

Distribution Strategies and Performance of Tourist Sites in Nigeria's Geo-political Zones

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Abstract: This research work focused on the effect of distribution strategies on performance of tourist sites in Nigeria's Geopolitical Zones. Distribution strategy is about how an organization distribute or makes available their products/services to the end users. While performance is how well a person or organization does a piece of work or activity over a period of time. The problems of the study were identified by a scholar who pointed out that many customers usually choose to buy a product but are not communicated efficiently, this then attracted the researchers interest to investigate same using selected tourist sites and to see how it can affect their patronage and brand image. The objectives verify the effect of distribution of tourist product and services on organizational patronage and the effect of distribution of tourist product/services on the brand image of the selected tourist sites. The study will be of significance to the general public, government at all level and employees. The research work was achieved through primary data, later analyzed with SPSS statistical package. However, simple linear regression was employed and findings reveals that the correlation coefficient is 0.556 in hypothesis one and 0.559 in hypothesis two which are very high as against the p-value 0.000. This implies that distribution of tourist product/services affects organizational patronage highly in the selected tourist sites leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses. Concluding that distribution of tourist product/services are significant on organisational patronage and brand image in the selected tourist sites. The researcher however, recommends that any organization/tourist sites who wish to be a preferred choice of destination should consider distribution strategy as a do or die affair.

Keywords: Tourism, Tourist, Distribution Strategy, Distribution channel.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism means travelling out of one's residence for fun; it includes such activities like sightseeing and camping. People who travel for fun are called tourist. Places that people visit for its peculiar nature are called tourist sites. However, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2016) defines tourism more generally in terms which go beyond the common perception of tourism as being limited to holiday activity only; as people who travel and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year and not less than 24hours for leisure, business and other purposes. Echeta (2014) is of the view that tourism can be domestic or international. However, international tourism has both incoming and outgoing implications on a country's balance of payments. Today tourism is a major source of income for many countries, and

affects the economy of both the source and host countries. Generally, tourism suffers as a result of strong economic slowdown and therefore call for a strong re-strategizing over the distribution strategies adopted by all tourism related industries. However, distribution strategies according to Barney (2014) is about how an organization distribute or makes available their product and services to the end users. To the tourist site it is how their products/services can be made available to the general public. And the researcher looked at how these strategies can influence organizations performance, but in this research we will be looking at performance in terms of market performance/patronage and brand image. Market performance according to Boroma (2013) is defined as a result of policies, the relationship of selling price to cost, the size of output etc. While patronage looks at how regular products/services are being requested within a particular time frame. And brand image are those attributes or qualities that customers or tourist perceive about a product or services. However, the problems of the study were identified by Tamara, Ljupco and Bogdanka (2016) that distribution/availability of products/services are the reasons for organizational patronage in the competitive development of enterprises. This reason attracted the researchers towards investigating it in Nigeria but to concentrating in selected tourist sites in Nigeria. Obasan, Ariyo and Hassan (2015) who also conducted a research in selected firms in Nigeria equally pointed out that many customers usually choose to buy or purchase a product, but are not communicated efficiently and these has affected the organizations brand image, this forms a problem which will also be investigated in selected tourist sites in Nigeria to see if it is the same in this organization. The objective of the study is to verify the effect of distribution/availability of tourist product/services on organizational patronage and looked at the effect of distribution/availability of tourist product/services on the brand image of tourist sites. The research questions looked at the extent distribution/availability of tourist products/services affect organizational patronage and to look at the extent distribution and availability of tourist products/services affect organizational brand image. However, two hypotheses was developed from the research questions and the first one was that distribution/availability of tourist product/services are not significant on organizational patronage while the second was that distribution/availability of tourist sites product and services does not affect their brand image. The study will be of significance to many people including the residence because of increased human & capital development. Staff will also benefit because their salaries are assured on monthly basis. Customer will also be sure that their needs are considered first. Governmental all level will experience an increased tax revenue from staff & tourist and lastly future researchers will equally use this research work as a guide. However below shows the operational framework of the study which the research work focused on.

