

African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management

ajthm.eanso.org

Volume 1, Issue 1, 2022

Print ISSN: 2790-9603 | Online ISSN: 2790-9611

Title DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/2790-9611>

ENSO

EAST AFRICAN
NATURE &
SCIENCE
ORGANIZATION

Original Article

Incentive Travellers' Preference and Their Influence on Destination Choice in Nakuru County, Kenya

Harrison Kabutha^{1*}

¹ Kenyatta University, P. O. Box 43844-00100 Nairobi, Kenya.

* Author for Correspondence ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7657-9376>; email: hkabutha@gmail.com

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.1.1.1033>

Date Published: ABSTRACT

28 December 2022

Keywords:

*Destination,
Choice,
Preference,
Incentive Tourism,
Influence.*

Incentive travel mostly addressed under MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) tourism, is widely considered a cornerstone of niche tourism, which combines both leisure and traveller's needs. This study was carried out with the aim of identifying and exploring incentive travellers' preferences and, most especially, how they influence the choice of Nakuru County in Kenya as a destination. Findings from the research were to be used as a reference basis for incentive travel promotion and development. Adopting a descriptive research design, the study sought to achieve the following objectives; (i) To profile incentive tourism dynamics in Nakuru County, Kenya, (ii) To assess whether preset tourism conditions in Nakuru County had a positive influence on incentive travellers' preference for choice of destination, (iii) To determine the potential difference in preference among incentive travel earners and incentive travel earners' managers for choice of Nakuru County as a destination and (iv) To derive strategic options for promotion and development of incentive tourism in Nakuru County and Kenya by extension. In addition, the correlational research design was employed to identify whether there was an association between variables as enlisted in the study objectives, for instance, incentive traveller's choice and preset conditions in Nakuru County as a destination choice. Considering the study was based on existing incentive travel consumers' decision-making process, the stratified sampling method of data collection was adopted, with the respondents classified into three strata; (i) incentive travel earners, (ii) incentive travel earners' managers and (iii) destination management organisations' managers. Based on the research findings, the study concluded that uniquely diversified programs, activities as well as quality amenities play a key role in the consumer decision-making process on the choice of destination. In line with its purpose, the study generated strategic and progressive recommendations for the promotion and development of incentive tourism as a niche product in Kenya.

APA CITATION

Kabutha, H. (2022). Incentive Travellers' Preference and Their Influence on Destination Choice in Nakuru County, Kenya *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 1(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.1.1.1033>.

CHICAGO CITATION

Kabutha, Harrison. 2022. "Incentive Travellers' Preference and Their Influence on Destination Choice in Nakuru County, Kenya". *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management* 1 (1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.37284/ajthm.1.1.1033>.

HARVARD CITATION

Kabutha, H. (2022) "Incentive Travellers' Preference and Their Influence on Destination Choice in Nakuru County, Kenya" *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 1(1), pp. 1-14. doi: 10.37284/ajthm.1.1.1033

IEEE CITATION

H. Kabutha, "Incentive Travellers' Preference and Their Influence on Destination Choice in Nakuru County, Kenya", *AJTHM*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1-14, Dec. 2022.

MLA CITATION

Kabutha, Harrison. "Incentive Travellers' Preference and Their Influence on Destination Choice in Nakuru County, Kenya". *African Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, Vol. 1, no. 1, Dec. 2022, pp. 1-14, doi:10.37284/ajthm.1.1.1033

INTRODUCTION

Globally, current statistical evidence points to the fact that MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tourism has experienced steady growth over the years (Smagina, 2017). This can be attributed to the fact that the tourism sector generates large sums in revenues, hence the urge and need by national governments to maximise it. Testament to this fact, for instance, is the World Trade Organization's (WTO) 2015 annual report on 'Tourism Satellite Accounts', which found the tourism sector to be contributing a whopping USD 7 trillion annually to the global economy (United Nations World Trade Organization [UNWTO], 2016). On the international scale, the United States of America has dominated the MICE industry for quite significant periods due to its economic capacity to invest heavily. For instance, approximately USD 110 billion worth of investment is spent on an annual basis by the superpower (Carter, 2017).

The United States of America is not the only key player in the MICE industry. Countries in both Western and Eastern Europe are vibrant in the promotion of MICE business at the national level. In essence, it is only in Africa and part of the Asian continent where countries have not been seen to invest heavily in the MICE industry, despite the

potential held in their tourism industries (Zhou & Ap, 2009). This largely owes to the fact that, unlike other tourism sectors, MICE tourism is considered a high-capital investment sector (Wu & Zhang, 2013), which makes it a challenge for developing and under-developed countries to compete for a substantial global market share in the MICE industry.

