinations (Meo et al., 2022). Additionally, increasing concerns over overtourism, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation have highlighted the need for responsible and authentic experiences. Furthermore, geopolitical tensions and unforeseen events like the COVID-19 pandemic have disrupted travel patterns, emphasizing the necessity for adaptability and diversified strategies (Wah et al., 2022). According to data from the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the region experienced a significant drop in international tourist arrivals, with a 73% decline in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (World Travels and Tourism Council, 2021). This downturn has exposed vulnerabilities in Asia's tourism sector, as it heavily relies on international visitors. Moreover, the emergence of new global destinations,

changing consumer preferences towards sustainable and authentic experiences, and the need for enhanced digitalization for seamless travel have further eroded Asia's competitive edge in the global tourism landscape, necessitating innovative strategies and collaborative efforts to regain its standing (UNWTO, 2020).

South Africa is a popular tourist destination for a number of reasons. Its natural beauty, diverse wildlife, and varied landscapes make it a unique and appealing destination. Additionally, the country has a rich history and culture that is evident in its art, music, and cuisine. Visitors to South Africa can enjoy a wide range of activities, from safari tours and hiking to wine tasting and beach vacations (Rogerson & Visser, 2020). According to Giddy (2018), the tourism industry in South Africa faces a number of marketing challenges. These include the need to increase awareness of the country as a tourist destination, to improve the image of the country, and to attract more high-spending tourists. In addition, the industry needs to overcome the challenge of a high level of competition from other countries in the region (Strydom et al., 2019).

The impact of public relations on tourism competitive advantage can vary greatly depending on the specific industry, company, and public relations strategy involved (Anthony, 2018). However, some potential impacts of public relations on tourism competitive advantage could include increased brand awareness and reputation, improved customer loyalty, and increased sales and market share (Ferguson, 2018). Similarly, public relations can help tourism businesses to differentiate themselves from their competitors and to create a more positive image of the industry as a whole. Although, Nigeria's infrastructure is not well developed, which can make it difficult for businesses to provide tourist services (Verčič & Ćorić, 2018).

Several studies have investigated marketing promotional tools and competitive advantage (Mahadalle & Kaplan., 2017; Sang, 2016). Also, few authors sought to link social media marketing, transit advertising with customer loyalty, firm growth and in different sectors (Williams et al., 2018; Bricci, et al., 2016). Despite the drift in the past studies, some authors (Maina & Afande, 2015; Alavinasab, et al., 2017) still managed to conduct studies on competitive advantage but these studies were in developed countries. However, these studies suggested that there exists gap in knowledge that may be filled by future studies in the areas of marketing promotional tools (Kazeem, 2021), the service sector (Sharma, 2017), and in developing countries (Chakraborty, 2020). Furthermore, the research was done outside of Nigeria, therefore there is a knowledge gap regarding how marketing promotional tools and competitive advantage interact in Nigeria. Hence, the need to fill this gap. Nigeria's tourist centres are not well developed, which limits the competitive advantage of the tourism industry. A decline in competitive advantage within the tourism industry have had far-reaching repercussions for destinations and businesses alike. As a destination loses its unique appeal and differentiating factors, it struggles to attract and retain tourists, leading to a drop in visitor numbers and revenue. This can trigger a negative ripple effect, causing local businesses to face financial challenges, resulting in reduced employment opportunities and stunted economic

development (Williams et al., 2018). Moreover, a weakened competitive edge erodes the destination's position in the market, making it harder to stand out among competitors and leaving it vulnerable to shifting consumer preferences. Ultimately, this decline can erode the destination's reputation, deter investment, and lead to a long-term stagnation that is hard to reverse, limiting growth prospects in the broader tourism landscape (Ekeke & Olori, 2020).

Literature Review

In this section, various literature was reviewed conceptually, empirically and theoretically in line with the study's variables.

Marketing Promotional Tools

Marketing promotional tools are strategies, methods or resources that compel consumers to buy a product or service (Camilleri, 2018). Many marketing and advertising professionals use them to raise awareness of a new product or increase sales of a particular item or service. Gibson and O'Rawe (2018) defined promotional tools as the aspect of marketing that involves delivery of company, brand or product messages to target customers. Promotional Mix are a set of tools that helps organisations promote their product. Every tool is important to make an organisation's product successful, each of these tools determines the success of your marketing strategy and the success of the product or business (Labanauskaitė et al., 2020). According to Shaddiq et al. (2021), other benefits of marketing promotional tools include creating awareness, generating leads, building brand equity, and increasing sales. Marketing promotional tools can enable organisations build relationships with customers and create loyalty, reach a larger audience, target specific demographics, and track the effectiveness of their campaigns (Losada & Mota, 2019). Moreso, marketing promotional tools can save organisation's time and money by automating certain tasks. They are essential in helping organisations to create a more targeted and effective marketing campaign. By targeting a specific audience, organisations can ensure that their message is reaching the right people (Murtazina, 2022). Also, marketing promotional tools help in increasing the visibility of a brand and create a more professional image (Cheah et al., 2019).

