



The influence of place identity on destination competitiveness in Machakos County, Kenya

Winfred Musengy'a Barak*
Post Graduate Student, Kenyatta University, Kenya
E-Mail: barakwinnie@gmail.com

Dr. Shem Wambugu Maingi
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Kenyatta University, Kenya

Dr. Edgar Otsembo Ndubi
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Kenyatta University, Kenya

Corresponding author*

Abstract

The topic of place identity has recently attracted interest among researchers because to date there exists no place brand identity model that is universally accepted. Nevertheless, this core aspect of the destination branding process has influence on destination competitiveness upon which success and performance of any brand depends on. The purpose of this study was to determine the Influence of place identity on the competitiveness of Machakos County as a tourist destination. Specific objectives of this study were to determine the influence of visitor profile on destination competitiveness, to investigate the influence of visitor place identity perceptions on destination competitiveness, to examine the effect of visitor self-efficacy on destination competitiveness and to determine the moderating effect of tourism industry context on the relationship between place identity and destination competitiveness of Machakos County. Data analysis was done using SPSS, descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlation results indicated that Place Identity perception, Visitor self-efficacy, and industry context were positively and significantly associated to destination competitiveness. Regression results further showed that place identity perception, visitor self-efficacy, and industry context were positively and significantly associated to destination competitiveness. The study concluded that tourists' perception of a destination's Identity as a preferred destination choice for travel is crucial as it plays a role in tourist satisfaction and with it the intention to recommend or return. The study recommended that DMOs should work towards ensuring a congruence between the identity of a place and the image portrayed .

Keywords: Visitor profile, place identity perceptions, self-efficacy, industry context, competitiveness.

Introduction

Tourism over the last six decades has experienced continued expansion and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world with many new destinations emerging alongside the traditional destinations. Many destinations in the world have invested in tourism making it a key driver in socio-economic progress through job and enterprise creation, export revenues and infrastructure development (UNWTO, 2017). Globally, In 2017, International tourist arrivals increased by about 7% reaching to 1323 Million from 1239 Million in 2016. This record superseded the forecast by UNWTO of a growth of 3.8% per year between 2010 and 2018. Africa received 5%, Americas 16%, Asia and Pacific 24%, Europe 51% and Middle East 4% of total arrivals. In terms of receipts, Africa managed 3%, Americas 24%, Asia and Pacific 29%, Europe 39% and Middle East 5% of total receipts. (UNWTO, 2018). Looking at this trend



therefore, every country, city or region in the world must keep competing with others to acquire its share of commercial, political social and cultural transactions in a single virtual market. Due to lack of time to make comparisons between a variety of destinations; people base their buying decisions on the perceived images of places (UNWTO, 2009) hence the need to continually ensure a growing competitive edge for every tourist destination.

According to KIPPRA, (2017) African Tourism plays a very significant role in the global economy, although the African region is yet to fully exploit its potential. There is always a gap between tourist arrivals and receipts in the region which could point to the need to repackage Africa's tourism products. Nevertheless, international tourist arrivals in Africa increased by 8% in 2016 hitting 58 million, showing improvement from the weaker performance in 2014 and 2015 which was as a result of health, geopolitical and economic challenges. International tourist receipts stood at US \$35 Billion which is 3% of the world's share (UNWTO, 2017). Despite the challenges that affect its image, Africa's tourism experience can be enhanced by development of the tourism product which cannot be successfully achieved without involvement and participation of all public and private stakeholders. (UNWTO, 2015)

Tourism earns Kenya foreign exchange and creates jobs and wealth. Tourism earnings in Kenya rose by 17.8% from 84.6 Billion in 2015 to 99.7 Billion in 2016. International visitors arrivals increased by 13.5% to 1339.7 thousand in 2016 as a result of improved security, successful high profile conferences and aggressive marketing in domestic and international markets (KNBS, 2017.) Tourism contributes significantly Kenya's Gross Domestic Product and in 2015, contribution to GDP was 9.9% which is expected to grow at a rate of 5.8% per annum to reach 10.1% in 2026. This sector which has been identified as one of the leading sectors in the realization of Vision 2030 accounts for 9.3% total employment in the country which is 0.3% than global statistics. (KTB, 2016) The industry has recorded rapid growth since independence and great resilience even during the political unrest in 2007. Wilderness and wildlife which are key products for Kenya as destination are facing the threat of global climate change hence the need for product diversification. The sector has remained relatively underdeveloped compared to other destinations that are grouped with it in terms of visitor numbers, yield and diversity with statistics showing that only 1.8 Million visitors coming to Kenya compared to 8.3 Million visitors that visit South Africa annually (GOK, 2013). This calls for intensive product diversification strategies by involving both public and private stakeholders in order to boost the competitive edge of the country in the region.

