Original Scientific Article

Tourism Destination Competitiveness and Entrepreneurial Development in South-West Region, Nigeria

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The study is based on how tourism destination competitiveness enhances entrepreneurial development. The study aims to assess the factors contributing to the region's tourism competitiveness and examine the role of entrepreneurial activities in fostering its development.
The study adopted a survey research method, a structured questionnaire was used in collecting primary data, and the data were analysed using SMART PLS for structural equation modelling and path analysis.
The study's findings identified the role of tourism competitiveness in entrepreneurship development. The results reveal that facilitating indicators are the most significant measure of destination competitiveness influenced by entrepreneurial development. In contrast, the presence of local businesses at the destination is the most significant measure of entrepreneurial development influenced by destination competitiveness. The observed variables also indicate that destination attraction is critical to the facilitating indicators since it is the most significant variable driving core indicators. Therefore, it is concluded that the competitiveness of tourism destinations plays a significant role in developing entrepreneurship.

Keywords: tourism, tourism destination, destination competitiveness, entrepreneurial development

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Introduction

Tourism substantially impacts economies, as exemplified by its role in job creation and business establishment (Tleuberdinova et al., 2021). This phenomenon underscores the intricate relationship between tourism and entrepreneurship. On the one hand, understanding of entrepreneurship is gaining clarity, but further advancement is required in comprehending policies that can effectively unlock its potential (Szerb et al., 2017). Ambiguities in entrepreneurship measurement and definition have led to debates. While scholars acknowledge the multifaceted nature of entrepreneurship (Capello & Lenzi, 2016), substantial improvements are needed in measuring entrepreneurship development. Johnson (2017) suggests assessing entrepreneurship development through local job creation, new business establishments, and enhanced well-being. Entrepreneurship is a global concept that spans diverse sectors of the economy, of which tourism is one of the sectors.

As a significant labour provider encompassing diverse services for tourists, the tourism sector's growth is vital (Akbaba, 2012). Its impact on the economy, society, and the environment is widely acknowled-

ged (Özyurt and Kantarcı, 2017). Recognising the intertwined influence of tourism and entrepreneurship on the economy, a mutually beneficial relationship emerges. However, existing literature predominantly focuses on entrepreneurship's impact on tourism development, giving rise to the concept of tourism entrepreneurship. Undoubtedly, entrepreneurship often propels tourism development, supported by studies such as Chhanda and Mohammad (2018), Nongsiej and Shimray (2017), and Serafimova and Petrevska (2018). The interplay between tourism and entrepreneurship is reciprocal; enhanced tourism competitiveness attracts more visitors, increasing the demand for services, while a thriving entrepreneurial landscape enhances a destination's allure and competitiveness. This mutual relationship is of interest to researchers seeking empirical evidence of how destination competitiveness drives entrepreneurial growth. Given tourism's pivotal role in economies, it is imperative to harness this potential for economic enhancement, especially in Nigeria, where sluggish development in the tourism sector has hindered competitiveness and entrepreneurial opportunities (Esu, 2015).

Despite the growing recognition of the symbiotic relationship between tourism and entrepreneurship, the specific interplay between tourism destination competitiveness and the entrepreneurial development of host communities in the Southwest region of Nigeria still needs to be explored. While existing literature has highlighted the significance of tourism and entrepreneurship in driving economic growth and job creation, there needs to be more empirical evidence and comprehensive analysis regarding how the competitive attributes of a tourism destination directly influence and foster entrepreneurial activities within the local communities. This gap in the knowledge limits our understanding of the mechanisms through which a competitive tourism destination can stimulate entrepreneurial development and, consequently, enhance the overall economic sustainability of the region. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the impact of destination competitiveness on entrepreneurial development and economic growth. It seeks to ascertain how a competitive tourism destination can foster a conducive environment for entrepreneurial endeavours within host communities. This research clarifies the limited understanding of how destination competitiveness directly shapes and promotes local entrepreneurial activities, thereby enhancing the economic prospects of the Southwest region in Nigeria.

Literature Review

Tourist Destination Competitiveness

The ability of a tourism destination to increase its appeal to locals and visitors by providing customer-oriented tourism services and high-quality, novel, value-added products that tourists care about, is referred to as tourism competitiveness (Sul et al., 2020). These services help the destination gain domestic and global market share and maintain its market position while competing with its competitors. A tourist destination is envisioned from the supply perspective as a hub of amenities and services specifically designed to meet the various needs of visitors, thereby presenting an amalgamated selection of tourist services rooted in the inherent potential of the destination (Hodson, 2021). In the context of the rising awareness and advancement of tourism on a global scale, fierce competition has formed among destinations, creating a situation where each competing location commands different aspects of patronage (Jose et al., 2022). The essential idea of destination competitiveness is that prominent destinations have clear competitive advantages (Küçükaltan & Pirnar, 2016). The ability of a place to increase tourism expenditure, gradually attract visitors while assuring their satisfaction, and concurrently improve the well-being of the local population sustainably is at the core of its competitiveness (Rey-Maquieira and Ramos, 2016). According to Özyurt and Kantarcı (2017), a destination's competitiveness must be strong to rise above similar locations. Competitiveness refers explicitly to a destination's ability to create and incorporate value-added offerings that sustain its inherent assets and market position relative to rivals (Murayama et al., 2022).

