



A study of relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals: A comparative study of Nigeria and selected African countries

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria and to have a comparative study of tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals of selected African countries with Nigeria. The study made use of secondary data collected from the database of world bank and world economic forum travel and tourism competitiveness index. The findings indicated that tourism price competitiveness had a significant relationship with international tourist arrivals. The ranking for Nigeria was above average for the period under review, but the position of Nigeria in price ranking has not translated to high number of international tourist arrivals to the country as compared to other top destinations in Africa. Therefore, there is need to improve on other factors that form the choice of international tourists in choosing a destination, as tourists do not search for cheaper destinations but destinations with value for money.

Keywords: tourism, destination, price, competitiveness, Nigeria, Africa

Introduction

Tourism is an important sector for African economies and has been praised for its capacity to stimulate economic growth through job creations, and by attracting investments and fostering entrepreneurship, while also contributing to preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity, protection of cultural heritage and promotion of empowerment of local communities [United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) 2017]^[1].

The development of tourism destination areas all over the world has contributed to the increase in international tourist arrivals as these destinations use various marketing strategies to attract tourists to their regions. Travel and Tourism generated US \$7.6 billion (10% of global GDP) and 277 million jobs (1 in 11 jobs) for the global economy in 2014. Recent years have also seen tourism sector growing at a faster rate. International tourist arrivals have surged, reaching nearly 1.14 billion and visitor spending more than matched that growth (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015)^[2].

In Africa, the sector has expanded significantly since the mid-1990s, with the number of tourist arrivals to the continent doubling from 24 million between 1995 and 1998, to 48 million between 2005 and 2008, and increasing to 56 million between 2011 and 2014. In terms of growth, international tourist arrival, to Africa grew by an average of 6 percent per year (UNCTAD, 2017)^[1].

According to the Travel and Tourism Competitive Index of World Economic Forum (2015)^[3], destinations compete for international tourists when they are able to provide an enabling environment, improve on travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions, provide necessary infrastructure and

preserve the natural and cultural resources of the destination. Under the Travel and Tourism Policy and Enabling conditions price competitiveness is one of the pillars that if properly articulated, could lead to increase in international tourist arrivals to a destination. The price competitiveness comprises of ticket taxes and airport charges, Hotel price index, Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) and fuel price level. From the competitive index, price competitiveness for Nigeria was 68th out of 136 countries surveyed, with a score of 4.9. On its components, ticket taxes and airport charges 0 – 100 (best) was 69th, Hotel price index US\$ was 92nd; Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), was 63rd; and fuel price levels US\$ cents/litre was 26th.

Despite the positive direction of the country's prices competitiveness (4.9/7.0), Nigeria over the years have not been able to compete with other top destinations in Africa in terms of tourist arrivals. Meanwhile, quite a number of studies have been carried out in the area of tourism development and international tourist arrivals, but empirical studies in the area of relationships between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria remain scanty. It is on this that the study is based to examine the relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria and also to conduct a comparative study on tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals between Nigeria and selected African countries.

Review of related literature

Concept of Pricing

Price is the amount of money charged for a good or service.

More broadly, price is the sum of the values consumers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2006) ^[4]. Price is that which is given up in an exchange to acquire a good or service. It is typically the money exchanged for the good or service (McDaniel, Lamb & Hair, 2006) ^[5]. The authors opine that consumers are interested in obtaining a “reasonable price”. “Reasonable price” really means “perceived reasonable value” at the time of the transaction. Price paid is based on the satisfaction consumers expect to receive from a product and not necessarily the satisfaction they actually receive. According to Morrison (2002) ^[6], research studies have shown repeatedly that customers tend to associate higher prices with higher-quality services and facilities. This is especially true when:

1. Customers do not have sufficient information or prior experienced to compare features of competitive offerings,
2. Services are perceived as complex, and there is a high risk of making a bad choice,
3. Services are perceived as having a certain snob appeal and carry social prestige,
4. The difference between the prices of competitive services is minimal. In this case, customers may choose the highest-priced service because they perceive an added guarantee of quality.

Pricing and Value for money

According to Morrison (2002) ^[6], many leading experts in tourism industry believe that travelers are becoming increasingly value-conscious. They want value for money. The author sees value for money as “the way that customers compare the amount of money they pay to the quality of the facilities and service they receive”. A price must convey to customer a feeling that they are receiving value for money. They must be convinced that the quality of the service and facilities they are getting is consistent with the price they are paying.