Nonetheless, the significant economic benefits enjoyed by heavy and serious investors in MICE have, in the recent past, caught the attention of other willing players (Wu & Zhang, 2013). As a result, developing countries in Africa and Asia are beginning to follow suit. A good example would be Thailand, one of the still-developing nations in Asia, which has embarked on a deliberate effort to promote and develop MICE tourism activities (Tsai & Sakulsinlapakorn, 2016). The same applies to a number of countries in the African continent, with South Africa acting taking the lead, contributing 10% to MICE activities in Africa in 2019 (International Congress and Convention Association [ICCA], 2019). Other dominant players in Africa include Rwanda, Morocco, and Kenya. Despite the increased efforts, however, Africa has stagnated at controlling a meagre 2% of the global MICE market share (ICCA, 2019).

Having singled out Kenya from the rest of Africa as an interesting tourist attraction, this research identified a need for examining and assessing the status of incentive tourism in the country. This was with an aim to establish how it can contribute to the general growth of the tourism sector in the country, specifically in the county of Nakuru. More so, such a boost is necessitated by the fact that the tourism industry ranks 3rd in contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as per the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2012). In so doing, the research narrowed down to incentive tourism as a distinct MICE component and focused on its promotion and development.

Incentive travel, although not so much globally explored as compared to the other components of MICE, carries the potential to contribute significantly to a country's tourism sector (Carter, 2017). In the USA for instance, incentive travel contributes 5% to the general economic impact of the MICE industry (Jin et al., 2016).

Current research in Kenya and Africa by extension does not pay keen attention to the travel decision-making process of this dynamic tourism product (Kihima, 2015). Consequently, there exists a gap in knowledge on the current status in regard to demand and supply across the market, a gap that this study sought to fill. The general presumption with regard to incentive travel is that a consumer's decision-making process is guided by their individual/personal preferences (Carter, 2017). Leisure tourists are seen to be after pleasure, and as such, their decisions are influenced by the desire to visit encounter and experience new and exciting destinations. Considering this fact, therefore, Kenya's ability to compete in the MICE industry can be enhanced by shifting focus from the capital to emerging cities and destinations. The researcher hoped that recommendations generated by this research would go a long way to assist key stakeholders in the Kenyan tourism industry in planning, organising, developing, and marketing the country's tourism sector.

In realising its purpose, which was to explore and identify incentive travellers' preferences and how they influence the choice of destination in Nakuru County, Kenya, in order to provide a reference for incentive travel promotion, this research sought to achieve the following objectives:

- To profile incentive tourism dynamics in Nakuru County
- To review whether preset tourism conditions in Nakuru County influence incentive travellers' preference for choice of Nakuru County, Kenya
- To identify the potential difference in preference among incentive traveller earners and their managers for choice of Nakuru County, Kenya
- To derive strategic options for the development and promotion of incentive tourism in Kenya

The following research questions were settled on:

- What constitutes the incentive tourism industry in Nakuru County?
- What are the best strategic policies for incentive tourism promotion and development?

This research was guided by the following hypotheses:

H₀: There is no association between preset tourism conditions and incentive travellers' preference for choice of destination in Nakuru County, Kenya

H₀: There is no significant relationship in preference among incentive travellers and their managers in choice of destination in Nakuru County, Kenya

The fact that data for analysis were collected from respondents already attending incentive travel programs stands tall as the key limitation of this study (Taherdoost, 2016). This is because the study concept was based on incentive travellers' decision-making process, and, therefore, data from an individual already at the site could be highly

subjective. The study could benefit more from collecting data from respondents before they attend the incentive program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism is not an entirely new concept as business tourism existed centuries ago, with trade and commerce among the activities behind many travels (Omolara, 2019). This involved travelling for long distances in search of buying and selling markets for products. Despite the widespread development and technological advancement, the purposes behind most business travels in contemporary society remain largely unchanged. Business tourism today still represents travel activities undertaken mostly by organisations for commercial, professional, and work-related purposes (Wu & Zhang, 2013). Such travels basically encompass meetings, exhibitions, conventions, and incentive travels. In this context, incentive travel is considered a motivation tool used by employers to steer their employees to greater heights of performance (Davidson & Cope, 2003).

The earliest traces of incentive travel dates way back to the year 1906 in the United States of America. Dayton, a national cash register company, introduced a reward program for the best-performing employees with a trip to the company's headquarters (Kononenko, 2014). Even though other monetary valuables accompanied the reward, the employees cherished the incentive trip. In as much as the incentive practice has evolved to include more sophisticated and high-value rewards, its worth in terms of demand and supply (Kononenko, 2014) is still poorly studied and measured, with most studies experiencing a challenge in categorising incentive travel as either leisure or business tourism. This fact alone ignites the need for further research.

