THE INFLUENCE OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS ON THE MOTIVATIONS, CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR, AND SATISFACTION OF DOMESTIC TOURISTS IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

As one of the oldest forms of tourism, domestic tourism remains vital for any destination especially in this post Covid-19 era when tourists are extremely sensitive to cross-border travel. Therefore, an understanding of how marketing communication channels affect the motivation, consumption behavior and satisfaction of domestic tourists is crucial in promoting this form of tourism. This study aims to investigate the influence of marketing communication channels on the motivations, consumption behavior and satisfaction of domestic tourists visiting Machakos People's Park, in Kenya. To achieve this, a survey was conducted on a sample of 258 domestic tourists visiting Machakos People's Park. Quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS software. Explorative factor analysis was performed to distinguish the push and pull motivation factors, and descriptive measures were determined. Thereafter, cross-tabulation and chi-square determination were performed to test the associations between marketing communication channels and the other variables in the study. An alpha level of .05 was used for these statistical tests. The findings revealed that marketing communication channels had a significant influence only on the consumption behavior of domestic tourists but not on their motivations and satisfaction. These findings are instrumental for the marketing communication and management of Machakos People's Park, and similar domestic tourist destinations.
Keywords: cross-travel tourism, Machakos People's Park, structured questionnaire, push and pull motivation, marketing strategy
JEL codes: M31, Z33

INTRODUCTION

Tourist behavior is the way tourists behave as determined by their attitudes towards a certain tourism product and their response to using the product (*March & Woodside*, 2005). The knowledge of tourists' behavior has practical significance for the stake-

holders of the entire tourism sector (*Pearce,* 2005). Research on this subject has been conducted widely to assist tourism marketing and product planning and development with the ultimate goal of increasing the number of tourists who visit destinations (*Van Vuuren & Slabbert,* 2011). Literature indicates that this behavior is influenced by various factors including motivation, attitude, perception, individual factors, physical and built environment, and expectations (*Barajas,* 2021). Usually, it is manifested in the way tourists select their product, plan their trips, purchase their services, consume tourist products, and evaluate the services, their feedback, and propensity to revisit destinations or repurchase products (*Juvan et al.,* 2017). Consequently, motivations, consumption behavior and satisfaction of tourists have been among the major subjects in tourism research today.

Tourist motivation, defined as the driving force that determines tourists' behaviour, is closely associated with tourist behavior (*Schuckert et al.,* 2015; *Pratminingsih et al.,* 2014; *Pesonen, et al.,* 2011) and tourist satisfaction (*Wong et al.,* 2013); *Correia et al.,* 2013). According to *Barutçu et al.* (2011), there are two types of motivation: push motivations, which are related to the internal and emotional desires such as rest and self-actualization and pull motivations, which are related to cognitive and external factors such as climate, facilities and landscape. Push and pull factors have been employed quite extensively in assessing tourists' travel motivations (*Kanagaraj & Bindu,* 2013; *Yiamjanya & Wongleedee,* 2015; *Michael et al.,* 2017; *Wijaya et al.,* 2018). Both of these factors determine the decision that a tourist makes to visit a place (*Mehmetoglu & Normann,* 2013).

On the other hand, tourist satisfaction, which is defined as the level of positive feelings emanating from tourists' experience at a destination (*El-Adly,* 2019), is determined by tourists' experiences. Based on *Sturgeon et al.* (2015) satisfaction reflects both an emotional and cognitive phenomenon. Extant literature indicates that tourist's satisfaction is determined by many factors including perceived quality of experience, the cost of the stay, expectations, perceived quality of destination attributes, and tourist motivations (*Osiako et al.,* 2022; *Yun & Pyo,* 2016; *Suanmali,* 2014).

Marketing communication and sources of tourist information

When making choices and decisions related to their trips, tourists consult a large number of marketing communication channels. Particularly, the information can be categorized as offline: for instance, travel magazines and brochures, and online: for instance, online reviews and destination websites; commercial: that is; tourism-business related and non-commercial: for example, relatives and friends (*Paraskevaidis & Andriotis,* 2015), external: for example, destination website or internal: for instance, destination familiarity and prior experience (*Toyama & Yamada,* 2012). In recent times, the internet has extensively pervaded the tourism and hospitality industry.