The pricing policy selected for a tourism product is often directly related to the performance of its future demand. Selling the right price is also crucial to the profitability of the tourism enterprise (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhil, 2008) ^[7]. According to the authors, of all the marketing mix, pricing decisions are the hardest to make. This is because prices for tourism products have to take into account the complexity created by seasonality of demand and the inherent perishability of the product. Also, within tourism there are major differences in segment, such as business travelers and those taking a vacation. The relative elasticities of demand for these segments are dissimilar and price sensitivity is affected by different factors.

Tourism industry products related to vacations are associated with an elasticity demand curve, where a small increase in price creates a large fall in demand. According to Cooper *et al.*; (2008) ^[7], leisure travel is price elastic because of the following:

- The ratio of tourism prices to income is normally high. This is the case not only for overseas travel but also for leisure centres, cinemas, and attractions, especially in times of recession.
- The consumer can choose a substitute or forgo the purchase if the overall value is considered to be

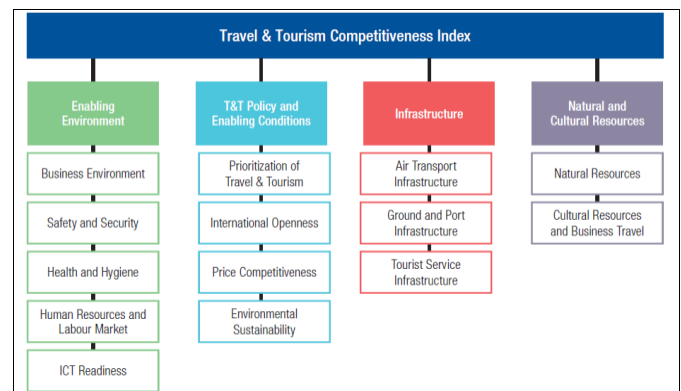
unacceptable.

- It is relatively easy to judge the offer alternative brands and products, and therefore easy to switch demand to cheaper alternatives.

Whatever pricing policy is adopted, a company has to take into consideration the potential consumer’s perceptual assessment. In deciding to buy a product, a consumer has to be willing to give up something in order to enjoy the satisfaction of the benefits the product will deliver. The majority of tourists are looking for value when they buy a product and value is derived from the functions of quality, and price as well as the added value of the image or brand (Cooper *et al.*, 2008) ^[7].

The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index Model

First compiled in 2007, the travel and tourism competitiveness index (TTCI) measures the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable development of the travel and tourism sector, which in turn, contributes to the development and competitiveness of a country (WEF, 2017) ^[8]



Sources: World Economic Forum (2017). Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index.

Fig 1: The T & T Competitiveness index 2017

The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index model by World Economic Forum shows various factors that contribute to the competitiveness of destinations. It is made up of four major indexes that consist of 14 pillars. Price competitiveness is one of the pillars under Travel and Tourism Policy and Enabling Conditions. The shows that having a favourable pricing policy would lead to the competitiveness of a destination. It is on this assumption that the study is based to examine if there is any form of relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals.

Tourism Price Competitiveness and Tourism Performance

Tourism is a sector that is being considered in economic development policies of many countries and has a strategic importance. Because it contributes to economic development in a country by providing foreign exchange inflow, and positively affects employment. Companies operating within the tourism sector and various business lines working in these companies have regarded international tourism as an opportunity to increase income.

Countries and business should take into account tourist goods and services prices in rival destinations in international

tourism so that they get and maintain the above-mentioned benefits expected from the tourism in an effective manner. Which countries are tourism price competitive capacity higher than the others and what are the reasons for this advantage? To find answers to these questions is required that a price comparison is made of a wide variety of products in different destinations (Oyewole, 2004)^[9].

The reason for this measurement is that touristic demand is widely accepted to be heavily influenced by price competitive capacity of destinations. It can be said that this acceptance is based on view about price elasticity of demand (Assaf & Josiassen, 2011)^[10]. However, there are many studies that international visitors are aware of tourist goods and services prices, and take into account the cost of tourism basket consisting of tourist goods and services in the decision on the destination selection (Crouch, 1994; Edwards, 1995; Dwyer *et al.*, 2000; Oyewole, 2004)^[11, 12, 13, 9].

