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## **Moderating Effect of Tourism Business Networks on Tourism Backward Linkage with Local Micro and Small Enterprises in Kisumu County**

### **Abstract**

The study aimed to establish whether the effect of physical location and type of tourism enterprises, on extent of tourism backward linkage with local enterprises in Kisumu County was moderated by business networks established by tourism enterprises. Cross section survey of 106 tourism enterprises was conducted and ANOVA was used in the analysis. It was established that the effect of type of tourism enterprise on the local purchase ratio did not vary with the level of business networks developed by tourism businesses, but the effect of physical location of tourism enterprises on local purchase ratio varied with level of networks developed. Also, tourism enterprises with three and more business networks and located in outskirts of Kisumu City and rural areas outperform their counterparts with two and less business networks in creating linkages with local economy. However, tourism enterprises with two and less business networks outperform those with three and more business networks in creating local economic linkages in Kisumu Central Business District (CBD). Therefore, collaborative strategies amongst tourism enterprises in rural areas invigorated local economy more than competition amongst them, but increased competition amongst enterprises in Kisumu CBD as opposed to cooperation improves backward linkage with local economy.

**Keywords:** *Tourism business networks, tourism backward linkage, Kisumu city, local purchase ratio*

**JEL Classifications:** L26, L53, Z32

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### **ORIGINAL SCIENTIFIC PAPER**

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## 1. Introduction

According to the United Nation Commission on Trade and Development (UNCTAD, 2009), the maturity of tourism service coupled with size and breath of domestic economy influences the beneficial tourism linkages with local enterprises. Backward linkage is the demand connection formed between a given enterprise with other enterprises in the resource market (Battat et al, 1996; Frank et al., 1999). Backward linkage is measured as proportion of total raw material and components sourced locally per year (Loughlin, 1981; McAleese & McDonald, 1978 & O`Farrel, 1981). Tourism backward linkage is, thus, an empirical indication of relative importance of tourism to the local economy (Mak, 2004).

Though, according to United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP, 2011), proportion of tourists` spending in local economy coupled with indirect economic activities induced by tourists` spending determine local economic effects of tourism, economic impact of tourism on the economies of almost all countries of Sub Saharan Africa has not been optimal (UNCTAD, 2017). In Kenya, only between 2% and 5% of total tourism receipt cascade down to local people at the grass root level in form of low income jobs and income from sale of agricultural products and souvenir (Akama, 1997; Bachmann, 1988). Also, according to a World Bank report titled '*Kenya Country Economic Memorandum: From Economic Growth and Shared Prosperity*' published in 2016 by the World Bank Group, the country`s economic growth which accelerated in the past decade has not resulted in widespread prosperity for all Kenyans. According to the report, Kenya`s economy still remained amongst the poorest 25% of countries in the world with poverty level as high as 40% of the population (World Bank, 2016). It is no wonder that Akama (2000) and Dieke (1991) down played the role of Kenya`s tourism in the long term sustainable economic growth of the country.

Fortunately, micro and small enterprise sector is the fastest growing in Kenya with 66% of 1.3 million enterprises located in rural areas (Ministry of Industrialization and Vision 2030, 2002). The sector has been recognized in the *Kenya Sector Plan for Tourism 2013 -2017* as central in sustainable tourism development (Ministry of Devolution and Planning, 2013). However, the development and mainstreaming of micro and small enterprise sector into the national economy has been hampered by such structural factors as unfavorable policy environment and taxation regime, inhibitive legal and regulatory environment, limited access to information, market and financial services, inadequate business skills and access to technology, limited access to infrastructure, formal and informal entry barriers, HIV/AIDS, and limited access and lack of adherence to health and safety in work places (Ministry of Labor and Human Resource Development, 2005). Despite the structural weaknesses in the sector generally, tourism enterprises are indispensable in the prosperity of a destination as they enhance trickle-down effect of tourists` spending into local economy (Ateljic & Page, 2009).