For tourism locations, various scholars have created various competitiveness models (Azzopardi & Nash, 2016; Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). The macro-environment and micro-environment supply factors (core resources and attractors, supporting

factors and resources, destination management, and qualifying determinants) that affect destination competitiveness were proposed by Crouch and Ritchie (1999). The attractiveness-based conceptual framework of Vengesayi (2003) covers how tourists perceive a destination, whereas destination competitiveness focuses on attaining a favourable competitive position within an industry. As a result, a destination's allure crystallises into its image, illuminating the crucial role that image plays in defining the destination's competitive edge. To remain a tourist contender in the modern day, each place must respect the competition. Customer retention takes priority over acquiring new customers in terms of corporate goals because it increases revenue and reduces costs (Qu et al., 2011). The retention and satisfaction of customers, which are essential components, are the sine qua non of destination competitiveness. Every destination is responsible for encouraging visitor retention, which is a requirement supporting its competitiveness. As stated by Buhalis (2000), and supported by Vengesayi (2003), the competitiveness of a destination is woven into the fabric of the economic health of the local population. A destination that does not affect its visiting community loses its competitive edge. The yardsticks and markers include numerous variables and indicators to assess a tourism destination's competitiveness.

Perna et al. (2018) contend that uniformly applying a single set of competitiveness indicators across all locations and historical periods would be oversimplified. A generalised method of competitiveness measurement is impossible due to each tourist location's unique traits and nuances. As a result, what constitutes competition for one location may differ significantly for another. The research by Mior Shariffuddin et al. (2022), which discovered that no standard collection of objects, traits, or indicators can assess the competitiveness of tourism locations, lends support to this idea. The complex and varying characteristics of definitions and measurement components from diverse perspectives illustrate the complexity of competitiveness of destinations. The sources of comparative and competitive advantages of tourist destination competitiveness (TDC), focused on elements like destination image, tourism experience, and loyalty, also have a synergistic relationship (Dupeyras & MacCallum, 2013). Goffi and Marco (2018) studied tourist competitiveness in the context of small and medium locations in Italy. Their findings show that important elements like managerial skill, service quality, and regulations that support local empowerment are necessary for excellent Italian small and medium destinations (SMDS) to be competitive.

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (2016) identifies a wide range of metrics, divided into two areas, to measure the competitiveness of tourism destinations using indicators: (i) core indicators, which include metrics like tourism direct gross domestic product, inbound tourism revenues per visitor by source market, overnights in all types of lodging, exports of tourism services, labour productivity in tourism services, purchasing power parity (PPPS) and tourism prices, country entry visa requirements, natural resources and biodiversity, cultural and creative resources, visitor satisfaction, and the national tourism action plan; and (ii) supplemental indicators. These determinant elements are crucial in determining a destination's status relative to other locations depending on particular characteristics. This can be compared to other places to see how competitive and resilient it is. On the other hand, the indicators reveal a destination's competitive advantages and weaknesses (Dwyer & Kim, 2003).

Tourism Entrepreneurship

The tourism industry is considered a vital part of the economy globally due to its capacity to generate revenue and jobs (Musavengane et al., 2019; Woyo & Slabbert, 2021). Entrepreneurship significantly influences how economic landscapes are shaped by encouraging new business initiatives, facilitating employment openings, broadening market perspectives, and promoting an innovative culture (Moriano et al., 2012). Although there are many different perspectives on entrepreneurship, Hernández-Perlines et al. (2016) emphasises that it comprises a broader vision that involves invention, risk-taking, and proactive initiative in the establishment of a business. These disparities highlight the crucial economic function of

entrepreneurship, which has an impact on a variety of businesses.

Entrepreneurs are proactive seekers of revolutionary shifts, skilled at capturing hidden possibilities and adapting to dynamic circumstances (Drucker, 2017). This proactive outlook supports Pepple and Enuoh's (2020) claim that entrepreneurs prosper when they seize opportunities. This dynamic viewpoint is evident regarding the tourism industry, where business opportunities take on a distinctive dimension. The work of Montañés-Del-Río and Medina-Garrido (2020), who emphasise how the tourism business differs from other sectors regarding perception and conversion of entrepreneurial opportunities into concrete tourism products and services, sheds light on this. Fostering entrepreneurial growth in the tourism industry requires the creation of an ecosystem that values innovative thought, calculated risk-taking, and synergistic engagement between people and businesses. Entrepreneurs are crucial in reshaping this environment. They identify unmet needs in the industry, develop creative solutions, and compile value-added services that suit the constantly changing preferences of travellers. Entrepreneurs are the driving force behind the development of fledgling ideas into successful businesses in this dynamic interplay, while addressing the changing needs of the contemporary tourism landscape (Pepple & Enuoh, 2020). In essence, entrepreneurship's broad impact affects many aspects of economic growth, and in the context of tourism, it acts as a catalyst for innovation, value creation, and adaptable responses to a constantly changing market (Hernández-Perlines et al., 2016; Pepple & Enuoh, 2020).

Tourism Destination Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship

Competitiveness serves as a predictive gauge for the economic sustainability of tourism in destinations, particularly where leakages and linkages with employment and income generation opportunities quantify the magnitude of its economic impact (Mtapuri et al., 2021). Competitiveness is a complex construct, whose measurement has not been standardised, as several aspects are included in its composition (Dodds & Holmes, 2020; Woyo, 2018). Tourism competitiveness is directly related to a country's economic growth (Michael et al., 2019). Due to the economic benefits of tourism, tourist destinations globally are increasing investments in the industry to boost local economies (Reisinger et al., 2018). Işıka et al. (2019) delved into the potential correlation between tourism and entrepreneurship, revealing a surge in knowledge production in this realm since the 2010s. In the realm of economic growth, the role of entrepreneurship has become progressively more prominent. Nonetheless, the current literature's comprehension of policies to cultivate entrepreneurship's latent potential remains constrained (Szerb et al., 2019).