Associating the costs of basket of tourist goods and services with the destination selection and touristic demand has brought forward price competition in international tourism. Tourism price competitiveness of countries with comparative price advantage among alternative destination is regarded and high (Dwyer, *et al.*, 2001)^[14].

Crouch (1994)^[11] states there are considerable difficulties in comparing the price of international tourism. These difficulties result largely from touristic products denominated in foreign currency and impact of exchange rate changes on purchasing power. One might need approaches to price measurement which have normalized or neutralized these challenges in order to fully understand the impact of price on international tourism demand (Oyewole, 2004)^[9].

One of the measures for price competitiveness is the tourism price competitiveness index. Tourism competitiveness is the ability to represent a place where appeals concerning the destination for those who are and are not residing in a country(destination) are optimized, to offer quality, innovative and attractive services for tourists, and to have a significant market share in domestic and international tourist market (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013)^[15].

Tourism competitiveness capacity is a general concept that includes price differences in association with exchange rate movements, the productivity levels of the various components of the tourism industry and other factors affecting the attractiveness of a destination (Dwyer, *et al.*, 2003)^[16]. Tourism competitiveness can be affected by many social, demographic, qualitative and economic factors (Dwyer, *et al.*, 2001)^[14].

Tourist product price is a key component of the country or destination's general tourism competitiveness. Prices are one of the most essential criteria for making decisions as to whether journeys will make or where to travel (Forsyth & Dwyer, 2009)^[17]. At the same time, price experience the tourists had experienced in the previous tours become effective in making decisions as to whether they revisit destinations where they traveled before (Barros & Machato, 2010)^[18]. As a result, tourists are being considered the prices of the destinations where they will visit while making choice between touristic destinations. They have compared costs of living in their own countries, and alternative destinations (Dwyer *et al.*, 2001)^[14]. Therefore, if any country wants to develop and boost its tourism industry, it should be paid

attention to comparative price competitiveness especially among alternative destinations.

Price competitiveness indexes are developed to perform comparative price analysis of destinations depending on the importance of price competitiveness in tourism. Many alternative models and indicators are used in these developed indexes (Forsyth & Dwyer, 2009)^[17]. One of the indexes developed to do the price competitiveness analysis in the tourism industry is a price index that was developed by World Economic Forum in conjunction with the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC). Four price indicators were used to create this index, indicating that they are composed of purchasing power parity (PPP), fuel price, ticket price and collected taxes and hotel price (WEF, 2017)^[8]. Another one of the comprehensive approaches to measuring tourism price competitiveness is purchasing power parity(PPP) approach developed by Dwyer *et al.* (2000)^[13]. Price competitiveness index developed by these authors uses value-in-local-currency of the same goods and services in different countries mentioned in the report by World Bank International Comparison Programme. Cost of tourism product basket for each destination can be calculated based on these price data. Depending on calculated costs of tourism basket, travel/tourism expenditures may be formed purchasing power parity (PPP), which shows the levels of expenditure required to purchase goods and services in the same tourism basket in different destinations.

International Tourism Receipts and Arrivals

An ever-increasing number of destinations worldwide have opened up to, and invested in tourism, turning it into a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs, and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development.

Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification to become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world. Many new destinations have emerged in addition to the traditional favorites of Europe and North America. Tourism has boasted virtually uninterrupted growth over time, despite occasional shocks, demonstrating the sectors strength and resilience. International tourist arrivals have increased from 25 million globally in 1950 to 278 million in 1980, 674 million in 2000, and 1,186 million in 2015. In the same vein, international tourism receipts earned by destinations worldwide have surged from US\$2 billion in 1950 to US\$104 billion in 1980, US\$495 billion in 2000, and US\$ 1,260 billion in 2015 (UNWTO, 2016)^[19].

Tourism as a major category of international trade in services, have also generated US\$211 billion in exports through international passenger transport services rendered to non-residents in 2015, bringing the total value of tourism exports up to US\$1.5 trillion, or US\$4 billion a day on average. International tourism now represents 7% of the world's exports in goods and services, up from 6% in 2014, as tourism has grown faster than world trade over the past four years. As a worldwide export category, tourism ranks third after fuels and chemicals and ahead of food and automotive products. In many developing countries, tourism ranks the first export sector (UNWTO, 2016)^[19].