Generally, incentive travel can be categorised into work-related incentives and leisure-based incentives. The former is a hybrid of work and leisure after work. It is purely based on employee

progress and development while allowing attendees to engage in some form of team-building and training (Davidson & Cope, 2003). Worth noting is, however, the fact that its overall goal is to enhance the company's performance level (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Leisure-based incentives, on the other hand, are aimed at offering pleasurable and memorable moments to employees. Most of them come as paid holidays, where employees are discouraged from thinking or engaging in anything relating to work (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). Existing literature on incentive travel programs suggests that the nature of incentive travel programs offered to corporate travellers depends on the purpose explained by the sponsor organisation (Sandhya & Kumar, 2011). Team-building intervention is seen as the most popular form of incentive travel. It involves socialising activities, indoor as well as outdoor fun activities.

Even though there exists little data on the status of incentive tourism in Kenya, Nakuru County counts among the fast-emerging destinations of choice in MICE tourism (International Congress and Convention Association [ICCA], 2019). This was especially after Naivasha town hosted its first international conference in the recent past, which was followed by other high-end international meetings (International Congress and Convention Association [ICCA], 2019). It therefore, follows that the county's tourism market was analysed from the demand and supply perspectives. There are a number of factors which have contributed to the steady growth and development of the tourism sector in Nakuru County. First, the county is host to some of the early white settlement schemes in Kenya, a fact which is a tourist attraction in itself (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2012). Secondly, Nakuru traverses quite a large ground cover of approximately 7,500 square kilometres, making it able to comfortably play home to a large variety of flora and fauna (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2012). In addition, Nakuru County's devolved government is keen on

developing the tourism sector. For instance, in its strategic development plan for 2018-2022, the county government clearly singles out tourism as a crucial income-generating sector, only 2nd to agriculture. Nakuru County also has a large human population estimated to be in the region of about 2.1 million (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2012), which provides more than sufficient workforce to the tourism industry, both skilled and non-skilled. Another factor that gives Nakuru leverage is its proximity to Kenya's capital city of Nairobi. As a result, most tourists who find Nairobi to be congested usually consider Nakuru the best alternative, as they are exposed to the county's main tourist attractions which include national parks, mountains, craters, and pre-historical sites among others.

With regard to preset conditions and their influence on the choice of destination, it is fair to acknowledge that the tourism sector, just like every other sector, is affected by a number of external factors (Witt, 1992). These include, but are not limited to, technology, social, political, safety, economic and legal trends across the world. The global economy, to be specific, is such a great influencer when it comes to the tourism industry. The sector tends to experience an upward surge with increased disposable incomes and vice versa. With regard to legal, the tourism sector is regulated by a number of laws and policies. In situations where the regulations are friendly, there is likely to be experienced an upward surge of tourists (Thiumsak & Ruangkanjanases, 2016). In as much as tourists like to visit safe environments, they tend to avoid places with too strict legal requirements since this could translate to the tour not being as enjoyable as initially intended. Tourism and technology have always gone hand in hand, with the former always taking maximum advantage of the latter (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). In essence, technological advancements are aiding the smooth operation of the tourism industry.

According to most scholars, preference for a particular destination is determined by the motivational properties of the product, among them being the cost and location (Buhalis, 2000). The reality in most cases is that tourists usually create a visual image of a particular destination in their minds before even visiting. The appearance of such a mental image is purely based on what they could have heard, read, or seen in media regarding the destination (Severt & Breiter, 2010). Regarding incentive tourism product promotion and development strategies, therefore, it is worth acknowledging that the foundation of any incentive travel program is the choice of destination, its products and services (Severt & Breiter, 2010). Consequently, it is imperative for destination marketing strategies to enhance the destination's image and establish proper customer relations and loyalty. The various tourist attractions need to be advertised online on a large scale, as well as the accommodation and transport facilities (Buhalis, 2000).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study, conducted in Nakuru County, Kenya, combined descriptive and correlational research designs. Generally, descriptive research design aids in affirming 'what exists' as opposed to 'why it exists' (Creswell, 2014). In so doing, research becomes capable of exploring and understanding a phenomenon (Taherdoost, 2016). This was considered necessary in order to realise the first objective of the research, which was to profile the status of incentive tourism in Nakuru County, Kenya. By enabling the researcher to unearth as much information as possible, the descriptive research design facilitated the derivation of strategic options for the promotion and development of incentive tourism in Kenya in accordance with the objectives. The correlational research design on the other hand was suitable, as the study sought to identify whether there was an association between variables as enlisted in the study objectives.

