

## Abstract

Tourism is an ever-growing service industry with great development potential. It has become one of the most important drivers of socio-economic development worldwide and has attracted interest for research. Many nations rely on tourism industry as a key source for foreign exchange, private sector growth, infrastructure development, and poverty alleviation in terms of employment opportunities and improvement of the welfare of the people in tourist destinations. According to United Nation World Tourism Organization, development agencies and policymakers are increasingly advocating tourism as an effective way to reduce poverty in least-developed countries. However, lack of proper marketing strategies is a challenge in many county governments, posing further challenge in tourism performance. The general objective of the study was to assess the effect of destination marketing on tourism performance in West Pokot County. Specifically, the study sought to establish the influence of awareness creation, developing new markets, advertising and branding on tourism performance in west Pokot County. To achieve these objectives, descriptive research design was used. Target population consisted of employees of hotels, officials of tour firms and officers in the ministry of tourism in the County Government of West Pokot. Purposive sampling technique was used and a total of 41 respondents selected. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study established that 41.8 % of the changes in tourism performance in West Pokot County was attributed to destination marketing. The P- value was 0.000 indicating that destination marketing had a significant influence on tourism performance of west Pokot County. The study recommends that destination marketing should be promoted by all the stakeholders involved and the funds allocated to destination marketing should be increased. This will promote the performance of tourism since destination marketing increases awareness among domestic and foreign tourists.