International Tourist Arrivals

The number of international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) in 2015 reached a total of 1,186 million, an increase of 52 million over the previous year. Representing an increase of close to 5%, this marks the 6th consecutive year of above-average growth following the 2009 global economic crisis, with international arrivals increasing by 4% or more every year since 2010 (UNWTO, 2016)^[19].

Table 1: International tourism; number of arrivals from 2001-2015 for Nigeria

	Nigeria
2001	850,000
2002	887,000
2003	924,000
2004	962,000
2005	1,010,000
2006	1,111,000
2007	1,212,000
2008	1,313,000
2009	1,141,000
2010	1,555,000
2011	715,000
2012	486,000
2013	600,000
2014	854,000
2015	1,255,000

Source: The World Bank (2016) International Tourism, Number of

Presentation and Interpretation of Data

Table 2: International Tourism, Number of Arrivals and Tourism Receipts for Nigeria from 1995-2015.

Years	Number of Arrivals	International Tourism Receipts
1995	656,000	47,000,000
1996	822,000	58,000,000
1997	611,000	83,000,000
1998	739,000	81,000,000
1999	776,000	99,000,000
2000	813,000	186,000,000
2001	850,000	168,000,000
2002	887,000	256,000,000
2003	924,000	58,000,000
2004	962,000	49,000,000
2005	1,010,000	139,000,000
2006	1,111,000	209,000,000
2007	1,212,000	337,000,000
2008	1,313,000	959,000,000
2009	1,414,000	791,000,000
2010	1,555,000	736,000,000
2011	715,000	688,000,000
2012	486,000	639,000,000
2013	600,000	616,000,000
2014	854,000	601,000,000
2015	1,255,000	470,000,000

Source: The World Bank (2016) International Tourism, Number of Arrivals, adapted from www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.IN.T.ARVL/countries

Arrivals, adapted from www.data.worldbank.org/indicator/ST.IN.T.ARVL/countries

Table 1 shows the International tourism; number of arrivals from 2001-2015 for Nigeria. The basis of the table is to have a look at the international tourism arrivals for Nigeria.

Methodology

This study made use of secondary sources in collecting relevant data and information. Score of tourism price competitiveness for Nigeria was collected from travel and tourism competitiveness index of the World Economic Forum. Number of International Tourist Arrivals was collected from the database of the World Bank. Meanwhile, data on global ranking and score of tourism price competitiveness for African countries was collected from 2017 travel and tourism competitiveness report, while the number of international tourist arrivals for the African countries was also gathered from the database of the World Bank.

Techniques of Data Presentation and Analysis

For data presentation and analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical tools were employed. The descriptive Statistical tools employed under this study include; tables to organize the data, charts and graphs. Meanwhile, the inferential statistical tool to be employed was Pearson Correlation.



Fig 2: International Tourism Receipts for Nigeria from 1995-2015



Source: Researcher

Fig 3: International Tourist Arrivals for Nigeria from 1995-2015

Table 3: Score of tourism price competitiveness for Nigeria from 2007-2017.

Years	Tourism price competitiveness Score (1-7) best
2007	4.9
2008	4.9
2009	4.7
2010	4.7
2011	4.0
2012	4.0
2013	4.3
2014	4.3
2015	4.38
2016	4.38
2017	4.9

Source: WEF (2017) The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 and other issues. World Economic Forum Publications.

Table 2, shows the score of tourism price competitiveness for Nigeria from 2007 to 2017. The score is taken from the survey of tourists and tourism administrators by the World Economic

Forum in various years in a 7-point Likert-scale from highly effective to less effective.



Source: Researcher

Fig 4: Tourism Price Competitiveness in Nigeria.



Source: Researcher

Fig 5: Trend lines of Tourism Price Competitiveness in Nigeria.

For tourism price competitiveness under the periods, Nigeria recorded above average. This shows that the country is competitive in the area of pricing of tourism products. This is an advantage to the sector but requires proper awareness for tourists to know that the country’s tourism products are affordable.