With regard to the target study area and population, the research was limited to Nakuru County, Kenya as a potential incentive travel destination. Mostly in the Naivasha sub-county, Nakuru County is endowed with a vast range of tourist attractions, including, among others, lakes, ranges, parks, and mountains (Kihima, 2015). The rationale for settling in Nakuru County was based on the reality that it has, in the recent past, shown significant growth in the MICE industry, with Naivasha ranking 34th among Africa's popular tourist destination points. Incentive travellers who visited Nakuru County within the study period were identified as the ideal target population for the purposes of this research. Besides incentive travellers, managers in organisations which awarded travel incentives were also consulted during the study.

As a result of adopting the descriptive design of research, the study was able to explore both quantitative and qualitative data (Van, 2012), hence the use of various sampling techniques (*Appendix 1*). Directly obtaining information from primary sources was considered paramount. As such, the stratified method of sampling was adopted, considering the primary respondents were divided into 360 incentive travellers, 60 incentive travellers' managers and 40 destination management organisations (*Appendix 2 & 3*). In addition, the random sampling method was also employed to give each participant an equal chance of being selected for information. This method of sampling provided for a quick and less costly process of data collection from a well-defined population (Creswell, 2014).

The main form of data collection employed by the study was the use of questionnaires, which had been developed in line with the research aims and questions (*Appendices D, E & F*). The questionnaire forms were distributed to the incentive travel earners in their various hotels and accommodation centres during their free time upon proper introduction by the researcher via an introductory letter. Most incentive travellers' managers were not

physically available and therefore, questionnaires were shared electronically for feedback. The process of data collection was less complicated, as the researcher had conducted prior visits to hotels and accommodation centres to get acquainted with the respondents (Creswell, 2014). The research calculations using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0) facilitated the quantitative analysis, while content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative kind of data. The relationship between different variables was measured using the cross-tabulation method in order to make possible the generation of solutions to specific problems as suggested by the hypothesis (*Appendix H*).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Having successfully communicated and explained the purpose of the study to the respondents, a response rate of 89% was attained by the research (*Appendix I*), which was considered satisfactory (Brewer & Rojas, 2012). The simplicity of the questionnaires also contributed to the easy understanding of the expectations of the respondents (Taherdoost, 2016). Out of the 360 incentive travel earners, 321 responded, while 52 out of the 60 consulted incentive travellers' managers gave a response (see *Table 1*). For the destination management organisations, 36 out of the overall figure of 40 were able to respond. Only fully filled questionnaires that underwent data cleaning were considered in the tabulation of the response/success rate. In terms of gender, 57% of the incentive travel earners were male, while their female counterparts constituted 43%, owing to the fact that companies mostly employ more males than females. The study also found that the majority (76) of the incentive travel earners lay between 30-35 years, while those above the age of 40 constituted the smallest number of 52. This showcased the reality that most incentive travel earners are middle-aged employees, who are usually more active, ambitious, and easily excited by travel incentives (Davidson & Cope, 2003).

Table 1: Response Rate

Category	Expected Response	Actual Response	Response Rate
Incentive travellers (Questionnaire)	360	321	89%
Incentive travellers' managers (Questionnaire)	60	52	87%
DMO managers (Questionnaire)	40	36	90%
Total response/Average response rate	460	409	89%

In regards to academic qualification, 47% of incentive travel earners were composed of holders of bachelor's degrees, while 32% constituted those with post-graduate qualifications. While 30% of the incentive travel earners were from the corporate world, 27% constituted those from non-governmental organisations, and 24% represented those from the private sector. The government sector was the least presented, with 19%. The large percentage represented by corporate organisations can be attributed to the fact that corporate organisations are always in constant competition with each other, and therefore, incentive travels are resourceful strategies for enhancing capacity building among employees, hence making them more competent (Lau, 2016). Finally, domestic travel incentive earners constituted the majority with 69%, while 31% was made up of their foreign counterparts.

On the profile of incentive travellers' managers, 36 were male while 16 were female, denoting that most organisational leadership positions are filled with more males than females. In addition, 71% of the managers are comprised of locals. In terms of age, most managers were above 40 (29%), agreeing with the reality whereby most management positions are usually awarded to employees with substantial experience under their belt (Witt, 1992). Regarding the destination management organisations' managers, 73% were male and 27% female, while local managers comprised 33.