Based on the discovery of *Pantano et al.* (2017), the propensity of purchasing online reaches its highest point with people aged 30 to 49 years. On the contrary, older tourists consider offline methods (*Bi & Kim,* 2020), while young people, although they have a positive approach towards online media (*Di Pietro & Pantano,* 2013), purchase less due to insufficient financial resources or lack of credit cards to pay

online. *Del Chiappa and Balboni* (2019) believe that millennials consider word of mouth and guidebooks as reliable travel information sources while old adults tend to prefer tour operators and travel agencies. According to earlier literature, information search also varies with gender where the majority of the studies recorded that more males use internet as compared to females (*Bi & Kim, 2020*). *Zhu et al.* (2013) stated that the exact nature of the communication media not only evolves but also changes and that people's trust in diverse media also changes and evolves (*Haddow & Haddow,* 2013).

Basic indicators of domestic tourism in Kenya

Domestic tourism is defined as the activities undertaken when residents visit places for tourism within their country of origin (*Mapingure,* 2018). The *UNWTO* (2020 cited in *TRI,* 2021) has observed that domestic tourism at the global level performs far much better than international tourism by over six times in terms of tourist trip numbers. Before Covid-19 *WTTC* (2018) reported that this form of tourism was a significant source of tourism earnings in China, Brazil, India, Argentina and Germany, as well as Japan, Mexico, the UK and the US. Despite being a notable destination in Africa, Kenya in the past appeared to over-rely on international tourism (*Manono & Rotich,* 2013; *MToW,* 2018; *Osiako & Szente,* 2021). The tourism sector is a major economic contributor to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at 10.4% and directly employs 990,000 jobs (*TRI,* 2021). Additionally, tourism statistics in the country have indicated a gradually improving domestic tourism performance in recent years, where local trips to recreational areas have appeared to be picking pace. Correspondingly, there has been growth and expansion in the number of recreational facilities, centers and activities in the country. This has both been caused by and resulted from accelerated local leisure-related activities, especially in and adjacent to major urban centers such as Nairobi, Nakuru, Mombasa, Kisumu and Eldoret. Earlier studies carried out on domestic tourism in Kenya have exhibited a paucity of comprehensiveness in scope and content, leaving many aspects of domestic tourism in need of research attention (*Osiako & Szente,* 2021).

One of the areas that needs investigation is how marketing communication channels of domestic tourists influence their motivations, consumption behavior, and satisfaction. Given that domestic tourists receive information from diverse sources, there was a need for a more focused study aimed at understanding how these factor influences motivations, consumption and satisfaction. As Kenya strives to maximize the benefits of tourism as espoused in the various policy documents (*GoK,* 2007; *MToW,* 2020) such knowledge is crucial to inform about the development of a sustainable domestic tourism sub-sector. Citing examples from Kenya, *Ndivo et al.* (2012) argued that information sources help create destination awareness, as well as aid in the making of the final destination choice. Related to this, and in the Kenyan domestic tourism situation, *Kamau et al.* (2015) found that marketing communication channels were significant in creating awareness of tourist destinations in Kenya. Hence, Hypotheses 1a to 3b are hereby stated. Therefore, this study was carried out in Machakos People's Park with the aim of achieving the following three objectives:

1. To establish the influence of marketing communication channels on the motivation of domestic tourists.

2. To establish the influence of marketing communication channels on the consumption behavior of domestic tourists.
3. To establish the influence of marketing communication channels on the satisfaction of domestic tourists.

To achieve the above objectives, the following hypotheses were tested:

H1a - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and their push motivations for visiting recreation sites.

H1b - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and their pull motivations for visiting recreation sites.

H2a - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and their re-visitation behavior for recreation sites.

H2b - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and their frequency of visiting places similar to MPP.

H2c - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and the time they spent at recreation sites.

H2d - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and their company type while visiting recreation sites.

H3a - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and their product experience while visiting recreation sites.

H3b - There is a relationship between domestic tourists' source of information and their overall satisfaction when visiting recreation sites.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Area of study

Data for the current study was obtained from Machakos People's Park (MPP). The Park is found in Machakos County, Kenya. The recreational park is a forty-acre gated site, which is open to the public on Thursday afternoons, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. It comprises of landscaped lawns, play area for children, walkways, restaurants and an arena that hosts concerts and other social events. Adjacent to the main park is Maruba Dam, a man-made lake where boat tours are offered for a fee. Entry to the park is free for individuals and groups of less than ten people. However, these visitors pay for the various individual recreational services they choose to enjoy inside the park. This study considered this recreational park for understanding domestic tourism.