Kisumu as one of the 47 Counties of Kenya has a growing youthful population majority of whom are unemployed, without entrepreneurial skill and who have been identified in the *County Integrated Development Plan 2013 - 2017* as a threat to development (Ministry of East Africa Affairs, Commerce and Tourism, 2013). However, according to *Sector Plan for Tourism 2013 -2017* involvement of the youth in tourism activities at County level economically empower them and help reduce insecurity. But the ability of Kisumu County hospitality industry to absorb unemployed youth has been undermined by its very low occupancy rate (Kenya National Bureau of Standards (KNBS, 2013). Therefore, limited penetration of tourism activities and skills in Kisumu County created insignificant backward linkage with local micro and small enterprises which in turn denies local business people opportunities for appropriating optimal economic benefits from tourism. The purpose of this study was to establish the moderating effect of level of tourism business networks on the relationship between physical location of tourism firms, type of tourism firms and proportion of purchase from local micro and small enterprises by tourism enterprises. The hypothesis

behind the study was that the influence of location and type of tourism firm on proportion of local purchase is independent on the extent of business networks in tourism.

## 2. Literature Review

Business networks are independent enterprises bound together by trust or some common interest, and which are useful in not only transferring knowledge, as conduit for information, and diffusion of intensive skills that are costly to secure, but also provide opportunities for exchanging goods and services that are not easy to enforce through contractual arrangement (Hisrich, 2008). Networks are thus, “the framework of individual and organization relationships which form the stage upon which entrepreneurial performance is played” (Wickham, 1998:169). Every business is found in a network of relationship with other enterprises which is either tight or loose network (Wickham, 2006). In tourism, according to Baggio et al. (2008), business networks are more critical than in any other industry.

Criticality of business network in tourism was supported by a study conducted by Bickerdyke (1996) in Australia, where it was established that tourism had the most inter organization networks. Businesses with international or regional associations tended to have impressive performance owed to its enhanced ability to attract business worldwide (Sudhir, 2009). For example, Sudhir established that airlines which developed working relationship with hotel referrals improved their payload significantly. Cai and Szedl (2016) conducted a field experiment wherein they sought to establish inter - firm relationship and business performance in China. The study, which was based on random sample of 2800 young Chinese managers, was conducted in Nanchang. The finding of this study was that business networks positively correlated with firm performance through such mechanisms as peer effect, trust, improved access to business partners and information diffusion. Based on this finding, they underscoring the importance of policy of organizing business associations in the development of private sector. However, this study was neither based on managers working in tourist industry nor on the moderating effect of business network on tourism backward linkage with local business which this study seeks to establish. Further, due to different structural settings and institutional arrangements between Nanchang and Kisumu County, it is highly doubtful whether the findings could apply to Kisumu County.

In yet another study done in Lagos Nigeria, Igwe and Minai (2011) wanted to find out the effect of location on performance of small firms. From the physical geography perspective, location of a feature can be established as either absolute or relative location by use of coordinate system or reference to something else respectively (Gabler et al., 2007). In this context, location means relative location. Igwe and Minai used a cross sectional study based on questionnaire survey approach. They adopted a systematic random sampling of 300 entrepreneurs and owner managers who were registered with state government of Lagos. In the end, they found out that location had a moderating effect on the relationship between external factors, individual and firm characteristics with firm performance. The finding was in conformity with the urban economic theory in which key locations such as proximity to airport, urban centers and seafronts confer higher turnover and profit (Sinclair & Stabler, 1997). It was also consistent with perspective of Zimmerer (2005) that location significantly and positively affects the relationships, and that choosing a location which is convenient to target customers enhances growth rates and success of enterprises. Further, business location decision was influenced by proximity to raw material, business premise accessibility, quality of road network and level of economic activity in an area (Minai, 2011). The conclusion from the study was that location was a significant consideration in entrepreneurship development. However, according to their own admission, their finding was biased against trade and distribution sector. Trade and distribution services spans tourist industry and thus, leaving them out in the study discounts applicability of findings in tourism business. Also, whereas this finding was about the moderating effect of location in influencing business performance,

the current study, on the contrary, seeks to establish the moderating effect of business networks on the relationship between location and backward linkage. Therefore, the moderating effect of business network on the relationship between location and backward linkage has not been established but the current study seeks to find it out.

Khanal et al. (2014) carried out a study on tourism inter - sector linkage in Lao PDR economy. The study used international visitors` expenditure survey, and was based on input – output model. It was established that between 2003 and 2008 tourism depended heavily on such sectors as food and beverage, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, agriculture and livestock. A similar study conducted in Tanzania by Kweka et al. (2001) found out that food and beverage, fishing, staple food, whole and retail trade were most important sectors for tourism. However, another study carried out by Yobesia and Valle (2009) on the economic contribution of tourism on Kenya`s economy established that tourism had weak backward linkage with extractive activities in which most people were employed. The conclusion from Yobesia and Valle finding was that the real economic impact of tourism on local economy was weak.