A correlation analysis between the key variables under study, incentive program preference compared to preset conditions in the chosen destination, revealed a positive correlation. With regards to the participants' incentive travel

destination preference, the study findings were consistent with the selected theoretical framework (Creswell, 2014), the 'customer decision-making process'. The findings will capture the perspectives of incentive travellers (*Appendix 4*), incentive travellers' managers (*Appendix 5*) and destination management organisations' managers regarding incentive programs in comparison to preset conditions. 77% of incentive travel earners had participated in such travelling before, with most of them highly rating attractions, high per diem and activities as key influencers in the decision-making process as to the choice of destination. The positive correlation was further emphasised by the fact that most participants felt that amenities or activities in their previous destination points were in most need of improvement. On the other hand, accessibility to attraction sites, amenities and accommodation were not considered as major motivational factors when it came to a choice of destination.

As for the travellers' managers, 91% reported having been previously involved in arranging incentive travels before, with amenities and accommodation highly rated as being key influencers in destination selection. Accessibility to attraction sites and activities was moderately rated by the travellers' managers. On the responses from destination management organisations' managers, most of them stated that incentive travellers preferred attractions and activities in their destination points, compared to other preferences, with accessibility to attraction sites being least desired by travellers.

DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study focused on Nakuru County and in the process investigated the type of target market available within the specific MICE geographical niche. Tourism is considered an important source of income for the Nakuru County government, accounting for approximately 90% of the budget (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2012). A keen literature review indicates that most of the incentive travel earners visiting Nakuru are young males aged between 26-35 years. Therefore, there is a need to improve and diversify the list of current products and services in order to appeal to the youthful market, hence increasing the returns from MICE. Additionally, this study demonstrates that incentive travel earners tend to choose destinations which guarantee high per diem, as this would force their managers to increase per diem for their employees so as to improve their experience during the travel and boost morale (Jonsson & Devonish, 2008).

A close examination of incentive travel packages offered by local and international travel and hospitality agencies points to the fact that Kenya can hardly be said to be one of the best incentive travel destinations in Africa, the growth of the tourism sector in the country notwithstanding (Kihima, 2015). Due to its conducive climate, wildlife presence, proximity to major towns as well as major landforms and geographical structures, Nakuru County is home to diverse tourism activities (Kamau et al., 2015). Consequently, there has been substantial investment into MICE, which has in turn, generated fairly substantial revenue for the government. According to Kamau (2015), the upward surge in the performance of the tourism sector is attributable to the more than 200 global as well as continental meetings hosted in Kenya between 2015 and 2016. However, countries such as South Africa, Egypt and Rwanda are seen to be miles ahead of Kenya when it comes to incentive travel destinations in Africa. Rwanda, in particular, offers superior hospitality compared to Kenya and other countries as well (Kihima, 2015).

It, therefore, follows that Kenya is arguably not a popular incentive travel destination point in Africa. South Africa, for instance, offers more accommodative services with a blend of unique attraction sites compared to Kenya and other countries within Africa. Other countries like Egypt, unlike Kenya, are on a larger scale due to the fact that they are endowed with more mesmerising ancient features and sites. These unique attraction features tend to attract attention and preference from a wide range of tourist groups, including both corporate travellers and scholars (Severt & Breiter, 2010). Considering the foregoing, therefore, Kenya's tourism sector is called upon to change tactics and adopt productive and progressive marketing strategies, such as incentive travel programs, if it is to remain relevant and competitive.

MICE activities within Nakuru County continue to experience a unique set of challenges which include, but are not limited to insecurity, scarcity of accommodation facilities, inadequate skilled labour force, unexplored local tourism, inadequate infrastructure, and natural disasters (Kihima, 2015). On the international front, global financial crises have also had an effect on the number of tourists visiting the Country (Kihima, 2015). In addition, inadequate resources required in the promotion and advertisement of tourist attraction sites have negatively influenced the rate of tourist inflow (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007), hence denying the essential country opportunities for sustainable economic growth (Hudson, 2008). Such an effect has also been experienced in Russia, where poor marketing techniques, inadequate support from the government and the inability of service providers to handle big events have negatively affected the MICE industry (Smagina, 2017). These kinds of setbacks are similar across the board and prevent countries from succeeding in MICE as an emerging line of product in the tourism sector (Wu & Zhang, 2013). Sustainable development, as envisaged in this study, is therefore derailed unless efficient and

effective strategic measures are initiated to curb the challenges.

