

# Study of The Aspects Used By Commercial Airlines In Facilitating Domestic Tourism In Kenya

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## Abstract

This study sought to find out how commercial airlines are facilitating domestic tourism in Kenya. Domestic tourism involves locals visiting fun places, holiday destinations and entertaining centers for their own relaxation or fun activities within the national boundaries. The locals may decide to visit such places to get away from the usual pressure associated with work, monotony of daily living and time to bond with the family. Domestic tourism has seen a significant increase that has been caused by several external influences that have impacted on the consumers. Several organizations, both public and private sectors have encouraged domestic tourism by giving incentives to persons interested. In this paper data was collected from the print media. The aim of the study is to identify the means, in which commercial airlines use to reach the domestic tourist as well as ways that commercial airlines use to promote domestic tourism in Kenya. The study concluded that commercial airlines have largely employed print media to communicate to the consumers the following; reduction of fares, increased frequency of specific routes, and introduction of new routes. The advertisements are especially heavy during the period following long holidays, which shows that the airlines are appealing to the consumers who are working to take advantage of the period and travel to a different destination to unwind and also spend time with the family. Commercial airlines have greatly encouraged domestic tourism by offering reduced fares to popular destinations, and tour operators not wanting to be left behind offer discounted packages on air fare and accommodation during this season.

**Key words:** Airlines, domestic tourism, print media

## 1.0 Introduction

Domestic tourism in Kenya is one of the economic activities that have been greatly encouraged in Kenya. Locals are urged to visit various destinations within the country on a national level to increase the economic activities of the country and partly for different people to get to experience the different rich cultures found in the country. Domestic tourism is also encouraged on a personal level for the following reasons; these may include among others, to get away from pressures related to work, be away from their daily locality and to find time to bond with the family.

Domestic tourism has witnessed an exponential growth due to several external influences that have impacted on the consumers. Several organizations, both public and private sectors have encouraged domestic tourism by giving incentives to persons interested. Government has reduced the charges to several recreational facilities like the national parks, nature trails and museums as opposed to the charges made on international tourists and, the private sector have reduced the charges in accommodation, airline tickets, discounted tour packages in order to encourage the local people to visit tourist destinations more so during low season for the international tourist.

Domestic tourism is a field that is still developing. This is largely hampered by the fact that it is a service industry. There are factors that are associated with a service industry that poses a challenge especially when it comes to marketing, these factors include;

1. Intangibility – tourism cannot be sampled in advance of the purchase, therefore an element of risk is involved on the part of the purchaser,
2. Heterogeneity – the tourism service cannot be standardized with each unit sharing identical characteristics. The service provider cannot guarantee certain uniformity and quality when it depends on consistency and skill of individual at the time that the service is being dispensed. A holiday taken in a week of continuous rainfall is very different from one taken in glorious sunshine.
3. Perishability – tourism product is highly perishable. An airline seat not sold today is lost forever. Travel industry suffers from time-variable demand. Often holiday demand is concentrated in long holidays and business travelers wish to fly at specific times. Airlines prefer to offer a balanced service around the clock to maximize the use of their resources.

4. Inseparability – services are highly personalized, the product being the outcome of the performance of the seller. Elements in the product purchased and social skills in dealing with consumers are an essential part of the product. It is for this reason that training becomes so vital for the success of travel and tourism industry.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 describes the materials and methods used in collecting and organizing data. Section 3 discusses the results that were obtained after collection and analysis of data. Section 4 concludes the paper.

## 2.0 Materials and Methods

The methodologies that were used to collect and analyse the data for the paper are as follows:

### 2.1 Materials

The information required was primary data, and was collected from the daily newspapers published within a range of 12 months. The information required was divided into two parts. The first part sought general information on advertisement by commercial airlines operating locally and the second part was to seek information regarding the forms in which commercial airlines use to encourage domestic tourism.

### 2.2 Methods

This study applied a descriptive longitudinal survey to find out the aspects in which commercial airlines use to encourage domestic tourism.