Test of hypothesis

- H₀:** There is no significant relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria
- H₁:** There is a significant relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria

Table 4: Correlations result between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals

		International Tourist Arrivals (Choice Of Destination)	Tourism Price Competitiveness
International Tourist Arrivals (Choice Of Destination)	Pearson Correlation	1	.871
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	11	11
Tourism Price Competitiveness	Pearson Correlation	.871	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	11	11

Source: SPSS 20.0

Table 3 above is the Pearson Correlation Coefficient matrix of the relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals, showing the correlation coefficient, significant value and the number of cases. The correlation coefficient shows a strong relationship (0.871)

with a significant value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This implies that there is positive and significant relationship between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria. Therefore, the null is not accepted.

Table 5: Tourism Price Competitiveness and International Tourist Arrivals for African Countries in 2017

Country	Tourism Price Competitiveness		International Tourist Arrivals
	Rank Global	Score (1-7)	
Morocco	47	5.2	10,176,762
Egypt	2	6.2	9,139,104
Tunisia	9	5.9	5,359,309
Algeria	4	6.0	1,710,000
South Africa	43	5.2	8,903,773
Namibia	30	5.4	1,388,000
Botswana	13	5.7	1,528,000
Zambia	79	4.8	932,000
Zimbabwe	53	5.1	2,056,588
Lesotho	57	5.0	320,000
Mauritius	116	4.1	1,151,252
Kenya	74	4.8	1,114,100
Tanzania	34	5.4	1,104,000
Rwanda	78	4.9	987,000
Uganda	60	5.0	1,303,000

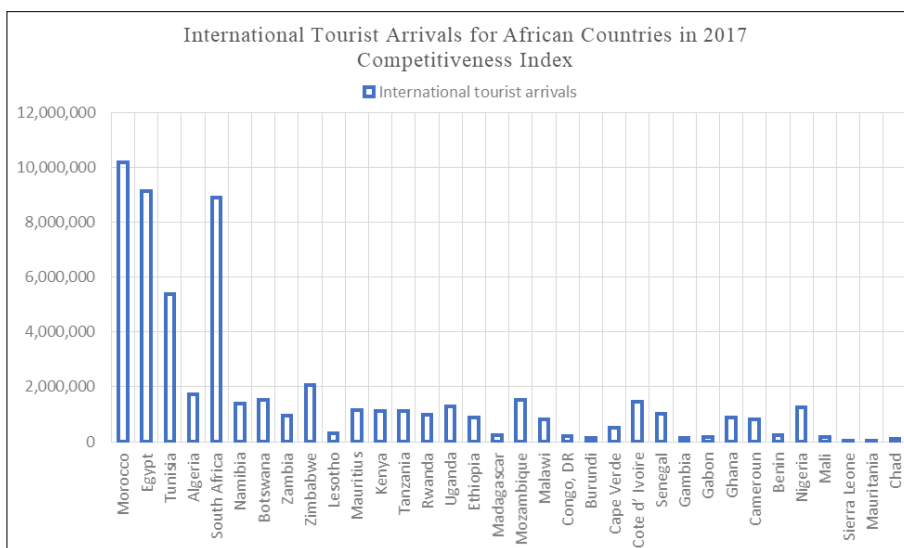
Ethiopia	64	4.9	864,000
Madagascar	55	5.0	244,321
Mozambique	93	4.6	1,525,000
Malawi	95	4.6	805,000
Congo, DR	126	3.8	191,000
Burundi	82	4.7	131,000
Cape Verde	49	5.2	519,722
Cote d Ivoire	107	4.4	1,441,000
Senegal	130	3.7	1,006,600
Gambia	56	5.3	135,000
Gabon	25	5.5	187,332
Ghana	114	4.2	879,000
Cameroun	58	5.0	812,000
Benin	65	4.9	255,000
Nigeria	68	4.9	1,255,000
Mali	59	5.0	159,000
Sierra Leone	99	4.5	23,798
Mauritania	75	4.8	30,000
Chad	69	4.9	120,000

Source: WEF (2017) The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017 for Africa. World Economic Forum Publications and World Bank (2017). International Tourist Arrivals for African countries

Table 4 above shows the rankings and scores of African countries as regards to tourism price competitiveness in the latest 2017 edition and the international tourist arrivals as a measure of tourism performance in various African countries. From the table, Nigeria rank 68th in price competitiveness of tourist attraction sites with a score of 4.9. Egypt was the highest ranked in Africa with a rank of 6.2 and 9,139,104 arrivals in 2017. Morocco ranks 5.2 below Egypt but with 10,176,762, which is the highest number of arrivals under the same year. Algeria ranks 6.0 above South Africa and Morocco in tourism price competitiveness but with fewer international tourist arrivals of 1,710,000.

