

Tourism Marketing Strategies and Destination Promotion of Pamoja Tours and Travel in Entebbe, Kampala, Uganda

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between tourism marketing strategies and destination promotion at Pamoja Tours and Travel in Entebbe, Uganda. In an increasingly competitive tourism market, the marketing strategies employed by tour operators are central to promoting destinations and attracting visitors. The study investigated how digital marketing, product and packaging, pricing strategy, and branding and promotion relate to destination promotion. A cross-sectional survey design with a mixed-methods approach was adopted, and data were collected from 180 respondents comprising tourists, marketing staff, and tourism stakeholders using structured questionnaires and interviews. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression-based path analysis were used. The results revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between tourism marketing strategies and destination promotion ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$), with the marketing dimensions jointly explaining 64.0% of the variance in destination promotion ($R^2 = 0.640$). Digital marketing and branding and promotion emerged as the strongest predictors. The study concludes that effective tourism marketing strategies significantly enhance destination promotion and recommends investment in digital marketing, strong branding, and attractive product packaging.

Keywords: tourism marketing, destination promotion, digital marketing, branding, Pamoja Tours and Travel, Entebbe, Uganda

1.0 Introduction

Tourism is one of the most important and fastest-growing sectors of the global economy, and destination promotion—the process of communicating the attractions and value of a destination to potential visitors—lies at the heart of tourism development (Kotler et al., 2021). In a competitive global and regional market, destinations and the tour operators that promote them must employ effective marketing strategies to capture the attention of increasingly informed and discerning travellers, differentiate themselves from rivals, and convert interest into visitation (Pike, 2021). The marketing strategies employed by tour operators are therefore central to the success of destination promotion and, ultimately, to the economic benefits that tourism brings.

Uganda, endowed with rich natural, cultural, and wildlife attractions, has significant tourism potential, and the sector is a priority for economic development (Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, 2023). Realizing this potential depends heavily on effective marketing and promotion, both by national tourism bodies and by private tour operators who package and sell destinations to visitors (Kayondo & Mugisha, 2023). Pamoja Tours and Travel, based in Entebbe—the location of Uganda's principal international airport and a gateway for many visitors—operates in this competitive environment and relies on marketing strategies to promote destinations and attract tourists, making it an

instructive case for examining the relationship between marketing strategies and destination promotion (Sophie & Crispus, 2024).

Tourism marketing strategies are multidimensional. Digital marketing—the use of websites, social media, search engines, and online travel platforms—has become central to reaching and engaging today's travellers, who increasingly research and book online (Buhalis, 2021). Product and packaging concerns the design and bundling of tour products to meet the needs and desires of target markets (Jallow et al., 2022). Pricing strategy concerns the setting of competitive and value-based prices. And branding and promotion concerns the building of a distinctive, appealing destination and operator brand and the communication of its value through advertising and promotional activity (Kotler et al., 2021; Pike, 2021). Understanding how these dimensions relate to destination promotion is essential to effective tourism marketing (F. Christopher & Shamirah, 2025).

Although the importance of marketing to tourism is well established, empirical evidence quantifying the relationship between tourism marketing strategies and destination promotion for Ugandan tour operators, and disaggregating the effects of specific strategies, remains limited (Kayondo & Mugisha, 2023; Nakigudde & Ochen, 2023). This study addresses that gap by examining, through correlation and regression-based path analysis, how digital marketing, product and packaging, pricing strategy, and branding and promotion relate to destination promotion at Pamoja Tours and Travel (Julius et al., 2024). The findings are significant for tour operators, tourism authorities, and marketing scholars (F. Christopher & Shamirah, 2025). The article proceeds with the problem statement, objectives, literature review, methodology, results and interpretation, and conclusions.

2.0 Statement of the Problem

Effective destination promotion depends on sound tourism marketing strategies, and operators such as Pamoja Tours and Travel invest in marketing on the expectation that it will promote destinations and attract visitors (Kotler et al., 2021). Ideally, well-designed digital marketing, product packaging, pricing, and branding should enhance destination promotion and drive visitation (F. Christopher & Shamirah, 2025). In practice, however, many Ugandan tour operators struggle to promote destinations effectively in a competitive market, and the extent to which marketing strategies actually account for destination promotion has not been established through rigorous empirical research (Kayondo & Mugisha, 2023; Nakigudde & Ochen, 2023).