On preset tourism conditions, there are several factors that generally influence the choice of destination by tourists (Buhalis, 2000). It follows that there is a need for any incentive program to align itself with the needs of incentive travellers. They must experience the necessary satisfaction and perceived experience as envisioned in their minds prior to the visit. Creating the right image and perception in regard to the potential destination goes a long way in breeding customer loyalty and actualisation. Incentive destination is not just about the typical product and service but also contains a series of components heightened into the mind and memory of every incentive traveller (Thiumsak & Ruangkanjanases, 2016). As such, incentive travellers' feedback is essential in making critical up-to-date decisions in regard to the most appropriate promotional strategies (Wu & Zhang, 2013). High per diem, activities and attractions are some of the factors that influence a traveller's choice of destination. Therefore, when shortcomings in such areas are looked into and proper adjustments made, there is a guarantee that a positive turnover will be made in the tourism industry in Kenya, especially in Nakuru County. Natural uniqueness and originality greatly attract potential tourists looking to experience something different (Kononenko, 2014). Nakuru County is the perfect bait for tourists, as it contains beautiful sceneries, historical sites, and rich culture. However, the limiting factors which prevent attraction from potential tourists need to be addressed.

Regarding strategies for the promotion and development of incentive tourism, the bulk of the burden lies with the government (Kihima, 2015). In most countries, it is the ministry of tourism that is responsible for promoting and developing the tourism sector by developing policies to deal with development barriers (Wu & Zhang, 2013). This is done with the aim of improving tourism services as

well as crafting tools that enable the country to be more appealing to as many potential tourists as possible. The Kenya Tourism Board, established under the Ministry of Tourism in Kenya, bears the bulk of this responsibility (Kamau et al., 2015), even as it seeks to work closely with the private sector towards the establishment, administration, and coordination of tourism policies. In addition, the Tourist Act of 2011 provides a mandate for the packaging of special tourism services and goods, as well as domestic and regional tourism marketing and promotion. If properly executed, these would greatly improve the performance of domestic tourism.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study demonstrated that incentive travel earners' destination preferences as well as those of their managers are related to preset conditions in the potential destination (Thiumsak & Ruangkanjanases, 2016). Destination Management Organizations' managers on the other hand, strive to meet and satisfy the preferences of both the incentive travel earners and their managers (Thiumsak & Ruangkanjanases, 2016). However, there is a difference in destination preferences for incentive travel earners and those of their managers. While incentive travel earners prefer attractions, activities and high per diem, their managers' choice is influenced by the organisation's policy and immediate goals. Managers go further to consider the quality of accommodation, amenities, and accessibility to the preferred destination.

Regarding the development of incentive tourism in Nakuru County, the study noted that there is a proportionally large amount of revenue generated through tourism activities, a fact which has increased the government's participation (Kihima, 2015). This is seen through the implementation of policies and the creation of agencies aimed at supporting the tourism industry. The Kenya Tourism Board has made progressive steps in the achievement of strategic goals and promotion of

Kenya's diverse natural endowment, on which counties such as Nakuru heavily rely for tourist attraction and revenue generation. Through various campaigns initiated by the ministry of tourism, both foreign and domestic tourists have been encouraged to visit Nakuru County. Resources have been identified to facilitate the availing of information online to potential customers, which is a big step towards attracting incentive travellers as they become knowledgeable about the destination.

In conclusion, the study was able to establish the fact that unlike other MICE sectors where travel destination choices are mostly influenced by the purpose of the visit (Wu & Zhang, 2013), incentive travel is slightly different. For other MICE products, information on forthcoming events and conferences can influence the preference and choice for a destination. For incentive travels, the preset conditions of a potential destination play a key role in the decision-making process as to destination (Davidson & Cope, 2003).

The study recommends government interventions in the management of the different factors directly or indirectly influencing the growth of the tourism industry in Nakuru County. These include the efficient maintenance of attractions and historical sites, offering a guarantee as to security as well as preservation of social-cultural systems (Buhalis, 2000). Further, there is a need for the government to consider increasing budgetary allocation for the tourism sector. Not only is this necessary for the maintenance of the attraction sites and amenities (Buhalis, 2000), but it also facilitates proper advertisement and promotion of what Kenya has to offer to the outside world.

While the main area of focus for this study was to evaluate the nature of the supply-demand environment with the actual customers as respondents, the field could benefit more from the use of respondents with no experience of the destination of focus. This would facilitate the collection of more objective views as opposed to

subjective ones gathered from respondents who have already settled on the geographical area of focus as their destination choice (Taherdoost, 2016).