Statement of the Problem

The identity of places is a key issue close to becoming a matter of survival although not purely on economic terms but due to the increasing need to promote identity in this era of globalization and rising competition among territories, (Botschen & Promberger, 2017). A key characteristic when coming up with place identity as opposed to a corporation according to Authors, (2017) is that the brand needs to accommodate the diverse interests from multiple stakeholders that are involved and this is the reason why principles of brand management that are still dominant in branding literature are being challenged. This is because identity of a place develops historically overtime while place brand management develops identity of a place brand for strategic and for commercial purposes. In Literature, there is a gap in knowledge regarding how place branding managers seek to involve different stakeholders in development of the brand, communication and the evaluation process.

Branding process, according to Tasci & Gartner, (2009), should go beyond promotional and advertisement activities by representing the actual value of a destination and continually portraying a consistent image and theme to the target market which is achievable through internal stakeholder involvement. In practice currently, place branding is limited to designing of logos,



catchy slogans and launching of marketing campaigns for destinations. (Campello, Aitken, Thyne & Gnoth, 2013). Fierce competition in the tourism industry has risen among destinations as a result making many of these adopt branding with the aim of differentiating themselves and improving their image to potential customers. Place marketing and destination branding have become instrumental globally to survive this competition (Garcia, Gomez & Molina, 2012).

After 15-20 years of growing popularity across a wide range of geographical scales, the effectiveness of place branding is now being questioned. (MedWay, Swanson, Delpynelrotti, & Zenker, 2015). Place branding practices have become exhausted, duplicated and in some cases mimicked. However, recent recognition from studying place identity has been found to help clarify opportunities and limitations of place branding. Moreover, according to Kavaratzis, (2009) shortcomings relating to literature and the concept itself have been evident with a major criticism being that the practice was originally designed for corporations and products and cannot be transferred to a city or region. This therefore forms the basis of this study, as it endeavors to fill this gap. In literature, minimal attention has been accorded place identity as opposed to brand identity and previous researches mostly concern themselves with products and services. Little has been done about how it is constituted, negotiated and how it relates to space and time (Kalandides, 2011). Wheeler and Weiler (2011) says that branding of a destination and implementation of the brand tends to overlook local communities and business operators that are key brand owners who come into contact with customers and deliver the product promise to customers. These two stakeholder groups alongside visitors contribute greatly to the place identity of a place. Mohd and Ismail (2014) suggest strongly the need to determine the extent of internal stakeholders' involvement in destination branding.

This study looks into place identity in terms of visitor profiles, visitor perceptions and visitor self-efficacy while at a destination and determined the influence of these aspects on competitiveness of a destination in terms of visitor numbers, expenditure, and uniqueness of the place, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and behavioral intentions.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To determine the influence of visitor profile on destination competitiveness of Machakos County
- ii. To investigate the effect of visitor place identity perceptions on destination competitiveness of Machakos County
- iii. To determine the effect of visitor-self efficacy on destination competitiveness of Machakos county
- iv. To examine the moderating effect of industry context on the relationship between place identity and destination competitiveness of Machakos County

Research Hypothesis

HO₁: *Visitor profile does not have any influence on the destination competitiveness of Machakos County*

HO₂: *There is no direct relationship between visitor place identity perceptions and destination competitiveness of Machakos County*

HO₃: *Visitor self-efficacy does not have any effect on the destination competitiveness of Machakos County*

HO₄: *Industry context does not affect the relationship between place identity and destination competitiveness of Machakos County*



Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Destination Competitiveness Theory

According to this theory by Scholar Mihalic, (2000) development of tourism destination competitiveness is derived from natural resources and man-made resources. Natural resources form the comparative advantage while man-made resources form the competitive advantage of a destination. This theory only focuses on the demand side of tourism and what and how marketers can work on and improve facilities at a destination. It doesn't however consider the demand side in tourism which entails the potential visitors who are also key stakeholders to a place. In this study, the researcher examined the influence of place identity among visitors on destination competitiveness on Machakos County as a tourist destination.

Break well's Identity Process Model

In this model, identity is conceptualized as an organism which moves through time and develops through accommodation, assimilation and evaluation. It is governed by principles of distinctiveness, continuity and self-esteem. Distinctiveness describes the perceived uniqueness of being associated to a city, town especially by residents. Continuity describes either the 'match' between environment and the desires and wants of residents or the buildup of memories attached to a place with reference to past events in the lives of residents. Self –esteem is concerned with personal feelings of worth or social value by an individual gained or boosted from the qualities of a place. Recently a fourth principle of self-efficacy was added which is an individual's perception on his ability to achieve their goals while at a particular place. This study includes visitors to a place as vital when conceptualizing the identity of a place. The researcher examined place identity in terms of visitor profile, visitor perceptions and visitor self-efficacy and how it affects competitiveness of a tourist destination.