Operators face marketing challenges, including limited digital presence, weak product differentiation, pricing pressures, and underdeveloped branding (Buhalis, 2021; Pike, 2021). These weaknesses may constrain destination promotion, but the precise contribution of each marketing dimension remains unclear, hampering efforts to allocate marketing resources effectively. Without such evidence, operators risk investing in strategies that yield limited returns (Promise et al., 2024). If this gap remains unaddressed, tour operators may continue to underperform in promoting destinations, and Uganda's tourism potential may go unrealised (Julius et al., 2024). This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between tourism marketing strategies and destination promotion at Pamoja Tours and Travel and to identify the most influential dimensions.

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3.0 Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between tourism marketing strategies and destination promotion at Pamoja Tours and Travel in Entebbe, Uganda.

3.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the tourism marketing strategies employed by Pamoja Tours and Travel.
- ii. To establish the relationship between marketing dimensions (digital marketing, product and packaging, pricing strategy, and branding and promotion) and destination promotion.
- iii. To determine the relative contribution of each marketing dimension to destination promotion.

4.0 Literature Review

Research on tourism marketing and destination promotion draws on the marketing mix framework, destination marketing theory, and the consumer decision-making model (Sophie & Crispus, 2024). The marketing mix framework holds that marketing outcomes are shaped by the coordinated management of product, price, place, and promotion, providing a foundational lens for analysing marketing strategies (Kotler et al., 2021). Destination marketing theory focuses specifically on how destinations are positioned, branded, and promoted to target markets, emphasising the distinctive characteristics of tourism as an experience good (Pike, 2021). The consumer decision-making model frames the tourist's journey from awareness through consideration to booking, highlighting the role of information, image, and persuasion at each stage (Buhalis, 2021).

Empirical studies broadly confirm that marketing strategies shape destination promotion and visitation (Kartawinata et al., 2020). Research finds that operators and destinations employing strong, coordinated marketing achieve greater visibility, appeal, and visitation than those with weak marketing (Pike, 2021; Buhalis, 2021). Studies in East Africa report that marketing strategies significantly influence destination promotion, though effectiveness is constrained by capacity and resources (Kayondo & Mugisha, 2023; Nakigudde & Ochen, 2023).

Digital marketing features prominently as an increasingly decisive dimension (Julius & Audrey, 2026a). Because travellers increasingly research and book online, digital channels—websites, social media, search, and online travel platforms—have become central to reaching and engaging them, and studies link strong digital marketing to greater destination visibility and visitation (Buhalis, 2021). Branding and promotion form a second theme: a distinctive, appealing brand and effective promotional communication shape destination image and appeal, and research associates strong branding with better promotion outcomes (Pike, 2021; Kotler et al., 2021). Product and packaging constitute a third theme, since well-designed, differentiated tour products aligned with target-market needs enhance appeal and conversion (Kotler et al., 2021). Pricing strategy forms a fourth theme: competitive, value-based pricing influences destination attractiveness and booking decisions, though its effect operates alongside perceived value and quality (Pike, 2021). The literature emphasises that these dimensions are interdependent and that effective destination promotion requires their coordination (Faith et al., 2023). Despite this body of work, few studies quantify and compare these dimensions for a Ugandan tour operator, a gap this study addresses.

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5.0 Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with a mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). The quantitative component measured variables and tested relationships, while the qualitative component provided contextual depth on marketing practice.

5.2 Study Population and Area

The study focused on Pamoja Tours and Travel in Entebbe, Uganda. The target population comprised tourists and clients, the company's marketing staff, and tourism stakeholders, who together provided customer, organisational, and industry perspectives on marketing strategies and destination promotion(Nelson, Christopher, Teddy, et al., 2022).

5.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample of 180 respondents was drawn, comprising 120 tourists and clients, 30 marketing staff, and 30 tourism stakeholders(Nafiu, 2012). The sample size was determined with reference to the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) guidelines. Tourists were selected using convenience and systematic sampling, while staff and stakeholders were selected purposively as key informants.

5.4 Data Collection Instruments

A structured questionnaire measured the marketing dimensions—digital marketing, product and packaging, pricing strategy, and branding and promotion—and destination promotion on a five-point Likert scale(Ariyo, 2023). An interview guide was used with staff and stakeholders to obtain qualitative insights.

5.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert review, yielding a content validity index above 0.70 (Amin, 2005). Reliability was confirmed through a pilot study, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the marketing strategies scale.