Research design and variable measurements

This study used cross-sectional questionnaire survey to collect quantitative data by structured questions. The variables of interest in this study are domestic tourists' socio-demographic characteristics, the source of first information about MPP, the most satisfying experiences, satisfaction levels, and frequency of consumption/visiting such places. The motivation variables for this study are developed basing on previous conceptualizations and studies in the context of leisure tourism and modified in relation to the area under study (*Yiamjanya & Wongleedee*, 2015; *Xu & Chan*, 2016;

Naidoo et al., 2015; *Kassean & Gassita,* 2013). Ultimately, push motivation indicator variables amount to 10 while there are 12 pull motivation indicator variables. All the 22 motivation statements considered are measured with the five-point interval scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Types of product/service experiences were broken down into seven categories from which the respondents indicated the one that gave them the greatest satisfaction. These categories included 1-food, 2-drinks, 3-nature-based activities, 4-ambience, 5-entertainment, 6-outdoor recreation, and 7-socializing.

The overall satisfaction variable for this study was measured on the five-point Likert scale as follows: No satisfaction (1) Satisfaction below average (2) Average satisfaction (3), Satisfying (4), Highly Satisfying (5). As pertains to consumption behavior, visitors' re-visitation was measured by the respondents' indicating the number of times they revisited the park on a frequency scale from: nil (0), to more than five times (5). Furthermore, they were required to indicate the length of time they intended to spend in the park during the present visit, and how frequently they planned and visited recreational places similar to MPP. The last consumption behavior examined was the type of company. The main marketing channel of communication was sought by asking the respondents to indicate their first source of information about the recreation site under study. To answer this, they selected from a list that highlighted word of mouth, print media, the internet and websites, social media, happened to see the place while passing, and television and radio broadcasts. The final part of the questionnaire enquired about the respondents' socio-demographics: age, gender, education level, family status, county of origin and income.

Data collection and analysis

A cross-sectional descriptive research design was applied in this study to collect data and establish the relationships among key variables. This study targeted recreationists of Kenyan origin who visited MPP during the period of study (December 2019 and January 2020). To achieve this, a semi-structured questionnaire was used which included both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Systematic random sampling was carried out to collect data from respondents. Every fourth Kenyan adult person (over the age of 18 years) entering the park through the main entrance during the opening days (Thursday afternoons, Friday, Saturday and Sunday) was requested by the two appointed research assistants to participate in the survey by filling in the questionnaire. After being introduced to the survey and its main aims those who acknowledged to be Kenyans, and consented to participate in the study were given an opportunity to voluntarily respond to the questions. A total of 392 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 311 (79% response rate) were filled. From these, 258 (83%) were found to be complete and usable. Data was analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 23.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, N.Y., USA) software to determine descriptive and inferential statistics: percentages, frequencies, standard deviations, measures of central tendency, and cross-tabulation.

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

As indicated in *Table 1*, the sample comprised of more males (53.2%) than females (46.8%). The majority of them (55.7%) earned an income of less than 50,000 Kenyan shillings (USD 500) per month. Respondents who were married with child/ren represented the highest percentage in marital status (27.2%). As pertains to the highest level of education attained by the respondents, the biggest proportion of the sample (35.4%) were middle-level college graduates. Rural dwellers exceeded (63.9%) urban dwellers (36.1%) who visited MPP during the survey period.

Table 1: Respondents' socio-demographic characteristics (N=258)

Socio-demographic variable		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	137	53.2
	Female	121	46.8
Age	18-25	36	13.9
	26-35	93	36.1
	36-45	87	33.5
	46-55	31	12.0
	56-65	11	4.4
Your income	below 50,000	144	55.7
	50001-100000	65	25.3
	100001-150000	42	16.5
	over 150000	7	2.5
Your marital status	Single Without Children	67	26.0
	Single With Child/ren	51	19.6
	Married With Child/ren	70	27.2
	Married Without Children	67	26.0
	Widowed	3	1.3
Highest educational level attained	Primary	20	7.6
	Secondary	57	22.2
	College	91	35.4
	Bachelor's Degree	73	28.5
	Post Graduate Degree	16	6.3
Residence	Rural	165	63.9
	Urban	93	36.1