Empirical Review

Concept of Destination Competitiveness

A destination according to (Buhahis, 2000) is a tourism place that offers a mixture of tourism products and services. A destination's competitiveness is linked to its ability to deliver goods and services that perform better than those in other destinations to satisfy visitor needs. (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). In their definition of destination competitiveness; Ritchie & Crouch, (2003) say that what truly makes a destination competitive is its capacity to enlarge tourism expenditure; to continually attract visitors; providing satisfying and unforgettable experiences and its ability to do so profitably while enhancing wellbeing of the residents and preserving its natural resources for future generations. According to (Dwyer & P, 2000) it's a general concept that encompasses price differentials coupled with exchange rate movements; productivity levels of various components of the tourist industry are qualitative factors affecting the attractiveness or otherwise of a destination. According to Hankinson, (2004) destination image contributes to competitiveness of a destination. Previous studies have emphasized the importance of identifying the factors that contribute to destination competitiveness as they add to the competitive edge of a destination.

The concept of Place identity

The term Place identity has been in use since 1970s. Proshansky H, (1978) defined it as "The dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to physical environment. Pronshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, (1983) defined it as the individual's cooperation of a place into the larger concept of self, which has been described as the 'potpourri of memories, conceptions, interpretations, ideas, and related feelings about specific physical settings. According to these scholars, Place identity is made up of perceptions and conceptions concerning the environment.



As such it can be divided into two clusters; One consisting of the memories, thoughts, values and settings while the other captures the relationship between different settings for example school, home and neighborhood.

Visitor profile

According Huh, Uysal and McCleary (2006), tourist profiles comprise of socio-demographic variables namely gender, age, income, occupation, marital status, and nationality; and travel behavior characteristics which are described by variables such as decision-making time to choose a destination, length of stay, travel companion, past travel experiences, holiday organization mode, type of accommodation used, mode of transport, activities undertaken during holiday and sources of information. These tourist profile constituents are critical in analyzing satisfaction and loyalty of visitors to a destination(Ozdemir, Aksu, Ehtiyar, Çizel, & Çizel, 2012).

Visitor Perceptions

Perception has been defined as the process by which people select, organize and interpret stimuli into meaningful coherent whole. (Luala, Gabriela, & Joe, 2013). According to Beerli & Martin, (2003), visitor perceptions to any given attraction differ based on demographic situations including age, gender, income level, and education level and number of children among others. Knowing how a region is perceived is vital in attracting more visitors to the region. However, in tourism research the perception of a destination name has been given emphasis more than the visuality of a destination (Mackay & Fesenmaier , 2000). This study therefore examined the effect of visitor place identity perceptions on destination competitiveness of Machakos County as a tourist destination.

Visitor Self-Efficacy

Self -efficacy has been defined as the assessment of an individual's capability to organize and implement actions necessary to achieve successful levels of performance (Bandura ,1986).It is what makes a difference between how people feel, think and act.(Kaur, 2018).According to Bandura 1999, social self –efficacy is the awareness of one's abilities that enable him to accomplish social relations and work together with others in terms of social situations and conflicts . Torres and Watson, (2013) says that it's the beliefs that people have on their ability to perform a particular task.

Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure has been defined as the physical tangible elements that are set up at destination to meet the demands of tourists at a destination (Inskeep, 1991).Which according to Buhalis, (2000) and Wilde & Cox, (2008) includes transport, infrastructure amenities and facilitating resources at a tourism destination. Tourist amenities have been found to have a direct influence on visitor satisfaction (Zeinali & Jarpour, 2015) while generally tourism infrastructure was found to affect visitors' decision making on which places to visit. (Cuccuceli & Ghoffi , 2016).

Conceptual Framework

This is a conceptualized view of place identity and its influence on destination competitiveness. This framework describes place identity in terms of its visitor profiles, visitor perceptions and visitor self-efficacy.