Operational framework

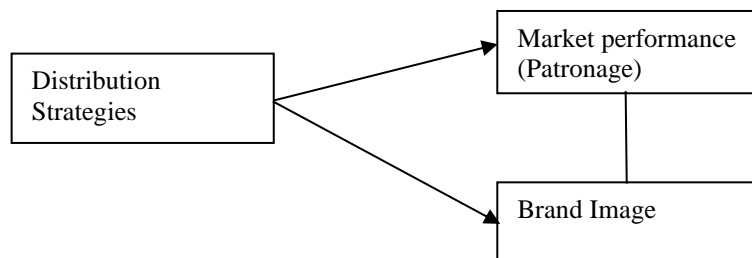


Fig. 1.1: Operational Framework of Distribution Strategies and Performance of Tourist Sites in Nigerias Geo political zones.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem of the study was noted By Tamara, Ljupco and Bogdanka (2015) that efficient distribution strategy of products/services are the reasons for organizational patronage in the competitive development of enterprise. This reason attracted the researcher towards investigating it in Nigeria but concentrated on selected tourist sites in Nigerias geopolitical zone. Obasan, Ariyo and Hassan (2015) also conducted a research in selected firms in Nigeria they pointed out that many customers usually choose to buy or purchase a product, but are not communicated efficiently, this forms a problem of the study towards investigating it in selected tourist sites and to see how it can affect the patronage and brand image of tourist sites in Nigeria.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study investigated the effect of distribution strategies on performance of tourist sites in Nigeria geopolitical zones.

Specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Verify the effect of tourist sites distribution strategies on organizational patronage in select tourist sites in Nigerias geopolitical zones.
- ii. Determine the effect of tourist sites distribution strategies on the brand image of select tourist sites in Nigerias geopolitical zones.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the statement of problem and objective of the study stated above, these two research questions were formulated below.

- i. To what extent does distribution strategy of tourist products/services affect organizational patronage?
- ii. To what extent can distribution strategy of tourist products/services affect organizational image?

1.5 Hypotheses

Null Hypotheses

- i. Tourist sites distribution strategies of product and services does not significantly influence organizational patronage.
- ii. Distribution strategy of tourist sites product and services does not significantly affect organizational brand image.

2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Conceptual Review

Rowe (2012) Opines that distribution consists of the physical aspect and the channel. And distribution is crucial to marketing, for without good distribution, no single product would reach the ultimate consumer. However, distribution is not only a matter of ensuring that products reach the hands of consumers. It involves a product's movement from the stage of procuring raw materials, through manufacturing stage, to the final stage of procuring raw materials, through manufacturing stage, to the final stage of selling the product. Indeed, raw materials offer little or no satisfaction until they reach the hands of a manufacturer who transforms them into a final product of some kind. Therefore, the raw material must be moved physically with a view to attaining the goal of providing potential satisfaction to ultimate consumers.

Distribution is an important marketing function aimed at getting the right product to the right market segment at the right quantity and at the right activities for example, transport, inventory management, warehousing material handling and order processing. All the activities involved in distribution can only be carried out by few manufacturers, although some manufacturers do sell directly to the ultimate consumers. Most employ the services of middlemen, retailers, wholesalers, agents and brokers.

Rotler and Armstrong (2013) posits that distribution takes place if a concrete arrangement has been reached with a supplier through tender or direct purchasing to deliver an authenticated, documented, quantified and qualitative raw materials at a specified period to a company's warehouse using a specified mode of transportation. When this is accomplished physical distribution is said to have taken place. It must also be recalled that within channel distribution physical movement of goods equally take place. The essence of keeping goods in the warehouse is sheer preservation of the material. Quality of such materials are often subjected to inter-departmental movement for purposeful transformation into finished goods which are later transferred to another ware-house for onward selling to potential customers. The primary aim of physical distribution encompasses transportation, material handling, packaging ware-housing, inventory, location and order processing. Goods are designed for consumable exchange and this can take place when the goods are physically moved from the factory premises into the outlets for onward transmission to various homes. The

outlets consist of the functional; Middlemen and agents. They constitute channel facilitators and play important role -in ensuring continuous production and product availability to the consumers.

A channel of distribution is a network of interdependent and interrelated institutions that perform all the activities necessary to move products from manufacturers to ultimate consumers. Channels of distribution are made up of the; manufacturers, intermediaries and customers. A marketing distribution channel is an inter-organization system' comprising of a set of interdependent institutions and agencies involved with the task of moving anything of value from; its point of conception, extraction or production to point of consumption or uses. It always includes both the producer and the final consumer for the product, as well as intermediaries involved in the title transfer. Though agent; middlemen do not take actual title to goods, they are included as part of distribution channel because of their active role in the transfer of ownership. (Coleman, 2018).

In tourism, distribution channel is concerned therefore with sending information about the tourist product and services: through the travel agent, tour operator, principal or manufacturer by means of brochures, publication in newspaper, television, radio, magazine etc. and when booking are made and confirmation of the booking are send back to the tourist.