REFERENCES

- Brewer, M. S., & Rojas, M. (2012). Consumer attitudes toward issues in food safety. *Journal of Food Safety*, 1-22.
- Buhalis, D. (2000). Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management*, 21(1),97-116, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00095-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00095-3)
- Carter, J. (2017). *Incentive Travel report: Top destination trends for 2017*. Retrieved 2022, from Conference & Incentive Travel: <http://www.citmagazine.com/article/1421565/incentive-travel-report-top-destination-trends-2017>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. California: Thousand Oaks.
- Davidson, R., & Cope, B. (2003). *Business travel: Conferences, incentive travel, exhibitions, corporate hospitality and corporate travel*. London: Pearson Education.
- Hudson, S. (2008). *Tourism and hospitality marketing: a global perspective*. Sage
- ICCA. (2019). *Events and education*. Retrieved 2022, from International Congress and Convention Association.
- Jin, Y. J., Min, W., & Yoo, J.-W. (2016). The Impact of Tourism Advertising on Corporate Attitudes and Tourism Intentions: Country and Corporation Interactions in the Halo Effect and Public Diplomacy. *Tourism Culture & Communication*, 109-121.
- Jonsson, C., & Devonish, D. (2008). Does nationality, gender, and age affect travel

- motivation? A case of visitors to the Caribbean Island of Barbados. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 398-408.
- Kamau, F., Waweru, F. K., Lewa, P., & Misiko, A. J. (2015). Influence of marketing communication channels on urban domestic tourism in Kenya. *British Journal of Marketing Studies*, 1-22.
- Kihima, B. O. (2015). Domestic tourism in Kenya: Trends, initiatives and practices. *Les Cahiers d'Afrique de l'Est/The East African Review*, (50), 22-39, <https://doi.org/10.4000/eastafrica.289>
- KNBS. (2012). *Nakuru County-Kenya national Bureau of Statistics*. Retrieved 2022, from Kenya National Bureau of Statistics: <https://www.knbs.or.ke/download/nakuru-county/>
- Kononenko, I. (2014). *The effects of incentive travel: The value for parties involved (Unpublished undergraduate thesis)*. Retrieved 2022, from HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences: https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/73309/Kononenko_Irina.pdf?sequence=1
- Lau, C. (2016). *Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE)*. Retrieved 2022, from The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/kla/pshe/references-and-resources/tourism/MICE_English_2016.pdf
- Omolara, C. (2019). Rostow's growth theory, structural transformation and economic development: the Nigerian experience. *International Journal of Arts & Sciences*, 199-212.
- Sandhya, K., & Kumar, P. D. (2011). Employee Retention by Motivation. *Indian Journal of Science and Technology*, 1778-1782.
- Severt, K. S., & Breiter, D. (2010). *The anatomy of an incentive travel program*. Retrieved 2022, from Incentive Solutions: <http://www.incentivesolutions.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/travel-incentives-boost-retention.pdf>
- Smagina, N. (2017). The Internationalisation of the Meetings-, Incentives-, Conventions- and Exhibitions- (MICE) Industry: Its Influences on the Actors in the Tourism Business Activity. *Journal of Economics and Management*, 105.
- Swarbrooke, J., & Horner, S. (2007). *Consumer behavior in tourism*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Taherdoost, H. (2016). Validity and reliability of the research instrument; How to test the validation of a questionnaire/survey in research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management (IJARM)*, 28-36.
- Thiumsak, T., & Ruangkanjanases, A. (2016). Factors Influencing International Visitors to Revisit Bangkok, Thailand. *Journal of economics, Business and Management*, 4(3), 220. Doi: 10.7763/JOEBM.2016.V4.394
- Tsai, L. M., & Sakulsinlapakorn, K. (2016). Exploring Tourists' Push and Pull Travel Motivations to Participate in Songkran Festival in Thailand as a Tourist Destination: A Case of Taiwanese Visitors. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 4(5), 183-197. doi: 10.17265/2328-2169/2016.10.001
- UNWTO. (2016). *Final Workshop on Experimental Tourism Satellite Accounts in Countries of Southern Africa*. Retrieved 2022, from UNWTO: <https://www.unwto.org/archive/global/news/2016-08-04/final-workshop->

experimental-tourism-satellite-accounts-countries-southern-africa

Van, W. B. (2012). *Research design and methods Part I (powerpoint slides)*. Retrieved 2022, from University of the Western Cape: https://www.uwc.ac.za/Students/Postgraduate/Documents/Research_and_Design_I.pdf

Witt, S. (1992). Incentive travel: Overview and case study of Canada as a destination for the UK market. *Tourism Management*, 275-287.