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

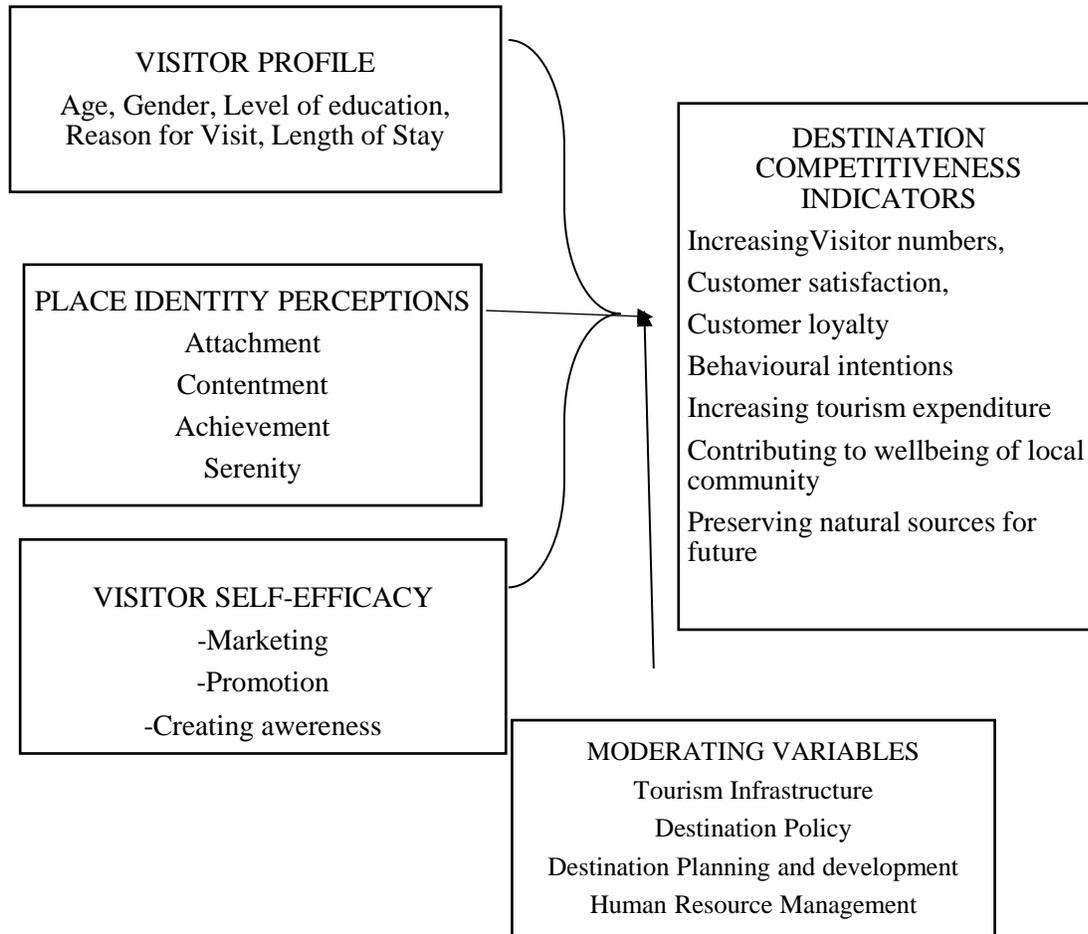


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Adapted and Modified from :(Breakwell, 1983) &(Breakwell, 1992)

Research Methodology

A cross-sectional descriptive research design was used in this study to determine the relationship between Place Identity and Destination Competitiveness among visitors to selected tourism enterprises in Machakos County. The study area was in Machakos County which has 8 Sub-Counties namely Machakos Town, Masinga, Yatta, Kangundo, Matungulu, Kathiani, Mavoko and Mwala. This study targeted visitors to 202 registered tourism enterprises who visit and patronise products and services in Machakos Sub-county (TRA, 2018). Semi-structured questionnaires including both open –ended and closed ended questions was used to collect data from sampled respondents. Descriptive statistics including charts, graphs, tables, percentages and frequencies was used. Inferential statistics was employed to measure reliability of conclusions from collected data. Hypothesis testing was done using T-Test and Chi-square tests and a linear regression model was used to bring out the relationship between the variables in the conceptual framework.



Results and Findings

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics for Place Identity Perceptions on Destination Competitiveness

The study sought to establish the influence of visitor place identity perception on destination competitiveness in Machakos County. For the purposes of interpretation 1 & 2 (Strongly agree and agree) were grouped together as agree 4 & 5 (disagree and strongly disagree) were grouped as disagree. Results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Influence of Place Identity Perception

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
I feel attached to the place	42.0%	22.4%	19.2%	11.4%	5.0%	2.2	1.2
I feel important when in Machakos County	16.9%	46.2%	19.4%	14.3%	2.9%	2.4	1.1
I feel I have achieved a lot when in Machakos County	36.9%	27.2%	24.0%	9.6%	1.9%	2.1	1.1
I feel Nostalgic about Machakos County	38.3%	34.7%	12.9%	10.9%	2.9%	2.1	1.1
I feel secure Machakos County	43.9%	39.7%	7.1%	6.1%	2.9%	1.8	1.0
I feel relaxed Machakos County	59.7%	28.7%	6.6%	2.3%	2.7%	1.6	0.9
Average						2.0	1.1

Results in Table 1 indicated that majority of the respondents 64%(42+22.4) agreed with the statement that feel attached to Machakos County while 16% disagreed with the statement. Asked if they feel important when at the place, majority with 63% agreed while 17% disagreed with the statement. The respondents were asked if they feel they have achieved a lot when in Machakos County and 64% agreed with the statement while 11% disagreed with the statement. Further the respondents were asked if feel nostalgic about Machakos County where 73% agreed and 4% disagreed. on whether they feel secure in Machakos county, majority agreed with 83% while only 9% disagreed. Lastly, the respondents were asked if they feel relaxed in Machakos county and majority with 88% agreed and only 5% disagreed to the statements.