Social Media Marketing

According to Dwivedi (2021), social media marketing is a process of creating content that can be published on social media platforms in order to achieve marketing and branding goals. Li et al. (2021) submitted that social media marketing (SMM), also known as digital marketing and e-marketing, is the use of social media platforms on which users build social networks and share information to build a company's brand, increase sales, and drive website traffic. Social media marketing is a process of using online platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to build relationships and interact with potential and current customers (Li et al., 2021). According to Aji et al. (2020), the benefits of social media marketing for a business are that it is a cost-effective way to reach out to potential and current customers, it builds brand awareness and credibility, and it allows businesses to track their marketing efforts and ROI. Other benefits of social media marketing for

businesses include increased brand awareness, more leads and customers, and higher conversion rates (Misirlis & Vlachopoulou, 2018).

Telemarketing

Telemarketing is a form of direct marketing in which a salesperson contacts potential customers by phone (Rahayu et al., 2018). The promotion of a good or service through the use of the telephone in order to reach out to potential or existing clients is known as telemarketing. According to Begam (2020), telemarketing is a form of marketing that entails making phone calls to potential and existing clients in an effort to sell goods or services. Telemarketing has a number of benefits, some of which are that it is an efficient method for connecting with a large number of potential customers at a low cost, that it enables a more personal connection to be made with potential customers, and that it is a flexible method for connecting with potential customers (Zhang et al., 2020). Farooqi and Iqbal (2019) stated that telemarketing's many applications include not only the generation of leads and appointments, but also the upselling and cross-selling of products and services.

Transit Advertising

Transit advertising is a form of advertising that is focused on public transportation vehicles, such as buses, trains, and subways (Wilson et al., 2021). Machado et al. (2018) defined transit advertising as an advertising placed in or on modes of public transportation or in public transportation areas. Le Minh Kieu and Cai (2018) defined transit advertising as the practice of using various modes of public transportation, such as buses, trains, subways, trams, and taxis, as platforms for promoting products, services, events, or messages to a wide audience. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2022) posited that Transit marketing can help businesses increase ridership by promoting the benefits of taking public transportation, as well as increased awareness of public transportation options and encouraging people to try them out. Transit marketing can help businesses improve customer satisfaction by highlighting the positive aspects of public transportation, generate revenue for public transportation systems by encouraging people to use them and promote sustainability by highlighting the environmental benefits of taking public transportation (Wilson et al., 2021).

Public Relations

Public relations are the process of managing communication between an organisation and its publics (Reshetko et al., 2021). Grunig (2020) posited that public relations are the process of creating and maintaining a positive image for a company or product through media exposure. This can be done through press releases, media interviews, and other publicity initiatives. Public relations are the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or an organisation and the public. It is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and their publics. Public relations can help an organisation communicate its messages more effectively to its target audiences and can help build relationships with key stakeholders (Reshetko et al., 2021). Public relations are an important part of any

marketing strategy as it can help to build goodwill and positive associations with the organisation. It can also help to increase sales and market share, and to build brand equity. Grunig (2020) is of the opinion that organisations need to be aware of the potential risks and negative publicity that can be generated by public relations activities, and they need to have a plan in place to manage these risks.

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion refers to the various activities and initiatives that a company undertakes to raise awareness and interest in its products or services (Anghelcev et al., 2020). Sales promotion can take many forms, including advertising, public relations, and discounts. Melović et al. (2020) refer to sales promotion as the entire set of activities, which communicate the product, brand, or service to the user. The idea is to make people aware, attract and induce them to buy the product, in preference over others. Sales promotion of goods or services can be done in a variety of ways. The sales promotion of a product or service through marketing is essential because it helps to generate sales, as well as interest and awareness of the brand. Additionally, it can assist in setting up a product or service apart from those offered by competitors (Akbar et al., 2020). Sales promotion is important because it helps to spread the word about a company's products or services and can help to increase sales. Sales promotion can also help to build brand understanding and create a positive image for a company (Peng et al., 2019).

