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# Branding and Promotion of Tourism Destinations in Africa.

*An investigation of the branding and promotion of  
tourism in Africa, case of Cameroon.*



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## **Abstract**

This study explores the branding, and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon. The research aims to identify strategies and challenges faced in positioning Cameroon as a competitive tourist destination and suggest areas for improvement. The research methodology employed a combination of content analysis, case studies, and interviews with industry experts. The findings highlight the significance of effective branding and promotion strategies in attracting tourists and creating economic benefits. Challenges such as language barriers and access to industry experts were encountered during the research process. The study recommends further research with a larger time frame to gain more insights. Overall, this research contributes to understanding the implications and opportunities for enhancing the branding and promotion efforts of tourist destinations in Cameroon.

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Keywords: branding, promotion, marketing, tourism, Cameroon, tourist destination



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background of the study

Many countries rely on tourism as a crucial source of income and jobs (Buame and Opoku, 2019). On a global level, there are numerous aspects of tourism branding and promotion that have been successful in recent years. For example, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) have become increasingly important for promoting international destinations through digital platforms such as social media or websites (Ritchie & Crouch 2003). Additionally, strategies like experiential marketing have also helped create memorable experiences for travelers which can help increase their loyalty towards certain brands or locations (Gretzel et al., 2011). Furthermore developments such as e-commerce solutions provide better opportunities for customers to research their travel options online before booking trips abroad (Wang et al., 2019).

In Europe specifically, there has been an increased focus on sustainable approaches to promote destinations by emphasizing local cultures rather than mass-marketing techniques employed elsewhere around the world (Kozak & Kozak 2020). Similarly Asian countries like China are investing heavily into various forms of digital advertising with many Chinese companies now actively targeting overseas markets through search engines and other online channels (Li, 2018). This trend is likely going to continue given its success so far at attracting more visitors from abroad while still maintaining strong ties between locals within each country's respective culture .

With its diverse array of natural and cultural attractions, Africa in the same light has great potential to draw visitors from all over the globe. However, as Mbai (2018) points out, Africa's tourism industry is lagging behind other regions in terms of development.

Africa's tourism industry has a long history dating back to the colonial era when Europeans explored and hunted in the continent. However, it was only in the mid-20th century that tourism became a significant industry in Africa. At first, countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Egypt embraced tourism due to their diverse natural and cultural resources that attracted visitors. Later on, in the 1970s and 1980s, tourism expanded to other African countries like South Africa, Morocco, and Tunisia. Nevertheless, Africa's tourism industry still lags behind other regions in terms of development.





In any industry, including tourism, creating a unique identity and image for a product or service is key through branding. To attract and keep customers, various tactics and techniques are used, which are referred to as promotion. All the activities that a company undertakes to promote its products or services fall under marketing. These components are particularly important in the tourism industry as they are the means by which a destination is marketed and communicated to potential tourists (Tichaawa & Atsabah, 2020).

Several African countries have developed successful branding, and promotion strategies to attract tourists. South Africa is a prime example of a country successfully marketing its tourism industry. The country's "A World in One Country" campaign highlights the diversity of the country's landscapes, wildlife, and cultures. Egypt's "This is Egypt" campaign emphasises the country's rich cultural heritage and history, while Morocco's "Travel in Morocco" campaign showcases the country's vibrant and exotic culture.

Another successful example is the Visit Rwanda campaign. The campaign began in 2017 to promote Rwanda as a tourism destination. The campaign's branding included a unique logo, "Visit Rwanda," used in all marketing materials. Promotion tactics included advertising on social media, television, and billboards in major cities worldwide. The campaign also included hosting international events, such as the Tour du Rwanda cycling race, to attract tourists. The marketing strategy included partnerships with airlines and travel agencies to offer tour packages to Rwanda. The campaign was successful, with Rwanda experiencing a 21% increase in tourism in 2018.

Africa boasts a wide range of natural resources, from its unique wildlife and breathtaking landscapes to its impressive natural wonders. Moreover, the continent is steeped in rich culture, history, and traditions. Despite this, Africa has yet to fully harness its tourism potential due to various factors, such as political instability, insecurity, insufficient infrastructure, and inadequate marketing and tourism promotion. As a result, African countries struggle to compete with other regions, such as Europe, Asia, and America, in the tourism industry (Mbai, 2018).

Tourism is a significant industry in America and Europe, attracting millions of tourists annually. In 2019, the United States welcomed over 79 million international tourists, while Europe welcomed over 700 million. The number of international tourists in Africa has been steadily increasing, with the region welcoming over 70 million tourists in 2019. Cameroon is among the



fastest-growing tourist destinations in Africa, attracting over 1 million tourists in 2019, contributing to over 5% of the country's GDP.

Tourism is vital to many African countries as it generates significant revenue and employment opportunities. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism industry contributes 8.5% of Africa's GDP and provides 24 million jobs. Branding, promotion, and marketing are essential components of the tourism industry that can help attract and retain tourists. In 2019, Africa's tourism industry generated \$39.2 billion in revenue, accounting for 3.3% of the continent's GDP. In contrast, the tourism industry in Europe generated \$1.5 trillion in revenue, accounting for 9.5% of the region's GDP. The tourism industry in America generated \$1.1 trillion in revenue, accounting for 7.6% of the region's GDP.

Cameroon is a country in Central Africa with diverse natural and cultural resources. The country has several tourist attractions, including beaches, wildlife, cultural sites, and natural wonders. However, the tourism industry in Cameroon has not yet reached its full potential due to various challenges. These challenges include poor infrastructure, inadequate branding and promotion, and a lack of proper branding. These factors have made it difficult for Cameroon to compete with other regional destinations (Cameroon Ministry of Tourism, 2019).

In recent years, the Cameroon government has taken several measures to promote tourism in the country. These measures include the establishment of a national tourism board, the creation of new tourist sites, and the development of infrastructure. Despite these efforts, the tourism industry in Cameroon is still underdeveloped compared to other destinations in the region. This study aims to investigate the branding, and promotion strategies used in the tourism industry in Cameroon and how they influence the growth and development of the industry.

Tourism plays a significant role in the economy of several countries, including Cameroon. To attract and maintain tourists, branding, and promotion, are critical aspects of the tourism industry. Despite Africa's tremendous potential in tourism, various factors have affected the region's competitiveness with other destinations (Buame & Opoku, 2019). This study aims to investigate Cameroon's tourism industry's branding, and promotion, strategies and suggest improvements to enhance its growth and development.



## **1.2 Problem Discussion**

The branding, and promotion of tourist destinations is an important aspect of the tourism industry, as it plays a crucial role in attracting visitors and generating revenue. However, there is a lack of research in the literature on how this process is done in African countries, particularly in the case of Cameroon.

Existing studies have focused on developed countries and have largely ignored the unique challenges faced by developing countries in Africa. Khupe and Olutuase (2017) and Gachanja and Mugomba (2017) are among the few works which have highlighted the importance of marketing in promoting tourism in South Africa and Kenya respectively. Cameroon is one of these developing countries with its own unique challenges in promoting tourism. Despite having a diverse range of tourist destinations, such as beaches, wildlife reserves, and cultural sites, Cameroon has struggled to attract tourists and generate revenue from the industry.

This is partly due to ineffective branding, and promotion strategies, which have failed to communicate the unique selling points of Cameroon's tourism industry and target the right audiences (Mintsa & Ndongfack, 2017). As a result, the industry has not realised its full potential in generating revenue, creating jobs, and supporting local businesses. This is because there are fewer people aware of what attractions exist within Cameroon as well as how they may be accessed with ease or at reasonable costs. Tourism has the potential to play a significant role in the economic growth of Cameroon, but the country's tourism industry is underdeveloped compared to its potential (Toure et al., 2020).

According to the World Tourism Organization, the continuous emergence of tourism destinations has led to tight competition for visitors. As such, the ability of a destination to project and distinguish itself on the world stage is a very important factor in determining how many visitors get to patronise it (UNWTO, 2009).

Also, The buying behaviour of tourists and the marketing channels used to reach them are two key aspects that must be considered when it comes to tourism marketing. Tourist's purchasing decisions are often heavily influenced by their motivations for travelling (Buhalis & Law 2008). For example, those who travel with the intention of experiencing a new culture may respond more positively to campaigns that emphasize cultural activities or local attractions than those with other goals such as relaxation or adventure (Kozak et al., 2015). Therefore, marketers



should consider what motivates their target audience when selecting which promotional methods they use; this could include both traditional media such as television advertisements and print materials alongside digital platforms like social media networks or travel websites (Hjalager & Richards 2002).

One gap in the literature that needs to be addressed is the lack of research on the specific challenges faced by African countries in promoting their tourist destinations. Studies by Ngobo (2018) and Ngatchou and Tsafack (2019) have identified some of the challenges faced by the tourism industry in Cameroon, such as inadequate infrastructure, political instability, and poor marketing strategies. However, there is a need for more research that specifically focuses on the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa.

Another gap in the literature is the lack of research on strategies that can be used to improve the branding, and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon. Studies by Mavondo et al. (2017) and Kiper and Şimşek (2019) have identified some strategies that can be used to improve tourism in general, such as improving infrastructure and investing in marketing campaigns. However, there is a need for more research that specifically addresses the context of Cameroon and provides actionable recommendations for improving the branding, promotion, and marketing of its tourist destinations.

In conclusion, the literature on the branding, and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa, particularly in the case of Cameroon, is lacking. There is a need for more research that specifically addresses the challenges and opportunities faced by developing countries in Africa, and provides actionable recommendations for improving the branding and promotion of their tourist destinations. This will not only help these countries attract more tourists and generate revenue but also contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism industry in Africa as a whole.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

This study aims to examine how tourist destinations in Africa are currently marketed and promoted. We aim to provide a clear understanding of the challenges African countries face when promoting tourist destinations and offer practical strategies and recommendations to enhance the branding and promotion of Cameroon as a tourist destination. The study will add



to the existing literature on sustainable tourism development in Africa, which can help African countries attract more tourists and increase revenue.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

*RQ1: How is the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa done?*

The branding and promotion of tourist destinations play a crucial role in attracting visitors and stimulating economic growth in the tourism industry (Smith, 2018). In the specific context of Africa, understanding how the branding and promotion of tourist destinations are conducted is essential for assessing the effectiveness of current strategies and identifying areas for improvement. By investigating the practices and approaches employed in Africa's tourism industry, valuable insights can be gained regarding the strategies used to position and market the continent's tourist destinations (Buhalis & Costa, 2013). This research aims to explore the branding and promotion methods employed in Africa, providing a comprehensive understanding of the continent's efforts to attract tourists and showcase its unique attractions.

*RQ2: What challenges are faced in the branding and promotion, of tourist destinations in Africa and what strategies can be used to improve the situation?*

The branding and promotion of tourist destinations play a pivotal role in driving tourism growth and economic development across Africa. As the continent continues to diversify its tourism offerings and attract visitors from around the world, it is important to understand the challenges faced in the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa (Jones et al., 2019; Okumu & Olaru, 2021). By examining these challenges in detail, valuable insights can be gained into the underlying issues that impact the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa (UNWTO, 2018).

#### **1.5 Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to examine the branding and promotion strategies of tourist destinations in Cameroon, to identify the specific challenges faced by the country in promoting its tourism industry and providing actionable recommendations for improvement. This study aims to fill the gap in the literature on the branding, and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa, particularly in the case of Cameroon, by providing a context-specific analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by the country in promoting its tourist destinations. The study also seeks to contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism industry in Africa



by providing practical recommendations for improving the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in developing countries.

### **1.6 Delimitation**

The study is concerned with efforts in the branding and promotion of tourism in Cameroon and, as such, contains data collected from industry experts who classify as individuals or organisations who promote tourism activities the country.

The study encompasses both natural and artificial tourist attractions and leisure locations.

The study does not intend to develop any new theory on tourism branding and promotion. Still, it intends to add to extant literature findings in the case of Cameroon by testing the existing theory on the topic and attempting to validate the findings of existing literature further.

The branding and promotion will include only formal efforts of promoters (by both government and private individuals) on social media, promotional campaigns, adverts and image upliftment through graphics and concepts that make the tourist locations attractive.



## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Conceptual Underpinnings**

#### ***2.1.1 Branding and Promotion of Tourist Destinations***

Tourism constitutes one of the largest sectors worldwide (Tsiotsou R., 2010), though often faced with challenges and difficulties. The growing demand for holiday and leisure activities has significantly led to an increase in the demand for tourism destinations, as this has changed the way and nature in which the tourism sector was, giving way to the need for marketing so as to get customers informed about the touristic potentials of their various tourism destinations (Tsiotsou & Ratten 2010; Tsiotsou & Vlachopoulou, 2011). This has led to the use of several marketing tools, such as branding and promotion in order to boost the marketability of these tourist sites.

Branding and promotion are essential components of a successful tourism business. While branding has to do with the process of creating a unique identity for a business, promotion has to do with the process of communicating with potential customers (Tien, Dung, & Tien, 2019). Like branding, promotion involves communicating the brand's identity to potential customers, which can be done through various channels such as advertising, public relations and social media. Promotion should be tailored to the target audience and focus on the unique experiences the business or brand seeks to offer. Branding is the foundation of any successful tourism business. It involves creating a unique identity that distinguishes the business from its competitors. A country's tourism sector in itself is a brand, especially with the role it plays in that economy as such, the tourism brand is considered to be a unit in the development strategy of the country (Thanh, 2017). Tourism branding is building and identifying a tourist destination's distinct and unique characteristics (Tien et al., 2019). Lang (2013) defines branding as a combination of all products and services of different industries such as agriculture, tourism, sports, arts, education, and technology investment related to the travel destination.

The concept of branding in tourism aims to transmit a favourable image of the tourist destination to the tourist, which influences their preferences and the tastes of different target



groups. Branding not only improves the image of the tourist destination but on the ways of life of the inhabitants as they have to adapt to the changes to suit the needs of the tourism industry (Kotler & Gertner, 2004). Due to fierce competition from the tourism industry, it is important to take measures by putting out a strong brand. In branding the tourism destination, the image of the tourism destination is the most crucial weapon for the stakeholders in the tourism industry as the destination image enhances the effective influences which affect the customers' awareness, conviction and emotional relationship with tourism destinations (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011).