RESULTS

Exploratory factor analysis of the motivation variable

A five-point scale was used to measure the level and type of motivation for domestic tourists visiting MPP. The scale in the questionnaire was used to specify the level of agreeableness from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. In order to determine the primary dimension of the respondents' motivation to visit MPP, an exploratory factor analysis was performed. For item inclusion, loadings of .40 were used and eigenvalues of 3.927 and 2.869 for factor extraction criterion. A total of 22 items

represented the motivational factor on which a factor analysis with Principal Component Approach and Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization was performed. To verify the normality and significance of the conducted analyses, KMO Bartlett's test was carried out and it was found to be highly significant (approximate $X^2 = 1120.390$, $df = 136$, $p < 0.0001$). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) overall measure of sampling adequacy (.805), and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($X^2 = 1120.390$) indicated that the data were suitable for using factor analysis (*Tabachnick & Fidell,* 2001).

EFA yielded two categories of motivation factors, which represented 40% of the total variance (*Table 2*). Cronbach's coefficients were calculated for each factor in order to determine the reliability of the analyzed data and serve as a measure of internal consistency among the identified items. From the original 22 items, items number 6, 14, 16, 21 and 22 did not load to their respective factors adequately with the set value of at least .40 and were therefore dropped. Thus, the push motivation factor was left with 9 items and the pull motivation factor with 8 items.

Table 2: Explorative factor analysis of the motivation items

| Item No. | Motivation Item Statement | Item loading | | Mean | Std dev. | Relia-bility |
| | | Factor | | | | |
		[a]PushM	[b]PullM			α
1	I had saved money to spend on such a visit	.656				
2	I wanted to find relief for my ill health	.724				
3	I need a place to enjoy company of friends	.645				
4	I need for an opportunity to learn	.558				
5	I find an ideal place for my children	.559		3.34	.765	.800
6	To conduct research	.518				
7	It was recommended by friends	.507				
8	I had an incentive offer from my employer	.722				
9	I feel historically attached to this place	.658				
10	This place is a famous attraction		.596			
11	In this place I enjoy outdoor recreation		.472			
12	In this place I enjoy attractive landscape		.747			
13	The place suits my need to relax		.573	3.62	.689	.761
14	This place is easily accessible		.688			
15	I enjoy a variety of experiences		.491			
16	In this place I enjoy pleasant ambience		.718			
17	This place is affordable		.561			

Note: [a]PushM - Push Motivation; [b]PullM - Pull Motivation; Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Oblimin with Kaiser Normalization.

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the two factors were .800 and .761 respectively. They were both above .70 and therefore sufficient for performing factor analysis.

Consumption behaviour

The majority of the respondents (36.0%) were visiting the recreational park for the first time (*Table 3*). This was followed by those visiting for the second time (25.2%) and then the third time (21.7%). These percentages were drastically reduced to a mere 4.3% for the visitors coming for the fourth time. The fifth time was represented by 5.8% and those who had visited for more than five times represented 7%. Evidently, the chances of recreationists making subsequent visits to the park marginally reduce progressively as they made some extra visit, with the chances dropping sharply after the third visit.

Table 3: Travel behavior and party characteristics (N=258)

Travel behavior		Frequency	Percent
Number of revisits to MPP	0	93	36.0
	1	65	25.2
	2	56	21.7
	3	11	4.3
	4	15	5.8
	More than 4	18	7.0
How frequently I visit similar places	Once every month	26	10.1
	More once every month	16	6.2
	Every public holiday	31	12.0
	Once a year	57	22.1
	Twice a year	42	16.3
	Occasionally	86	33.3
Travel party	I came alone	47	18.2
	I came in the company of a spouse without children	42	16.3
	I came in the company of a spouse with children	65	25.2
	I came in the company of children without a spouse	34	13.2
	I came with friend/s/colleagues	70	27.1
Duration spent at MPP	1-3 hours	105	40.7
	4-6 hours	126	48.8
	7-9 hours	20	7.8
	10 hours and above	7	2.7

Nearly half of the respondents (48.8%) spent between 4 to 6 hours at the recreational park during their visit (*Table 3*). This was followed by a 40.7% enjoying the site for up to 3 hours while 7.8% and 2.7 % represented the 7-9 hours and 10 hours and above durations, respectively. The average time spent by visitors at the MPP is 4.14 hours.