Competitive Advantage

According to Distanont and Khongmalai (2020), competitive advantage is the edge that one business has over its rivals. This can be in the form of better technology, lower prices, better customer service, or a unique product. Competitive advantage is an advantage over competitors gained by offering consumers greater value, either through lower prices or by providing additional benefits and service (Nwabueze & Mileski, 2018). According to Amoako (2020), a competitive advantage is anything that gives a company an edge over its competitors, helping it attract more customers and grow its market share. Anwar (2018) submitted that competitive advantage is an advantage over competitors gained by offering consumers greater value, either by means of lower prices or by providing greater benefits and service that justifies higher prices. A company's ability to produce goods or services faster, more efficiently, or for less money than its competitors is known as a competitive advantage. These elements enable the productive entity to outperform its competitors in terms of sales or margins (Saeidi et al., 2019).

Hagiu and Wright (2020) believed that competitive advantage can make an organisation more profitable, allow an organisation to charge more for its products or services, and help an organisation to attract and retain customers. Competitive advantage can also help a company to survive during tough economic times. Likewise, competitive advantage can help a company to gain market share and increase profits, help a company to differentiate itself from its competitors, attract and retain customers and help build brand equity (Nwabueze & Mileski, 2018). Competitive advantage is important because it allows a company to create unique value for its customers and to capture value in return.

A company with a competitive advantage can charge premium prices for its products and services, which in turn increases its profits and shareholder value (Anwar, 2018). According to Saeidi et al. (2019), competitive advantage is an important concept in business. It is the advantage that a company has over its competitors. The concept is important because it helps companies to be successful. There are many factors that determine competitive advantage. The most important factor is the company's ability to produce a product or service that is better than its competitors. Other factors include the company's brand, its customer service, and its price (Kahupi et al., 2021; Kuncoro & Suriani, 2018).

Marketing Promotional Tools and Competitive Advantage

Various studies have looked at marketing promotional tools and competitive advantage with varied results. From the study of Adimo and Osodo (2017), findings showed that an increase in channel differentiation strategy such as use of market trends to determine most appropriate channel strategy, use of different channels with the aim of minimizing cost of distribution, selling some of the products and services through intermediary and complementary firms and applying different distribution channels so as to satisfy unique customer needs would result in an increase in performance through market share, revenue, sales and customer satisfaction. In the study of Upamannyu et al. (2015), findings showed that there is a relationship between corporate image and brand trust. It also states that if the corporate image is good in the view of customers certainly, customer trust can be won by the brand easily. The study of Laksamana (2018) found that social media marketing leads to purchase intention and brand loyalty. Hence, brand loyalty is affected by purchase intention. Similarly, Algharabat (2017) found that social media marketing (SMM) activities positively affect self-expressive brands (inner and social), which in turn impact brand love. The study further revealed that brand love positively affects brand loyalty. Likewise, the research results of Stojiljković (2019) showed that Social Media Marketing greatly influences customer relationship development. Correspondingly, Gautam and Sharma (2017) found positive significant impacts of social media marketing and customer relationships on consumers' purchase intentions. In addition, our study model confirmed full mediation of customer relationships in the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intentions. From Rahi and Abd Ghan (2016), the findings confirm that customer's perception of public relations and customer perceived value are the antecedent of e-loyalty. Moreover, results prevailed that the impact of customer's perception of public relations and customer perceived value on e-loyalty is stronger and significant when switching cost and brand image are favourable.

In the same vein, results from the study of Chen and Lin (2019) indicated that social media marketing activities indirectly affect satisfaction through social identification and perceived value. At the same time, social identification and perceived value directly affect satisfaction that then influences continuance intention, participation intention and purchase intention. Onyango (2016) examined the effect of digital marketing on SMEs performance, and they found that there is a strong correlation between digital marketing

and performance of flower firms and therefore recommends that those flower firms that have not been using digital marketing should to a large extent adopt digital marketing to be competitive and enhance organizational performance.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the Attention, Interest, Desire, Action (AIDA) theory. The theory is highly relevant in studying marketing promotional tools and competitive advantage in selected tourism centers. In the context of tourism, capturing the attention of potential visitors is the first crucial step. Effective promotional tools, such as visually appealing advertisements or engaging online content, play a pivotal role in grabbing attention (Ullal & Hawaldar, 2018). Subsequently, generating interest involves showcasing the unique features and attractions of the tourism destination, creating a desire for visitors to experience them. By strategically aligning promotional efforts with the specific interests and preferences of the target audience, marketers can cultivate a strong desire to visit the tourism center (Fortenberry & McGoldrick, 2020). Moreso, prompting action involves implementing compelling calls-to-action and facilitating easy booking processes, thereby converting interest and desire into tangible visits. Mastering the AIDA model in the tourism sector can contribute significantly to gaining a competitive advantage by efficiently guiding potential visitors through the decision-making process and enhancing the overall effectiveness of marketing campaigns (Purbaningsih et al., 2022).