Branding a tourist site is often compared with the branding of products, according to Anholt, (2004), countries are like brands, and people directly associate a certain product with the branding of a place, such as a case of associating pizza with the brand of Italy. Kotler & Gertner, (2004) identified crucial factors and characteristics that efficiently understand the strength and weaknesses of the tourist destination. Such factors include the size of the domestic market, access to regional trade areas, education of the people, tax incentives, skilled labour, cost of labour and the security in the destination sites. According to Kotler & Gertner, (2004), countries might have to enter into cooperation with stakeholders working in the touristic area. They need to be aware of the resources, nature of the tourism destination so that they can better manage their tourist target group and get to know the the kind of customers that are mostly attracted to their destination to better tell the story about the tourism destination.

Thus, tourism brands should be catching the attention of people by crafting eye catching headlines that are not too long nor too short but selling a compelling and attractive story about the destination. This can be related to the case of the Eiffel Tower in Paris and the Oktoberfest in Germany, where compelling emotional stories are being told to boost its brand's image and promotion (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). They further assess that for tourism brands to stay in the competition and up to date with the changes in the tourism industry, they must keep improving and putting in place strategies for the branding and development of the tourism destination.

In staying up with the competition, (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004) identified a five-phase model for launching and relaunching a destination brand. Phase one represents a market investigation, gathering and collecting important data and the core values of the destination and evaluating how significant and appropriate the brand might be for the tourism economy. The model also





insinuates that a destination brand must be durable, relevant, communicable to potential tourists and therefore have a strong position in the tourism market (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). The second phase is brand identity development, where assets and characteristics of the tourism destination are modelled into brand identity, which will then communicate the vision to the final consumer. Stakeholders must efficiently distribute their brands and products directly to their target consumers through advertisements, campaigns and social media promotion. The fourth stage is implantation, which is extremely crucial and leads to the fifth stage, monitoring and controlling the lifecycle and behaviour of the brand (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004).

- Phase one           Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendation
- Phase two           Brand identity development
- Phase three         Brand launch and introduction: communicating the vision
- Phase four         Brand implementation
- Phase five         Monitoring, evaluation and review.

Gathogo and King'ei (2019) studied the effectiveness of destination branding strategies in the Kenyan tourism industry. The study aimed to determine the extent to which destination branding strategies influence tourists' perception of Kenya as a tourist destination. The authors used a sample of 384 tourists from different countries who visited Kenya in 2017. The study used regression analysis to analyse the data collected from the respondents. The study's findings revealed that destination branding strategies significantly influence tourists' perception of Kenya as a tourist destination. The study also found that destination image significantly mediates the relationship between destination branding strategies and tourists' perception of Kenya. The study provides important insights into the effectiveness of destination branding strategies in the Kenyan tourism industry. However, the study's sample size is limited to 384 tourists, which may not represent the entire population of tourists who visit Kenya. Future studies could increase the sample size to improve the generalizability of the findings.

George (2015) conducted a comparative study of destination branding in South Africa and Kenya. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of destination branding strategies in the two countries and identify the factors contributing to their success or failure. The author used a sample of 250 tourists from each country and analysed the data using regression analysis. The study found that destination branding strategies significantly influence tourists' perception of



the two countries as tourist destinations. However, the study also found that the success of destination branding strategies depends on various factors, including political stability, infrastructure, and the level of investment in the tourism industry. The study provides valuable insights into the factors contributing to the success or failure of destination branding strategies in Africa. However, the study's sample size is relatively small, and the results may not be generalisable to other countries in the region. Future studies could increase the sample size and include more countries to comprehensively analyse African destination branding.

### ***2.1.2 Brand Identity In Branding and promotion Of Tourist Destinations.***

Tourism is a well-accepted phenomenon that contributes immensely to the growth and development of a nation's economy through public and private sector investments in facilities and infrastructure development. It generates substantial revenue, which aids in developing and managing tourism destinations in the country. With the increasing number of tourists and tourist destinations globally, there is a need to promote, market, and establish a strong brand identity for these destinations due to intense competition (Manhas et al., 2012).

While branding has been extensively used as a marketing tool for products and services, destination branding is more complex as it involves various elements such as actual sites, culture, customs, and history (Cai et al., 2009). As tourism destinations compete with each other in the industry worldwide, it becomes crucial to effectively manage and create a unique brand identity that showcases the outstanding physical features and benefits of a destination, differentiating it from its competitors (Morgan et al., 2010; Koltringer and Dickinger, 2015).

The concept of branding has often been associated with products and services, but when it comes to tourism destinations, it takes on a whole new meaning. Brand identity is crucial to establishing a brand's core values and image. It represents the most important phase in the process of image creation, encompassing the development and preservation of a unique set of ideas and perceptions (Keller, 2013; Roy & Banerjee, 2014).

Brand identity is created from the sender's or destination promoter's perspective, while the tourists perceive the brand image (Stevens, 2012). In promoting and marketing tourist destinations, tourism promoters and strategists develop a brand identity based on the unique



characteristics of the destinations. The goal is to create a memorable brand image in the minds of visitors and tourists (Qu et al., 2011). Tourists form a destination image based on the brand identity projected by destination promoters or marketers, who strive to establish and enhance brand identity based on their understanding of the tourist's brand image of a particular destination (Koltringer & Dickinger, 2015).

In the context of branding and promoting, tourist destinations, Matiza & Oni (2014) developed a conceptual model of destination brand identity and image consisting of three stages: destination brand identity, communication of destination brand identity, and destination brand image. This model seeks to explain that brand identity represents the destination and is communicated through marketing strategies, ultimately forming a destination image among tourists. Brand identity evokes emotions and influences behaviours among tourists and visitors, as the brand holds social and emotional value for them.

Destination brands are more complex than product brands as various stakeholders consume them for different purposes, including investment, employment, and identity creation (Balmer & Greyser, 2006). Identity encompasses how a destination or tourism provider aims to identify or position itself and its products. An effective brand identity promotes the destination's unique character and value proposition, conveying it distinctively and evoking emotional connections, rather than being merely a mental image (Kotler et al., 1993). The control of identity primarily lies in the hands of the stakeholders of the tourism destinations. Brand identity also relates to how brand owners want the destination to be perceived, encompassing its features, beneficial attributes, and the symbolic, experiential, social, and emotional values embedded in the brand (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005).

### ***2.1.3 Strategies used to Brand, Promote and Market Tourist Destinations.***

Tourism considerably contributes to the world economy, accounting for 10.4% of global GDP and employing 330 million people (World, Travel and Tourism Council, 2021). However, the sector is incredibly competitive, with sites from all over the world vying for the attention of travellers. To differentiate themselves from the competition, venues must implement substantial and successful marketing tactics that highlight their distinctive characteristics and attractions.



In recent years, travel influencers have emerged as an important tool in the tourism industry. Working with tourism influencers with a significant social media following can help destination promoters reach a broader audience. Influencers can draw attention to the destination's unique features and build buzz among their followers. This may increase interest and, as a result, the number of tourists (Pirani & Aitken, 2019). Search engine optimisation (SEO) boosts a website's ranking in search engine results pages (SERPs). By optimising their websites for relevant keywords, tourism destinations may increase their online visibility and attract more organic visitors. Keyword research, website content optimisation, and backlink construction can help (Coca-Stefaniak & Morrison, 2018). Furthermore, most tourists are looking for the best offer. Offering enticing packages and promotions may help tourism destinations attract more tourists. This might be achieved by collaborating with hotels, airlines, and other travel companies to provide all-inclusive packages or discounted rates. Tourism destinations may also offer seasonal promotions or last-minute discounts to encourage bookings (Buhalis & Michopoulou, 2011).

Furthermore, trade shows and events are fantastic places to network and promote a tourism destination's specific benefits. Attending industry events allows tourist destinations to meet with travel agencies, tour operators, and other industry professionals. This can lead to new business partnerships and more reservations (Morrison & Coca-Stefaniak, 2014). Sharpley, (2014) highlights sustainable tourism as a brand marketing approach that is becoming increasingly popular among travellers. Tourism destinations that encourage sustainable and responsible tourism may attract environmentally conscious visitors. This may be achieved through supporting ecologically beneficial activities, aiding local communities, and reducing garbage and carbon emissions. User-generated content (UGC) refers to any content submitted by visitors, such as reviews, photographs, and videos, and is one of the most often used tactics by tourist destination advocates. Tourism destination promoters may use UGC to exhibit actual passenger experiences and build trust among potential travellers. This may be performed by presenting UGC on the tourism destination's website, sharing it on social media, incorporating it into marketing materials, and sharing it on social media (Xiang, Du, Ma, & Fan, 2020). The local community may be a valuable resource in promoting tourist attractions. Attractions may develop relationships and market themselves to a large audience by connecting with the local



community. This may be achieved through arranging community events, assisting local companies, and working with community groups.

Lei (2016) conducted a study to analyse the role of storytelling and social media in destination branding. The study focused on South African Tourism's Facebook page and utilised a content analysis approach. The study's findings suggest that storytelling and social media are effective tools in destination branding. The study identified several important storytelling elements, such as emotional appeal and visual imagery, in destination branding. The study also highlighted the role of social media in reaching a wider audience and engaging with tourists.

#### ***2.1.4 Marketing Channels Used In Promoting the Tourism Industry.***

Every marketing effort should begin with a plan; tourism marketing is no different. The marketing plan is your road map and details the attractions in your area. It forces you to set a budget for your promotional spending. At the end of each tourism season, you can use your marketing plan to set goals and make changes for the next year (Chron, 2019).

Tourism marketing can be expensive, particularly if you want to attract national or international tourists. Typical funding sources are state tourism agencies and taxes, including hotel taxes. Suppose there are several tourist attractions in a specific county or across several neighbouring counties. The entire area can be marketed to potential visitors as an appealing weeklong destination by combining advertising and other marketing activities. Partnerships can give tourists a fuller travel experience (Chron, 2019).

Marketing in the tourism industry has distinct characteristics from other marketing plans. Because tourists are temporary, they are exposed to an area's goods and services for shorter periods. But tourists are counting on having a good time, so marketers should consider strategies that appeal to the emotions, such as treating kids to a memorable experience (Chron, 2019). Tourism means travelling to a particular destination and includes all activities undertaken during the stay (Gupta & Mirjha, 2016).

A solid marketing strategy is crucial in any business, and the tourism industry is no different. (Wild Web, 2019). Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries in the world and is also one



of the best ways to boost a country's economy. With more and more destinations realising this and seeking to attract more tourists, the industry is becoming increasingly competitive. This is why ensuring your marketing strategy is up to scratch is more important than ever (Wild Web, 2019). The reasons why a good marketing strategy is vital to the tourism business (Wild Web, 2019):

Identify the ideal target market. The first step to developing a successful marketing campaign is identifying the ideal target market. Depending on the experience on offer, the customer will vary. Attract new customers and develop loyalty. Once the ideal target market has been identified, a strategy to reach these potential customers must be developed. Because customer loyalty is key, a lot of time must be devoted to building brand awareness and creating ongoing, interconnected campaigns that target previous guests and attract new ones.

Understand the customer journey. In tourism, the ultimate goal is selling an experience, not a material object. This means that the customer journey to purchase is rather different and comes with challenges. Understanding the journey that the customer takes before purchasing is critical to a successful marketing campaign.

Stand out from competitors. As the tourism industry becomes increasingly competitive, ensuring that your business stands out is important. Highlighting what is unique or different about the business is one of the best ways to achieve this. A good marketing strategy can communicate these points effectively to the customers in a way that speaks to them.

Hone in on the most effective tactics. Using research and analytical tools, a marketing strategy allows you to assess which resources are best helping to reach your audience, and then focus on those resources to ensure the best ROI possible. At the end of the day, having a good marketing strategy in place allows you to feel confident, knowing that all your business's marketing needs are being carefully looked after. Tourism marketing contributes to the growth of local and national economies worldwide. In fact, one-fifth of all global jobs created over the past decade have been within the travel sector. Nearly 10 percent of all jobs are supported by this industry (Bizfluent, 2019).

They also make sure that information on restaurants, hotels and other venues is easily accessible and up-to-date (Bizfluent, 2019). Tourism marketing drives business growth. Customers who



are satisfied with your services spread the word about your facility, whether it's a local pub or a hotel. This will bring you more clients and give you a competitive edge (Bizfluent, 2019). Considering these facts, it's no wonder that travel professionals invest billions in marketing. Digital advertising spending in the U.S. travel industry increased from \$2.4 billion in 2011 to \$8.5 billion in 2018, and it's expected to reach \$9.8 billion in 2019 (Bizfluent, 2019). Today, you can easily travel from one place to another and use the internet to research every possible destination. (Bizfluent, 2019) Tourism would not exist to the extent that it does today if tourists cannot travel from one destination to another quickly and efficiently (Camilleri, 2017). Content marketing is increasingly added to the marketing mix of advertising companies in the tourism industry (Tourism Review, 2019).

Marketing in tourism is just a way to describe the experiences that potential customers can expect if they buy the respective product. The stages in marketing strategy are:

- Identify the market customers.
- Transmit information.
- Determine the most appropriate way to reach those customers.
- Closing the transaction.
- Develop and implement a post-visit strategy.

Marketing strategies depend largely on budget. Marketing means a lot of money spent on a relative percentage of buyers of the tourist product. A marketing strategy focused on a particular market segment can bring more buyers, even if it means a higher cost per person. The complexity of the tourism industry, and the specific nature of the tourism business's activity, bound to consider all other tourism-related activities, leads to the need for an appropriate marketing approach.

Horan (2018) studied the power of the African narrative in destination marketing. The study explored how the African narrative is used in destination marketing and its impact on tourists' perception of African destinations. The author analysed the websites of 24 African tourism organisations and conducted interviews with marketing professionals. The study found that an African narrative is a powerful tool in destination marketing, enabling African destinations to differentiate themselves from other destinations. The study also found that storytelling in



destination marketing effectively engages tourists and creates emotional connections with the destination.

### ***2.1.5 Buying Behaviour of Tourist Destination.***

New consumer trends, political changes, new technology, the fragmentation of markets, globalisation, vertical, horizontal and diagonal integration, environmental concerns, economic integration and many other key developments are all adding to the complexity of corporate management in tourism. Today and in the future, the tasks of strategic management extend well beyond finding or creating new markets. Tourism managers must adjust to all sorts of changes to ensure a sustained inflow of resources and a continuing outward flow of services. Under today's pressures, tourism executives charged with strategic management must be alert to an increasing diversity of impacts that result from the strategy, policy and management design they select. This process encompasses searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating and disposing of products and services (Moutinho, 2000).