However, distribution channels in tourism industry are diagrammatically illustrated below:

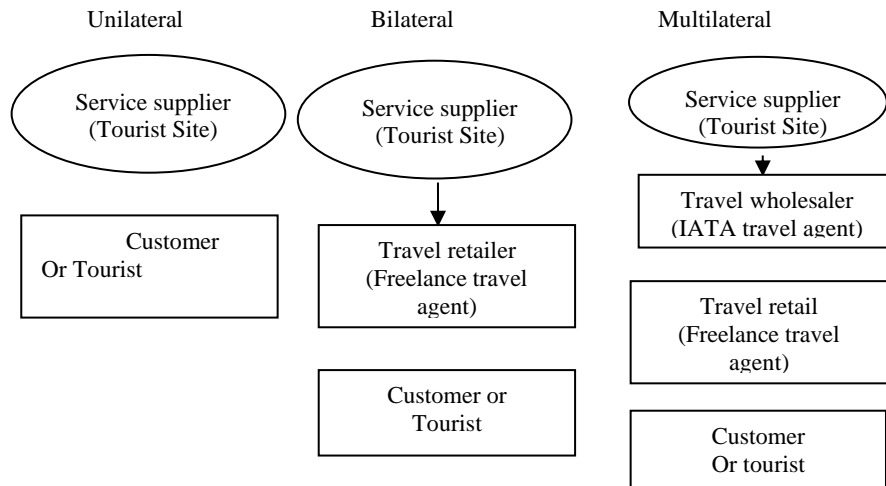


Fig. 2.1: Distribution channels

(Adapted from Borman and Motowidlo 2015) Customer Driving Employee Performance San-Francisco Jersey- Bass.

Unilateral Distribution: This involves direct distribution of tourism product from the producer to the consumer. For instance, the tourist sites manager dealing with customers directly. Barney (2014) posits that the advantages of direct distribution is that it gives a manufacturer complete control over their product.

Bilateral Distribution: Echeta (2016) opines that it is an indirect distribution which involves the use of an intermediary. For instance, a tourist sites providing services through a travel retailer.

Multilateral Distribution: This involves the use of travel wholesaler allowing them to deal with travel retailers and then to the customers.

However, manufacturer are persons, group or firm that makes the product and or services to be delivered to the public for purchase. While wholesaler is a person or group that buys large quantities of a product from manufacturers and sells it to retailers.

Wholesalers sells goods to other businesses, they do not sell directly to consumers. And lastly, a retailer is a person or person's that sells products directly to consumers and end users. As they are selling to consumers for personal use, the goods are usually sold in small quantities.

However, distribution strategy is about how effectively a firm gets its product to consumers and end users. It plays a lot of role in making organizations performing as expected financially and in patronage level. Because if what is produced are not consumer, the organization cannot make a profit and cannot be able to produced again nor pay back her shareholders or stakeholders; infact, it went further destroying her brand image.

2.1.1 Factors Determining Distribution Channel in Tourism

(i) **Location of Point of Sell:** The location of point of sale of the tourist products determined customer's ability to have access to the product. The leading five countries of the world namely Germany, U.S.A, France, U.K and Canada account for 57% of total tourist arrivals/ generating countries in the world. These countries occupied these positions because of the location of the point of sell in them. (W.T.T.C 2014)

(ii) **Distance of the Destination:** Distance of the destination to the market is another factor. Channels of distribution are: normally located in the cities around shopping centre, bus-stops where people can easily have access to them.

(iii) **Cost of Distribution:** The detail outlets are those areas outside the main offices for distributing the products.

Therefore, money must be spent on staff salaries, rent payment insurance and administration cost.

(iv) **Effectiveness in Generating Sells:** This depends on the marketing coverage means the numbers of sales out lets available in the-region or country. Motivation depends on satisfying the different wants and the needs of different people¹ in the distribution chain.

(v) **Image:** The image is also determined by the area where the product is sold e.g. selling a tour in a chemist shop and: supermarket will have a different image on the product. (W.T.T.C, 2014)

2.1.2 Functions of Distribution Channels

Echeta (2016) opines that a distribution channel in tourism industry allows customers to have access to goods and services ready at their disposal. Marketing channels perform many key functions, some help to complete transactions and as such the functions include the following:

(i) **Information:** Marketing channels gather and distribute marketing research and intelligence information about actors; and forces in the marketing environment needed for planning and facilitating exchange.

(ii) **Promotion:** They also develop and spread persuasive communications about the product offered and by so doing promote the product and get the public aware of its existence and also means of getting access to the product.

(iii) **Contact:** They also find and communicate with prospective buyers-who would be interested in their product, when more contacts are made the demand for the product will increase.

(iv) **Matching:** The distribution channel also indulges in shaping and fitting the offer to the buyers needs including such; activities as manufacturing of grading assembling packaging products.

(v) **Negotiation:** Their functions also include reaching an agreement on price and other terms of the offer so that ownership or possession can be transferred.

(vi) **Risk Taking:** They also assume the risk of carrying out the channel worker responsibilities.

(vii) **Financing:** They also acquire funds to cover the cost of the channel.