Descriptive Statistics on Influence of Visitor Self Efficacy

The study sought to establish the influence of visitor self-efficacy on destination competitiveness in Machakos County. Results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Influence of Self Efficacy

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
I can get as much information as I need about Machakos County before I visit	31.2%	44.3%	11.5%	7.6%	5.4%	2.12	1.1
My expenditure while in Machakos County promotes the economic wellbeing of the local community	31.4%	32.4%	17.5%	12.7%	6.0%	2.3	1.2
I can market Machakos County while at the destination through social media	41.2%	36.4%	14.6%	4.5%	3.2%	1.9	1.0
I can easily adopt the culture of the local people in Machakos County	37.8%	27.3%	20.3%	10.8%	3.8%	2.1	1.1
I know that my behavior while at Machakos County helps in conserving natural resources for the future	31.3%	36.1%	17.4%	11.1%	4.1%	2.2	1.1
I can enjoy undisturbed quiet holiday in a serene environment in Machakos County	44.0%	32.3%	16.5%	4.4%	2.8%	1.9	1.0



I know that I can get value for money while in Machakos County	42.6%	32.5%	13.6%	8.5%	2.8%	1.9	1.0
I can easily adjust to the weather conditions in Machakos County	47.5%	34.8%	10.4%	4.1%	3.2%	1.8	0.9
Average						2.0	1.1

Results in Table 2 indicated that majority of the respondents with 76% agreed with the statement that they can get as much information as they need about Machakos County before they visit while 13% disagreed. On whether the expenditure while in Machakos County promotes the economic wellbeing of the local community, majority agreed with 64% while 19% disagreed. The respondents were asked if they can market Machakos County while at the destination through social media and agreed with 78% while 8% disagreed with the statement. Further, the respondents were asked if they can easily adopt the culture of the local people in Machakos County and majority with 65% agreed to the statement while 15% disagreed.

The respondents were asked if they know that their behavior while at Machakos County helped in conserving natural resources for the future and majority with 67% agreed to the statements while 15% disagreed. The respondents were asked if they can enjoy undisturbed quiet holiday in a serene environment in Machakos County and majority with 76% agreed whereas only 7% disagreed. Further, the respondents were asked if they know that they can get value for money while in Machakos County and they agreed with 75% while only 11% disagreed. Lastly the respondents were asked if they can easily adjust to the weather conditions in Machakos County and agreed with 82% whereas 7% disagreed.

Descriptive Statistics on Industry Context

The study sought to establish the influence of industry context on destination competitiveness in Machakos County. Results were presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Industry Context

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
Hotel Infrastructure							
Accommodation facilities are in good quality	33.4%	44.6%	15.6%	4.8%	1.6%	2.0	0.9
Food and beverage service is excellent	28.0%	53.2%	11.8%	6.1%	1.0%	2.0	0.9
Accessibility to hotels is good	42.2%	40.9%	9.9%	5.8%	1.3%	1.8	0.9
I am generally satisfied with hotel services offered	47.6%	33.8%	7.4%	9.3%	1.9%	1.8	1.0
The Machakos Sports ground is an excellent place to be	42.9%	36.5%	13.3%	4.4%	2.9%	1.9	1.0
Entertainment Facilities							
Machakos people park is a fascinating place to be	35.9%	43.8%	12.1%	5.1%	3.2%	2.0	1.0
There is variety of good music and other entertainment activities	35.0%	42.7%	10.5%	9.9%	1.9%	2.0	1.0
I am greatly satisfied with entertainment services offered	36.9%	43.0%	9.2%	7.3%	3.5%	2.0	1.0
Social Amenities							
Shopping malls are located strategically and are well equipped	51.8%	36.9%	7.8%	2.3%	1.3%	1.6	0.8
Banking halls are easily accessible	42.1%	45.0%	7.4%	3.9%	1.6%	1.8	0.9
Telecommunications are excellent	48.2%	35.3%	11.0%	3.2%	2.3%	1.8	0.9
Places of worship are easily accessible	45.0%	33.2%	15.6%	4.2%	2.0%	1.9	1.0



Medical facilities are easily accessible and affordable	36.8%	38.5%	16.8%	4.9%	3.0%	2.0	1.0
Academic institutions are easily accessible, affordable and offer quality education	45.8%	33.4%	11.4%	7.1%	2.3%	1.9	1.0
Transport Facilities							
Machakos has good roads	37.3%	42.5%	10.4%	7.8%	1.9%	1.9	1.0
Public transport is readily available	29.0%	52.8%	12.4%	2.0%	3.9%	2.0	0.9
Tour operators and travel agents offer good services	41.5%	28.8%	16.0%	8.8%	4.9%	2.1	1.2
I am generally satisfied with transport services offered	40.2%	38.9%	9.5%	8.5%	2.9%	2.0	1.1
Average						1.9	1.0

Under hotel infrastructure, results in Table 4 indicated that majority of the respondents with 78% agreed with the statement that accommodation facilities are in good quality while 6% disagreed with the statement. The respondents were asked if food and beverage service are excellent and 81% agreed while 7% disagreed. On whether accessibility to hotels is good, 83% agreed while 7% disagreed. On whether they are generally satisfied with hotel services offered, majority agreed with 81% while 11% disagreed. The respondents were asked if Machakos Sports ground is an excellent place to be and they agreed with 79% while 7% disagreed.