The tourist buying decision presents some unique aspects: it is an investment with no tangible rate of return, and the purchase is often prepared and planned through savings made over a considerable period. That is, the vacation tourist will invest with no expectation of material and economic return on his or her purchase of an intangible satisfaction CB remains one of the most researched areas in the marketing and tourism fields, with the terms 'travel behaviour' or 'tourist behaviour' typically used to describe this area of inquiry. Few comprehensive reviews of the literature on CB concepts and models exist in the field of tourism. Exceptions include (Moutinho, 1993), who reviews the social and psychological influences on individual travel behaviour to develop a model of tourist behaviour (Dimanche and Havitz, 1995).

Travel decisions, therefore, are very much affected by forces outside the individual, including the influences of other people. The forces that other people exert are called social influences. According to Dimanche et al, 1995, these social influences can be grouped into four major areas: (i) role and family influences; (ii) reference groups; (iii) social classes; and (iv) culture and subculture. The analysis of consumer behaviour requires the consideration of various processes, internal and external to the individual (Engel et al., 1995). Hence, to understand purchasing behaviour, one needs to examine the complex interaction of many elements present





at different stages, from arousal to decision, as well as from purchase to post-purchase experiences.

Tourism is an important part of the modern service industry and a strategic pillar industry of the global economy. It can provide many employment opportunities and good income with strong action and less resource consumption. Promoting the development of tourism is of great practical significance in changing the mode of economic development, adjusting the industrial structure, and expanding domestic demand. The so-called preference is that consumers like one commodity more than another. It is a subjective description method that can reflect a kind of emotion and tendency in people's hearts. Preferences have individual characteristics and group characteristics. In other words, a certain group with some common characteristics has similarities in theory. Tourists' preference for tourism destination choice means that some common factors will affect the choice of tourism destination by groups of tourists with specific characteristics. Therefore, there are some similarities in the choice of tourist destinations. That is, they have similar preferences. Tourism destination preference prediction is an important part of tourism research, tourism planning, and management. Therefore, accurate prediction of destination selection preferences can improve the scientific level and effectiveness of tourism research planning and management.

According to Junyi Zhang,( 2020), the rapid growth of the tourism industry has increased the energy consumption in visiting destinations. With the growth of the global economy (even though various uncertainties exist), this trend is expected to be further strengthened. The variety-seeking property of tourist behaviour suggests that with the increase in income, people may be more likely to visit more faraway destinations, because those faraway destinations may have different attractions that can meet people's unmet tourism needs. He goes ahead to say that, for tourist behaviour research, both revealed and stated preferences as well as socio-psychological factors motivating behavioural changes toward an energy-saving tourism lifestyle, should be further examined. Studies based on stated preference approaches should be deepened. In contrast, actual tourist behaviour and the hidden preference behind it should not be neglected either, because they are important to identify important factors encouraging and discouraging behavioural changes for reducing energy use. Behavioural interventions should be given similar importance as technologies have been given, especially considering the



existence of various rebound effects and the importance of achieving a long-lasting sustainable lifestyle.

Global tourism markets have greatly evolved. New source markets (and new destinations) are emerging, particularly in Asia. Consequently, it is expected that by 2030 the traditionally top two destination regions, Europe and North America, will have their market share significantly reduced in favour of Asia and the Pacific. Tourist profiles are changing as well. Travellers in 2030 will have different values, and customs and expect different tourism experiences according to their respective wants and needs. The Future Foundation report (2015) produced for the Global Distribution System (GDS) Amadeus on future traveller tribes states that future travellers will not respond to classic socio-demographic patterns, but that their profiles will be determined by their values, behaviours and specific needs.

Following the process that leads to the choice of a destination and type of accommodations and activities, tourists have an on-site experience that will satisfy or dissatisfy them. Satisfaction is reached when tourists perceive quality and high performance in delivering tourism services. Satisfaction is achieved if the overall tourist experience matches the expectations that have been formed by personal needs, previous experience and various marketing messages. Of course, expectations may vary considerably from one tourist segment to another. Different segments may exhibit different expectations, motivations, interests, etc. (Ballantyne, Packer, & Sutherland, 2011).

Providing tourists with memorable and satisfying travel experiences is a complex task that requires understanding tourist motivations and expectations. Experiences are personal and may be described as tourists' individual and subjective responses after interacting with a tourism destination or a tourism firm. Furthermore, tourists' experiences integrate a set of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and subjective impressions acquired from the trip's planning phase till the return home (Andrades, 2012; Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

right positioning strategies to reach the selected target markets. But the crucial stage in implementing positioning strategies that promise memorable experiences for tourists is the effective delivery of such experiences. So, the key questions to be answered are: How can destinations and firms design and supply memorable experiences to their customers? What are



the basic components of a tourist experience? Tourists from a medium or inferior social layer dedicate only a small part of their time to travel. They usually travel forced by family or medical problems and often in groups to benefit from price discounts. They usually use public transport such as bus or train, demanding accommodation and meals at quite low rates. They rarely demand auxiliary services during the journey.

The time a tourist spends deciding the purchase during the journey and the time gap between the moment of purchase and the moment of payment influences the purchasing behaviour. For example, the tourist does not pay as much attention to details when the time to decide on the purchase is short. Generally speaking, the purchase decision is adopted more easily when the time gap between the purchase and the payment is larger.

The second event listed in the figure above is the hallmark event. This term describes a certain type of event; nevertheless, it can hold various meanings. According to Getz (1997), hallmark events are those that possess such significance, in terms of tradition, activeness, image or publicity that the event provides, the city, community or destination with a competitive advantage. (Ritchie 1984) defined it this way: Major one-time or recurring events of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance a tourism destination's awareness, appeal and profitability in the short and/or long term. Such events rely for their success on uniqueness, status, or timely significance to create interest and attract attention” An example of a hallmark sport event could be Wimbledon, the tennis tournament in London or the Grand Prix Formula One in Monaco.

Private firms and small businesses dominate the tourism industry across various sectors, including transport, accommodation and attractions. However, the public sector has a key role in successfully developing tourism in a particular locality. Public sector intervention is necessary to ensure that the associated benefits of tourism are maximised, and any potential problems are minimised for the benefit of the economy, society and environment, as well as for the long-term interest of the tourism industry itself. The role of tourism in developing countries poses serious questions. While many developing economies desperately need the financial receipts from tourism, the social and environmental costs imposed by inappropriate forms of tourism development simply cannot be ignored (Oppermann and Chon, 1997). Image libraries will be available for home viewing that will contain all the world's best art. Inexpensive flat



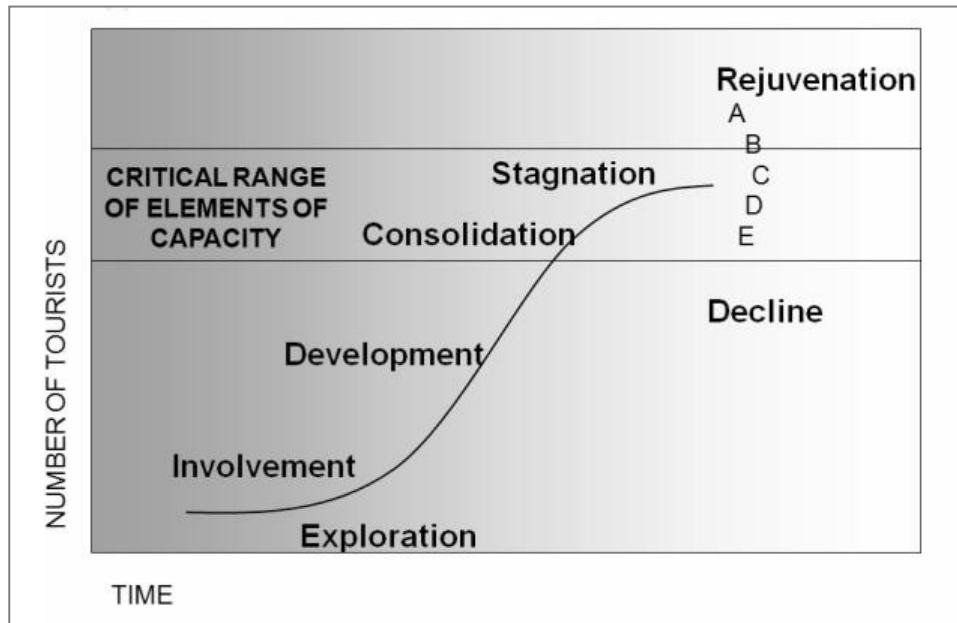
panel display devices will be available, throughout the house, with a resolution so good that viewing a projection will be jar new product looms in the 21st century in the form of space travel (Hawkins, 1989). This may be a long way off, although pressure to make possible a limited number of high-cost flights will build up as soon as techniques are devised to make capsules more inhabitable. A passenger module could be developed for the space shuttle that will carry passengers to an orbiting space hotel or act as a hotel module itself. Some of the above may be in the realms of science fiction, but others, predicted 10 years ago, are already becoming a reality.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

### ***2.2.1 The Butler Theory of Tourist Area Life Cycle***

The Butler Theory of Tourist Area Life Cycle is a conceptual framework that describes the evolution of tourist destinations over time. The theory suggests that tourist destinations go through several stages of development, including exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation, and decline. Different factors and challenges characterise each stage, and understanding these stages can be useful for planning and developing sustainable tourism.

Butler, in 1980, proposed a theory of tourism development, which is still being used in tourism research to date (Buttler, 2006). This can be seen in the works of (Tomvasyan, 2020). Butler's model of the Tourism Area Life cycle is very similar to the product life cycle theory. He explained that tourist attractions, just as products from other fields such as the automobile industry, indicate how slowly a new product is accepted, then there is a general rise in enthusiasm which leads to rapid growth in sales, and eventually, grows tired of the product and sales start to decline. Below is a diagram of the original TALC model as proposed by Buttler in 1980.



*Figure 1: Tourist Area Life Cycle (Butler, 1980)*

Source: Butler (1980; 2006)

The theory was developed mostly to explain how the performance of resort destinations could be sustained. Key to its underpinnings was the concept of the critical range of elements of capacity. It argued that if the relative capacity of the resort is exceeded, then the destination's appeal will decline and become less competitive. There will be a need for intervention to improve these capacities. Such interventions include but are not limited to reinvestments in physical and financial resources, including branding and promoting of the touristic destinations.

The tourism area branding theory proposed focused on creating a unique identity for a destination that is attractive and appealing to tourists (Buttler, 2011). The theory proposes that destinations should create a unique identity based on their unique assets, such as cultural heritage, environment, and attractions. This identity should be supported by a consistent and coordinated marketing approach that uses symbols and imagery to create a strong, positive, and memorable impression of the destination.

Additionally, Butler suggests that destinations should develop a strong, consistent brand that can differentiate them from other destinations in the same area. Branding and promotion are what is done in the reorientation phase of the modified Tourist Cycle Evolution Model of Butler. This model is shown in Figure 2 below.

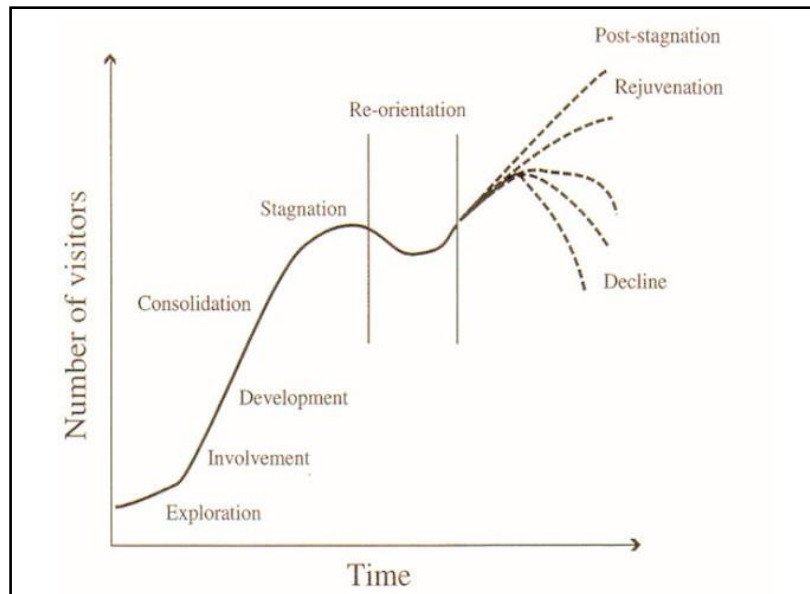


Figure 2: Modification of the Butler Tourist Cycle of Evolution Model (Agarwal 2006)

Source: (Buttler, 2006).

As the number of visitors to a touristic area grows, it reaches a point of consolidation and then stagnation. At this point, there is a need for stakeholders to reinvent ways by which the attraction can be stimulated and new visitors attracted. Branding and promotion are among the strategies that can be implemented to achieve this. The result of reorientation can be positive or negative, in which case there is a need for a further stage to extend the life cycle of the touristic destination.

This theory shows simply how tourism, in general, is a product which is sort after by consumers, but also that specific tourist attractions cannot remain the same over the years, but they must innovate, become more appealing, increase awareness, have a compelling story and be able to offer an experience to visitors as thrilling as that of competitors both local and international. Today's world has become increasingly digital, making digital media paramount. In the context of marketing, promotion, and branding of tourist attractions in Cameroon, the Butler Theory can be applied to understand the current stage of development of these attractions and to identify appropriate marketing strategies. For example, if a tourist attraction is in the early stages of development, it may require more investment in infrastructure and promotion to attract visitors. If it is in the consolidation stage, it may require a more focused marketing campaign to attract repeat visitors and build a strong brand.



Additionally, the Butler Theory can help identify potential challenges and opportunities for tourism development in Cameroon. For example, if a tourist attraction is stagnating, it may be necessary to identify new markets and attractions to revitalise tourism in the region. On the other hand, if a tourist attraction is in the early stages of development, it may be necessary to focus on sustainable development practices to ensure that tourism growth is managed in a way that is environmentally and socially responsible.

In conclusion, the Butler Theory of Tourist Area Life Cycle can be a useful framework for researching Cameroon's marketing, promotion, and branding of tourist attractions. It can help to identify appropriate marketing strategies, as well as potential challenges and opportunities for tourism development in the region.