From the literature, it is apparent that tourism is significantly linked with sectors of the economy such as food and beverage, wholesale and retail trade, but poorly linked with a section of the economy biased towards extractive industry. However, types of tourism enterprises that have linkages with the identified local sectors are not only unclear but also the extent to which tourism is linked with non-extractive activities within Kisumu County is not yet established. Also, the input – output model in the analysis has drawbacks as it has been found to require much data and time to construct as compared with multiplier approach which is cheaper and efficient (Jenkins & Likorish,1997). In contrast, this study will not only establish the moderating effect of business network on the relationship between type of tourism firms and backward linkage but also identify the tourism firms themselves which have such significant backward linkage with general local economy.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

Cross section survey was adopted in the study, wherein target population of 266 Tourism enterprises operating in Kisumu County was used. The enterprises consisted of hotels, lodges, guest houses, restaurants and clubs. From the target population, a stratified random sample of 106 was drawn based of Fisher Formulae. Permission for conducting research in Kisumu County was sought and granted from National Commission on Science Technology and Innovation, Kisumu County Commissioner and County Director of Education. Authorization documents were attached to the self-administered questionnaires which were distributed to the 106 Tourism Enterprises. Quantitative data were collected from the enterprises. From Table 1, the population size for the three categories of enterprises and their corresponding sample sizes drawn based on a multiplier of 0.3985 is indicated. The overall sample size of 106 enterprises was drawn, consistent with 0.075 margin of error with 95% confidence interval. The sample size was comprised of three sub groups of different sizes as shown in the Table 1.

**Table1:** The Categories and Sample Sizes of Tourism Enterprises.

CATEGORIES OF TOURISM ENTERPRISES	POPULATION	MULTIPLIER	SAMPLE
	SIZE		SIZE
Hotels, Motels and Lodges	128	0.3985	51

<b>Guest Houses</b>	<b>70</b>	0.3985	28
<b>Restaurants</b>	<b>68</b>	0.3985	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>266</b>	0.3985	106

**4. Results**

**4.1 Effect of Between-Subject Factors**

The objective was to establish the moderating effect of tourism business networks on the relationship between physical location, type of tourism enterprises and local purchase ratio. In order to achieve the foregoing objective, ANOVA based on Generalized Linear Model, was adopted. The model is formulated below as; *Local Purchase Ratio = Baseline + Location effect + Tourism Type Effect + Location\*Tourism Type Interaction Effect + Tourism Business Network Effect + Location \*TB Network Interaction Effect + Tourism Type\*TB Network Interaction Effect + Location\*Tourism Type\*TB Network Effect + Within Group Error.*

Local purchase ratio was used as the continuous dependent variable. The Between-Subject Factors included physical location factor measured at three levels namely, outskirts of Kisumu Town, within Kisumu CBD, and rural areas of Kisumu County. Type of tourism enterprise factor was measured at three levels namely hotels and lodges, guest houses, restaurants and clubs. Lastly, level of tourism business network factor was measured at two levels namely, 2 and less networks, and 3 and more networks. The measurement levels for the three factors and their respective group sizes are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2:** Levels and Group Sizes of Between-Subjects Factors.

Factors	Levels	Value Label	Group Size
Level of Networking	1	2 and less networks	42
	2	3 and more networks	64
Enterprise Location	1	Outskirt of Kisumu Town	53
	2	Within Kisumu CBD	31
	3	Rural areas within Kisumu	22
Enterprise Type	1	Hotel & lodge	51
	2	Guest house	28
	3	Restaurant & club	27

**4.2 The Main and Interacting Effects of the Factors**

From the Table 3, the moderating effect of tourism business network on the relationship between location of tourism business and local purchase ratio is significant (F value = 6.337, p value = 0.003). However, there is no significant interaction effect between level of tourism business network and type of tourism enterprise (F-value = 1.863, p value = 0.161). Generally, however, the effect of type of tourism enterprise on the local purchase ratio does

not depend on the level of business networks developed by tourism businesses. Also, the main effect of type of tourism enterprises on local purchase ratio is insignificant (F value = 0.103, p value = 0.902). Therefore, the hypothesis that the influence of location and type of tourism firm on proportion of local purchase is independent on the level of business networks in tourism is partly rejected.