Koitamet (2018) posits that the dynamics of 'push' and 'pull' factors extend their influence to encompass entrepreneurship, signifying that a medley of forces drives various phenomena, including entrepreneurship. According to Made and Yuni (2018), push factors for tourists are those factors that make a person want to travel and these are mainly internal psychologic motives, while the pull factors are the external factors that affect the wish of tourists to travel for the fulfilment of a need or desire. Within the entrepreneurial context, 'push' factors encapsulate internal and external circumstances that impel individuals toward entrepreneurial endeavours. Such circumstances might involve dissatisfaction with conventional employment, yearning for autonomy, job displacement, or pursuing financial autonomy. Conversely, 'pull' factors beckon individuals towards entrepreneurship by presenting enticing prospects like elevated earnings, the allure of pioneering innovative products or services, a profound resonance with a specific industry, or the prospect of personal and vocational advancement. Therefore, Koitamet's (2018) assertion underscores the intricate interplay between inherent motivations and external opportunities in embracing entrepreneurship, mirroring the multifaceted dynamics that steer other facets of life or phenomena.

Examining Romanian entrepreneurship within the tourism and hospitality sector, Iuliana et al. (2016) dissected micro-level influencers that mould local entrepreneurship and the dynamics affecting the tourism and hospitality industry. Their investigation

Table 1 Operationalisation of Variables

Variable Type	Latent Variable	Observed Variable	Measurement
Independent Variable	Destination Competitiveness (DC)	Core Resource Indicators (CRI) – Safety and Security (CRISS), Accessibility (CRIAC), Infrastructure (CRII) and Hospitality Standard (CRIHOS)	Questionnaire Items: CRISS1,2,3; CRIAC, CRII,2,3; CRIHOS1,2,3,4,5,6
		Facilitating Indicators (FI) – Quality of visitors' experience (FIQUE), Attractions (FIATT), Ancillary Services (FIANS), and Climatic and Environmental conditions (FICEC).	Questionnaire Items: FIQUE 1,2,3,4; FIATT 1, 2,3,4; FIANS 1, 2,3,4; FICEC 1, 2, 3,4
		Supporting Indicators (SI) – Political indicators (SIPI), Economic and Socio-cultural indicators (SIESC) and Destination Management (SIDM)	Questionnaire Items : SIPI 1, 2, 3; SIESC 1, 2, 3, 4; SIDM 1, 2, 3, 4
Dependent Variable	Entrepreneurial Development	More local people are employed in the destination as a result of tourism (ED1) The presence of tourism in the destination enhances the creation of jobs (ED2) More local businesses are present at the destination (ED3) There is a high level of creativity and innovation in the destination (ED4) Tourism helps with the welfare of the residents of the host communities (ED5)	Questionnaire Items ED1, ED2, ED3, ED4, ED5,

Note Table showing the operationalisation of the variables used in the study.

disclosed a symbiotic relationship between entrepreneurship and tourism, indicating a mutual influence between the two domains. Hence, the present study in the context of Nigeria, with a particular focus on the southwest region.

Research Methodology

The central objective of this study is to investigate the dynamic interaction between the competitiveness of tourism destinations and the expansion of entrepreneurial endeavours within host communities, with a specific focus on the southwest region of Nigeria. The primary aim is to unveil and comprehend the essential contribution of competitive tourism destinations in propelling economic advancement within the immediate local context. In pursuit of this goal, the study undertakes the identification and comprehensive evaluation of critical variables that serve as quantifiable indicators of tourism destination competitiveness and the evolution of entrepreneurial activities. Through rigorous analysis, the research delves into the intricate interrelationships between these identified variables for the measure of destination competitiveness (Ferreira & Perks, 2020) and entrepreneurial development (Johnson, 1990). These variables are discussed under the section on measures of destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development. The study thereby sheds light on how they mutually influence and shape the trajectory of economic progress and sustainable growth within the South-West region of Nigeria.

A survey research design was employed to conduct this study, employing a structured questionnaire utilising a 5-point Likert scale format. This approach facilitated primary data collection, complementing secondary data from a thorough literature review. The study was conducted across six states within the South-West region of Nigeria, encompassing six tourist attractions, one in each state (destination). These attractions include Lekki Conservation Centre (LCC,

Lagos State), Olumo Rock (Ogun State), Ikogosi Warm Springs (Ekiti State), Idanre Hills (Ondo State) and Agodi Park and Gardens (Oyo State). These attractions were selected to encompass a diverse spectrum, including well-established sites with documented visitor arrivals and less-developed ones with varied records of tourist footfall. Visitors to these attractions were selected as the target population for the study. Employing a purposive sampling technique, significant tourist attractions from each state were chosen as the target population, guided by the availability of tourist arrival data to enrich the study's insights. The researcher personally visited these selected attractions to get visitor numbers data, engaging with tourists and operators of small and medium-sized enterprises.