2.1.3 Functions of Intermediaries

Fisk (2016) opines that intermediaries are used because they specialize in the very important task of moving products to customers effectively and efficiently. In doing this, they perform the following activities among others.

Buying: Intermediaries identify and anticipate the needs of the customers they serve. Therefore, the intermediaries buy products and makes it available to target markets. Furthermore, intermediaries perform the crucial function of communicating the customers concerns to manufacturers, thus helping to satisfy customer's needs.

Selling: Many manufacturers have limited resources and so they are unable to establish all financial they need contacts with their target markets. Such manufacturers do use intermediaries.

Bulk Breaking: The intermediaries gather large quantities of goods from various sources, thus, building up an assortment of brands and then sell this

assortment to customers in small quantities. Therefore, the intermediaries create; time, place and possession utility because they make the products available when customers want them, where they; want them and at the right quantities.

Transportation: At time, intermediaries do provide vehicles that can be used to move product between geographical points. Some intermediaries provide delivery services which enhance exchanges with ultimate consumers.

(v) **Financing:** Some wholesalers often help their customers by providing them with credit facilities. Indeed, wholesalers do offer assistance to retailers with a view to stimulating sales. (Fudge and Schlacter, 2015)

Risk Bearing: Most of the intermediaries take title to the products that they sell. Hence, they bear the risk of not selling the products and the manufacturer assumes no legal responsibility for them. If the product becomes obsolete for any reason, the intermediary bears the loss. Furthermore, intermediaries usually stand behind their products, thus customers who procure faulty or unwanted product can seek redress more quickly from the intermediary than from the manufacturer.

(vii) **After-Sales-Services:** Some intermediaries provide after sales- services. This is necessary to bolster up repeat purchase. The function of channel of distribution ranges from title transfer, physical movement, goods storage, communication of products finishing in transit, inventory and on purchase.

Provision of Information: The intermediaries provide information and insight into markets. This information may be vital to small businesses, now business entrant or an export firm.

The Intermediaries Facilitate the Buying Process, by bringing together a range of similar or related items into a large stock e.g. a super market provide customers with a wide variety of choice which increases store traffic for the purchase of several goods.

2.1.4 Factors Affecting Choice of Distribution Channels

Taylor and Shaw (2015) suggest that the factors influencing the choice of distribution channels can be divided into two broad categories namely:

Environmental factors and corporate factors:

(1) **Environmental factors:** Comprises of competition, customer's characteristics, legal regulation and the state of the economy are environmental factors that influence channel decisions of companies. (a) **Competition:** The channels of distribution used by competitors will influence the company's choice of channel: selection. Most companies want their products to compete in the same channels. Some manufacturers adopt different; distribution strategies, thus, avoiding competitive products thereby establishing unique distributive riches.

(b) **Customer Characteristics:** Companies can sell their product directly to customers when such customers are few, large and geographically concentrated. Online other hand, if a company has many small, geographically dispersed

customers, then, it requires intermediaries to sell the products to such customers. (c) **Legal regulation:** Generally, companies are expected to carry out their operations within the ambits of the laws enacted by Governments in different counties of the world. (d) **Economic conditions:** The state of the economy will affect the choice of distribution channels. In a period of economic recession companies may strive to reduce cost by passing the intermediaries and selling directly. However, the high cost of personal selling should compel the manufacturers to use the services of intermediaries in an economic downturn.

(2) **Corporate factors:** Basically two company factors affect channel decisions, namely product and company's characteristics. (a) **Product characteristics:** The product characteristics that encourage direct marketing are listed as follows.

(i) Bulk: Bulky products require distribution channels that will minimize transportation and handling costs.

(ii) Complexity: Complex products such as industrial generators require technical expertise of the manufacturer's sales persons.

(iii) Perishability: perishable product must be speeded through their channels. Such-channels are usually short.

(iv) High price: high priced products. Sometimes require direct marketing because potential buyers may wish to deal directly with the manufacturers before making their purchase decisions.

Company characteristics: Company characteristics can influence channel selection. A financially weak company needs intermediaries more than one that is financially strong. A company with adequate finance and establish its own sales force or build its own warehouse. A financially weak company would have to use intermediaries.

In this research work a distribution channels to tourist sites is the chain of organizations and individuals between the tourist sites marketers and his potential customers which is used to make the tourist sites product available and convenient for the general public. However, Doole and Lowe (2011) posit that each organization or individual is known as marketing intermediary or channels. They further affirm that to function properly, there must be a flow of information and persuasion from marketer to customer i.e. information about location, price, reservation system, menu style, attractions, etc.

