

Abstract

Shrines' market appeal and authenticity drive religious tourism branding initiatives. Ideal packaging strategies further determine product performance in religious destinations. This article examined the potential contribution of market appeal and authenticity to religious tourism branding in the Kenyan Coast, Western, and Eastern regions. Multistage Cluster Sampling was used to sample 700 respondents. Surveys were conducted using structured interviews between February 2012 and April 2013. Questionnaires targeted communities, tourists, and tourism developers. Questionnaires examined the types of shrines, utilization rate, perceived importance, and current development levels. It further assessed applicable religious tourism branding strategies within regions. Data analysis involved factor analysis, ANOVA, and t-tests. Results indicated that Kenyan shrines serve natural, physical, and cultural purposes, which determine their market appeal. New brands, line-extensions, and brand extensions emerged significant product branding strategies ($p < 0.05$). Thus, it implied perceived loss of product authenticity.