The sampling frame for this study consists of the tourists to the selected attraction in each of the selected states. The questionnaire was distributed using the assistance of research assistants at the different attractions. Each selected attraction is purposively selected based on availability of tourist arrival records. This record provided the data on the population of the study. With a target population of 314,843 individuals (data on tourist arrivals to the six attractions before the COVID-19 pandemic), the sample size was determined as 1,530 using the Raosoft online sample calculator. Data regarding visits to these attractions was acquired before the COVID-19 pandemic. In alignment with this, 1,530 questionnaires were disseminated amongst the participants. The gathered data underwent a rigorous and comprehensive analysis encompassing descriptive and inferential methodologies. The operationalisation of the variables in the questionnaire is outlined in detail in Table 1. Descriptive analyses are showcased through tables displaying frequencies and percentages, thereby elucidating the socio-economic characteristics of the study participants. In contrast, analytical techniques such as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's test, alongside confirmatory factor analysis, are presented in Table 3 to bolster and underscore the study's methodological robustness. Within the realm of inferential statistics, the process of hypothesis testing unfolds through the conduit of structural equation modelling. This analytical approach explores the influence of destination competitiveness on the host

Table 2 Socio-Economic Characteristic Distribution of Respondents

Demography	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	378	37.5
Female	630	62.5
Age		
16–25	456	45.2
26–35	252	25.0
36–45	180	17.9
46–55	80	7.9
56–65	28	2.8
66-above	12	1.2
Qualification		
Secondary	108	10.7
OND	214	21.2
B.SC/HND	424	42.1
Master's	202	20.2
PhD	40	4.0
Others	10	1
Marital Status		
Single	600	59.5
Married	388	38.5
Divorced	16	1.6
Widowed	4	.4
Occupation		
Student	600	59.5
Civil servants/professionals	172	17.1
Medical practitioners	40	4.0
Entrepreneurs	116	11.5
Artisans/Farmers	44	4.4
Clergy	8	.8
Contractors	12	1.2
Retired	16	1.6
Distribution of Questionnaire		
Osun	48	4.8
Lagos	268	26.6
Ogun	124	12.3
Ondo	60	6.0
Ekiti	68	6.7
Oyo	440	43.7

Note Table showing the socio-economic characteristic distribution of respondents to the questionnaire.

Table 4 Factor Loading of Destination Competitiveness Dimensions and Entrepreneurial Development

	Variables	Factor loading
Core Resources Indicators (Safety and Security)	I feel safe and secure in and around this destination	0.828
	Non-availability of security in place can stop me from visiting the destination	0.871
	If I feel threatened in a destination, it will affect my revisit of the destination	0.833
Core Resources Indicators (Accessibility)	It is always easy for me to access this destination	0.822
	The visa requirements are too stringent	0.821
	The accessibility rules and regulations are too stringent	0.683
Core Resource Indicator (Infrastructure)	The roads are well constructed	0.850
	There is adequate power supply	0.896
	Medical facilities are well situated for accessibility	0.851
	The transportation networks are well organized and there are diverse means of transport	0.866
Core Resource Indicator (Hospitality Standards)	The accommodation services are good	0.772
	There is a diversity of accommodation types in the destination	0.805
	The quality of accommodation services provided are equal to the value for the money	0.801
	The food is a representation of the culture of the destination	0.823
	I look forward to the food provided at the destination	0.810
	The food is well prepared in accordance with safety standards	0.777
Facilitating Indicator (Quality of Experience)	My expectations are met at the destination	0.826
	There is the delivery of high-quality service at the destination	0.857
	I get value for money in the destination tourism experience	0.809
	Management capabilities of tourism firms	0.674
Facilitating Indicators (Attraction)	The attractions are attractive and properly managed	0.802
	The attractions are easily accessible	0.857
	The attractions are well equipped to meet tourists' needs	0.864
	The attractions provide pleasurable and enjoyable experiences	0.866
Facilitating Indicators (Ancillary Services)	There are efficient communication services	0.821
	There are enough souvenir shops at the destination	0.843
	I am fully satisfied with the delivery of service at the Destination	0.863
	The staff are well trained for the delivery of quality service	0.802
Facilitating Indicators (Climatic and Environmental)	The weather at the destination is consistently favourable	0.781
	Environmentally compatible approach to tourism development planning	0.772
	Public sector commitment to minimising negative environmental impacts of tourism	0.822
	The festival of the destination is an attractive element of the destination	0.804
	I love to participate in the local activities of the destination	0.775
Facilitating Indicators (Social and Political)	The government is committed to tourism	0.856
	There is a high level of political lawlessness	0.815
	There is political stability at the destination	0.846

Continued on next page

Table 4 Continued from previous page

	Variables	Factor loading
Supporting Indicators (Socio-Economic)	Regularity of tourist inflows	0.848
	Presence of local businesses	0.830
	Public sector commitment to maximising the economic impacts of tourism on the local community	0.873
	Public sector commitment to minimising negative social impacts of tourism on the local community	0.829
Supporting Indicator (Destination Management)	Effectiveness in crafting tourism experiences	0.796
	Tourist destination communication and visitor satisfaction management	0.788
	Tourist guidance and information	0.770
	Promotion of partnerships among tourist businesses	0.756
Entrepreneurial Development	More local people are employed in the destination as a result of tourism	0.715
	The presence of tourism in the destination enhances the creation of jobs	0.700
	More local businesses are present at the destination	0.785
	There is a high level of creativity and innovation in the destination	0.722
	Tourism helps with the welfare of the residents of the host communities	0.679
	Tourism gives room for more businesses to be established	0.649
	There are no stringent rules to the establishment of a business at the destination	0.698

Note Table 4 is the presentation of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the variables for the study. The table shows adequate loading of each of the variables, showing their significance in the measure of destination competitiveness and entrepreneurship.

communities' entrepreneurial development. The execution of this analysis entails the utilisation of both SPSS and SMART PLS software, thereby facilitating a thorough exploration of the collected dataset.