They suggested that in the same vain there should be reserve flow of payment or information from the holiday maker or tourist site visitor to tour operator and then to the producer. However, Child (2012) posits that an organization must decide which channel of distribution to employ as well as the comparative cost. Where channel member (meddle men) are used by the producer of tourism services must decide on the commission to pay which is normally between 8%-10%. He further affirms that some of the factors required for determining distribution policy include location of point of sales, Distribution cost, effectiveness of the marketing

effort, organization image and consumer motivation regarding tourist product. Similarly, the distribution system must be efficient, positive and dynamic.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Theory of Distribution Channels

Johnston (2017) Opines that theory of distribution channels is about how an organization or company distribute their products and it affect sales, products choice, brand image even profitability. He posits that the pathways from a business organization to customers are called distribution channels. And understanding the theory behind creating and maintaining these distribution channels gives a company some control over how they approach the market place and how quickly they can move products to customers.

Organizations Position in the Channel

Bush and Hunt (2016) posits that a distribution channel is the conduit from product to customers in its simplest form. However, the channel may be much longer than this. For instance, a company may harvest raw materials and ships to a wholesaler that ships to retailer that delivers the product to the final consumers.

The theory of distribution Channel states that each company in the channel must charge enough to pay expenses and leave profit knowing where the companies are in the channel helps them to understand their costs and their makeup need. They further explained that if a company are near the end of the channel, they will pay the most for a product, because it has been marked up on its way to them. While if they are near the beginning they may be expected to charge what are commonly called wholesale prices because their buyers understand that they incur less expenses at the start of a channel.

For tourist sites if they are creating a distribution channel, they need to decide how many intermediaries they want. For instance, some Tourist sites sell products directly to the other with no intermediaries. While other distribution approaches may involve numerous handlers along the way, thus driving up the final price charged to consumer/ tourist.

A tourist sites determining factor in creating a distribution channel is the market price for their goods or services. If multiple intermediaries that is the use of tour operator & travel agents will cause the price to rise higher than customers will pay, such organization distribution channel must be whittled down or can even adopt the two method, thereby selling in different prices, unless where the intermediaries have the majority of the customer. The organization can be controlled by those intermediaries, not to market directly to the consumers at a cheaper price.

2.2.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model Theory

Vroom (2014) stated in his book that this is another well-known communication theory; it suggests that there are two ways persuasion of customers or tourist can occur. First, there is the central route. This is when attitude change stems from purposeful evaluation, also refers to as elaboration. Second is the peripheral route, this is when there is a little elaboration and an attitude change does not come from inference but rather through association. By understanding the two means of persuasion, organizations are able to be more critically focused. This message of our strategy and marketing towards establishing one of these means. As a result, we will create change within our customer and persuade them into action. This theory is very important to the research work because it tries to suggest that, whichever marketing strategy a tourist site may apply in order to perform better. The strategy should not go beyond association with the customer. Similarly, when an organization associate with their customer and it's intended customer the organization will be able to persuade them, an appropriate distribution strategies based on the choices of customers and that will lead to increase organizational patronage & brand image.

2.2.3 Brand Equity Theory

Fudge and Schlacter (2015) opines that a brand is a distinguishing name or symbol that is intended to differentiate behaviour. Brand influence customer behaviour and provide sustained revenues for the organization. They further added that the brand equity is the added value attributed to a product by the consumer, source of brand equity can guide marketing decision. As a result, a manager needs to fully understand the source of brand equity. The brand is based on brand knowledge in the mind of customer. Brand knowledge is all the thought and feeling. Perception and experience linked to the brand. Brand awareness and brand images are the two element of brand knowledge. Brand awareness is consumer ability to recall the brand while brand image is their perception of the brand. However free association is a simple way to extract brand knowledge. This theory is relevant to this research work because through the application of distribution strategies which will involve the use of appropriate travel agent and tour operators, the organization can use different symbol and name to distinguished their product because other competitor will begin to produce such a product so that it can be clearly distinguished by name or symbol, in the mind of the tourist or consumer or even the physical presentation of the product to them and that will lead to increased organizational patronage and brand image.

2.3 Empirical Review

A research conducted by Chisanya, Gathiaka, Nguruse, Onyancha and Vilakazi (2014) on the effect of distribution strategy and competition in the regional sugar sector: the case of Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. The study was basically empirical reviews found progressive liberalization of global

markets are likely to result in increased competitiveness and effective Brand image in the regional sugar industry as firms seek to grow their capabilities in order to trade globally.

Mehdi, Sied and Jamshid (2013) conducted a research on organizational performance distribution strategy and financial strategy alignment; an empirical study on various pharmaceutical firm in Iran. The research process tested all Iranian pharmaceutical manufacturers listed in Tehran Stock Market for period of five years between 2006-2010 and their marketing strategies were determined by using stated and Olson taxonomy and their financial strategies have been developed by calculating total risk and total return of sample companies for five return in the frame of a 2 x 2 matrix. The result shows that distribution strategies alignment between financial and marketing has significant impact on project ability indices, the result of the analysis are quite compelling by indicating strong support for the matching of distribution strategy on profitability indices and performance implications of the match between distribution strategy and financial (Performance indices are significantly higher in matched strategy types, it means special pair wise strategy types indicating higher range of profitability in the organization or firm.