Conceptual Model

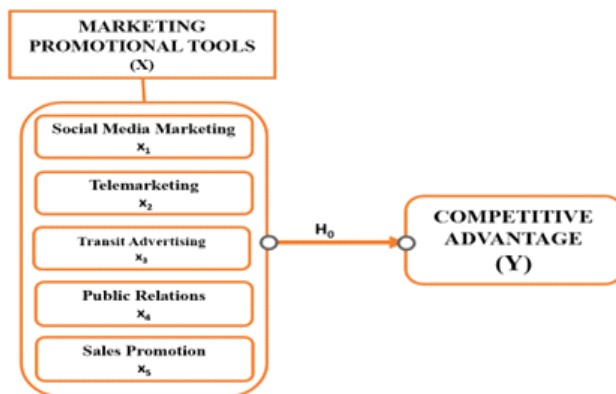


Figure: Conceptual Model for Marketing Promotional Tools and Competitive Advantage
Source: Researchers' Conceptualization (2024)

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. The population consisted of 431 marketing employees working at the top, middle and lower levels from 10 selected tourism centres in South-West, Nigeria. The total enumeration method was adopted. A structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of constructs ranged from 0.70 to 0.92. A response rate of 98.4% was recorded.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential (multiple linear and hierarchical regression) with the aid SPSS statistical software version 27.

Functional Model

In this study, there were two constructs: independent and dependent variable. The independent variable is knowledge management which was measured with sub variables such as social media marketing, telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations, and sales promotion, while the dependent variable is competitive advantage which was measured as a whole.

The model for the variables is denoted in the equations below:

Operationalization of Variables

The variables of this study are operationalised as shown below:

X = Marketing Promotional Tools (MPT)

Y = Competitive Advantage (CA)

$$Y = f(X)$$

Variables Identification

$$X = (x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$$

x_1 = Social Media Marketing (SMM)

x_2 = Telemarketing (Telem)

x_3 = Transit Advertising (TA)

x_4 = Public Relations (PR)

x_5 = Sales Promotion (SP)

Y = Competitive Advantage (CA)

Hypothesis

$$Y = f(x_1, x_2, x_3, x_4, x_5)$$

$$CA = \alpha_0 + \beta_1 SMM + \beta_2 Telem + \beta_3 TA + \beta_4 PR + \beta_5 SP + \mu_i \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where:

Beta (β) = the degree of change in the outcome variable for every 1-unit of change in the predictor variable.

ϵ_i = error term

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

A total of 431 copies of questionnaire were administered to employees of the selected tourism centres in South-West, Nigeria. Out of the distributed 431 copies of questionnaire that were distributed, 424 were correctly filled and returned. This represents a response rate of 98.4%, which is deemed satisfactory for data analysis and interpretation.

Table 1: Multiple Regression between Marketing Promotional Components and Competitive Advantage of selected tourism centres in South-west, Nigeria.

N	Model	B	Sig.	T	ANOVA (Sig.)	R	Adjusted R ²	F (4,420)
424	(Constant)	6.481	.001	3.454	0.000 ^b	0.483 ^a	0.224	25.481
	Social Media Marketing	-.102	.129	-1.519				
	Telemarketing	.148	.020	2.340				
	Transit Advertising	.174	.001	3.294				
	Public Relations	.211	.000	3.582				
	Sales Promotion	.283	.000	4.972				
Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Marketing, Telemarketing, Transit Advertising, Public Relations, Sales Promotion								
Dependent Variable: Competitive Advantage								

Source: Researchers' Findings, 2023

Interpretation

Table above shows the multiple regression analysis results for the marketing promotional tools on competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west, Nigeria. The results showed that telemarketing ($\beta = 0.148$, $t = 2.340$, $p < 0.05$), transit advertising ($\beta = 0.174$, $t = 3.294$, $p < 0.05$), public relations ($\beta = 0.211$, $t = 3.582$, $p < 0.05$) and sales promotion ($\beta = 0.283$, $t = 4.972$, $p < 0.05$) all have positive and significant effect on competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west, Nigeria. However, social media marketing ($\beta = -0.102$, $t = -1.519$, $p > 0.05$) is the only factor that shows a negative but insignificant effect on competitive advantage. This implies that, telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations, and sales promotion are important factors in the tourism centres which in turn yield an increase in competitive advantage. The R value of 0.483 supports this result and it indicates that marketing promotional tools has a moderate positive relationship with competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west, Nigeria. The coefficient of multiple determination $Adj R^2 = 0.224$ indicates that about 22.4% variation that occurs in the competitive advantage of the selected tourism centres can be accounted for by the marketing promotional tools while the remaining 77.6% changes that occurs is accounted for by other variables not captured in the model. The predictive and prescriptive multiple regression models are thus expressed:

$$CA = 6.481 - 0.102SMM + 0.148Telem + 0.174TA + 0.211PR + 0.283Promo + U_i \text{---Eqn(i)}$$