The frequency with which respondents planned and visited recreational places similar to MPP appeared to vary greatly (*Table 3*). An overwhelming majority (33.3%) indicated that such local tours are undertaken occasionally, rather unfrequently. This

strongly suggests that undertaking local tours at regular intervals is not a primary concern of most Kenyans. Those who participate in such trips once a year are 10.1% and those who do it twice a year were 16.3%. A further 12.0% engaged in such activities during public holidays those who did it more than once every month reached 6.2%.

When asked to specify with whom they visited the MPP with, a majority of the respondents (27.1%) indicated that they came in the company of friends or colleagues. The second highest percentage (25.2%) came in the company of their spouses with children, followed by 18.2% who came alone, while 16.3% came in the company of spouses without children. The least percentage (13.2%) came to enjoy in the company of child/ren without a spouse (*Table 3*).

Satisfaction with recreational experiences

The park offered a variety of recreational experiences to visitors. Considering seven categories of product and service experiences at the park, respondents were asked to indicate the category from which they derived the highest satisfaction. As indicated in *Table 4*, "outdoor recreation" and "socializing" offered the highest satisfaction among 19.8% of respondents, closely followed by "entertainment" (18.6%), "ambience" (17.4%), "nature" (17.1%), and, finally, "food and drinks" (7.4%). When asked to rate the overall satisfaction they received in the park, the majority (49.2%) described the overall experience as "satisfying". The rating scale ranged from "1 = no satisfaction" as the lowest score, progressing through "2= satisfaction below average", "3 = average satisfaction", "4 = satisfying" and finally "5 = highly satisfying" (*Table 4*).

Table 4: Satisfaction (N = 258)

Product/service experience		Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
Most satisfying service experience	Drinks	7	2.7	4.73	1.682
	Food	12	4.7		
	Nature-Based Activities	44	17.1		
	Ambience	45	17.4		
	Entertainment	48	18.6		
	Outdoor Recreation	51	19.8		
	Socializing	51	19.8		
Level of satisfaction	No Satisfaction	4	1.6	3.95	.885
	Satisfaction Below Average	13	5.0		
	Average Satisfaction	44	17.1		
	Highly Satisfying	70	27.1		
	Satisfying	127	49.2		

Tourists' source of information

In order to establish the channels through which visitors to the park heard about the existence of MPP for the first time, respondents were asked to indicate how they came to learn about the park for the first time. It turned out that word of mouth (WOM) from friends and relatives was the most common channel of marketing

information at 38.8%. Next came newspapers and other print media (17.1%), then internet and websites (14.0%), followed by social media (12.0%). Those who happened to know the place by seeing it while passing by represented 11.6%, and finally, television and radio broadcasts 6.6% (*Table 5*).

Table 5: Tourists' source of information (N = 258)

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Word of mouth (WoM)	101	38.8
Print media	44	17.1
Internet and websites	36	14.0
Social media	31	12.0
Happened to know by passing by	29	11.6
Television and radio broadcasts	17	6.6

Influence of marketing information channels on domestic tourism

To determine the influence of marketing information channels on domestic tourism, these variables were cross-tabulated with three variables: motivation, consumption behavior and satisfaction. *Table 6* summarizes the results and gives the respective chi-square test values and implications for the associations.

As indicated in *Table 6*, the sources of destination information only influenced consumption behavior but had no influence on the motivations and satisfaction of domestic tourists.

Table 6: Chi-square test results for cross-tabulating marketing information channels with motivation, consumption behavior and satisfaction

Mea-sure	Motivation		Consumption behavior				Satisfaction	
	PushM	PullM	Revisi-tation	Frequ-ency of visit	Time Spent	Com-pany type	P/S Exp	OS
χ2	125.357	120.307	54.200	50.021	27.785	41.371	29.889	30.601
df	120	120	25	30	15	20	30	20
p-value	.351	.475	.001	.012	.023	.003	.471	.061
Influe nce	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO

Note: PushM – Push motivations; PullM – Pull motivations; P/S – Product/Service experience; OS – Overall satisfaction.