**Table 3:** Test of Between-Subject Effects.

Dependent Variable: Local Purchase Ratio						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	
Corrected Model	2.102 <sup>a</sup>	16	.131	1.721	.057	
Intercept	27.185	1	27.185	356.185	.000	
Network Factor	.394	1	.394	5.163	.025	
Location	.494	2	.247	3.236	.044	
Enterprise Type	.016	2	.008	.103	.902	
Network Factor * Location	.967	2	.484	6.337	.003	
Network Factor * Enterprise Type	.284	2	.142	1.863	.161	
Location * Enterprise Type	.090	4	.022	.294	.881	
Network Factor * Location * Enterprise Type	.277	3	.092	1.210	.311	
Error	6.793	89	.076			
Total	56.521	106				
Corrected Total	8.894	105				

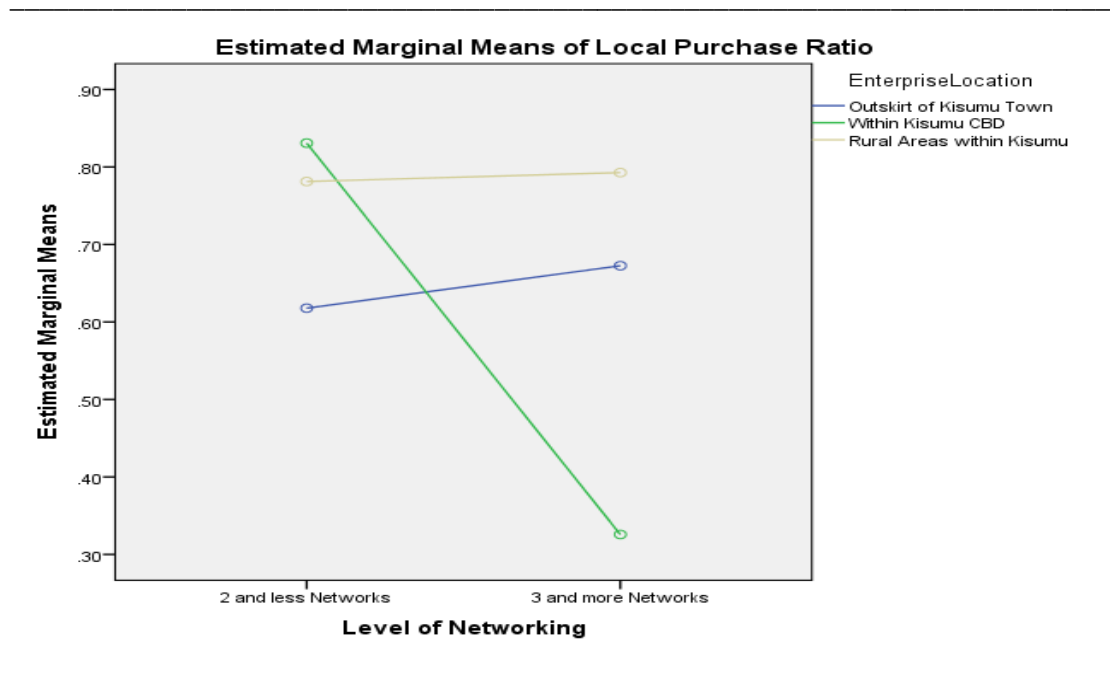
#### ***4.3 Effect of Location of Tourism Enterprises and Level of Business Networking***

According to result in Table 4, tourism enterprises with two and less business networks, and located in the outskirts of Kisumu City, Kisumu Central Business District (CBD) and rural areas have, on average, 62%, 83% and 78% respectively of their total purchases sourced from local suppliers. Also, as indicated in Figure 1 and Table 4, the moderating effect of tourism business network is positive in both rural areas and in the outskirts of Kisumu Town, but it is negative in Central Business District. Further, the moderating effect of tourism business networks is more negatively stronger in Kisumu Central Business District than it is positively stronger in rural and outskirts of Kisumu Town. Further, similar tourism enterprises located in the outskirts of Kisumu City, Kisumu CBD and rural areas of Kisumu County, but with three and more business networks get, on average, 67%, 33% and 79% of their total input purchases from local businesses. From the result, it is apparent that tourism enterprises located in outskirts of Kisumu City and rural areas with three and more business networks outperform their counterparts with two and less business networks in creating linkages with local economy. However, tourism enterprises with two and less business networks outperform those with three and more business networks in creating local economic linkages in Kisumu CBD.