The Hypothesis of the Study

The study was set to test this hypothesis:

HO *There is no significant relationship between destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development*

H1 *There is a significant relationship between destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development*

Measures of Destination Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship Development

Destination competitiveness (DC) is measured in core resource indicators – CRI (safety and security – CRISS, accessibility – CRIACC, infrastructure – CRIINF, and hospitality standard (CRIHOS) (Accommodation and Food); facilitating indicators-FI (quality of the visitor's experience (FIQUE), attractions (FIATT), ancillary services (FIANS) and climatic and environmental conditions (FICEC)); and supporting indicators- SI (Political indicators (SIPI), Economic and Socio-cultural indicators (SIESC) and Destination Management (SIDM)) as indicated by Ferreira and Perks (2020). Johnson (1990) explains that entrepreneurship development is measured by More local people are employed in the destination as a result of tourism (ED1), The presence of tourism in the destination enhances the creation of jobs (ED2), More local businesses are present at the destination (ED3), There is a high level of creativity and innovation in the destination (ED4), Tourism helps with the welfare of the residents of the host communities (ED5). Table 1 is a representation of the operationalisation of the research variables and how each variable was measured.

Findings

One thousand five hundred thirty (1,530) questionnaires were distributed, and 1,008 questionnaires were retrieved and considered usable for analysis. The study achieved a response rate of 65.8 percent, which was considered sufficient for the study based on Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), who assert that 50 per-

Table 5 Internal Consistency and Convergence Validity for the Effect of Destination Competitiveness on Entrepreneurial Development

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
DESCOM	0.970	0.971	0.972	0.536
ED	0.832	0.837	0.874	0.569

Note Table 5 is a representation of reflective measurement which is part of the structural equation modelling. The table shows the internal consistency convergence validity, showing Cronbach's alpha, rho alpha, composite reliability and average variance extracted. Each of these indicates consistency.

Table 6 Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker and HMT for the Effect of Destination Competitiveness on Entrepreneurial Development

		DESCOM	ED
Fornell-Larcker	DESCOM	0.660	
	ED	0.584	0.707
HMT	DESCOM		
	ED	0.646	

Note Table 6 shows the discriminant validity of the variables. This is measured using Fornell-Larcker and HMT tests; both indicate that there are not discriminant issues.

cent is deemed suitable and sufficient for analysis. The following sections further elaborate on the findings of the study.

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the socio-economic attributes exhibited by the surveyed individuals. From 1,008 responses, the gender distribution reveals that 37.5% of the participants are male, while the remaining 62.5% are female. Exploring the demographic composition based on age, the data shows that the age range of 16–25 constitutes the largest segment, accounting for 45.2% of the respondents. Meanwhile, those aged between 26 and 35 make up 25% of the sample, followed by individuals aged 36–45, representing 17.9% of the total. Further segmentation indicates that 7.9% fall within the 46–55 age group, 2.8% are between 56 and 65, and a smaller portion, comprising 1.2%, is 65 years and above. Education levels among the respondents are diverse, with a substantial majority holding B.Sc./HND degrees, constituting 42.1% of the total. Conversely, a minor fraction of 4.0% possess PhD qualifications. Another segment encompasses individuals whose educational background is unspecified but includes various forms of education, such as diplomas and certificates, totalling 1%.

Marital status reveals that most respondents, amounting to 59.5%, are single, while 38.5% are married. Additionally, a smaller proportion is divided between divorced individuals, constituting 1.6%, and those who are widowed, making up 0.4%. Occupational distribution uncovers that a considerable portion of the participants are students, comprising 59.5% of the respondents. Among other professions, civil servants constitute 17.1%, medical practitioners represent 4.0%, entrepreneurs account for 11.5%, artisans/farmers comprise 4.4%, contractors comprise 1.2%, clergy 8% and retired individuals contribute 1.6%. Geographically, the survey draws participants from various states. Specifically, 4.8% of respondents are from Osun state, 26.6% from Lagos state, 12.3% from Ogun state, 6.0% from Ondo state, 6.7% from Ekiti state, and the largest proportion, totalling 43.7%, hail from Oyo State. This distribution comprehensively represents the socio-economic characteristics observed among the surveyed individuals across different regions.