The theory has been developed entirely around resort tourist sites. However, above that, there are widely different aspects of tourism. Butler (2006) argued that the theory might fail in accuracy in specific locations or resorts. However, Butler (2004) explained that the focus should be on whether the theory remains relevant in twenty-first-century research examining tourism. As such, with many researchers still using it, making references and adapting the theory to specific circumstances shows that the theory is still useful rather than focusing on whether the theory explains all examples of destination development.

### ***2.2.2 Chaos Theory***

The chaos theory is a mathematical theory that explores the behaviour of complex and dynamic systems. The chaos theory was developed by Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in the 1960s (Oestreicher, 2007). Lorenz first observed the phenomenon as early as 1961 when he was experimenting with computational models of the atmosphere. He observed the strange behaviour of a particular model and realised that small changes in the initial conditions of the model could result in large changes in the system's behaviour. This led him to develop the concept of a strange attractor, which is the basis of chaos theory. and assumes that systems are sensitive to initial conditions, nonlinear and have feedback loops (Doherty and Delener, 2001).

Although it may seem that branding and promotion of tourism in Cameroon are not complex and dynamic systems, the chaos theory can still be applied to provide insights and help improve



the effectiveness of these activities. One way to apply the chaos theory is to use the concept of sensitivity to initial conditions, also known as the butterfly effect (Lorenz, 1963; 1969). This suggests that small changes in a system's initial conditions can lead to large and unpredictable outcomes over time. In the context of branding and promotion of tourism in Cameroon, this means that small changes in the marketing strategy or communication messages can have a significant impact on the behaviour of tourists and their perception of Cameroon as a tourist destination.

The main limitation is that chaos theory does not consider external factors, such as the political or economic environment, which can impact the tourism industry. Any analysis based solely on chaotic models may overlook important details about how these external factors affect the success of branding efforts. Additionally, chaos theory does not provide insights into consumer behaviour or preferences which are essential elements for successful marketing campaigns and promotional activities geared towards increasing tourist arrivals to Cameroon.

Another limitation of using Chaos Theory in studying branding and promotion is its focus on short-term effects rather than long-term strategies that allow businesses to build sustainable customer relationships over time. While chaotic models can be used effectively for predicting immediate changes within a system, such as sudden shifts in demand due to seasonal variations or unexpected events like natural disasters, they lack predictive power when it comes to forecasting long-term trends since their predictions are too volatile due to the unpredictable nature of their inputs data sets. As a result, traditional methods like market research surveys remain more reliable sources providing valuable information regarding customer behaviours over extended periods.

### ***2.2.3 AIDA model and marketing***

The AIDA model was first introduced into the marketing world by Elias St. Elmo Lewis in 1898 as a model for the selling process. According to Michaelson & Stacks (2011), the model resulted from a study of the life assurance industry. It helped to describe the four (4) cognitive steps experienced when a new idea is received or a new product is bought. The AIDA framework is one of the most popular marketing communication models used by marketers to



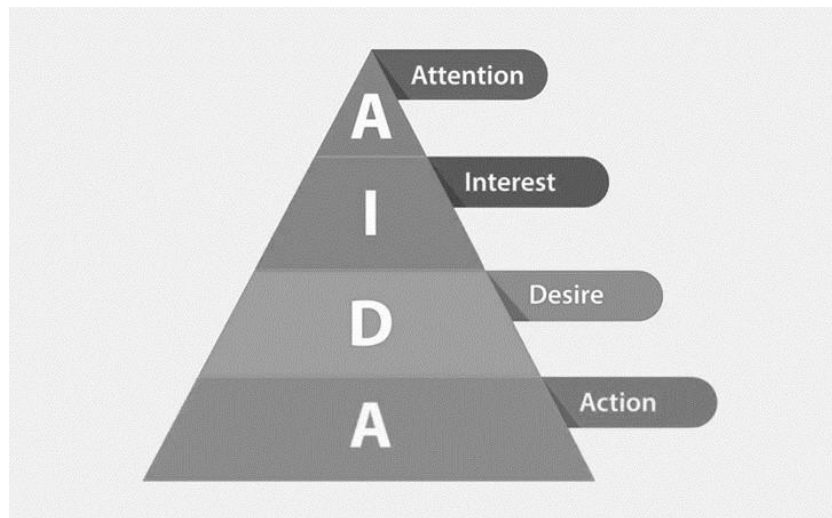


understand the purchasing decision journey of potential customers. It enables marketers to create effective promotion messages that boost sales.

Kotler and Armstrong (2016) describe the model as the stages potential customers go through before purchasing a product or service. They argue that this model highlights the importance of understanding customer needs and desires. Even though the model was introduced over a century ago, it is still highly relevant in today's marketing landscape (Kotler & Armstrong, 2016). The AIDA model helps marketers in the marketing communication industry to structure their marketing and promotion messages in such a way that it appeals to the needs and desires of the customer (Smith & Taylor, 2004; Fill, 2019).

The AIDA model is an acronym for Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. This four-step approach captures attention, generates interest, creates desire, and then prompts action, which is to make a purchase (Heath & Feldwick, 2007). Despite the prevailing interaction of people online and on social media, users still need to be informed about the existence of a new product, which triggers interest and desire based on the information received, and then action towards purchasing the product (Hassan et al., 2015). The AIDA model is very effective in evaluating the impact of advertising as well as the promotion and branding of a product or service since it enables control over every psychological transformation stage that occurs from an individual's initial exposure to an advertisement to their final purchase decision (Kojima et al., 2010).

*The four (4) phases of the AIDA model;*



*Figure 3: The AIDA Model*

The four (4) phases of the AIDA framework, which are Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action, are explained in the following paragraphs.

#### *Attention.*

According to the AIDA model, the first stage in the advertising process is to draw the potential customer's attention. This stage is critical because marketers cannot assume that their product or service has already captured the customer's attention. They must take deliberate steps to create communication messages that are eye-catching and attention-grabbing (Duffy, 2014).

To accomplish this, marketers can use a creative disruption strategy, which involves breaking existing behaviour patterns by creating highly creative messages that stand out from the competition (McGuire & Kilian, 2016). Examples of creative disruptions include guerilla marketing, which involves unconventional and abstract advertising placement, personalisation marketing, which involves intensely targeted messages, and provocative imagery, which uses controversial or edgy visuals to capture the viewer's attention (Yeshin, 2016).

In promoting and branding tourist destinations in Africa, using striking images and captivating videos to showcase the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and unique experiences of tourist destinations can be an effective strategy that captures the attention of potential tourists. The power of visual content in the branding and promotion of tourist destinations cannot be overemphasised as they are more engaging and memorable than text content. Therefore,



marketers can use striking images and irresistible videos to give tourists a peek at what these destinations offer.

For example, the Kenyan Tourism Board's "Magical Kenya" campaign has received wide praise for its use of striking images and visuals of the country's landscape, wildlife, and cultural heritage. The campaign featured Kenya's wildlife, such as lions, giraffes, and elephants, through stunning images and videos. It also did well in showcasing Kenya's beautiful beaches, national parks and cultural festivals. These visuals were well designed to attract potential tourists' attention to what Kenya as a tourist destination has to offer (Gathogo & King'ei, 2019).

Furthermore, storytelling can be an effective technique to lure the attention of tourist destinations because it creates an emotional connection between the potential tourist and the destinations (Kim & Morrison, 2017). Storytelling has been known to appeal to the emotions of people. By telling the stories of the destinations, their history, culture, and people, marketers may be able to create intrigue and curiosity That triggers a tourist's attention and motivates them to visit. Chronis (2012) highlighted that modern technology caused most tourists' decisions to travel increasingly influenced by narratives and storytelling of tourist destinations. Stories about tourist destinations help to increase competitive advantage and make the tourist experience more meaningful (Mossberg, 2008). Storytelling has become, over time, a strategy of value and has attracted much attention in the tourism industry (Akgün, Keskin, Ayar, & Erdoğan, 2015).

### *Interest.*

The second phase of the AIDA model, "interest", is very important in converting a potential customer to a paying one. After capturing the customer's attention, the marketer has to work hard to develop an interest in the product or service in the potential customer's mind.

The interest creation phase is very difficult because now the marketer needs to understand the needs and wants of the potential customer to tailor their message accordingly. At this level, the marketer must consider every aspect of the promotion message. One way of achieving this is by breaking down the messages into smaller digestible pieces highlighting the unique feature of the product or service. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2017), this can make the message more engaging and relevant for the potential customer.



Furthermore, the marketer can use captivating headlines and beautiful illustrations to help capture the mind interest of the potential customer in the product or service. According to O'Sullivan et al. (2016), catchy, intriguing headlines highlighting the benefits of the product or service can draw a reader's attention and pique their interest. Similarly, visually appealing and informative illustrations can further lure the potential customer's interest.

Another aspect to consider is the way in which the message is being tailored. The message should be tailored to the target audience of the product or service. The marketer should take note of the demography, psychology and behaviour of the target audience to help craft the ideal message that sparks interest. Moreso, communicating the most relevant message will help the potential customer as he or she won't be overwhelmed (Shankar et al., 2016).

If marketers can achieve the above-mentioned strategies, they succeed in increasing the potential interest of the potential customer, moving them closer to taking action and making a purchase.

In the context of promoting and branding tourist destinations in Africa, there are several strategies marketers can use to capture the interest of potential visitors. For instance, they can highlight the destination's attractions, such as wildlife parks, historical landmarks, and cultural festivals. Additionally, they can provide information about activities and events around these destinations which can appeal to visitors (Sheldon & Fesenmaier, 2017). Furthermore, practical information such as lodging options, weather conditions, and transportation and transportation availability can also be useful to give a full view of the tourist attraction and help tourists plan their trips effectively.

South Africa's Tourism Board "Meet South Africa" campaign goes on record as one of Africa's most successful destination marketing. The use of various social media channels and dedicated websites helped provide valuable information about tourist attractions and experiences in the country. These actions have highly contributed to the successful branding and promotion of tourist destinations in the country as it helps visitors to plan their trip effectively (Buys & Crompton, 2019).



### *Desire.*

The third phase of the AIDA model, "desire", is much like the second, but the main difference is making the potential customer feel a need or want to purchase the product or service (CFI, 2023). This stage is about conveying the product's value in such ways that make them see why they need the product or service in their lives.

In the tourism industry, desire can be achieved by highlighting the unique experiences the destination offers and the benefits of visiting. For example, the "Visit Rwanda" campaign sells the gorilla trekking experience to potential tourists. This experience is a major draw for many tourists because it creates a desire to experience it (Nyirabahizi, 2019). Thousands of tourists from Europe and America flood Africa just to experience the wonders of the gorilla trekking path of Rwanda.

Furthermore, the desired stage can be triggered by highlighting the positive emotions which tourists can experience when they visit these destinations. An example is the "Go To Mauritius" campaign which sought to create a desire for relaxation and indulgence in the emotions of potential visitors through images and videos of their beautiful beaches and relaxation resorts (Rampersad, 2019). Similarly, the "Discover Uganda" campaign sold the desire for adventure and exploration by promoting the country's natural beauty and wildlife (Kiggundu & Kim, 2017).

In conclusion, the desire phase of the AIDA model is focused on convincing potential tourists to take action by appealing to the emotions that push the tourist to visit. To achieve this, marketers must highlight the unique experiences and benefits of visiting the destinations. This creates a sense of desire that leads to a purchasing decision.

### *Action.*

The last phase of the AIDA model, "action", is the ultimate goal of every marketing campaign or branding and promotion: to initiate the potential customer to take action by purchasing the product. Every marketing campaign should end with a call to action whereby the customer is triggered to purchase. This stage is crucial as it is where the potential customer is transformed into an actual customer (CFI, 2023).



In branding and promoting tourist destinations in Africa, the action stage involves providing a clear call to action to trigger potential customers to book their trip. A good call to action is an excellent way to engage people to make a purchase. One of the best calls to action is those offering incentives such as discounts and promotions on booking accommodations, tour packages, flights, and other incentives.

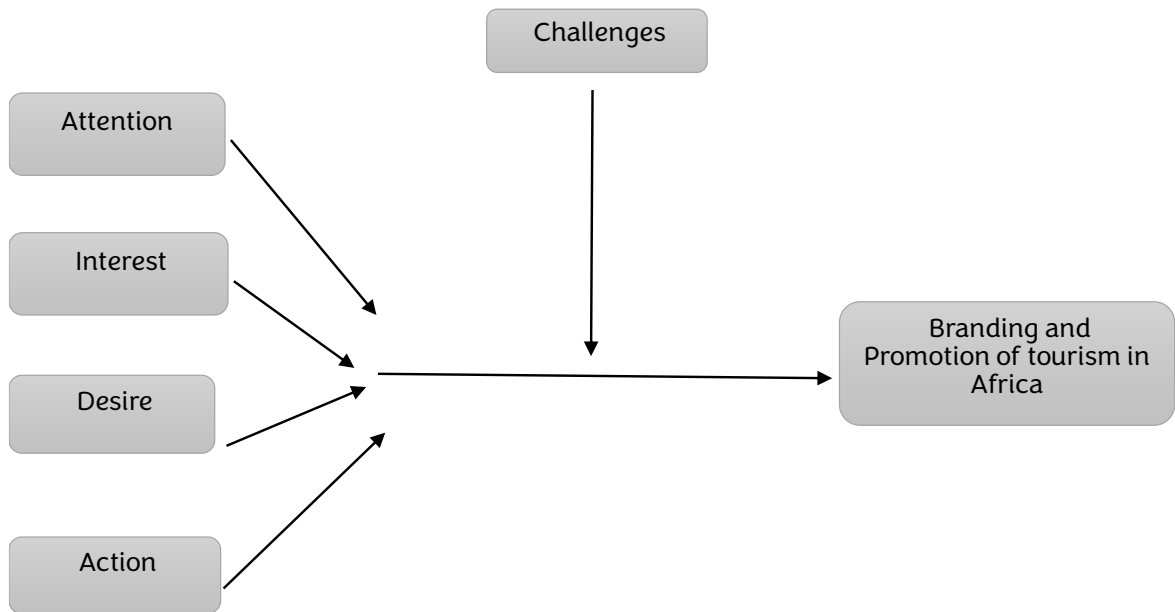
For example, Ghana's Beyond Aid campaign encourages visitors by using dedicated websites that offer discounts on accommodation, flights, and tours to promote their cultural experiences, traditional festivals, and historical sites (Ghana Tourism Authority, n.d.). Similarly, Kenya Airways regularly launches campaigns to promote the wildlife and natural attractions of the country by offering discounts on air tickets to visitors who book their trip during the campaign period (Kenya Airways, n.d.).