Under entertainment facilities, the respondents agreed with 80% that Machakos people park is a fascinating place to be while 8% disagreed. Majority with 78% agreed that there is variety of good music and other entertainment activities while 12% disagreed. On whether they are greatly satisfied with entertainment services offered, majority agreed with 80% while 11% disagreed. Under social amenities, the respondents were asked if shopping malls are located strategically and are well equipped and they agreed with 89% while only 4% disagreed. On whether banking halls are easily accessible, they agreed with 87% while only 6% disagreed. The respondents were asked if telecommunications are excellent and 84% agreed to the statement. On whether places of worship are easily accessible, they agreed with 78%. Majority agreed with 75% that medical facilities are easily accessible and affordable. On whether academic institutions are easily accessible, affordable and offer quality education they agreed with 79%.

Lastly under transport facilities, the respondents were asked if Machakos has good roads and majority agreed with 80% while 10% disagreed. On whether public transport is readily available, they agreed with 82% while 6% disagreed. The respondents were asked if tour operators and travel agents offer good services and 70% agreed. Lastly, the respondents were asked if they are generally satisfied with transport services offered and majority with 79% agreed while 11% disagreed to the statement.

Descriptive Statistics on Destination Competitiveness

Descriptive statistics were carried out on destination competitiveness and the results are shown in Table 4.



Table 4. Destination Competitiveness

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
Accessibility from surrounding locations	53.6%	34.7%	6.6%	2.5%	2.5%	1.7	0.9
Entertainment and recreation Facilities	27.0%	44.8%	13.0%	12.1%	3.2%	2.2	1.1
Favorable weather conditions	40.1%	36.3%	16.2%	6.1%	1.3%	1.9	1.0
Safety and security at destination	39.5%	37.6%	13.7%	7.6%	1.6%	1.9	1.0
Professionalism of staff	30.0%	37.4%	16.5%	12.9%	3.2%	2.2	1.1
Natural resources and cultural resources	34.6%	33.3%	11.9%	14.7%	5.4%	2.2	1.2
Price Competitiveness (Value for money)	38.1%	34.9%	16.2%	8.3%	2.5%	2.0	1.1
Hygiene and sanitation in facilities	44.5%	37.1%	12.3%	4.2%	1.9%	1.8	0.9
Average						2.0	1.0

Results in Table 4 indicated that majority of the respondents with 88% agreed with the statement that there is accessibility from surrounding locations. On whether there are entertainment and recreation facilities, majority agreed with 72% while 15% disagreed to the statement. On favorable weather conditions, majority agreed with 76.4% while 7% disagreed. The respondents were asked if there was safety and security at destination and they agreed with 77% while 9% disagreed to the statement. On professionalism of staff majority agreed with 67% and on availability of natural resources and cultural resources they agreed with 70%. The respondents were asked if there was price competitiveness on value for money and they agreed with 73% and on availability of hygiene and sanitation in facilities, they agreed with 82% while 6% disagreed.

Diagnosics Analysis

Normality

To test the normality of turnover intention (dependent variable) was done by use of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The hypothesis was tested at a critical value at 0.05, where the rule is that reject H_0 if the probability (P) value is less than 0.05 or else fail to reject.

H_1 : The data is normal.

Table 5. Test for Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Place Identity Perception	0.149	317	0.100	0.901	317	0.063
Self-Efficacy	0.144	317	0.071	0.919	317	0.021
Industry Context Destination	0.137	317	0.025	0.869	317	0.092
Competitiveness	0.242	317	0.086	0.748	317	0.072

The results indicated that the significance level was above 0.05 and thus the hypothesis was not rejected. Thus the data was concluded to be normal.



Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity test was done where tolerance of the variable and the VIF value were used where values more than 0.2 for Tolerance and values less than 10 for VIF means that there is no multicollinearity.

Table 6. Multicollinearity Test Using Tolerance and VIF

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Place Identity Perception	0.558	1.794
Self-Efficacy	0.390	2.566
Industry Context	0.434	2.306

From the findings, the all the variables had a tolerance values >0.2 and VIF values <10 as shown in Table 6. Indicating that there is no multi-collinearity among the independent variables.

Heteroscedasticity

Heteroscedasticity test was run in order to test whether the error terms are correlated across observation in the cross sectional data (Long & Ervin, 2000). The alternative hypothesis is that the data does suffers from Heteroscedasticity. Since the p-value is greater than the 5%, then the alternative hypothesis was rejected at a critical p value of 0.05 since the reported value was 0.05=0.05. Thus, the data did not suffer from heteroscedasticity as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Heteroscedasticity Results

Breusch-Pagan / Cook-Weisberg test for heteroscedasticity		
Ho: Constant variance		
Variable: fitted values of Destination Competitiveness		
chi2(1)	=	5.33
Prob > chi2	=	0.02

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was carried out to detect the association between the variables, identity perception, visitor self-efficacy, and industry context and destination competitiveness.

Table 8. Correlation Matrix

Variables		Destination Competitiveness	Identity Perception	Self-Efficacy	Industry Context
Destination Competitiveness	Pearson Correlation	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Place Identity Perception	Pearson Correlation	.577**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.656**	.643**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
Industry Context	Pearson Correlation	.684**	.589**	.737**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	



The results in table 8 indicated that place identity perception was positively and significantly associated to destination competitiveness ($r=0.577$, $p=0.00<0.05$). Self-Efficacy was positively and significantly associated to destination competitiveness ($r=0.656$, $p=0.00<0.05$) while Industry Context was positively and significantly associated to destination competitiveness ($r=0.684$, $p=0.000<0.05$).