Another research conducted by Tamara, Ljupco and Bogdanka (2016) on distribution strategy and market performance: the case of chocolate industry in Macedonia, the method of research was induction and deduction applied to obtain meaningful data on the basis of observation and identifying the individual and specific and drawing conclusions on issues in the field of market orientation and the creation of distribution strategies and plans for achievement in the competitive development of enterprises. The findings show that the success of consumer products largely depends on the distribution strategy. Distribution as an element of marketing mix brings the products to market, intensifies the demand for existing products and provides better position of the company on the market and others. They further found that in the design of marketing channel/distribution channels a great role play the resources of the enterprise, the objectives, the nature of the product and positioning strategy. If the goal is increasing the market share, then it is better for the company to develop direct sales to the end consumer, because in that case the costs for the sale force are lower than in case were intermediaries are engaged. On the other hand, if resources do not allow the company to significantly expand its retail network as an alternative option is inclusion of intermediaries in the process, whereby instead of selective distribution, the company needs to use intensive distribution, involving as much as possible mediators at every level of the channel. They further summarized that chocolate is a category of the product that is visible, which is of great importance because it is a conventional product and a subject of impulse purchase. This means that the best strategy would be combination of the pull and push strategy. The product should be made available in most supermarkets and discounters, and in as much as possible conventional stores i.e. The product should be placed in at least all those retail outlets where products of the direct competitors are placed. For example, the product should be

placed in stores at busy locations – near schools, city’s downtown, near market etc. in order to expand and make as much profit as possible and deepen its distribution network, in order to maintain intensive instead of selective market presence.

Amanze and Sondengam (2014) conducted a research on the analysis of marketing strategies of an integrated company in Sweden. They employed both primary and secondary method of data collection. The secondary data enables us to understand the general concept on marketing strategy of the company’s strategy while the primary data source was mainly gotten through interview with their contact persons. However, the result shows that companies who failed to apply marketing strategies like distribution strategy adequately are not leading in the market place in terms of competition whereas those who are adequately applying the marketing strategies like distribution strategy are maintaining profitable financial growth, brand image etc. They confirmed it by showing that in 2006 fiscal year that the company recorded 192 million whereas after application of marketing strategies with the concentration on distribution strategy the company now recorded 820 million as at September 2007 fiscal year, they further found that it has a potential to generate profit in the future due to these distribution strategies. Their result also revealed that it has an operating margin of 5.8% in 2006 after paying for a variable cost of running its services like wages, supplies etc. This means that it made 0.057 and 0.058 for every dollar of sales for the year 2005 and 2006 respectively. In that finding they also found that, the company recorded a slight increase in its operating margin but the higher the better for the company. Their research equally revealed that the company after applying the marketing strategies/distribution strategies adequately, they have derived the following competitive advantages from its operational efficiency: low operating cost, fewer unforeseen complications, enhanced service levels, consistent reliable reporting etc. and this has led to efficient market performance and has also contributed to efficient financial performance thereby rewarding shareholders adequately.

Obasan, Ariyo, and Hassan (2015) who conducted a research on the effect of distribution strategy on product market performance and brand image: A study of selected firms in Nigeria. Their research used only primary research method gathered from 284 randomly selected staff of ten selected companies. Those companies were quoted on the Nigerian stock exchange. To do this, they distributed a questionnaire as research instrument and the data gathered was subjected to factor analysis and regression analysis. The result of their findings shows that indeed market distribution strategy impacts on brand image and product market performance of the observed firms and of all the factors considered distribution strategy were found to be most important for efficient market performance and increased brand image. They however recommended that business organizations should accord necessary attention to the element of distribution strategy if they want their brand image enhanced by designing

distribution strategies driven by a sound marketing management, targeting and strategic positioning.

Another research conducted by Chisanya, Gathiaka, Nguruse, Onyancha and Vilakazi (2014) on the effect of distribution strategy on Brand image and market performance: the case of Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. They used exploratory research method to frame structure questionnaires, individuals with knowledge and ideas were interviewed to get idea to frame structured questionnaire apart from books and journals. Their research findings show that distribution Network of businesses within these countries has a wide and well managed network of salesman appointed for taking up the responsibility of distribution of products to diverse parts of the cities. The distribution channels are constructed in such a way that the demand of customers as fulfilled at the right place and the right time when it is needed by them. They found also that a detailed and well organized distribution strategy contributes to the efficient market performance and brand image, it also leads to low costs, higher sales and higher efficiency thereby leading to higher profits to the firm. They equally found that the companies who are performing better in the countries actually formulated the following distribution route. Key Accounts: the customers in this category collectively contribute a large chunk of the total sales of each of the companies they are dealing with. It basically consists of organizations that buy large quantities of a product in a single transaction. The company provides goods to these customers on credit, payments being made by them after a certain period of time i.e. a month or half a month, they therefore conclude that Good communication requires interaction between those preparing and those receiving reports and a good sales reporting system provides both for communication from the field to office and from office to the field and this will ensure continued market performance and good brand image spreaded in those companies in the countries.

