

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Search Engine Optimization, Competitive Advantage and Market Performance of Registered Tours and Travel Agencies in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract: COVID-19 is a devastating pandemic with widespread negative health, social, and economic consequences. Due to drastic changes in the business environment of tour and travel agencies, firms and marketing managers can now use search engine optimization to effectively position themselves. The study's main goal is to evaluate the effect of search engine optimization on the market performance of registered tours and travel agencies in Nairobi County, Kenya. Kenya's tourism ministry and state government work hard to improve the business climate for tour and travel companies. Despite the overall positive image, international tourist market growth rates in Kenya have been 3.5 percent slower from 2017 to 2019 compared to previous years. This was further aggregated by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the year 2020, when the growth rate of tours and travel agencies fell by 65%. The study's main goal is to evaluate the effect of search engine optimization on the market performance of registered tours and travel agencies in Nairobi County, Kenya. This study adopted a positivist philosophy. Both descriptive and explanatory research designs were used. A self-administered semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 324 registered tours and travels agencies picked from and a sample of 179 were used. Data analysis included the development and interpretation of both descriptive and inferential statistics, such as frequencies, mean, percentages, and standard deviation, and was presented using tables and numerical values. The results of regression analysis established that search engine optimization had a positive and significant effect on market performance of the registered tours and travel agencies picked from a sample of 179. The study recommends that agency management ensure that the firm's website is easily accessible in order to improve agency performance. Using the internet to gain a large market share can assist tours and travel agencies in improving the performance and income of their websites.

Keywords: Search engine optimization, Online marketing strategies, Market performance, Market share, Competitive advantage, Tours and travel agency

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