Regression Analysis

Simple regression analysis was done on each of the variables as illustrated below.

Relationship between Visitor Profile and Destination Competitiveness

The relationship between visitor profile and destination competitiveness was examined in the study using T-tests and chi-square as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Visitor Profile and Destination Competitiveness

Category	T- Value	p-Value	Sig
Gender	0.491	0.624	Not Significant
Category	Chi-Square Value	p-Value	Sig
Marital Status	63.368	0.806	Not Significant
Age	208.943	0.000	Significant
Level of Education	182.246	0.034	Significant
Reason for Visit	262.168	0.000	Significant
Means of Travel	60.738	0.004	Significant

Results in Table 9 shows that gender had a T-value of 0.491 and p-value of 0.624 and thus concluded it was not significant with destination competitiveness. Marital status had a chi-square value of 63.368 and a p-value of 0.806 and was concluded not significant with destination competitiveness. However, Age had a chi-square value of 208.943 and a p-value of 0.000 and was thus concluded significant with destination competitiveness. Level of education had a chi-square was competitiveness. Reason for visit had a chi-square value of 262.168 and a p-value of 0.000 and was thus concluded significant with destination competitiveness. Means of travel had a chi-square value of 60.738 and a p-value of 0.004 and was thus concluded significant with destination competitiveness.

Relationship between Place Identity Perception and Destination Competitiveness

The relationship between place identity perception and destination competitiveness was examined in the study using regression analysis. Table 10 presents the fitness model.

Table 10. Model Fitness of Place Identity Perception and Destination Competitiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.577a	0.333	0.331	0.5960699

a Predictors: (Constant), Place Identity Perception

Results in Table 10 revealed that place identity perception was a suitable variables in explaining destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 33.3%. This means that place identity perception explained 33.3% of the variations in the dependent variable that is destination competitiveness.



Table 11. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Place Identity Perception and Destination Competitiveness

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	55.897	1	55.897	157.324	.000
Residual	111.919	315	0.355		
Total	167.816	316			

Table 11 show the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variable (Place identity perception) was a good predictor/indicator of destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by an F statistic of 157.324 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level.

Table 12. Regression of Coefficients for Place Identity Perception and Destination Competitiveness

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.798	0.101		7.86	0.000
Place Identity Perception	0.589	0.047	0.577	12.54	0.000

The regression of coefficients results for in Table 12 shows that place identity and destination competitiveness was positively and significant related ($\beta = 0.589$, $p=0.000$).

Relationship between Self Efficacy and Destination Competitiveness

The relationship between self-efficacy and destination competitiveness was examined in the study using regression analysis. Table 13 presents the fitness model.

Table 13. Model Fitness of Self Efficacy and Destination Competitiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.656a	0.431	0.429	0.5505837

Results in Table 14 revealed that self-efficacy was a suitable variable in explaining destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 43.1%. This means that self-efficacy explained 43.1% of the variations in the dependent variable that is destination competitiveness.

Table 14. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Self Efficacy and Destination Competitiveness

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	72.326	1	72.326	238.589	0.000
Residual	95.49	315	0.303		
Total	167.816	316			

Table 14 show the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variable (Self Efficacy) was a good predictor/indicator of destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by an F statistic of 238.589 and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level.



Table 15. Regression of Coefficients for Self-Efficacy and Destination Competitiveness

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	0.625	0.094		6.629	0.000
Self-Efficacy	0.672	0.044	0.656	15.446	0.000

The regression of coefficients results for in Table 15 shows that self efficacy and destination competitiveness was positively and significant related ($\beta = 0.672$, $p=0.000$).

Moderating Effect of Industry Context on the Relationship between Place Identity and Destination Competitiveness

The moderating effect of industry context on the relationship between place identity and destination competitiveness was examined in the study using regression analysis. Table 16 presents the fitness model.

Table 16: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.828a	0.685	0.679	0.413633

Results in Table 17 revealed that age, education level, reason for travel, means of transport, place identity perception and self-efficacy were a suitable variable in explaining destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.685%. This means that self-efficacy explained 68.5% of the variations in the dependent variable that is destination competitiveness.

Table 17. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	114.477	6	19.079	111.516	0.000
Residual	52.696	308	0.171		
Total	167.173	314			

Table 18 show the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variables, age, education level, reason for travel, means of transport, place identity perception and self-efficacy were a good predictor/indicator of destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by an F statistic of 111.516 and the reported p value=0.000 which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level.