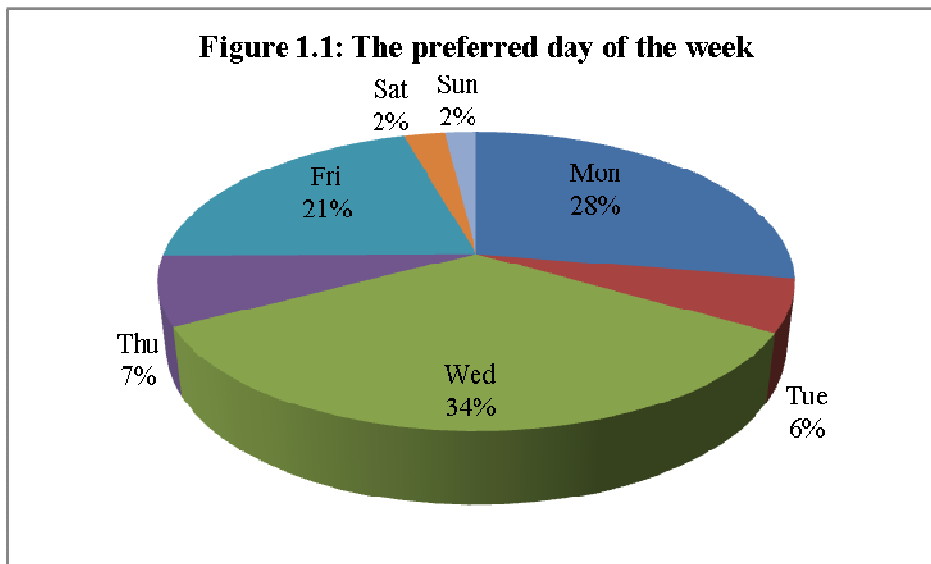
The population of interest for this study comprised of The Daily Nation newspapers published between the months of July 2010 to June 2011.

## 3.0 Results

The data collected from the first part was analysed using proportions while the second part was analysed using frequency distribution. This method revealed the changes that occur from one month to another.

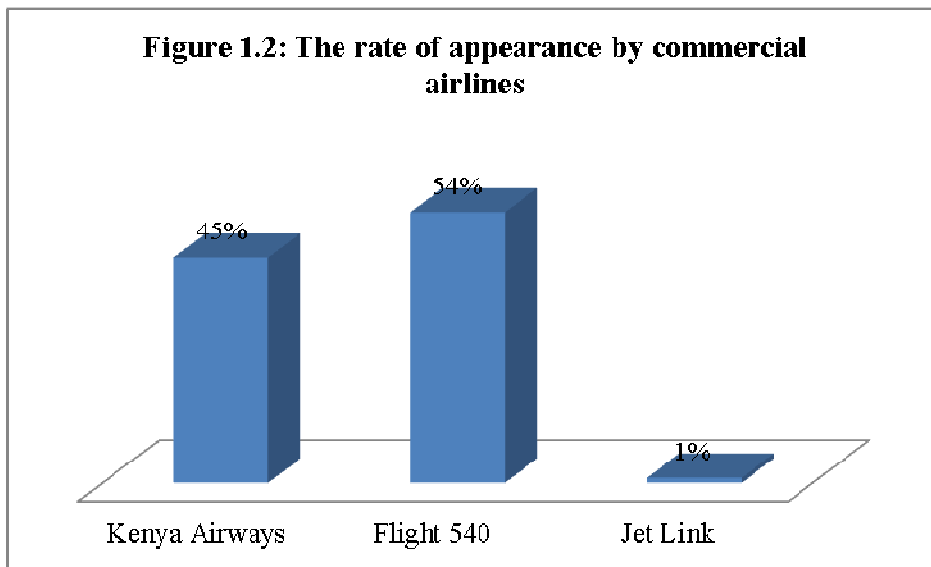
### 3.1 The preferred day of the week

The analysis of the results is shown in Figure 1.1 and it shows that Wednesday is a day preferred by commercial airline companies to advertise it accounted for 34% of all the appearances made followed by Monday with 28% and followed closely by Friday which made up 21%. The least advertised day is Sunday and Saturday both with 2% appearance, this is due to the fact that the leisure traveler would have already left or arrived at the destination of choice and the business traveler will not be making any trips until weekdays when most businesses are conducted. The print media is chosen because it can reach masses of geographically dispersed potential customers.