A result of research conducted by Fisk (2016) on the effect of distribution strategies on organizational brand image of Hotels in England, the method of research was through the use of questionnaires, which is primary data and interviewed 301 respondents in 9 hotels selected for the study, however, the result revealed that the place or physical distribution of a product is, arguably, the only essential and dominant element in the marketing mix. Distribution of product is one of the important rudiments in the marketing mix and it is the method of getting the product from the producer to the ultimate consumer. The study revealed that this distribution strategy helps the organization in performance level such as brand image. In that result he revealed that distribution enables the producers' product to get to the customers, otherwise the brand will be affected negatively.

3.1 Research Method

The research work focuses on distribution strategies. The researcher also limited his research work on select tourist sites in Nigeria which includes Obudu Mountain Resort, Kainji national park, Rojenny tourist Village, Marina resort, Lekki conservation centre, Eleko Beach, Akwa Wonderland, and Ikwe Holiday

Resort. However, the choice of choosing these organisation is because they are more Popular and doing well according N.T.D.C. yearly Buletin. And we concentrated on only those staff who occupies the position of managers, senior staff and supervisors and the reason is because they are the people who understand which distribution/availability strategies are more than the lower ranked. Population of staff was retrieved at different organizations administrative units.

However, the researcher concentrated on distribution/availability strategy and equally focused on two dependent variables market performance with focus on patronage and Brand Image. But the customers/tourist found within the premises of the tourist sites were used for the determinant of those organizations brand image.

The questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. And the Taro Yamane (1967) formula was used to determine the sampled population. It is calculated below: However, the population of study is 329 staff, put together. See Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1

TOURIST SITES	SUPERVISOR SENIOR STAFF AND MANAGERS	OTHERS	TOTAL
Obudu Mountain Resort (O.M.R)	50	150	200
Kainji National Part (K.N.P)	60	90	150
Rejenny Tourist Village (R.T.V)	21	44	65
Marina Resort (M.R)	48	54	102
LekkiConservation Centre (L.C.C)	72	88	160
Eleko Beach (E.B)	32	50	82
Awaka Wonderland (A. W. L)	20	30	50
Ikwe Holiday Resort (I.H.R)	26	56	80
Total	329	562	889

Source: Field survey, 2018

$$(n) \hat{=} N/1 + N (e)^2$$

$$L.C.C (n) = N/1 + N (e)^2$$

$$n = 329/1 + 329 (0.058)^2$$

$$n = 329/1 + 329 (0.003364)$$

$$n = 329 (1+1.106756)$$

$$n = 329/1. 106756$$

$$n = 297.2 \cong 297 \text{ staff}$$

The researcher however, concludes to concentrate on the total population, since the differences are not much and numbers of staff are not large enough. We equally purposively sampled 329 customers/tourist who determined only the organizational image. The data was analysed using SPSS and simple linear regression analysis

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Research Question One

What extent can distribution/availability of tourist product/services affect organizational patronage?

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: Distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services are not significant on organizational patronage.

Table 4.1: Output of Analyses Concerning Research Question One

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.556 ^a	.309	.307	.408	.309	142.530	1	319	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), DIS

Table 4.1.1: Output of Analyses Concerning Hypothesis One

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.302	.130		10.000	.000
DIS	.189	.016	.556	11.939	.000

a. Dependent Variable: MktPer

Table 4.1 shows the result obtained in respect of research question one, while Table 4.1.1 shows the result obtained in respect of hypothesis one. The result reveals that the correlation coefficient is 0.556, which is moderate. This implies that distribution/availability of tourist product/services affects organizational patronage moderately. Furthermore, Table 4.1.1 displays that the p-value for distribution strategy is 0.000, which is less than the level of significance (0.05),

hence leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, concluding that distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services are significant on organizational patronage.

Research Question Two

What extent does distribution/availability of tourist product/services affect organizational brand image?

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: Distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services does not affect the brand image.