Using easy and convenient booking options can be another way to create a call to action. The "Visit Ethiopia" campaign made it easy for potential visitors to plan by allowing them to book their trip online with various travel packages and activities to choose from (Ethiopian Tourism Organisation, n.d.). Similarly, Egypt's "Where it All Begins" campaign offered booking options and detailed information on travel requirements on visas, transportation, and accommodations to potential visitors (Egypt Tourism Authority, n.d.). Such offers encourage many tourists to visit the country's tourist destinations (Baum, 2019).

The AIDA model is used in the study as a guide to the collection and analysis of the empirical data. The study collects data on branding and promotion strategies. These are attention, interest and desire seeking strategies by tourism promoters. The orientation of the data collected on branding and promotion is to assess the contextual workability of the AIDA model in these endeavours. By using qualitative analysis, we are able to determine with much more depth the extent to which tourism promoters use branding and promotion to get the attention of tourists, create interest and stir a desire towards action. Because the AIDA model puts the marketer as the focal point of marketing outcomes, it studies the effectiveness of the strategies utilised by the marketer. This is the same approach used in this study to collect and analyse the data. The key is to make the marketer effective. By improving the marketers effectiveness favourable tourism outcomes can be achieved in the form of action translated from increased touristic visits to tourism sites.



2.2.4 *Theoretical framework model*





## **3 Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Empirical setting**

#### ***3.1.1 Cameroon's Tourism Industry***

Cameroon is located in the central African continent and bounded by neighbouring countries like Nigeria, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central Africa Republic, Republic of Congo and Tchad. The population of Cameroon is ethnically diverse, with most of its population living in urban areas. The name Cameroon was derived from the word “Rio dos Cameros” which means rivers of prawns, by Portuguese explorers who visited Cameroon in the 15th Century and named it after the river Wouri. Over time, the country's name has been pronounced by spelt differently for example, the Germans spelt Kamerun, the Spanish as Cameroes, the English as Cameroon, and the French as Cameroun (Longley, 2020).

Tourism in Cameroon is defined by its history, land and socio-cultural tradition, it is one of the most developing countries in the world with natural scenery and tourist attractions, but due to the lack of resources to develop these tourist sites, it is unable to benefit from these natural resources. With this aim and desire to make Cameroon a prominent tourist site, it was promoted in 1960, immediately after its independence (Kimbu, 2010). This saw the creation of the Cameroon Tourist Office (CTO) in 1966 to promote and develop tourism in the country. This office was responsible for developing tourism infrastructure, including constructing hotels and resorts and discovering other touristic attractions within the country. The government of Cameroon began investing in and developing national parks as back as 1970 with national parks such as Waza National Park, which has become a major attraction tourist destination for wildlife lovers (Ngota, 2018). Cameroon's tourism industry has witnessed some degree of decline, especially around the 1980s and 1990s which was caused by the political instability and economic challenges that saw the deterioration of the country's tourism infrastructure, such as hotels, and the closure of many resorts centres. However, the government of Cameroon has been putting in tremendous efforts to revive the tourism sector of the country through the promotion of ecotourism and cultural tourism (Tourism in Cameroon, 2020).





Cameroon's tourism industry is diverse with a range of attractions, one of which is the country's natural beauty which includes rainforest, mountains, beaches and wildlife reserves. Some of the most popular natural attractions are the Waza Park, home to elephants, giraffes, lions and other wildlife, the Limbe botanical garden and the Mount Cameroon mountain range in Buea. Apart from the natural attractions, the country also has a rich cultural heritage which is reflected in its arts, music, food and architecture (Cameroon, 2021).

One of the major initiatives undertaken by the government was the creation of the National Tourism Board (NTB) in 2014, with the mission and duty of promoting and marketing Cameroon's tourism industry. The board has been focused on promoting the country's cultural heritage, including cultural festivals and dances like the Mankon festival. The board has also promoted ecotourism, highlighting Cameroon's rich biodiversity and natural attractions, such as the Mount Cameroon National Park and the Korup National Park (Cameroon Tourism Board, n.d)

In 2019, Cameroon, through the National tourism board, launched a new tourism development plan which aims to double the number of tourists in the country by 2025. This plan includes developing and improving new tourist attractions, the improvement of tourism infrastructures like hotels and resort centres and promoting Cameroon as a safe and attractive destination for international tourism (Republic of Cameroon, 2019).

#### **3.1.1.1** Tourist destination in Cameroon

The West African country is blessed with various tourist destinations and fascinating sites, including natural attractions, cultural sites and historical landmarks. Cameroon is often referred to as Africa in miniature because of its diverse natural, and cultural features, which polls a significant number of tourists into the country yearly. According to Hall & Page, (2014), a tourist destination can be defined as a place marked and managed as a single entity with a range of products and services designed to meet the needs of tourists. Tourist destinations can be classified in various ways. However, they generally refer to places offering various attractions and activities designed to meet tourists' needs.

Cameroon has an old tourism sector that dates back to the 1970s and has evolved over the years with the government's growing effort and resource investment to make this sector thrive. Each region in Cameroon exhibits at least one or more tourist attractions that pull tourists and visitors



from Africa and around the World, with its beautiful sceneries such as landscape, wildlife with different and endangered species, mountains, beaches, iconic traditional palaces and gardens and parks (Nzembabyie & Nzembabyie, 2009).

a) National Parks and Wildlife

Cameroon is home to several national parks and wildlife research, which offer opportunities for tourists to observe wildlife and explore natural habitats. One of the most popular parks is the Waza National Park, located in the country's Far North Region and houses wildlife such as lions, giraffes, elephants and others. This Park was discovered around 1934 and was first used as a hunting ground before it was turned into a national park and made a UNESCO forest reserve. This park is home to many endangered wildlife species, such as giraffes, antelopes, bird species, jackals and many others (UNESCO, 2020). This park is mostly visited around December and March because the view of the park depends on the season of the year. This park has well-spaced bungalows which are made for entertaining many tourists, it also includes safari trips and available tour guides (Vigneron, 2001).



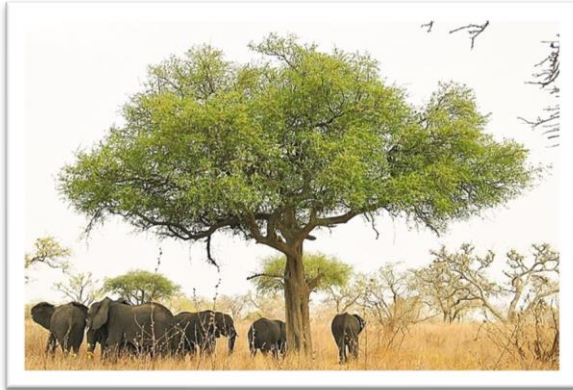
Figure 4: Waza National Park, Cameroon's Home for the Big 5

Source: See Africa Today,  
<https://seeafricatoday.com/adventure/waza-national-park-cameroon/>



Figure 5: Tourists standing in front of a mud hut at the Waza National Park

Source: Josh's Travel Blog,  
<https://jldtravelblog.wordpress.com/2010/04/23/waza-national-park/>



*Figure 6: Elephant around a tree in Waza Park.*  
Source: Wikipedia,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waza\\_National\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waza_National_Park)



*Figure 7: Gazelles in Waza Park*  
Source: Pilot guide,  
<https://www.pilotguides.com/articles/waza-national-park-cameroon/>

Apart from the Waza National Park and the Mount Cameroon National Park, there are National Parks and wildlife reserves in the country, like the Korup National Park and Takamanda National Park, which house about 115 gorillas and several plant species and birds. The Korup National Park is one of Cameroon's most renowned national parks, situated in the country's southwest region. With its dense tropical rainforests and remarkable biological diversity, Korup is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The park is home to an impressive array of flora and fauna, including rare species such as the drill monkey, chimpanzee, and African grey parrot. The image below captures the lush greenery and towering trees that dominate the landscape of Korup National Park.



*Figure 8: Tourists crossing the Mana Bridge at Korup National Park.*  
Source: TripAdvisor,  
[https://www.tripadvisor.co.za/Tourism-g482839-Korup\\_National\\_Park\\_Southwest\\_Region-Vacations.html](https://www.tripadvisor.co.za/Tourism-g482839-Korup_National_Park_Southwest_Region-Vacations.html)



*Figure 9: Rain forest in the Congolian basin, Korup National Park*  
Source: Alamy, <https://www.alamy.com/aerial-view-of-african-rainforest-in-congolian-basin-korup-national-image5777524.html>



Also, the Mount Cameroon National Park in the Southwest is another beautiful touristic destination which sits on the foot of Mount Cameroon, also called Mount Fako, which exhibits different types of tourism potential and mountain hiking for tourists and provides a view from its 41,000m peak volcanic mass (Namuene, 2015).. The figures below show pictures of some of the National parks and wildlife in Cameroon.



*Figure 10: A Hut at the top of Mount Cameroon*

Source: Wikimedia, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mount\\_Fako\\_hut\\_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mount_Fako_hut_2.jpg)

#### **b) Beaches, Coastal resorts and Water bodies**

Regarding beaches, Cameroon has a long coastline along the Gulf of Guinea which offers opportunities for beach activities and water sports. Some of the most popular beaches include Limbe beach known for its black sand and views of Mount Cameroon and the Kribi beach which is mostly used for swimming and surfing. Resort areas include the Hilton and the Mont Febe Hotels in Yaoundé which offers luxurious accommodations and amenities (Lonely Planet, n.d).

Cameroon has a number of water bodies which pulls a good number of tourists, such as the Lake Nyos, the twin lakes of Muanenguba and the Menchum fall. The Lake Nyos which is a crater lake do interest a lot of tourists from all the world due to its history of explosion of



decades ago. The explosion of the lake some 3 decades ago left behind a huge amount of human and material lost (Bressan, 2019). The Lake Muanenguba is also a touristic attraction which sees a number of tourist and visitors. It is known for its eerie appearance and bizarre stories. This lake often referred to as the Muanenguba twin lake is found in the Southwest. They are called the male and female lake, in which the male lake is only accessible to initiated men and it's often still and dangerous while the female lake which is known to be more receptive to visitors and its water is known to be medicinal (Dunia, 2015). The twin lake hold a strong and cultural importance to the Bakossi tribe and harbours a number of sacred plants which are used to makes one of the best herbs in the region.

Furthermore, the the Menchum fall which is also a beautiful tourist site which is located in the south of Wum and the North of Bafut in the Northwest region of cameroon. The river and its tributaries drains a large area of northwest Cameroon which in turn is a tributary of the Benue in Nigeria. The Mechum falls drains the highlands of Oku-Kom a height of 2400 metres around lake Oku and falls to about 800feets (Kimbu, 2010).



*Figure 11: Sunset at the Kribi Beach*

Source: Wikimedia,

[https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SUNSET\\_AT\\_KRIBI\\_BEACH.jpg](https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SUNSET_AT_KRIBI_BEACH.jpg)



Figure 12: The Menchum Falls

Source: Cameroon Post, <https://cameroonpostline.com/menchum-falls>

### **c) Cultural sites and festivals**

Cameroon is a culturally diverse country with over 200 ethnic groups, with a good number of villages, museums and art galleries with cultural festivals. One of the most famous festivals is the Ngondo festival which takes place in the coastal city of Douala and celebrates the culture of the Sawa people. The festival includes a variety of activities such as canoe races, dancing and traditional ceremonies.

### **d) Historic landmarks and Monuments**

Cameroon has a rich history with several historical landmarks and monuments that tell stories of the countries past. One of the most notable landmarks the Bamenda Ring Road which is a 367 kilometres circular road that passes through several villages and provides stunning view of the countryside. Other landmark includes the Reunification monument in Yaoundé and the Monument, the Prime Ministers Lounge in Buea. Other significant landmark includes the Fouban Royal Palace which is home to the Bamoun people's traditional ruler.



The Foumban Royal Palace and museum is one of the best palaces in Cameroon when it comes to cultural tourism in the country, the palace still has its preserved values and cultural dignities. The palace is located in the West region of the country and has different types of crafts which are of magnificent view to tourist and visitors. The entrance of the palace has been beautified with statues of different animals such as elephants, tigers and lions. It also has a museum which houses many ancient crafts, artefacts and stories behind them (Nzembabyie & Nzembabyie, 2009).



*Figure 13: The Foumban Royal Museum*

Source: Discover Cameroon, <https://discover-cameroon.com/en/foumban-en/>



*Figure 14: The reunification monument in Yaoundé*

Source: Tripadvisor, [https://en.tripadvisor.com.hk/Attraction\\_Review-g293773-d8822272-Reviews-Monument\\_de\\_la\\_Reunification-Yaounde\\_Centre\\_Region.html](https://en.tripadvisor.com.hk/Attraction_Review-g293773-d8822272-Reviews-Monument_de_la_Reunification-Yaounde_Centre_Region.html)

### **3.1.1.2** Organization of the tourism industry in Cameroon

The tourism industry is growing at a relatively steady rate in Cameroon with the help of the government in investment so much in this sector. Cameroon often referred to as “Africa in miniature” due to its diversity in climate, culture and geography is blessed with numerous tourist destinations which attracts tourist and visitor from within and outside the country. Efforts in the management and promotion of the tourism sector in Cameroon began around 1975 when the then General Commissariat of Tourism was reconstituted to the General delegation of Tourism by President Ahmadou Ahidjo with the aim of encouraging private investment in regards to travel agencies, hotels, airlines and promoting tourist destinations in Cameroon through adverts and other publications (Neba, 1999).





It should be noted that this sector is an important contributor to the country's economy through the generation of revenue and jobs for the locals. The tourism industry in Cameroon is organised through a variety of public and private sector institutions as well as government organisations. The government through the Ministry of Tourism is responsible for the development and promotion of tourism destinations in Cameroon. It is the ministry that formulates tourism policies, develops tourism infrastructure and promotes Cameroon as a tourist destination (Cameroon, 2021). The Ministry of tourism works with other government agencies such as the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development to promote cultural and ecotourism throughout the Cameroon territory.