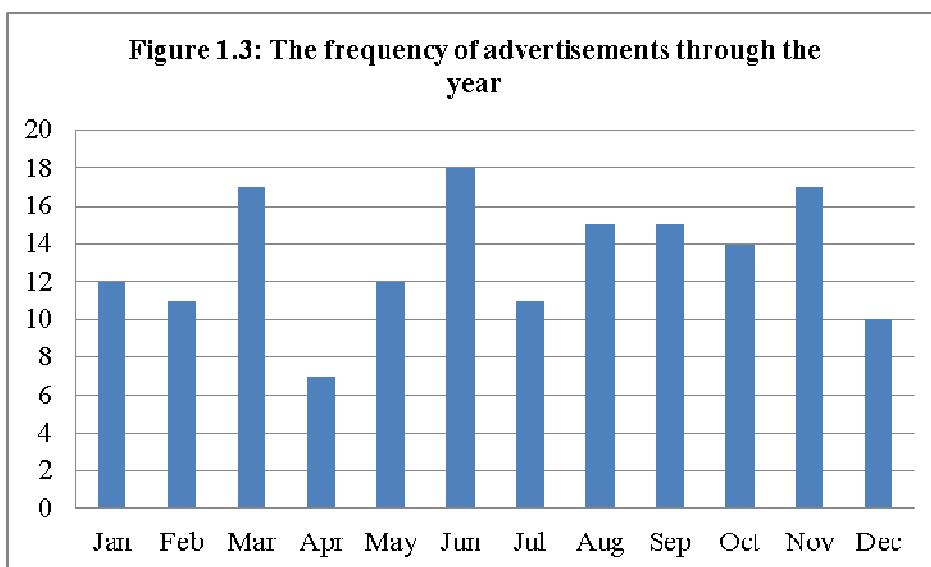
### 3.2 Advertisements by commercial airline companies

The results in Figure 1.2 show the percentage in which commercial airlines operating locally made an advertisement in the newspaper. The results listed three commercial airlines namely Flight 540, Kenya Airways and Jet Link. The appearance that was made by Flight 540 was 54% while Kenya Airways was 45% and Jet link was 1%. Commercial airlines have used advertisement to build up a long term image as a reliable airline as well as to trigger quick sales especially during low season when visiting international tourists are few in the country.



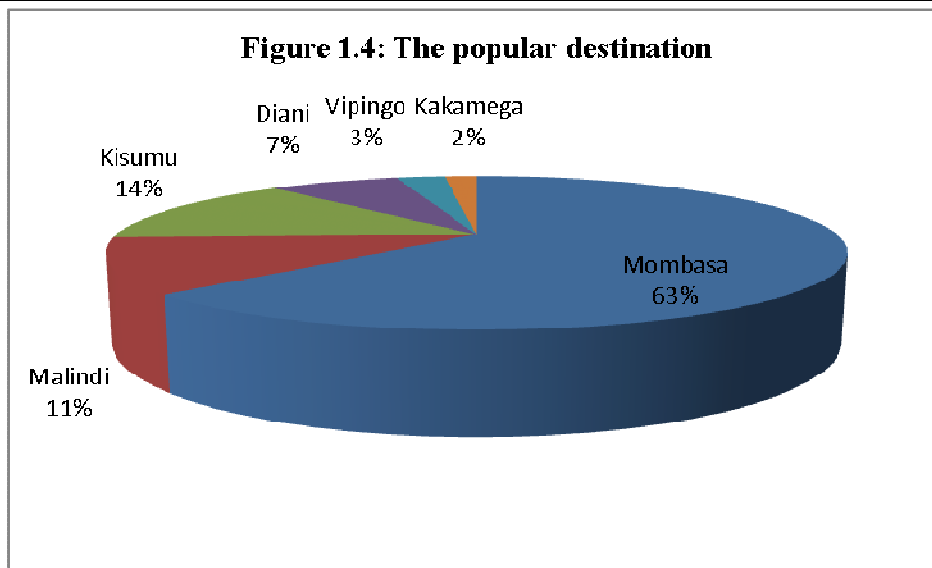
### 3.3 The number of appearance spread through the year

Figure 1.3 shows the rate of recurrence of advertisements which are done by commercial airlines operating locally throughout the year. The highest frequencies registered are in the months of March, June and November. The advertisements are especially heavy during these periods because of upcoming long holidays, which show that the airlines are targeting the customers who are working to take advantage of the period and travel to a new destination to unwind as well as spend time with the family. This period reflects leisure travel because of increased advertising in the months to follow Christmas and Easter holidays. The least number of advertisements made are in the months of April and December.