Test of Model Fit

KMO and Bartlett's test and Confirmatory Factor Analysis were the measures used to test for goodness of fit. KMO measures sampling adequacy (which determines if the responses given with the sample are adequate), which should be close to 0.5 for satisfactory factor analysis to proceed. Kaiser (1974) recommends 0.5 (value for KMO) as a minimum (barely accepted), values between 0.7–0.8 are acceptable, and values abo-

Table 7 Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) for the Effect of Destination Competitiveness on Entrepreneurial Development

DCCRIMSS1	2.264	DCFICEC3	2.956
DCCRISS2	2.593	DCFICEC4	2.769
DCCRISS3	2.672	DCFICEC5	2.914
DCCRIACC1	2.330	DCFIQVE1	3.631
DCCRIACC2	2.046	DCFIQVE2	3.267
DCCRIACC3	1.416	DCFIQVE3	2.292
DCINF1	3.719	DCFIQVE4	2.309
DCINF2	3.614	DCSIDM1	3.401
DCINF3	3.704	DCSIDM2	2.776
DCINF4	3.353	DCSIDM3	2.093
DCHOS1	2.794	DCSIDM4	2.538
DCHOS2	3.295	DCSIESCI1	3.294
DCHOS3	3.207	DCSIESCI2	2.545
DCHOS4	3.046	DCSIESCI3	3.274
DCHOS5	3.069	DCSIESCI4	2.711
DCHOS6	2.764	DCSIPI1	2.762
DCFIANS1	3.287	DCSIPI2	2.199
DCFIANS2	2.734	DCSIPI3	3.090
DCFIANS3	3.038	DCSIPI4	3.568
DCFIANS4	2.799	ENTDEV1	1.812
DCFIATT1	2.978	ENTDEV2	1.646
DCFIATT2	3.162	ENTDEV3	1.969
DCFIATT3	2.953	ENTDEV4	1.650
DCFIATT4	3.088	ENTDEV5	1.579
DCFICEC1	2.583	ENTDEV6	1.423
DCFICEC2	2.717	ENTDEV7	1.575

Note Table 7 is a representation of the test of collinearity tested by variance inflation factor. Each of the loadings is below 5.0 which indicates that there is no collinearity issues with the variables.

ve 0.9 are superb. KMO statistics were applied to each latent grouping. The sample is considered adequate if the value of the Kaiser Mayer-Olkin (KMO) measure is more significant than 0.50. Bartlett's test of sphericity for each variable also reached a statistical significance that was reflected by a $p < 0.001$, thereby supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. As shown in Table 3 (see appendix), all the variables for measuring destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development surpassed the satisfactory value of 0.5. for the measure of destination competitiveness: core resources indicators – safety and security – 0.821, accessibility 0.701, infrastructure – 0.630, hospitality standards – 0.824; facilitating indicators – quality of experience – 0.852, attraction – 0.756, ancillary services – 0.824, climatic and environmental – 0.814, and, social and political – 0.805; and the supporting indicators measured by socio-economic 0.798 and destination management – 0.830. In contrast, entrepreneurial development variables were: more local people are employed in the destination as a result of tourism, the presence of tourism in the destination enhances the creation of jobs, more local businesses are present at the destination, there is a high level of creativity and innovation in the destination, and tourism helps with the welfare of the residents of the host communities. The summation of these variables was measured with a score of 0.687.

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is a multivariate statistical procedure used to test how well the measured variables represent the number of constructs. Hair et al. (2019) established that the CFA measures from .60 and above are sufficient for a specific variable. Hence, the results of the CFA of each variable measured (see Table 4) showed the sufficiency of the various measures as all met with the recommendation of Hair et al. (2019). As shown in Table 3, the KMO and Bartlett's test of all the variables indicates that they support the factorability of the correlation matrix.

Structural Equation Modelling

Multiple regression analysis was conducted through structural equation modelling to evaluate the influence of destination competitiveness on the entrepreneurial development of tourism gateway communities in South-West Nigeria. For this analysis, a measurement model and structural model were carried out. Destination competitiveness was measured using the following dimensions: CRI (Core Resources Indicator), FI (Facilitating Indicator), and SI (Supporting Indicator), while entrepreneurial development was measured using statement items such as 'More local people are employed in the destination as a result of tourism', 'The presence of tourism in the destination enhances the creation of jobs', 'More local businesses are present at the destination', 'There is a high level of creativity and innovation in the destination', 'Tourism helps with the welfare of the residents of the host communities', 'Tourism gives room for more businesses to be established', and 'There are no stringent rules to the establishment of business at the destination'.

Table 8 Path Coefficient of Destination Competitiveness on Entrepreneurial Development

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	2.5%	97.5%	P Values
DESCOM → ED	0.433	0.435	0.030	14.513	0.373	0.489	0.000

Note Table 8 shows the path coefficient analysis of the relationship between destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development. The result indicates a significant relationship between destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development.

Table 9 Interaction Between Destination Competitiveness and Entrepreneurial Development

Variables	*ED*				
DESCOM	*B*	*SE*	*B*	*T-stat*	*P-Value*
	0.433	*0.030*	*0.435*	*14. 513*	*0.000*
Adj R^2	*0.186*				
F-Stat	*230.121*				
P-Value	*(.0000)*				

Note The analysis shows that an 18.6% (Adj $R^2 = 0.186$) variation in destination competitiveness is explained by entrepreneurial development. The result also indicates that a unit increase in entrepreneurial development ($B = 0.433$) leads to a 0.433 increase in destination competitiveness. The standardised beta ($\beta = 0.435$) shows a direct and positive relationship between entrepreneurial development and destination competitiveness. The t-stat ($t = 14.513$; $p = 0.000$) shows that entrepreneurial development significantly affects destination competitiveness.