Table 4.19. Regression of Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.600	0.076		7.851	0.000
Age*Industry Context	0.021	0.005	0.157	4.172	0.000
Education Level* Industry Context	0.518	0.055	0.558	9.507	0.000
Reason for Travel* Industry Context	0.077	0.014	0.222	5.655	0.000
Means of Transport*Industry Context	0.113	0.019	0.539	5.865	0.000
Place Identity Perception*Industry Context	0.032	0.022	0.132	2.458	0.015
Self-Efficacy*Industry Context	0.057	0.022	0.266	2.549	0.011

The regression of coefficients results for in Table 19 shows that when moderated by industry context, age ($\beta=0.021$, $p=0.000$), education level ($\beta=0.0518$, $p=0.000$), reason for travel ($\beta=0.077$, $p=0.000$), means of transport($\beta=0.113$, $p=0.000$) were positively and significantly related with destination competitiveness. Further, place identity perception($\beta=0.032$, $p=0.015$) and self-efficacy ($\beta=0.057$, $p=0.000$) were was negatively and significantly related with destination competitiveness. This is evidence that industry context moderates the relationship between place identity and destination competitiveness as the p-values<0.05.

Multiple Regression Analysis

The overall relationship between place identity and destination competitiveness was examined in the study using regression analysis. The analysis was done based on the significant variables in the previous models. Table 20 presents the fitness model.

Table 20. Model Fitness of Place Identity and Destination Competitiveness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.774a	0.599	0.587	0.453846

Results in Table 4.18 revealed that reason for visit, identity, self-efficacy and infrastructure were a suitable variable in explaining destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.599%.

Table 4.18. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	72.245	7	10.321	50.106	.000
	Residual	48.404	235	0.206		
	Total	120.649	242			

Table 21 show the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicated that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variables, reason for visit, identity, self-efficacy and infrastructure were a good predictor/indicator of destination competitiveness in Machakos County. This was supported by an F statistic of 50.106 and the reported p value=0.000 which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level.



Table 22. Regression of Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.108	0.367		0.293	0.770
Reason for Visit	0.039	0.017	0.095	2.240	0.026
Place Identity	0.119	0.059	0.117	2.009	0.046
Self-Efficacy	0.155	0.071	0.157	2.182	0.030
Infrastructure	0.524	0.072	0.519	7.272	0.000

The regression of coefficients results for in Table 22 shows that Reason for Visit and destination competitiveness was positively and significant related ($\beta = 0.309$, $p=0.026$). Place Identity and destination competitiveness was positively and significant related ($\beta =0.119$, $p=0.046$). Self-Efficacy and destination competitiveness was positively and significant related ($\beta =0.155$, $p=0.030$). Infrastructure and destination competitiveness was positively and significant related ($\beta= 0. 524$, $p=0.000$).

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concluded that visitor profile has a significant relationship with destination competitiveness. The study concluded that tourists' perception of a destination's identity as a preferred destination choice for travel is crucial. As a tourist is deciding a travel to a destination among alternative choices, the subjective judgment they make about the alternatives available to them depends on a number of factors, among which the most important of these is the true identity about each alternative. DMOs should therefore consider differentiating their products to cater for the needs of various visitor profiles and preferences.

Visitor place identity perception is recognised as an important factor in tourist destination choice behaviour as well as playing a part in tourist satisfaction, alongside the intention of visitors to recommend or return. The individual's beliefs, thoughts and impressions about a location prior and after visit, provides tourists with a certain feeling of both anticipation and creates in them an expectations of a destination, which can motivate them to make a visit. Destination Marketers and promoters should therefore work towards matching the marketed product to the reality at the destination to avoid cases of incongruence which affects customer satisfaction negatively. Strategies can be put in place either to develop facilities at a destination so as to match information relayed to potential visitors especially through the media. This will in turn result to satisfied customers that feel that they are getting value for their money and increases their return chances.

The study further concluded that visitor self-efficacy was another significant determinant of destination competitiveness. This study sought to find out the efficiency of visitors in making a destination competitive. Knowing that they have ability to influence economic wellbeing of the local community, adopt the culture of the local people, the fact that their activities while at the destination help in conserving natural resources for both the present and the future and their ability to enjoy undisturbed quiet holiday in a serene environment creates a sense of belonging for the visitors. In addition to their varied reasons for travel, visitors' realisation of their positive impact on the environment and on the lives of the local community makes them want to recommend a place to others or even return as they feel they are part of the sustainable development at the destination.



Recommendations

This study therefore makes the following recommendations:

- (i) DMOs should work towards ensuring congruence between the true identity of a place and the image portrayed to potential visitors.
- (ii) Tourism Policy makers should be put in place to guide County branding initiatives in the quest of diversifying the Kenyan Tourism Product.
- (iii) Destination Branding requires the opinions and views by many stakeholders and hence the need for DMOs to integrate their marketing efforts with opinions and views from key stakeholders especially the local community and the visitors as they come up with the tourism product of a place. These stakeholders play a key role in creating an identity for a place which will be competitive overtime.
- (iv) Destination Managers should work towards creating a sense of belonging to visitors'. Enhancing visitor self-efficacy in marketing any destination will directly influence their behavioral intentions to return and recommend others either by Word of Mouth or by use of media while at the destinations.

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