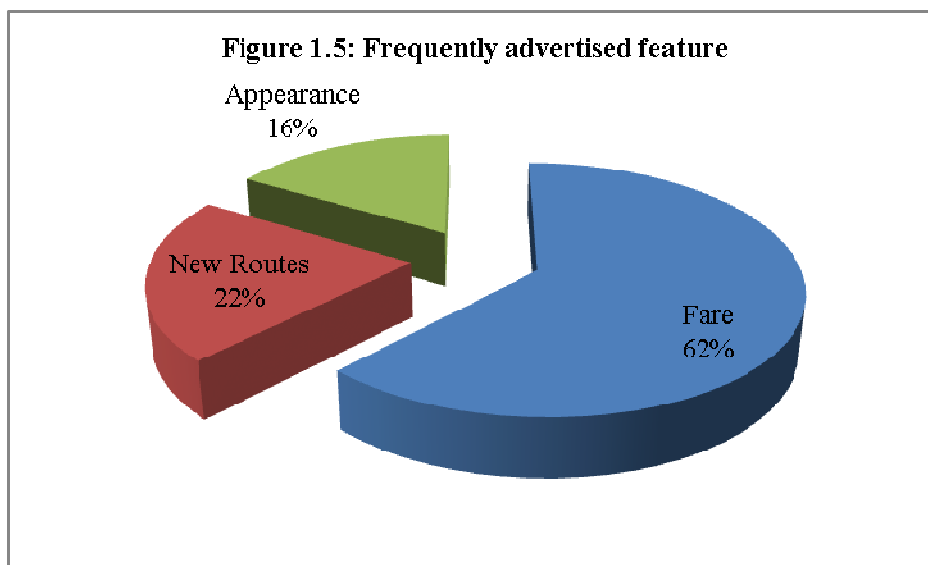
### 3.4 Popular destination

The most popular local destination communicated to consumers is Mombasa with 63% followed by Kisumu with 14% the results are shown in Figure 1.4. Commercial airlines operating locally have greatly encouraged domestic tourism by advertising heavily on popular holiday destinations as well as increasing the frequency of flights to those destinations. Not only are the companies advertising but also offering reduced fares, tour operators not wanting to be left behind also offer discounted packages on air fare and accommodation during this season. Nature of the area have strongly influenced on the frequency of advertisement on the destination.



**3.5 Forms in which commercial airlines are using to promote domestic tourism**

Figure 1.5 shows the forms in which commercial airlines operating locally are using to encourage locals to tour their own country. The content of the advertisement was 62% on fares followed by routes introduced accounting for 22% and appearance by an individual airline makes up 16%. Appearance is in the form of congratulatory messages, offers and packages. The main objective of advertising is to inform the consumers of the availability of the services. Commercial airlines also persuade customers to make an airline their preferred choice of travel or to switch to their favorite airline.



**4.0 Conclusion, Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

It is evident that commercial airline companies promote domestic tourism through different ways. The most significant way of doing this is by advertising popular destinations. These advertisements are especially heavy on the months following long holidays. Although advertising is the primary communication activity, other marketing mix elements are also essential like the pricing in form of reduced fares so as to make a significant impact on the consumer as well as elicit a positive reaction from the potential customer. In as much as the country is experiencing exponential growth in domestic, all the stakeholders should pay attention to the following trends of sustainable development; expanding literature on sustainable domestic tourism development, acceptance of alternative forms of tourism that may be beneficial to certain destinations, growing

recognition of the destination life-cycle concept in that attention must be paid to all the stages as time progresses and the number of visitors increases and emphasis on the sustainability of tourism development in terms of policies and plans.

This paper addressed the forms and ways of how commercial airlines encourage domestic tourism. Future research could be done to find out whether the efforts of commercial airlines to encourage domestic tourism actually translate to a positive response by the consumer and what factors may inhibit the efforts made by commercial airlines.

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