**Table 4:** Marginal Mean and Variability in Local Purchase Ratio.

Level of Networking	Enterprise Location	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
2 and less Networks	Outskirt of Kisumu Town	.618	.064	.490	.745
	Within Kisumu CBD	.831	.078	.677	.985
	Rural Areas within Kisumu	.781 <sup>a</sup>	.120	.544	1.019
3 and more Networks	Outskirt of Kisumu Town	.673	.073	.527	.818
	Within Kisumu CBD	.326	.107	.114	.538
	Rural Areas within Kisumu	.793	.074	.646	.939

a. Based on modified population marginal mean.



**Figure 1:** Moderating Effect of Tourism Business Networks.

## 5. Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

The moderating effect of tourism business networks on relationship between physical location of tourism enterprises and local purchase ratio was found to be significantly positive in rural areas and outskirts of Kisumu City but significantly negative in Central Business District. But from the previous findings of Cai and Szedl (2016), business networks was found to be positively correlated with firm performance and the performance was moderated by location (Igwe & Minai, 2011). However, when firm performance is interpreted to mean the extent to which the firm creates linkage with local enterprises, then current finding is partly consistent with that of Cai and Szedl with regards to tourism enterprises in rural and outskirts of Kisumu County, but partly inconsistent with regards to tourism enterprises in Central Business District of Kisumu County. Further, the current findings differ from that of Igwe and Minai as the study focused on moderating effect of tourism business networks on the relationship between physical location and firm performance. Therefore, on the basis of the finding, the contribution of the current study is the revelation that the effect of business network on firm performance is not only positive but it can also be negative, and it varies with the location of tourism enterprises. The current study also deviates from previous studies of Wickham (2006), Bickydyke(1996) and Baggio et al. (2008) in that it has established the strength and directional of the interaction effect of business networks on the relationship between enterprise physical location, and extent of tourism backward linkage with Kisumu County's economy. The moderating effect of tourism business networks has been established to be strongest but negative in Kisumu Central Business District, but positively more stronger in the outskirts of Kisumu City than it is in rural areas of Kisumu County.

The implication is that tourism enterprises, in extensive business network and located in rural areas and outskirt of Kisumu Town, tended to purchase more inputs from local suppliers than from suppliers based outside Kisumu County. On the contrary, tourism enterprises with extensive business networks which are located in Kisumu Central Business District, generally tended to purchase more inputs from suppliers based outside of Kisumu County than those based within. In order for increase in business network developed by tourism enterprises within the County to have positive effect on tourism backward linkage with local economy, such networks amongst tourism enterprises in rural and outskirts of Kisumu County were most likely developed with other local businesses both in tourist industry and outside the industry. Therefore, expansive business networks amongst tourism enterprises, based in rural areas and areas peripheral to the City, are likely to boost local industrialization which can help alleviate poverty in rural areas. Most tourism businesses located in Central Business District are, generally, large enterprises owned by businessmen who are not residents of Kisumu County. Such businesses rely on resource markets external to Kisumu County. Thus, expansive business networks amongst tourism enterprises located in central business district or urban areas lead to increased income leakages causing low level of local industrialization unless county government initiate structural adjustment in the local economy geared towards improving local production, and making such local output more attractive to city-based tourism enterprises than those from resource markets external to the County's economy. Therefore, it seems that collaborative strategies amongst Tourism Enterprises in rural areas can invigorate local economy than competition amongst them, while increased competition amongst tourism enterprises in Kisumu Central Business District, as opposed to cooperation, is healthy for the local economy and suppliers.

As a limitation, the finding from the study does not provide general picture of the general economic relationship between tourism enterprises and local micro and small businesses in Kenya. The sample drawn from tourism enterprises located only in Kisumu County and thus cannot be generalized to all tourism enterprises in Kenya. Secondly, owners of local micro and small businesses within Kisumu County were not directly involved in the study. Data



pertaining local owners of micro and small enterprises was obtained from tourism enterprises to which they supplied inputs.

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