It is worth noting that the Cameroon Tourism Board is the main promotional agency in Cameroon. The board is responsible for the promotion of tourist sites in Cameroon and makes Cameroon a tourist destination through its advertising campaigns, trade shows and other online and offline marketing initiatives (Tourism in Cameroon, 2020). The board also works with the private sector in the promotion of tourism in Cameroon. The private sector cannot be overlooked when it comes to tourism activities in the country as they play a vital role in the growth and sustainability of this sector. In the private sector we have the Cameroon Hotels Owners Association which represents the interest of hotel owners in Cameroon and works to promote the development of the hotel industry in the country.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend towards community-based tourism initiatives in Cameroon. These initiatives are typically organised by local communities and focus on promoting sustainable tourism that benefits local people around that area and the environment. This activity has been experienced at the Kribi Beach Community Tourism Association and the Bimbia Community Tourism initiative (UNWTO, 2013). These initiatives do not only promote sustainable tourism but also help to empower the locals and preserve their cultural heritage. There have also been a number of tourism development and promotional projects in Cameroon which were carried out by non-governmental organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. These projects were focused on developing tourism and supporting community-based tourism initiatives (World Bank, 2018).

There it could be seen that the tourism industry in Cameroon is organised through a variety of public and private sector institutions, as well as community-based initiatives all working together to promote the development and growth of tourism in the country. The government



through the Ministry of Tourism and the Cameroon Tourist Board provides the framework for the development of the industry, while the private sector and the community-based initiatives offer a range of services and experiences for tourist

### **3.2 Research perspective**

A research perspective refers to the theoretical or conceptual framework that guides a researcher's approach to a particular topic or problem. It encompasses the researcher's theoretical orientation, assumptions, and beliefs about the nature of knowledge and research process. The research perspective can have a significant impact. The researcher's perspective could be influenced by various factors such as cultural differences, societal values, economic development, and political stability of African countries. For instance, this study adopts a postcolonial perspective to explore how Africa's tourism industry has been shaped by the colonial legacy and how local communities are involved in branding and promoting their destinations (Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2014). This involves examining how Africa's tourism industry has been shaped by the legacy of colonialism, which can still have an impact on tourism development today. For example, African countries were often depicted in colonial-era travel literature as exotic and primitive, and this kind of imagery has persisted in Western tourism marketing campaigns (Van der Merwe & Saayman, 2014). Postcolonial theory suggests that such representations can be harmful and reinforce stereotypes that perpetuate inequality and injustice. Therefore, adopting a postcolonial perspective we explore how African communities and the governments alike are taking control of their own representation and challenging these stereotypes. By using this perspective, we examine exactly how a brand identity has been developed for African tourist destinations and how the marketing and promotion of this influence tourists' visitations to these destinations.

### **3.3 Research approach**

Research approaches refer to the general strategy or plan of action that a researcher will use to conduct their study. The choice of approach depends on the research question, the nature of the data, and the researcher's own preferences and assumptions. In this section, I will provide a background on three common research approaches: inductive, deductive, and abductive, and suggest which approach is best suited for the research topic "branding, marketing, and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa".



The inductive approach involves collecting and analysing data to develop a theory or explanation. This approach starts with specific observations and then moves towards broader generalisations or theories based on those observations. The inductive approach is often used in exploratory research or when the researcher wants to generate new insights or ideas (Bryman, 2015). For example, a researcher might use an inductive approach to explore how local communities in Africa are involved in the branding and marketing of their tourist destinations.

The deductive approach involves testing a hypothesis or theory through the collection and analysis of data. This approach starts with a theory or hypothesis and then moves towards specific observations or data to test that theory. The deductive approach is often used in quantitative research or when the researcher wants to test a specific theory or hypothesis (Bryman, 2015). For example, a researcher might use a deductive approach to test whether a particular branding or marketing strategy is effective in promoting tourism in Africa.

The abductive approach involves using a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning to develop a theory or explanation. This approach starts with observations and then uses logical reasoning to develop a tentative theory or explanation. The abductive approach is often used in qualitative research or when the researcher wants to explore a complex phenomenon that cannot be easily explained by existing theories (Bryman, 2015). For example, a researcher might use an abductive approach to explore how cultural factors shape the branding and marketing of tourism destinations in Africa.

For the research topic "branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Africa," an abductive approach would be used. This is because the topic is complex and multifaceted, and cannot be easily explained by existing theories or frameworks. An abductive approach would allow the researcher to explore the various factors that influence the branding and marketing of tourist destinations in Africa, including cultural, economic, and political factors. By using a combination of inductive and deductive reasoning, the researcher can develop a more nuanced understanding of the topic and generate new insights or ideas.

### **3.4 Research method**

There are several research methods that can be employed for this study. One such method is content analysis, which involves examining the visual and textual representations of African tourism destinations in marketing campaigns by analyzing tourism brochures, websites, and



social media platforms (Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008). This approach allows for a systematic examination of the branding and promotional strategies employed.

Another method that can be utilized is case studies, which involve in-depth analysis of successful branding and marketing strategies employed by tourism destinations in Africa. For example, the study can focus on the "Discovery Safari Africa in miniature" campaign conducted by the Cameroon National Tourism Board, among others. Through case studies, insights can be gained into the specific strategies and tactics employed by successful destinations (Yin, 2018).

Additionally, experiments can be conducted to test the effectiveness of different branding and marketing techniques. This can involve conducting controlled studies to evaluate the impact of various strategies, such as the use of social media influencers, storytelling, and experiential marketing. By manipulating and measuring specific variables, experiments provide valuable insights into the causal relationships between different marketing approaches and their impact on destination branding (Dwyer, 2017).

For this study, a content and thematic analysis of branding, marketing, and promotion campaigns was conducted. The analysis was based on interviews conducted with tourism promoters of tourist destinations in Cameroon. The interviews will provide qualitative data that can be analyzed to identify common themes, patterns, and strategies employed in the branding and marketing of tourist destinations in Cameroon.

### **3.5 Research Design**

Qualitative research is a valuable tool for tourism promoters in Cameroon regarding branding, marketing and promotion of their destination. Qualitative methods are particularly useful for gathering data on the opinions, beliefs and experiences of tourists who visit the country and those who are still potential visitors. By understanding how visitors perceive Cameroon's attractions and services, marketers can better target their promotional efforts to meet visitor needs.



### 3.6 Research process

#### 3.6.1 Sampling technique

The study used a combination of convenience and snowball sampling. Considering that it may not be possible to identify a member of the target population easily, the snowball sampling technique involves asking participants to suggest other people who might be relevant to the study and then recruiting those individuals. As such, I intend to have international tourists who have made a trip to Cameroon and assess how the variables under study played a role in their touristic visit. Also, tour operators and travel agents recommend others within the field to which the survey can be sent.

### 3.7 Presentation of respondents

*Table 1 – Experience in the Tourism Industry*

SN	Participant	Background/Experience in the Tourism Industry
1	Respondent 1	Tourism Facilitator in the delegation of Tourism SWR
2	Respondent 2	Tourism instructor and consultant
3	Respondent 3	Regional Chief of Service for Tourism Promotion in the South West Region
4	Respondent 4	Managing Director of Adventure with Big Phil
5	Respondent 5	Chief of M&P TOURISTIC TRAVELS AGENCY
6	Respondent 6	Researcher and lecturer at Siantou University Yaounde worked with 2 multinational travel agencies and tour companies

The participants had diverse backgrounds and experiences in the tourism industry. They bring expertise in management, consulting, tourism promotion, hospitality, catering, adventure tourism, and research. Their qualifications and professional roles provide valuable insights into the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon

*Table 2 – Duration of involvement in the industry*

SN	Participant	Duration of involvement in the industry
1	Respondent 1	5 years
2	Respondent 2	7 years
3	Respondent 3	19 years
4	Respondent 4	5 years
5	Respondent 5	15 years



The participants have varying durations of involvement in the tourism industry, ranging from 5 to 19 years. Their extensive experience and expertise contribute to the depth of insights they can provide regarding branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon.

### ***3.7.1 Data Collection***

For this study focusing on tourism in Cameroon, a combination of surveys through open-ended questionnaires and interviews with industry experts, including tour operators, travel agents, and government officials in the tourism delegation, was employed. The choice to utilise both questionnaires and interviews was driven by the challenge of securing participation from busy industry experts for interviews. The open-ended questionnaires provided flexibility, allowing respondents to share their opinions freely.

The collected data consisted of qualitative information, capturing the opinions of industry experts regarding the current state of branding, promotion, and marketing of tourist destinations in Cameroon. This qualitative approach was well-suited to explore the subjective experiences, perceptions, and opinions of industry experts in relation to the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon.

The data for this study was collected using a combination of interviews and an administered questionnaire. The data collection methods employed were designed to gather qualitative insights from industry professionals and obtain broader perspectives through a structured questionnaire.

These semi-structured interviews provided an opportunity to delve into the participants' expertise, experiences, and insights regarding the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon. The interviews were conducted either in person and virtually through WhatsApp calls, and audio recordings were made to ensure accurate capture of the participants' responses.

The questionnaire focused on the research questions of the study. It allowed participants to provide detailed responses and share their perspectives on the challenges faced and potential



strategies for improvement. The questionnaire was distributed electronically, and the responses were collected online through Google Forms.

### 3.7.2 Variables of Data Collection

Table 3 – Operationalization of Variables

Concept	Component	Item	Reference
Branding, Promotion, and Marketing of Tourist Destinations in Cameroon	Marketing and promotional materials	Review of brochures, websites, social media campaigns, and advertising materials	(Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Buhalis, 2000; Fyall & Garrod, 2005; Mogoş & Iorgulescu, 2016; Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019; Horan, 2018)
	Marketing Campaigns and Initiatives	Analysis of implemented marketing campaigns and initiatives	(Gathogo & King'ei, 2019; Kujala & Taskinen, 2019; Lei, 2016; Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019; Lopes & Baptista, 2018)
	Industry Experts' Perspectives	Interviews with industry experts to gather insights on branding, promotion, and marketing practices	(Buys & Crompton, 2019; George, 2015; Lei, 2016; Mbambo, 2015; Melewar et al., 2019; Liu & Pratt, 2017; Ntah & Arrey-Mbia, 2020)
Challenges Faced in Branding, Promotion, and Marketing of Tourism Destinations in Cameroon	Literature Review	Review of existing literature to identify common challenges in branding, promotion, and marketing	(Hosany et al., 2006; Pike, 2002; Liu & Pratt, 2017; Ntah & Arrey-Mbia, 2020)
	Industry Experts' Perspectives	Interviews with industry experts to gather perceptions	(Mbambo, 2015; Melewar et al., 2019; Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019)



		and experiences on challenges	
	Existing Reports and Studies	Analysis of reports, articles, or studies highlighting challenges specific to tourism in Cameroon	(Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019; Ntah & Arrey-Mbia, 2020; Melewar et al., 2019; Gachanja & Mugomba, 2017; Mintsu & Ndongfack, 2017)
Strategies to Improve the Branding, Promotion, and Marketing of Cameroon as a Tourist Destination	Literature Review	Review of literature to identify effective strategies and best practices	(Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Omodudu & Ayeni, 2016; Melewar et al., 2019; Gachanja & Mugomba, 2017; Mintsu & Ndongfack, 2017)
	Industry Experts' Perspectives	interviews with industry experts to gather recommendations and insights on strategies	(Gathogo & King'ei, 2019; George, 2015; Lei, 2016; Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019; Lopes & Baptista, 2018)
	Successful Case Studies	Analysis of case studies from other destinations that have improved their branding and promotion	(Gathogo & King'ei, 2019; George, 2015; Liu & Pratt, 2017; Kiper & Şimşek, 2019; Ngobo,

### 3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The study will analyse the data collected using a combination of content analysis. The researchers intend to follow the process suggested by Leavy (2017). To do this, we begin with Data preparation and organisation. In this stage, the open-ended responses from the questionnaires are sorted based on demographic qualities such as region of the respondent. It will then be put in a word processor from which specific themes can be extracted and sorted using content analysis.





The researcher will then study the responses to get an initial idea of the respondents' perspectives, to ensure that language ambiguity is addressed and that there is an understanding of the respondent's views.

This will lead us to the phase of assigning codes to the data. This helps to reduce and classify the data that is generated. This will enable us to use a statistical tool like SPSS to generate similarities and to ground the responses. Coding will be done using respondents' exact language (in vivo coding) (Strauss, 1987) cited by (Leavy, 2017). This allows the analysis to be used with a grounded theory approach.

The next step from this will be categorisation and theming. The researchers will then group similar or seemingly related codes together (Saladan, 2014).

In coding, categorising and thinking, the researchers take time to write about the data, putting down our impressions, ideas and emerging understandings. This will range from taking note of key quotes, and making detailed descriptions or summaries. In this stage, we will create links between theories, and empirical findings to the statements made by the respondents (in which case applying both data triangulation and theoretical triangulation) (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011, p. 51).



## 4 Results and Discussion.

This study aims to investigate the branding, and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon. The research questions that guide this study are:

- ® How is the branding, and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon currently conducted?
- ® What challenges are faced in branding and promoting, tourist destinations in Cameroon, and what strategies can be implemented to improve the situation?

### 4.1 Research question 1: How is the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon done?

#### 4.1.1 Marketing and promotional materials commonly used to promote tourist destinations in Cameroon.

The interview responses show that various marketing and promotional materials are commonly used to promote tourist destinations in Cameroon. This can be seen in Table 3 below.

*Table 4 – Promotional materials used to market destinations in Cameroon.*

SN	Item	Explanation
1	Internet Marketing	Using online platforms, websites, and social media channels is a prevalent method for promoting tourist destinations. This includes maintaining websites and utilising social media platforms to reach a wider audience.
2	Street Caravans	Street caravans are organised events where promotional activities occur, such as distributing flyers and engaging with the public directly on the streets. This method helps to create awareness and generate interest in tourist destinations.
3	Flyers and Bands during Events	Flyers and bands are commonly used during tourism and sporting events to capture the attention of attendees and provide information about the destinations. This method leverages the event's audience to promote tourist attractions.
4	Exposure during Conservation Missions	Collaboration with foreign agencies involved in conservation missions, such as WWF, GIZ, and wildlife conservation organizations, provides an opportunity to promote tourist destinations. The exposure gained during these missions helps create awareness of the natural and wildlife attractions in Cameroon.