5.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS(Nelson, Christopher, & Milton, 2022). Descriptive statistics summarised the variables; Pearson correlation established relationships; and regression-based path analysis quantified the combined and relative effects. Qualitative data were analysed thematically (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

5.7 Ethical Considerations

Permission was obtained from the company, informed consent was secured, participation was voluntary, and confidentiality was maintained throughout (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

6.0 Results and Interpretation

6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics based on responses from the 180 participants.

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Digital marketing	3.44	0.82	Moderate

Product and packaging	3.31	0.84	Moderate
Pricing strategy	3.08	0.88	Moderate
Branding and promotion	3.52	0.79	High
Overall marketing strategies	3.34	0.73	Moderate
Destination promotion	3.29	0.75	Moderate

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The descriptive results in Table 1 indicate that the marketing strategies of Pamoja Tours and Travel were moderate to high overall (mean 3.34)(Julius et al., 2026a). Branding and promotion recorded the highest mean (3.52), followed by digital marketing (3.44) and product and packaging (3.31), while pricing strategy recorded the lowest mean (3.08), suggesting that competitive and value-based pricing was the weakest dimension—consistent with the pricing pressures operators face in a competitive market (Pike, 2021). Destination promotion was rated moderate (3.29). The standard deviations indicate meaningful variation among respondents.

6.2 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation was computed to establish the relationships between the marketing dimensions and destination promotion (Table 2).

Variable	Destination Promotion (r)	Sig. (p)
Digital marketing	0.62	0.000
Branding and promotion	0.60	0.000
Product and packaging	0.53	0.000
Pricing strategy	0.49	0.000
Overall marketing strategies	0.66	0.000

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The correlation results in Table 2 show that all four dimensions were positively and significantly associated with destination promotion at the 0.01 level(Nelson et al., 2023). Overall marketing strategies correlated strongly with destination promotion ($r = 0.66$, $p < 0.01$), confirming that marketing strategies shape destination promotion, consistent with destination marketing theory (Pike, 2021; Kotler et al., 2021). Digital marketing recorded the strongest individual association ($r = 0.62$), reflecting the centrality of online channels to reaching today's travellers (Buhalis, 2021), followed closely by branding and promotion ($r = 0.60$). Product and packaging ($r = 0.53$) and pricing strategy ($r = 0.49$) were also significant, though more moderate. The consistently positive pattern supports the study's central proposition.

6.3 Regression-Based Path Analysis

A regression-based path model was estimated to determine the combined and relative effects of the marketing dimensions on destination promotion. Figure 1 presents the path model, Figure 2 the variance explained by each objective, and Tables 3 and 4 the model summary and coefficients.

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Path Model: Marketing Strategies → Destination Promotion

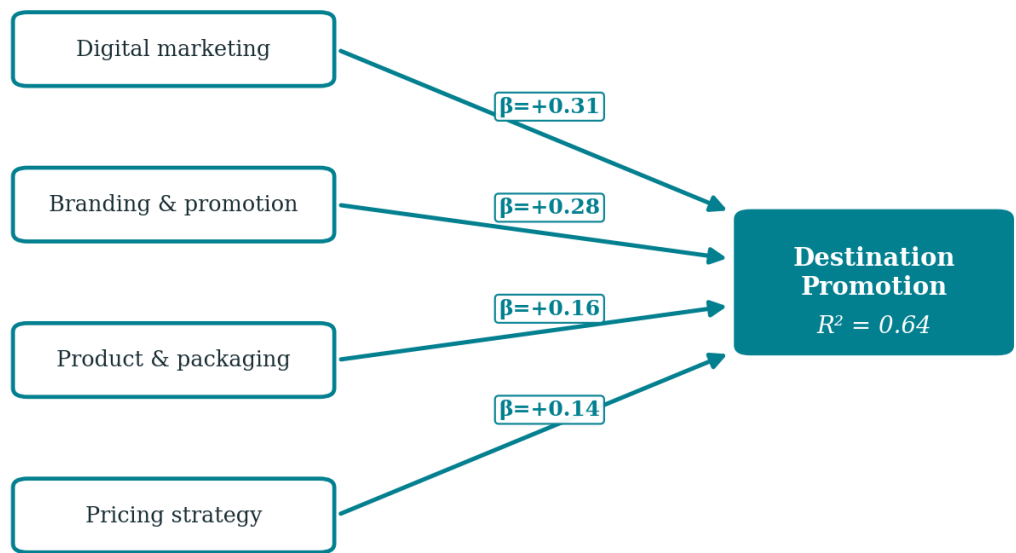


Figure 1: Path model of tourism marketing strategies and destination promotion (standardised β , $R^2 = 0.64$).