Wu, R., & Zhang, M. (2013). Research on the Tourism Effect and Marketing Strategy of Convention & Exposition Industry: A Case Study of Shenzhen City of China. *Journal of service Science and Management*, 6, 151-159. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/jssm.2013.62015>

Zhou, Y., & Ap, J. (2009). Residents' perceptions towards the impacts of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. *Journal of Travel Research*, 78-91.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of Sampling Technique

Technique used	Application	Justification
Stratified Sampling	To divide the population in to Strata's namely; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Incentive travellers ✓ DMO managers ✓ Managers of incentive travellers 	They are few and are easily identifiable within the population using the common relevant characteristic
Random Simple Sampling	To select individual participants within the population subgroups	The respondents were many and required equal chance of selection

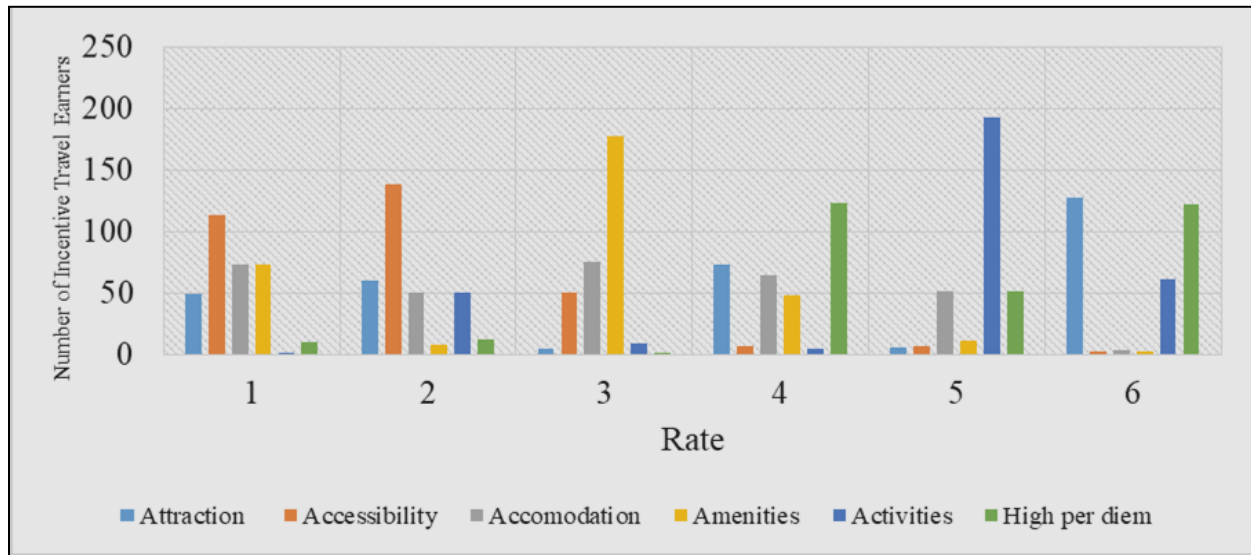
Appendix 2: Distribution of the Respondents

Category of participants	Population	Percentage	Sample Size
Incentive travellers	4,000	9%	360
Managers of incentive travellers	400	15%	60
DMO managers	75	53%	40
Total	4,475		460

Appendix 3: Demographic Information of Participants

Category	Bracket	Incentive Travel Earners		Incentive Travel Earners' Managers		DMO Managers	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	183	57%	36	69%	26	73%
	Female	138	43%	16	31%	10	27%
	Total	321	100%	52	100%	36	100%
Nationality	Kenyan	220	69%	37	71%	33	91%
	International	101	31%	15	29%	3	9%
	Total	321	100%	321	100%	36	100%
Age	18-25yrs	55	17%	4	8%	4	10%
	26-30yrs	73	23%	9	17%	5	13%
	30-35yrs	76	24%	11	21%	8	23%
	36-40yrs	65	20%	13	25%	9	25%
	Above 40yrs	52	16%	15	29%	10	29%
	Total	321	100%	52	100%	36	100%
Level of education	Primary	3	1%	0	0%	0	0%
	Secondary	11	3%	0	0%	0	0%
	College	54	17%	8	15%	7	20%
	University	151	47%	27	52%	19	52%
	Post graduate	102	32%	17	33%	10	28%
	Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Total	321	100%	52	100%	36	100%
Entity organization category	Corporate	95	30%	14	27%		
	NGO	88	27%	15	29%		
	Government	61	19%	10	19%		
	Private	77	24%	13	25%		
	Total	321	100%	52	100%		
Industry in which organization is in	Housing and construction	37	12%	6	12%		
	Banking	29	9%	3	6%		
	Processing and manufacturing	42	13%	7	13%		
	Medical	33	10%	6	11%		
	Tourism and hospitality	51	16%	7	14%		
	Governance	61	19%	11	21%		
	Academic	46	14%	8	15%		
	Other	22	7%	4	8%		
	Total	321	100%	52	100%		

Appendix 4: Incentive Travel Earners' Ratings for Destination Preferences



Appendix 5: Destination Preferences According to Incentive Travel Earners' Managers