5	TV Publicity	Ethnic groups from different regions, such as the Littoral, west, and grand north, use television publicity to promote their cultural events. These events serve as a platform to showcase the cultural heritage and attractions of the respective regions.
6	National and Regional Promotional Materials	1. Various promotional materials are produced, including national posters, regional flyers, gastronomy flyers, tourism maps of Cameroon, flyers highlighting prominent sites and attractions, and magazines. These materials are distributed through different channels to reach the target audience.
7	Word of Mouth	Recommendations and personal testimonials from satisfied tourists play a significant role in promoting tourist destinations. Positive word-of-mouth experiences contribute to building a favourable image and attracting more visitors.
8	Videos and Images	1. Visual content, such as videos and images, is used to showcase tourist destinations' beauty and unique features. These materials are shared through online platforms, social media, and other digitalisation tools to engage potential tourists and create a desire to visit Cameroon.

To promote tourist destinations in Cameroon, various marketing and promotional methods are employed such as internet marketing, street caravans, flyers, bands during events, exposure during conservation missions, TV publicity, national and regional promotional materials, word of mouth, and visual content such as videos and images. The ultimate goal of these approaches is to increase awareness, spark interest, and provide relevant information about the attractions and experiences that different tourist destinations in Cameroon have to offer.

#### ***4.1.2 Successful Marketing Campaigns and Initiatives implemented in Cameroon's tourism industry.***

According to the interview responses, several successful marketing campaigns and initiatives have been implemented in Cameroon's tourism industry. Some examples include:

1. "Tour with Cameroon" campaign: This campaign utilized social media influencers to promote tourism in Cameroon and attract visitors.
2. "African Eminiature" campaign: This campaign focused on showcasing the diverse natural elements of Cameroon, including forests, animals, and the coastal region. It aimed to position Cameroon as a destination where visitors can experience various



African flora and fauna. Strategies such as leveraging the influence of the UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization), promoting the exportation of local food and spices, and establishing foreign tourism offices in Europe, Asia, and the Americas were implemented.

3. The organisation of the Tourism Fair: Flora Travels organised a Tourism Fair with the support of the Minister of Tourism and Leisure. This event facilitated the exchange of information and the sale of touristic and cultural products. It also highlighted Cameroon's gastronomy and addressed challenges facing the tourism sector.
4. Intense marketing strategies: Various marketing channels such as sports events, digital platforms like Facebook, and advertisements in TV and magazines were used to promote Cameroon as a tourist destination.

#### ***4.1.3 Key elements or strategies that made these campaigns successful, as perceived by the participants.***

1. Utilization of social media influencers: The "Tour with Cameroon" campaign leveraged the influence of social media influencers to promote tourism in the country. This approach helped reach a wider audience and create a positive image of Cameroon as a tourist destination.
2. Emphasis on diverse natural elements: The "African Eminiature" campaign highlighted the presence of various natural elements in Cameroon, such as forests, animals, and the coastal region. This strategy aimed to showcase the rich biodiversity of the country and position it as a place where visitors can experience different aspects of African flora and fauna.
3. Collaboration with UNWTO: The "African Eminiature" campaign used the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to promote and sell the campaign. This collaboration likely provided credibility and visibility to the campaign, attracting more attention and interest from potential tourists.
4. Valorization of local food and spices: The campaign also focused on promoting the exportation of local food and spices, such as "pouvre de Penja," "eru," and "achu." This strategy aimed to showcase Cameroon's gastronomy and unique culinary offerings,



which can be appealing to food enthusiasts and contribute to the overall tourism experience.

5. Establishment of tourism foreign offices: The campaign involved the installation of tourism foreign offices in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. This strategy indicates a proactive approach to reaching international markets and promoting Cameroon as a destination across different regions.
6. Organization of the Tourism Fair: The organization of the Tourism Fair by Flora Travels, with the support of high-level government officials, facilitated the exchange of information and the sale of touristic and cultural products. This event provided a platform for showcasing Cameroon's gastronomy, cultural heritage, and tourism offerings. It also highlighted the challenges facing the sector, indicating a commitment to addressing and overcoming these challenges.
7. Utilization of various marketing channels: Successful campaigns made use of intense marketing strategies that included sports events, digital platforms like Facebook, and advertisements in TV and magazines. This multi-channel approach allowed for broader visibility and engagement with different target audiences.

Overall, the key elements that contributed to the success of these campaigns included leveraging social media influencers, emphasizing the diverse natural elements of Cameroon, collaborating with reputable organizations like UNWTO, promoting local food and spices, establishing international tourism offices, organizing industry events, and utilizing a mix of marketing channels for maximum reach and impact.

#### ***4.1.4 Key factors or practices identified by the participants that contribute to successful branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon.***

Based on the interview response, the key factors and practices identified by the participants that contribute to the successful branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon include:

1. Sharing brochures: The distribution of brochures helps in spreading information about the tourist destinations and their attractions, making it easier for potential visitors to learn about and plan their trips.



2. Influencers' pages and social media uploads: Utilizing influencers on platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and other social media platforms to showcase cultural aspects, cross-national marriages, football successes, and the prowess of footballers in international leagues plays a crucial role in promoting Cameroon as a desirable tourist destination.
3. Climatic factors and diverse tourism types: The participants mentioned the diverse climatic factors in Cameroon, including the Sahel, Savanna, and Equatorial climates, as well as the availability of various tourism types such as ecotourism, agroindustrial, seaside resorts, safari, birdwatching, religious, educational, and conferencing tourism. These factors contribute to the appeal and attractiveness of Cameroon as a destination.
4. Cultural and linguistic factors: The bicultural and bilingual nature of Cameroon, where multiple cultures and languages coexist, adds to the unique experience and allure of the destination. This cultural richness is a significant factor in attracting tourists.
5. Hospitable and tolerant nature of the Cameroonian people: The participants emphasized the hospitable and tolerant nature of the Cameroonian people, which creates a welcoming atmosphere for tourists. The warmth and friendliness of the locals contribute to the overall positive visitor experience.
6. Affordable pricing for the local population: Offering low pricing options for the local population to access tourism services and attractions promotes domestic tourism and supports the overall success of the branding and promotion efforts.
7. These factors and practices collectively contribute to the successful branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon, enhancing the country's image and attracting visitors from diverse backgrounds.

Discuss any unique challenges or opportunities specific to Cameroon that were mentioned by the participants in relation to branding efforts.



## **4.2 Research Question 2a: Challenges Faced in Branding and Promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon.**

### ***4.2.1 Main challenges identified by the participants in promoting Cameroon as a tourist destination.***

The main challenges identified by the participants in promoting Cameroon as a tourist destination are as follows:

1. Perception of tourism as foreigners or whites: There is a prevailing belief that tourism is primarily meant for foreigners or white visitors. This perception can hinder domestic tourism and limit the local population's engagement and participation in the tourism industry.
2. Lack of holiday culture: The participants noted a cultural challenge where there is a lack of emphasis on holidays in Cameroonians' work-life. This can affect the domestic tourism market as people may not prioritize leisure travel within the country.
3. Poor control of foreign TV content: The unregulated visualization of foreign TV content in the market can have an impact on the perception and promotion of Cameroon as a tourist destination. If negative or inaccurate portrayals are prevalent in foreign media, it can undermine the efforts to showcase the country's attractions and hospitality.
4. Lack of political will and support: Participants highlighted a lack of political will to support and accompany the actors in the tourism sector. This lack of support can manifest in various ways, such as inadequate funding, limited policy frameworks, and insufficient infrastructure development.
5. Lack of tourism and hospitality faculties and curriculum: The absence of dedicated tourism and hospitality faculties and curriculum in state universities poses a challenge in developing a skilled workforce for the industry. This gap can hinder the growth and professionalism of the tourism sector.
6. Poor maintenance and accessibility of tourist sites: Several challenges were identified regarding the state of tourist sites, including lack of upkeep, difficult



access due to bad roads, and high costs associated with visiting the sites. These factors can deter tourists and impact the overall visitor experience.

7. Limited marketing budget: The participants noted that there is a low marketing budget allocated to carry out effective marketing campaigns. Insufficient financial resources can hinder the promotion and advertising efforts needed to attract and reach potential tourists.

These challenges collectively contribute to the complexities of promoting Cameroon as a tourist destination. Addressing these issues would require efforts in cultural shifts, infrastructure development, policy support, educational enhancement, and increased investment in tourism promotion.

#### ***4.2.2 External or internal factors that negatively impact branding activities in Cameroon.***

The interview responses highlight several external and internal factors that negatively impact branding activities for tourist destinations in Cameroon:

a. External Factors:

1. Lack of interministerial collaboration: The lack of collaboration and coordination between different ministries and government bodies hinders the growth of tourism. This lack of cooperation prevents the development of a unified and comprehensive approach to tourism promotion.
2. Technical arm of tourism promotion: The absence or limited functioning of the national tourism board (MINTOUL) as the technical arm responsible for tourism promotion can negatively impact branding activities. Without a strong and effective tourism board, there may be a lack of strategic planning and implementation of tourism marketing campaigns.
3. Political ideology and division of ministries: The practice of dividing ministries and assigning them as political compensation can create challenges for tourism branding. This fragmentation may lead to a lack of continuity, coordination, and consistent policies in the tourism sector.

b. Internal Factors:





1. Inability to meet international norms and standards: Developing countries like Cameroon may struggle to meet the international norms and standards required for tourism structures, including accommodation, restaurants, and travel agencies. This can result in the existence of substandard facilities and hinder the overall branding and marketing efforts.
2. Limited financial investment: Insufficient budget allocation by stakeholders for effective promotion and branding campaigns can hamper marketing activities. Without adequate financial resources, carrying out impactful marketing initiatives and reaching a wider audience becomes challenging.

#### **4.3 Research Question 2b: Strategies for Improving Branding and Promotion**

##### ***4.3.1 Key strategies to improving the branding and promotion of Cameroon as a tourist destination.***

Based on the interview responses, here are the key strategies suggested by the participants for improving the branding and promotion of Cameroon as a tourist destination:

1. Promote domestic tourism: Develop a national tourist ideology that prioritizes local residents as the first target audience. Create awareness among locals about the importance of tourism and encourage them to become tourism brand ambassadors and marketers to attract foreigners.
2. Enhance competitiveness: Implement attractive foreign policies to make Cameroon's tourist sites competitive and internationally recognised. Aim for international awards to increase the appeal of the destinations to individuals and organisations.
3. Infrastructure development: Accelerate the decentralization process and allocate appropriate funds for infrastructure development. This includes building well-equipped tourism schools, improving road networks, constructing airports and sea transport facilities, and ensuring the availability of internet services to maintain functional websites for effective social media promotion.
4. Improve tourist sites: Invest in fixing tourist sites by repairing roads, beautifying the sites, and providing necessary amenities such as hotels and restaurants in the vicinity.



5. Utilize influencer marketing: Collaborate with influencers and leverage digital platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn for cost-effective marketing and promotion efforts.

***4.3.2 Innovative approaches or untapped opportunities that could be leveraged for better results of branding and promotion efforts of tourist destinations in Cameroon.***

Based on the interview responses, here are the innovative approaches and untapped opportunities that could be leveraged for better results in branding and promotion efforts of tourist destinations in Cameroon:

1. Utilize modern and advanced methods: Explore and implement other modern and advanced approaches to attract more people and raise awareness about the natural and beautiful sites in Cameroon. This could include leveraging technologies such as virtual reality or augmented reality to provide immersive experiences and a first-person view of the sites.
2. Focus on domestic tourism: Develop a national tourist ideology that prioritizes the local population as the primary target audience. Build awareness among the locals about the importance of tourism and empower them to become tourism brand ambassadors and marketers to attract foreigners.
3. Attractive foreign policies: Create and implement attractive foreign policies that make Cameroon's tourist sites competitive and internationally recognized. This can help attract individuals and organizations from abroad to visit and invest in the country's tourism sector.
4. Improve regional coordination and governance: Address the issue of regional delegates lacking technical expertise in their respective fields. Direct budgets to heads of services who have the necessary expertise to effectively implement annual plans of action. Establish Tourism Boards in each region to enhance regional coordination and management of tourism activities.
5. Enhance tourism infrastructure: Build recreational facilities such as restaurants, hotels, and parks around tourist sites to improve visitor experiences and encourage longer stays.



***4.3.3 How the government and private sector can collaborate to enhance tourism in Cameroon.***

1. Based on the interview responses, here is an analysis of how the government and private sector can collaborate to enhance tourism in Cameroon:
2. Partnership and Collaboration: Establishing a 50/50 partnership between the government and the private sector is crucial for effective collaboration. This means working together and sharing responsibilities and resources to achieve common goals in the tourism sector.
3. Training and Development: The private sector plays a significant role in training tourism and hospitality personnel. The government can collaborate by providing support and resources to enhance training programs and ensure the availability of a skilled workforce in the industry.
4. Enactment of Laws and Regulations: Engage private sector stakeholders in the process of enacting laws and regulations that affect the tourism sector. By involving them in policy-making, the government can benefit from their expertise and ensure that regulations are practical and favourable for industry growth.
5. Labor Code and Salaries: Collaborate to revise the labor code and institute fair and uniform salary scales for workers in the tourism sector. This includes considering sector-specific conventions and ensuring that salaries are adequate to cover essential living expenses. Improving the least salary in both the government and private sectors can contribute to the growth of domestic tourism by enabling workers to afford travel and hospitality services.
6. Resolving Internal Crises: Address internal crises and conflicts that impact tourism promotion. It is important to create a stable and secure environment that attracts tourists and instils confidence in both domestic and international visitors.