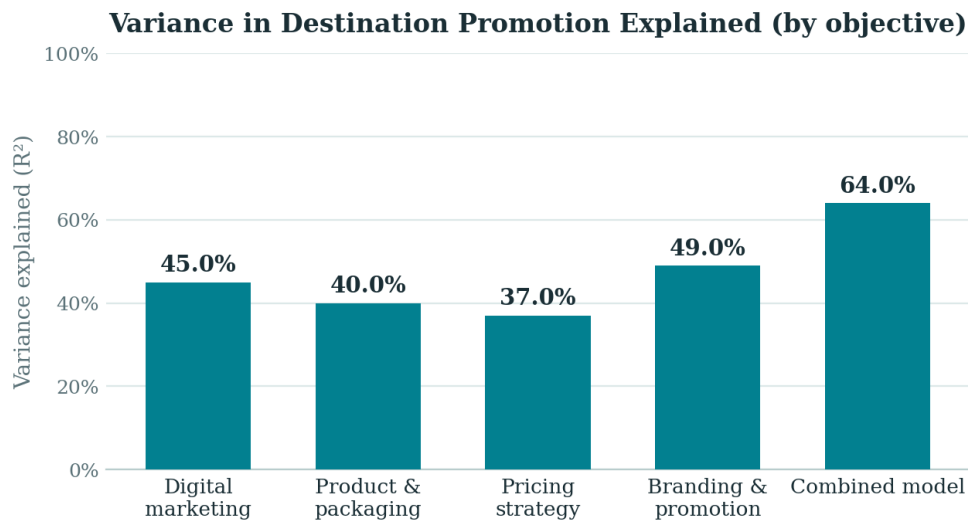


Figure 2: Variance in destination promotion explained across the study objectives.

Model Summary	Value
R	0.800
R Square	0.640

Adjusted R Square	0.632		
Std. Error of Estimate	0.447		
F (4, 175)	77.78 (p = 0.000)		
Predictor	Beta (β)	t	Sig. (p)
Digital marketing	0.31	4.71	0.000
Branding and promotion	0.28	4.22	0.000
Product and packaging	0.16	2.58	0.011
Pricing strategy	0.14	2.21	0.028

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The regression model summary in Table 3 indicates that the four marketing dimensions jointly explained 64.0% of the variance in destination promotion ($R^2 = 0.640$), a large proportion establishing marketing strategies as a major determinant of destination promotion. The model was highly significant ($F(4, 175) = 77.78, p < 0.01$) (Julius & Kazaara, 2026b). The remaining 36.0% of variance reflects factors such as destination attractiveness, security, seasonality, and macroeconomic conditions (Pike, 2021).

The standardised coefficients in Table 4, visualised in Figure 1, show that digital marketing was the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.31, p < 0.01$), demonstrating that online channels most strongly drive destination promotion in a market where travellers increasingly research and book digitally (Buhalis, 2021). Branding and promotion followed ($\beta = 0.28, p < 0.01$), confirming that a distinctive brand and effective promotion materially enhance promotion outcomes (Pike, 2021; Kotler et al., 2021). Product and packaging ($\beta = 0.16, p < 0.05$) and pricing strategy ($\beta = 0.14, p < 0.05$) contributed positively but more modestly. Notably, pricing strategy was both the lowest-rated dimension and the weakest predictor, suggesting that while competitive pricing matters, differentiation through digital marketing and branding offers greater leverage for destination promotion (Buhalis, 2021; Pike, 2021).

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that tourism marketing strategies have a strong, positive, and significant relationship with destination promotion at Pamoja Tours and Travel, with digital marketing and branding and promotion being the most influential dimensions. It is recommended that the company invest in digital marketing across websites, social media, and online travel platforms (Buhalis, 2021); build a distinctive destination and operator brand supported by effective promotion (Pike, 2021); design differentiated, attractive tour products aligned with target markets (Kotler et al., 2021); and adopt competitive, value-based pricing. Future research could employ objective visitation and booking data and comparisons across operators to further establish causality.

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