From the table, the tourism price competitiveness for Nigeria

recorded 4.9, that is above average. The score shows that Nigeria is in a better position to attract tourists to the country due to her competitiveness in the area of price. Meanwhile, from the table, it shows that price competitiveness is not the only factor that attracts international tourists to visit a particular destination. Therefore, Nigeria need to work on other factors as reported by the World Tourism Organisation report of 2006 that marketing programmes of Nigeria tourism products are inadequate, ineffective and efficient. Security threats are also one of the causes of low number of international tourist arrivals despite the advantage in price competitiveness.



Source: Researcher

Fig 6: International Tourist Arrivals for African Countries in 2017 Competitiveness Index

Tourism Price Competitiveness and International Tourist Arrivals in Nigeria.

The stated hypothesis was tested with Pearson Correlation to examine the relationship between tourism price

competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria. The correlation coefficient shows a strong relationship (0.871) with a significant value of 0.000 which is less than 0.05. This implies that there was a positive and significant relationship

between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrival in Nigeria.

The result was in support of the view of the World Economic Forum that indicated that from 2007 to 2017, Nigeria has maintained above average point (4.9) and also rank 68th out of 136th in price competitiveness. Price competitiveness is measured by the ticket taxes and airport charges (69th), hotel price index (92nd), purchasing power parity (63rd) and fuel price levels (26th). With the rate of naira against dollar, Nigeria is a cheaper alternative for international tourists to visits. Same view was expressed by the Director-General of the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) Folarin-Coker that Nigeria is the cheapest holiday available not just for international tourists but also to its citizens based on the exchange rate (Africa Travel News, 2017).

The use of tourism price competitiveness index as a measure of tourism price competitiveness in the study confirms the opinion of Dupeyras & MacCallum, (2013). Tourism competitiveness is the ability to represent a place where appeals concerning the destination for those who are and are not residing in a country(destination) are optimized, to offer quality, innovative and attractive services for tourists, and to have a significant market share in domestic and international tourist market (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013).

Summary of Findings

This study examined the nature of relationship that exists between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria. Based on the review of related literature, analysis of the secondary data, and the tested hypothesis of the study, the findings show that:

- Tourism price competitiveness exhibited a significant, strong and positive relationship with tourism performance in Nigeria [the correlation coefficient was positive and strong ($r = 0.871$) with a significant value ($0.000 < 0.05$)]. This shows that there is a strong relationship existing between tourism price competitiveness and international tourist arrivals in Nigeria.
- The score of tourism price competitiveness for Nigeria was above average but has not translated to high number of international tourist arrivals to the country in comparison with other top destinations like Egypt and South Africa.
- Tourism price competitiveness is not the only factor that influences international tourist arrivals to a particular destination. Other factors include: security, infrastructure, branding and good image.

Conclusion

Nigeria as a destination is blessed with abundant natural and cultural resources that if adequately developed, harnessed, priced and promoted are capable of attracting both domestic and foreign tourists, but over dependence on oil is hampering its development. This has resulted in low arrivals of international tourists over the years despite the country fair price as compared to many destinations in Africa. This shows that in tourism industry, having a fair price is not enough to attracting international tourists. Studies have shown that modern tourists are looking for values for their money, not just a cheaper destination to visit.

Many tourism destinations are competing for the international

tourist arrivals by putting many different strategies together to appeal to the tourists to make their destination a choice. Many destinations through their destination marketing organisations (DMO) apply marketing strategies to project the image of the destination at the international level and make the destination attractive, affordable and satisfying.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, this study suggests the following recommendations:

1. Nigeria is very competitive in term of price. The country has maintained above average point and also with good ranking. Despite the fact that the ticket taxes and airport charges, hotel price index, purchasing power parity and fuel price levels are fair, there is need to do more in the area of visa application and approval, issuance of business permit, and regional integration in terms of visa as in the case of Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya having a single visa for international tourists.
2. Issue of security challenges should be tackled at various levels in order to provide assurances and confidence to the international tourists.
3. Low prices for low quality tourism products will not attract buyers. Tourists these days search for value, therefore, tourism organisations and government at different levels should work on improving quality experience for the tourists by providing tourist infrastructure, and enabling environment for tourism businesses to thrive.

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