## **5 Summary of Findings**

*The summary of findings chapter will provide a concise overview of the key research findings related to the branding and promotion of Cameroon as a tourist destination. It will highlight the major themes, successful strategies, challenges faced, and implications of the findings, setting the stage for further discussion and suggesting areas for future research.*

### ***5.1.1 Branding and Promotion of Tourist Destinations in Cameroon.***

The findings of our study on marketing and promotional materials used in the tourism industry in Cameroon reveal a diverse range of channels and strategies being employed. Our research indicates that internet marketing, street caravans, flyers, live bands during the tourism and sporting events, websites, social media platforms, newspapers, magazines, and digitalization tools are all commonly utilized in the promotion of tourism in Cameroon (as indicated by interview responses). These findings align strongly with existing empirical literature on tourism marketing, which consistently emphasizes the significance of employing a variety of marketing and promotional channels to effectively reach a wider audience. Scholars such as Baloglu and McCleary (1999), Buhalis (2000), Fyall and Garrod (2005), Mogoş and Iorgulescu (2016), Mtapuri and Kapp (2019), and Horan (2018) have all highlighted the importance of utilizing diverse channels to maximize the impact of promotional efforts. By utilising multiple channels and materials, tourism organizations in Cameroon can capitalize on the strengths and reach of each platform, ensuring a broader and more targeted dissemination of their marketing messages. This comprehensive approach enables them to engage with a larger and more diverse audience, increasing the chances of attracting potential tourists and promoting the country's unique attractions and offerings effectively.

Furthermore, participants in our study highlighted several successful marketing campaigns and initiatives in Cameroon's tourism industry. Examples mentioned include the "Tour with Cameroon" campaign, the utilisation of social media influencers, the African miniature campaign, and the organisation of tourism fairs (as indicated by interview responses). These campaigns have effectively utilised social media platforms, influencers, and events to generate awareness and attract tourists. By leveraging the power of social media, these initiatives have been able to reach a broader audience and engage potential visitors through captivating content



and interactive experiences. The involvement of influencers has also proven to be an influential factor in capturing the attention and interest of target audiences, as their endorsement and personal experiences carry significant weight in shaping tourists' perceptions and decision-making. The alignment of these successful campaigns and initiatives in Cameroon's tourism industry with empirical literature is noteworthy. Scholarly studies by Gathogo and King'ei (2019), Kujala and Taskinen (2019), Lei (2016), Mtapuri and Kapp (2019), and Lopes and Baptista (2018) have consistently emphasised the effectiveness of social media marketing, influencer marketing, and events in promoting tourist destinations. These findings further validate the strategic choices made by the tourism industry in Cameroon and underscore the importance of these marketing approaches. The success of these campaigns and initiatives offers valuable insights for tourism practitioners and policymakers in Cameroon. By capitalising on social media platforms, engaging influencers, and organising tourism fairs, they can tap into the potential of these marketing strategies to attract more tourists, create positive destination perceptions, and ultimately contribute to the growth and development of Cameroon's tourism industry.

Moreso, the study found that the key elements or strategies perceived by the participants to contribute to the success of these campaigns include leveraging social media platforms, engaging influencers, utilising attractive foreign policies, improving infrastructure, enhancing the branding of local products, and involving the private sector in the promotion efforts (interview responses). These strategies align with the literature that emphasises the importance of utilising digital tools, engaging influencers, improving infrastructure, and involving multiple stakeholders for effective destination branding (Buys & Crompton, 2019; George, 2015; Lei, 2016; Mbambo, 2015; Melewar et al., 2019; Liu & Pratt, 2017; Ntah & Arrey-Mbia, 2020). The key elements and strategies identified by the participants in our study reflect best practices in destination marketing. Leveraging social media, engaging influencers, implementing attractive foreign policies, improving infrastructure, enhancing local product branding, and involving the private sector are all vital components of effective marketing campaigns. These findings provide valuable insights for tourism practitioners and policymakers in Cameroon, enabling them to develop comprehensive and strategic marketing approaches that can attract tourists, create positive destination perceptions, and contribute to the sustainable growth of the country's tourism industry.



### ***5.1.2 Challenges Faced in Branding, and Promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon.***

The findings regarding the challenges faced in branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon highlight several key issues. These challenges include negative perceptions about tourism, lack of infrastructure and resources, inadequate destination management, the negative impact of external factors, and limited marketing budgets (interview responses).

Negative perceptions about tourism, such as the belief that tourism is meant for foreigners or whites, can hinder the promotion of tourist destinations (interview response). This aligns with empirical literature emphasising the importance of addressing negative attitudes and stereotypes towards tourism in destination branding efforts (Hosany et al., 2006; Pike, 2002; Liu & Pratt, 2017; Ntah & Arrey-Mbia, 2020).

The lack of infrastructure, including poorly maintained sites and difficult access due to bad roads, is another challenge identified by the participants (interview response). Insufficient infrastructure can limit the attractiveness and accessibility of tourist destinations, impacting their promotion (Mbambo, 2015; Melewar et al., 2019; Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019).

Additionally, inadequate destination management practices, such as poor control of foreign TV content and lack of political will to support the tourism sector, pose challenges to effective branding (interview response). Effective destination management and governance are crucial for successfully promoting tourist destinations (Mbambo, 2015; Melewar et al., 2019; Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019).

External factors, such as the categorisation of tourism structures and the imposition of fees and regulations, can also negatively impact branding efforts (interview response). These factors can create barriers for stakeholders in the tourism industry and hinder their ability to meet international standards and requirements (Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019).

Lastly, the participants identified limited marketing budgets as a challenge (interview response). Insufficient financial resources can restrict the implementation of effective marketing campaigns and limit the reach and impact of promotional activities (Mbambo, 2015; Melewar et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the challenges faced in branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon, as identified in the interviews, are consistent with the issues highlighted in the



empirical literature. Addressing negative perceptions, improving infrastructure, enhancing destination management practices, mitigating external factors, and securing adequate marketing budgets are important considerations for overcoming these challenges and achieving effective destination branding (Hosany et al., 2006; Pike, 2002; Liu & Pratt, 2017; Ntah & Arrey-Mbia, 2020; Mbambo, 2015; Melewar et al., 2019; Mtapuri & Kapp, 2019).

### ***5.1.3 Strategies for Improving Branding and Promotion of tourist Destinations in Cameroon.***

The findings regarding strategies for improving branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon suggest several key approaches. These strategies include fostering local tourism awareness, enhancing collaboration between the government and private sector, investing in infrastructure development, leveraging digital tools and social media, and utilizing innovative approaches (interview responses).

Fostering local tourism awareness is highlighted as an important strategy by the participants, aiming to engage the local population as tourism brand ambassadors and marketers (interview response). This aligns with the empirical literature, which emphasizes the significance of involving local communities in destination branding efforts to enhance destination image and authenticity (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Omodudu & Ayeni, 2016).

Collaboration between the government and private sector is another key strategy mentioned by the participants (interview response). This partnership can facilitate the development of the tourism industry through shared responsibilities, joint investments, and coordinated marketing efforts (Melewar et al., 2019; Gachanja & Mugomba, 2017; Mintsu & Ndongfack, 2017).

Investing in infrastructure development is crucial for improving the branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon (interview response). Adequate infrastructure, including road networks, airports, and recreational facilities, enhances accessibility and visitor experiences, contributing to destination attractiveness and competitiveness (Melewar et al., 2019; Gachanja & Mugomba, 2017; Mintsu & Ndongfack, 2017).

Leveraging digital tools and social media platforms is identified as an effective strategy (interview response). Utilizing platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn can enhance marketing reach, engage with target audiences, and provide cost-effective



promotional channels (Melewar et al., 2019; Gachanja & Mugomba, 2017; Mintsas & Ndongfack, 2017).

Furthermore, the participants mention the use of innovative approaches, such as augmented reality, to provide immersive experiences of the tourist destinations (interview response). Incorporating technology-driven solutions can create unique and memorable experiences, attracting and engaging potential visitors (Melewar et al., 2019).

In conclusion, the strategies for improving branding and promotion of tourist destinations in Cameroon, as identified in the interviews, are consistent with the recommendations found in the empirical literature. Fostering local tourism awareness, enhancing collaboration between the government and private sector, investing in infrastructure development, leveraging digital tools and social media, and utilizing innovative approaches are essential for enhancing the destination image, attracting visitors, and achieving successful destination branding (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Omodudu & Ayeni, 2016; Melewar et al., 2019; Gachanja & Mugomba, 2017; Mintsas & Ndongfack, 2017).





## **6 Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Conclusions**

The findings of this study have significant implications for the branding and promotion of Cameroon as a tourist destination. Firstly, it highlights the importance of leveraging various marketing and promotional materials, such as internet marketing, street caravans, flyers, websites, and social media campaigns, to reach and engage potential tourists effectively. These channels can help create awareness, showcase the country's unique attractions, and generate interest in visiting Cameroon.

Secondly, the study emphasises the need to address the identified challenges that impact branding, and promotion efforts. These challenges include negative perceptions of tourism, lack of collaboration between government ministries, poor infrastructure, and limited marketing budgets. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts from government bodies, private sector stakeholders, and local communities to improve perceptions, enhance collaboration, invest in infrastructure development, and allocate sufficient resources for marketing initiatives.

Furthermore, the study suggests implementing successful strategies, such as fostering local tourism awareness, engaging social media influencers, and utilising digital tools, to enhance branding efforts. These strategies can help generate positive word-of-mouth, reach wider audiences, and create engaging content that resonates with target markets.

This study highlights the crucial role of effective branding and promotion in positioning Cameroon as a competitive tourist destination. By addressing the identified challenges and implementing the suggested strategies, Cameroon has the potential to enhance its tourism industry, attract more visitors, and create sustainable economic benefits for the country. It is essential for policymakers, tourism authorities, and stakeholders to recognise the significance of these findings and take proactive steps towards improving the branding and promotion efforts in Cameroon's tourism sector.



### ***6.1.1 Challenges faced in the study***

The research encountered several challenges that affected the data collection process and the overall study. One of the main challenges was the language barrier due to Cameroon's bilingual nature, with English and French being the official languages. Conducting interviews with industry experts posed communication difficulties, as some experts were more proficient in one language than the other. This language barrier may have hindered the depth of information gathered during the interviews.

Additionally, the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon presented challenges in accessing industry experts located in specific regions. The security situation and disruptions caused by the crisis made it difficult to reach out to experts in those areas and limited the geographic diversity of the participants. This may have impacted the representation and perspectives gathered in the study.

Furthermore, the limited period for the research restricted the number of participants that could be included in the study. With more time, engaging a larger and more diverse pool of industry experts would have been possible, allowing for a broader range of insights and perspectives.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that future research endeavors allocate sufficient time for data collection, allowing for a more comprehensive sampling of participants. This will enable researchers to reach a wider range of industry experts and gather more diverse insights. Additionally, efforts should be made to overcome the language barrier by ensuring proficient translation services or recruiting bilingual research assistants to facilitate effective communication with participants.

By addressing these challenges and providing adequate resources, future research on branding and promotion in Cameroon's tourism industry can yield more comprehensive and robust findings, contributing to the understanding and development of effective strategies for promoting Cameroon as a tourist destination.

### **6.2 Recommendations for future study**

Based on the identified gaps and opportunities, there are several areas for further research. Firstly, exploring the role of cultural heritage and sustainable tourism practices in the branding of Cameroon as a tourist destination would be valuable. Understanding how cultural assets can



be effectively utilised and promoted to attract tourists while preserving local traditions and communities is important to investigate.

Secondly, researching the effectiveness of public-private partnerships in enhancing branding efforts could provide insights into successful collaboration models and strategies. Investigating such partnerships' dynamics, challenges, and outcomes can shed light on how different stakeholders can work together to achieve common goals.

Lastly, examining the impact of technological advancements, such as virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence, on destination branding in Cameroon would be a worthwhile area for further exploration. Understanding how these technologies can enhance the visitor experience, create immersive storytelling, and influence tourists' decision-making processes can provide valuable insights for future marketing strategies.



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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

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## INTERVIEW GUIDE

### INTRODUCTION AND

Thank you for participating in this interview. This **is** aims to explore the branding, promotion, and marketing of tourist destinations in Cameroon. We aim to gather your expert insights to validate the claims made in the study.

Your valuable expertise in the field of tourism is **valued**. By sharing your experiences and perspectives, we seek to understand the challenges and identify opportunities for improving the visibility and appeal of Cameroon as a tourist destination.

Rest assured that your responses will be treated **with** confidentiality and used solely for research purposes. Your input will contribute to a better understanding of the effectiveness of branding, promotion, and marketing strategies in attracting visitors to tourist destinations in Cameroon.

Thank you for your time and expertise. Let's now proceed **with** the interview questions.

### 1. EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE

1. Can you please introduce yourself and your **role**?
2. How long have you been exposed (working) in the **tourism** Cameroon?
3. What are the various tourist destinations **you** as a stakeholder in the tourism industry of Cameroon?
4. What role do you play in the branding, **and** marketing of tourism destinations in Cameroon?
5. Can you tell us about your experience in the **tourism** Cameroon concerning Branding, Promotion, and Marketing of tourist destinations?

### 2. BRANDING, PROMOTION, AND **MARKETING** OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN CAMEROON.

#### MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:



6. What marketing and promotional materials are used to promote tourist destinations in Cameroon?
7. Which specific brochures, websites, social media or advertising materials have effectively created a positive image of the destinations?

#### MARKETING CAMPAIGNS AND INITIATIVES:

8. Can you provide examples of successful branding and initiatives implemented in Cameroon's tourism industry?
9. What were the key elements or strategies that made these campaigns successful?

#### INDUSTRY EXPERTS' PERSPECTIVES

10. What are the key factors or practices that contribute to successful destination branding, promotion, and marketing in Cameroon?
11. Are there any unique challenges or opportunities in Cameroon that should be considered in branding and marketing efforts?

### 3. CHALLENGES FACED IN BRANDING, PROMOTION, AND MARKETING OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN CAMEROON

#### MARKETING OF TOURISM DESTINATIONS IN CAMEROON

#### INDUSTRY EXPERTS' PERSPECTIVES:

12. In your view, what are the main challenges that stakeholders face in promoting and marketing Cameroon as a tourist destination?
13. Are there any external or internal factors that hinder the branding and marketing activities negatively?

### 4. STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE BRANDING, PROMOTION, AND MARKETING OF CAMEROON AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

#### MARKETING OF CAMEROON AS A TOURIST DESTINATION

#### INDUSTRY EXPERTS' RECOMMENDATIONS:

14. In your opinion, what are the key strategies that should be used to improve the branding, promotion, and marketing of Cameroon as a tourist destination?
15. Are there any innovative approaches or opportunities to be leveraged for better results?
16. How can the government and private sector collaborate to improve tourism in Cameroon?



17. Can you share successful examples of branding and marketing of tourist destinations in Cameroon with us?

## 5. CLOSING

*Thank you for your valuable insights and time.*

18. Do you have any additional comments or suggestions they feel are relevant to the study?