(Predictive Model)

$$CA = 6.481 + 0.148Telem + 0.174TA + 0.211PR + 0.283Promo + U_i \text{---Eqn(ii)}$$

(Prescriptive Model)

Where:

CA = Competitive Advantage
SMM= Social Media Marketing
Telem = Telemarketing
TA = Transit Advertising
PR = Public Relations
Promo = Sales Promotion

The regression model shows that holding marketing promotional tools to a constant zero, competitive advantage would be 6.481 which is positive. In the predictive model it is seen that of all the variables, social media marketing is negative and insignificant, so the management of the company can downplay this variable and that is why it was not included in the prescriptive model. The results of the multiple regression analysis as seen in the prescriptive model indicate that when all other variables of marketing promotional tools (telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations and sales promotion) are improved by one-unit, competitive advantage would also increase by 0.148, 0.174, 0.211 and 0.283 respectively and vice-versa. This implies that an increase in telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations, and sales promotion would lead to an increase in the rate of competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west, Nigeria. Also, the F-statistics ($df = 4, 420$) = 25.481 at $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the overall model is significant in predicting the effect of marketing promotional tools on consumer acquisition which implies that marketing promotional tools except social media marketing are important determinants in the competitive advantage rate of selected tourism centres in south-west, Nigeria. The result suggests that such tourism centres should pay more attention towards developing the components of the marketing promotional tools especially telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations, and sales promotion to increase competitive advantage. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_03) which states that marketing promotional tools has no significant effect on competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west, Nigeria was rejected.

Discussion of Finding

The aggregated results of multiple regression analysis for hypothesis three showed that marketing promotional tools (social media marketing, telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations and sales promotion) have positive and significant effect on competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west Nigeria ($Adj. R^2 = 0.224$; $F(4,420) = 25.481$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the combination of the independent sub variables was significant in predicting competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west Nigeria. Put in a differently, social media marketing, telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations and sales promotion combined have statistically significant effect on competitive advantage of selected tourism centres in south-west Nigeria.

Empirically, the result aligns with the findings of various empirical studies on marketing promotional tools. Various studies have looked at marketing promotional tools and competitive advantage with varied results. Adimo and Osodo (2017), findings showed

that an increase in channel differentiation strategy such as use of market trends to determine most appropriate channel strategy supports this result. In the study of Upamannyu et al. (2015), findings showed that there is a relationship between corporate image and brand trust. It also states that if the corporate image is good in the view of customers certainly, customer trust can be won by the brand easily. The study of Laksamana (2018) found that social media marketing leads to purchase intention and brand loyalty. Hence, brand loyalty is affected by purchase intention. Similarly, Algharabat (2017) found that social media marketing (SMM) activities positively affect self-expressive brands (inner and social), which in turn impact brand love. Stojiljković (2019) show that social media marketing greatly influences customer relationship development. Correspondingly, Gautam and Sharma (2017) found positive significant impacts of social media marketing and customer relationships on consumers' purchase intentions. In addition, our study model confirmed full mediation of customer relationships in the relationship between social media marketing and consumers' purchase intentions.

Santi and Fadjat (2020), in their study found that social media play a prominent role in promoting tourist destinations in Indonesia. Also, in Pembati et al. (2017), the finding showed that sales promotion has significant impact on organisational performance. Usage or experiment of a product or service is important at all levels of product life cycle, but it is more important at the preliminary and growth stages. The study of Kushwaha and Agrawal (2016), revealed that mobile marketing initiatives have a more significant effect on both consumers' negative attitudes and positive attitudes.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study investigated the effect of marketing promotional tools as measured using social media marketing, telemarketing, transit advertising, public relations and sales promotion on competitive advantage in selected tourism centers in South West, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that marketing promotional tools have significant effect on competitive advantage in the selected tourism centers in south-west, Nigeria.

Based on the results, the study recommends that management should invest in continuous market research to stay abreast of industry trends, customer preferences, and competitors' activities to sustain a competitive advantage. Implementing innovative and unique offerings, such as exclusive experiences or customizable packages, can set the tourism centers apart from competitors. Additionally, maintaining a strong online presence, optimizing customer service, and adapting to changing market demands will contribute to a sustained competitive edge.

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