Measurement Model

Table 5 represents the internal consistency and convergent validity of the effect of destination competitiveness on the entrepreneurial development of tourism gateway communities. The Cronbach Alpha (CA), rho_A, and composite reliability (CR) met the threshold of 0.70, with a higher value over the minimum standard. For the average variance extracted (AVE), the two variables also met the threshold of 0.50. For destination competitiveness, the CA is 0.970, rho_A is 0.971, CR IS 0.972 and AVE is 0.536, while entrepreneurial development has the values CA 0.832, rho_A 0.837, CR 0.874 and AVE 0.569. Overall, the table indicates that both constructs ('DESCOM' and 'ED') have high levels of internal consistency and reliability, as evidenced by the high values of Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability. Additionally, while the AVE values are above the threshold of 0.5, they could be further improved to enhance the convergent validity of the constructs. This suggests that a significant proportion of the variance in the observed items is captured by the underlying constructs, supporting the validity of the measurement model.

Table 6 is the Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity of the effect of destination competitiveness on entrepreneurial development. The values for the two variables indicate no discriminant value issues as they all met with the threshold of 0.90, with none of the variables higher than that value. The HTM result of discriminant validity, as shown in Table 6, also indicates no discriminant issue as the threshold is not passed. For the Fornell-Larcker criterion, both constructs' diagonal values (square roots of AVE) are higher than the off-diagonal correlation value (0.584). This suggests that there is discriminant validity between the DESCOM and ED constructs; they are distinct. The HMT ratio for ED (0.646) is higher than the correlation between ED and DESCOM (0.584), which indicates that the ED construct is adequately distinct from DESCOM. Based on these results, there is evidence of discriminant validity between the DESCOM and ED constructs. They are distinct concepts, and their

shared variance is reasonable. The HMT ratio further supports the distinctiveness of the ED construct.

Structural Model

Commencing with the collinearity analysis, as depicted in Table 7, it is evident that the prescribed threshold of 5 is satisfactorily met. Notably, none of the values surpass this threshold, aligning harmoniously with the recommendation outlined by Hair et al. (2019) that advocates for a variance inflation factor (VIF) approximation around 3 or even below. The tabulated data furnishes VIF values for diverse variables, wherein VIF serves as a statistical yardstick utilised to assess multicollinearity within a regression analysis. Multicollinearity surfaces when independent variables within a regression model display significant correlation, potentially resulting in shaky and unreliable coefficient estimations. VIF quantifies the extent to which the variance of a deduced regression coefficient escalates due to multicollinearity.

Path coefficient analysis is subsequently conducted to scrutinise the significance of the impact exerted by destination competitiveness on entrepreneurial development. Table 8 delineates this, confirming a substantial and noteworthy influence of destination competitiveness on entrepreneurial development. Path analysis is further elaborated upon in Table 8 and Figure 1. The graphical representation in Figure 1 captures the dynamic interaction between destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development. The path analysis demonstrates a commendable goodness of fit ($X^2 = 788$; $df = 172$, $p = 0.000$; $GFI = 0.97$; $RMSEA = 0.05$; $IFI = 0.96$; $CFI = 0.98$). The outcomes reveal that among the measures of destination competitiveness influenced by entrepreneurial development, facilitating indicators ($t = 52.925$; $p = 0.000$) emerge as the most pivotal. Concurrently, an increased number of local businesses at the destination ($t = 60.563$; $p = 0.000$) is the most influential determinant of entrepreneurial development impacting destination competitiveness. The variables also underscore the critical role of destination attraction ($t = 112.691$) in shaping the facilitating indicators, predominantly as the primary variable steering core resource indicators. This substantiates the findings posited by Perna et al. (2018), reiterating that a diverse set of competitiveness indicators is imperative, dispelling the notion of a singular set universally applicable across all destinations.

Table 9 further expounds upon the nexus between destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development. The analysis affirms that entrepreneurial development elucidates an 18.6% variance (Adj $R^2 = .186$) in destination competitiveness. Notably, a unit increment in entrepreneurial development ($B = 0.433$) correlates with a corresponding increase of 0.433 in destination competitiveness. The standardised beta ($\beta = 0.435$) underscores a direct and positive correlation between entrepreneurial development and destination competitiveness. The t-statistic ($t = 14.513$; $p = 0.000$) validates the substantial impact of entrepreneurial development on destination competitiveness. Based on the data, robust evidence substantiates a statistically significant relationship between the DESCOM and ED variables. This assertion is buttressed by the notably low p-value and the substantial t-statistic. As a corollary, the null hypothesis that posits an absence of a noteworthy relationship between destination competitiveness and entrepreneurial development is effectively discarded. This substantiates the profound influence of destination competitiveness on entrepreneurial development, underscoring its pivotal role. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of Findings

The findings show that destination competitiveness significantly drives entrepreneurial development. The more competitive a tourist destination becomes; the more entrepreneurial activities increase. The implication is that a competitive tourist destination in terms of contest or rivalry in providing identical items and addressing the same target demographic to grow sales, earnings, and market dominance increases entrepreneurial activities (Dimoska & Trimcev, 2012). The results reveal that facilitating factors such as attraction and quality climatic conditions are the most significant measures of competitiveness driving entrepreneurial development. The findings are consistent with the positions of Crouch et al. (2000) and Mikić et al. (2017) that a destination's tourism development must