Table 4.2: Output of Analyses Concerning Research Question Four

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.559 ^a	.312	.310	1.041	.312	144.768	1	319	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), DIS

Table 4.2.1: Output of Analyses Concerning Hypothesis Two

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	18.395	.332		55.412	.000
	DIS	.485	.040	.559	12.032	.000

a. Dependent Variable: BI

Table 4.2 shows the result obtained in respect of research question two, while Table 4.2.1 shows the result obtained in respect of hypothesis two. The result reveals that the correlation coefficient is 0.559, which is moderate. This implies that distribution/availability of tourist product/services affect organizational brand image moderately. Furthermore, Table 4.2.1 displays that the p-value for

distribution strategy is 0.000, which is less than the level of significance (0.05), hence leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, concluding that distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services positively affects the brand image.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The result in respect of research question one reveals that the correlation coefficient is 0.556, which is high. This implies that distribution/availability of tourist product/services affects organizational patronage highly in the selected tourist sites. Furthermore, the result reveals that the p-value for distribution strategy is 0.000, which is less than the level of significance (0.05), hence leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, concluding that distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services are significant on organizational patronage in the selected tourist sites. The result of this study is in line with the findings of Chisanya, Gathiaka, Nguruse, Onyancha and Vilakazi (2014) whose result revealed that progressive liberalization of global markets are likely to result in increased competitiveness and effective increased Brand image in the regional sugar industry as firms seek to grow their capabilities in order to trade globally. The result of this study also agrees with the result of Mehdi, Sied and Jamshid (2013) whose findings revealed that distribution strategies alignment between financial and marketing has significant impact on project ability indices, the result of the analysis are quite compelling by indicating strong support for the matching of distribution strategy on profitability indices and performance implications of the match between distribution strategy and financial (Performance indices are significantly higher in matched strategy types, it means special pair wise strategy types indicating higher range of profitability in the organization or firm. The result of this study agrees with the findings of Tamara, Ljupco and Bogdanka (2016) whose result revealed that the success of consumer products largely depends on the distribution strategy. Distribution as an element of marketing mix brings the products to market, intensifies the demand for existing products and provides better position of the company on the market and others.

The result of research question two reveals that the correlation coefficient is 0.559, which is very high. This implies that distribution/availability of tourist product/services affect organizational brand image very high. Furthermore, the p-value for distribution strategy is 0.000, which is less than the level of significance (0.05), hence leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis, concluding that distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services positively affects the brand image in the selected tourist sites. The result of this study is in line with the findings of Obasan, Ariyo, and Hassan (2015) whose result revealed that indeed market distribution strategy impacts on brand image and product market performance of the observed firms and of all the factors considered distribution strategy were found to be most important for efficient market performance and increased brand image. The result is also in agreement with the result of Chisanya, Gathiaka, Nguruse, Onyancha and Vilakazi (2014) whose result revealed that a

detailed and well organized distribution strategy contributes to the efficient market performance and brand image, it also lead to low costs, higher sales and higher efficiency thereby leading to higher profits to the firm. They equally found that the companies who are performing better in the countries actually formulated the following distribution route. Lastly the result of this study agrees with the study of Fisk (2016) whose result revealed that distribution strategy helps the organization in performance level such as brand image, and that distribution enables the producer's product and services to get to the customers at the right time.

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The research focused to investigate distribution strategy and performance of select tourist sites in Nigeria Geopolitical zones. The objectives of the research are to examine the effect of distribution/availability of tourist sites product /services on organizational patronage; and to examine the effect of distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services on the brand image. The methodology used the simple linear regression analysis since it enabled the researcher to capture the essence of the work effectively in addition to its high level of simplicity and global acceptability. The empirical analysis carried out in this study reveals that distribution/availability of tourist product/services affects organizational patronage highly in selected tourist sites and distribution/availability of this tourist sites product/services are significant on organizational patronage in selected tourist sites. Again, distribution/availability of tourist product/services affect organizational brand image very high, and distribution/availability of tourist sites product/services positively affects the brand image in selected tourist sites in Nigeria's Geopolitical Zones;

CONCLUSION

Tourism industry are where multifaceted activities are taking place. And the selected tourist sites are overwhelmingly contributing their quota and with a bold vision of becoming a preferred choice of destination across Nigeria and Africa. In its effort towards achieving this vision, they have made progress in acquiring a large customers/tourists and increased brand image. However, this growth has been as a result of their distribution strategies which has brought it increased market performance/patronage and brand image.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher recommend as follows:

Since it has been discovered and confirmed in the research that distribution strategies influences customers /tourists patronage, any organization/tourist sites who wish to keep growing in the business should embrace distribution strategies so as to be a preferred choice of destination and this will help them towards her stakeholders adequately.

Secondly, since our findings also revealed that distribution strategies of the selected tourist site usually affect the brand image of the organization. We however recommend that organizations/tourist sites should always adopt and implement the use of the three mode of distribution strategies namely unilateral, multilateral and bilateral distribution if they wish to be known by the majority of their customers which will help in boosting or increasing their brand image.

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