Results of hypotheses testing

With regard to the hypotheses tested, this study established that contrary to H1a and H1b, there was no relationship between domestic tourists' sources of information and their push motivations for visiting MPP, nor between domestic tourists' sources of information and their pull motivations for visiting MPP respectively. Hence, domestic

tourists' sources of information had no influence on their motivations for visiting MPP (H1 was not supported). H2a, H2b, H2c, and H2d were supported, since there was a relationship between domestic tourists' sources of information and the behavior of re-visiting MPP, the frequency of visiting places similar to MPP, the length of time they spent at MPP, and their company type when vising MPP, respectively. Hence, domestic tourists' sources of information fully influenced their consumption behavior (H2 was supported). Contrary to H3a and H3b, there was no association between domestic tourists' sources of information and their product experience while visiting MPP, nor between domestic tourists' sources of information and their overall satisfaction when visiting MPP, respectively. Hence, domestic tourists' sources of information had no influence on their product experience and satisfaction (H3 was not supported). The results of hypotheses testing are indicated in *Table 7*.

Table 7: Results of hypotheses testing

Hypothesis		Relationship tested	Decision
1	1a	Marketing comm. channels → Push Motivation	Not Supported
	1b	Marketing comm. channels → Pull Motivation	Not Supported
2	2a	Marketing comm. channels → Re-visitation	Supported
	2b	Marketing comm. channels → Similar places	Supported
	2c	Marketing comm. channels → Duration spent	Supported
	2d	Marketing c comm. channels → Company type	Supported
3	3a	Marketing comm. channels → Product Experience	Not Supported
	3b	Marketing comm. channels → Overall Satisfaction	Not Supported

DISCUSSION

Influence of marketing communication channels on domestic tourism

This study established that word of mouth (WOM) from friends and relatives was the most common channel through which the majority of the domestic tourists learnt about the existence of MPP. The poorest channel for informing them about the park was television and radio broadcasts. It therefore appears that information about the attractiveness of such attractions was already in the public domain, especially through person-to-person communication. Accordingly, *Barak et al.* (2017) earlier observed that visitors to Machakos County as a destination in Kenya could obtain as much information about the county as they needed before they visited. Thus, corroborating our argument and that of *Ndivo et al.* (2012) according to which the necessary information about destinations in Kenya was well sufficient in the public domain.

However, with regard to the variables in the current study, having WOM as the predominant marketing channel of communication had a positive influence only on the consumption behavior of domestic tourists. It had no influence on their motivations and satisfaction (Objective 1 & 3). Considering that pull and push motivations are the starting point of any visitor's decision (*Battour et al.,* 2012), and that motivations prompt the evaluation that visitors could make about a certain destination, the findings of this study imply that there is no particular channel that

strongly influences tourists' decision making and evaluation of this destination (motivation). Equally, since satisfaction emanates from prior expectations, it showed that the channels of communication did not create an expectation in the mind of the tourists to the point that they influenced their ultimate satisfaction.

The findings above are partly in line with the arguments of *Murphy et al.* (2007 cited in *Shen et al.*, 2018) who observed that the influence of friends, relatives or other tourists can affect tourists' consumption and satisfaction. It follows that the way messages are passed to domestic tourists will directly or indirectly determine their consumption behavior (Objective 2). Considering the current research, the consumption behavior in question could comprise of repeat visiting, touring other attractions that were similar in nature to MPP, spending considerable time at the attraction, and being in the company of particular types of individuals when visiting the recreation sites. The predominance of WOM as the primary source of tourism information as indicated in the current study could mean that only a small proportion of the potential audience was reached by marketing information. This situation calls for deliberate efforts by tourism product marketers and destination management organizations (DMOs) to additionally leverage on the rapidly expanding digital promotional channels. They need to enhance the exploitation of modern technology; especially socio-media and other internet-based marketing opportunities.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that some earlier studies found results that were contrary to the current findings. For example, *Sawagvudcharee* (2019) did not find a straightforward relationship with respect to domestic tourism and information sources.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, marketing information channels proved to be an important factor only with regard to the consumption behavior of domestic tourists. These channels determined domestic tourists' re-visitation tendency, visitation to similar places, time spent at recreation sites, and the type of people in the company of whom they enjoy recreational products and services. Since WOM was predominant in this case, it follows that for an effective tourism promotion, marketers of tourist destinations should endeavor to leverage on this premise to communicate to prospective domestic tourists to improve their consumption behavior. It was however noteworthy that, marketing communication channels had no bearing on domestic tourists' motivations and satisfaction but the exact reason for this requires further research.

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