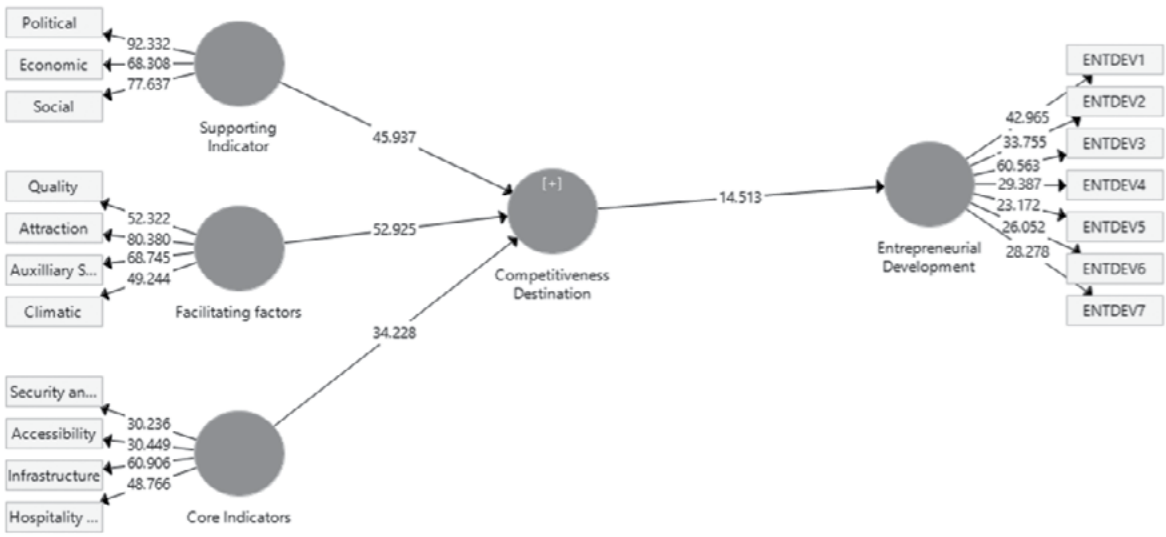

Figure 1 The path analysis achieved a goodness fit ($X^2 = 788$, $df = 172$, $p = 0.000$; GFI = 0.97; RMSEA = 0.05; IFI = 0.96; CFI = 0.98).

be sustainable for a destination to be competitive, not just economically and ecologically, but socially, culturally, and politically, leading to different entrepreneurial activities. This implies that for a destination to be competitive, the availability of attractions (both natural and artificial) is essential. According to Aina and Abiola-Oke (2016), the tourist attraction is the primary element for any destination's uniqueness among other destinations, influencing its competitiveness among other elements. Hence, as destinations become competitive, more tourists will visit the destination, creating more jobs and resulting in more local businesses coming into existence. This is because the comfort of a tourist in a destination is essential, hence the need for more service providers. These service providers could be small- and medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) or large businesses, at the destination (Pavlic et al., 2011; Goffi & Cucculelli, 2014). According to Dwyer and Kim (2003), destinations become more competitive based on the ability of the destination to deliver goods and services better than other destinations, which is determined by the experience of tourists at the destination. This is also corroborated by Rey-Maquieira and Ramos (2016) who asserted that destination competitiveness is understood by its ability to increase the expenditure of tourists through an increase in attracting tourists and ensuring their satisfaction at the destination while enhancing the well-being of the host community dwellers. Comprehensively, looking at the impact of destination competitiveness on entrepreneurial development, Rey-Maquieira and Ramos (2016) opined that the ability of a destination to increase tourism expenditure and the number of tourists to the destination, while satisfying them and ensuring the well-being of the host community sustainably, makes such a destination competitive among other destinations.

In summation, the singular nature of this study emanates from its dedicated focus on the South-West Region, empirical substantiation of the correlation, exploration of diverse entrepreneurial sectors, and pragmatic implications for policy formulation and sustainable development. The study advances the reservoir of knowledge concerning the intricate interplay between tourism and entrepreneurship, thereby proffering insights to guide decision-making and strategy formulation aimed at nurturing economic expansion and sustainable development within the unique context of the South-West Region of Nigeria.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study's findings offer a significant new understanding of the connection between the competitiveness of Nigeria's tourism destinations and the growth of the entrepreneurial sector. The correlation between these two factors is positive and statistically significant, emphasising the significance of improving destination competitiveness as a driver of entrepreneurship and regional economic development. This link strengthens tourism's ability to drive economic growth and employment creation (Cîrstea, 2014; Ajake, 2015). This viewpoint is consistent with Fakokunde's (2017) broadened definition of entrepreneurs, which includes people with the insight to see and seize business opportunities. These findings have numerous ramifications. A comparable rise in demand for numerous services, notably in the promotion area, is predicted as a destination develops and boosts its competitiveness. This increase in demand causes new company opportunities to materialise, thus spurring economic expansion.

Individuals with keen acumen who can identify and exploit these newfound opportunities assume the mantle of entrepreneurs, thereby amplifying the influence of tourism on the overall economy. This aligns with the findings of Çalkın and Işık (2017), who observe that entrepreneurship is becoming more prevalent within the tourism industry, mirroring its growth in other sectors. When appropriately utilised, the predominance of entrepreneurship in the tourism industry is evidence of the sector's substantial impact on a country's economy. This emphasises the significance of maximising the tourism industry's potential for its inherent advantages to local communities and the country's overall economic health (Çalkın & Işık, 2017). The study's distinctiveness comes in its regional emphasis, empirical confirmation of the link, analysis of various entrepreneurial sectors, and practical ramifications for sustainable policy development in the South-West Region of Nigeria. The findings add to the corpus of knowledge about the complex interactions between tourism and entrepreneurship by offering perceptions that can guide strategies for fostering economic growth and development in this particular setting.

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