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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SWOT ANALYSIS OF PLATEAU STATE AS A PRIME TOURIST DESTINATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

SWOT Analysis is the most renowned tool for auditing and analyzing the overall strategic position of a tourist destination. SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a destination. It involves identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to a destination. Plateau State, with her diversified social structure and complex business environment, poses many merits and demerits for clients, both of which affect the destination locally, nationally or internationally. Thus, a SWOT analysis becomes an indispensable exercise to be undertaken for the destination. This would allow achievable goals or objectives to be set for the destination afterward. The generic SWOT is common to almost all destinations while the specific SWOT usually applies to individual destinations based on the peculiarities and the intrinsic characteristics of each destination. In the wake of series/cycles of violent/bloody ethno-religious conflicts, bombings, terrorism and insurgencies it became critically indispensable. It was therefore critically important to categorically analyze the generic and specific SWOT analyses of Plateau State as a tourist destination. Tourism experts/practitioners/professionals and tourists were purposely identified and selected to attend interactive sessions to analyze the SWOTs of Plateau State. The results of the interactions established that Plateau state is indeed a land of beautiful sceneries, rich cultural and historical heritage and excellent/clement weather/climate. The people of the state are very hospitable and accommodating. These attributes explain some strengths of Plateau State but it was however, quickly noted that Plateau State has experienced series/cycles of violent/bloody ethno-religious conflicts, bombings, terrorism and insurgencies which are all weaknesses and threats befalling Plateau State. The state is the hub of the scenic zone in Nigeria and nicknamed as 'home of peace and tourism,' but has in coincidentally become the epicenter of communal conflicts in Nigeria. After her SWOT analyses, it is expected that Plateau State should come up with her tourism development policy and goals in order to sustainably develop, manage and promote her tourism industry to increase her tourism revenue as well as to impact on the state economy to alleviate poverty and diversify the economy of the state and the nation at large.

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INTRODUCTION

SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. By definition, Strengths (S) and Weaknesses (W) are considered to be internal factors over which you have some measure of control; while by definition, Opportunities (O) and Threats (T) are considered to be external factors over which you have essentially no control. And each destination has its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). SWOT analysis is the most renowned tool for audit and analysis of the overall strategic position of a destination and its environment.

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Its key purpose is to identify the strategies that will create a firm specific business model that will best align a destination's resources and capabilities to the requirements of the environment in which the destination operates. In other words, it is the foundation for evaluating the internal potentials and limitations and the probable/likely opportunities and threats from the external environment. It views all positive and negative factors inside and outside the destination that affect her success. A consistent study of the environment in which a destination operates help in identifying changing trends and also helps in including them in the decision-making process of the destination. Knowledge is indeed power, and knowing what the positives and negatives of your destination puts you in a more powerful position for action. In some ways a SWOT analysis pushes you to think "inside the box" by asking you to

categorize your effort in such simple opposing terms. But the purpose of this information gathering is definitely to help you move outside the box of any constraints or limitations that may have hindered you before. SWOT analysis is not in itself an action, but it can be a "support team" to help you:

- Identify the issues or problems you intend to change
- Set or reaffirm goals /objectives
- Create an action/strategic plan

SWOT analysis can help to discover areas for action. During your assessment and planning, you might keep an image in mind to help you make the most of a SWOT analysis: Look for a "stretch," not just a "fit." SWOT usually reflects your current position or situation. You can use SWOT to justify a course that has already been decided upon, but if your goal is to grow or improve, you will want to use it differently. A realistic recognition of the weaknesses and threats that exist for your effort is the first step to countering them with a robust and creative set of strengths and opportunities. SWOT landscape also indicates which underlying strength/weakness factors that have had or likely will have highest influence (Ritchie, J.R. & Crouch, G.I. (2003). Plateau State has a number of both "generic" and "specific" strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The generic SWOT is common to almost all destinations while the specific SWOT usually applies to individual destinations based on the peculiarities and the intrinsic characteristics of each destination. It was critically important to categorically analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that Plateau State exhibits as a tourist destination. This was the challenge of this study. The study was to carry out a SWOT analysis of the state as one of the leading tourist destinations in Nigeria.

Plateau state has equally been embroiled in series of insurgencies, terrorism, bombings, communal crises and conflicts between September 2001 and 2014 and these have resulted in the death of thousands of people and destruction of properties worth billions of naira. Associated with these has been the assumed loss of the positive image that the state had groomed over the years. Many residents have relocated to other preferred destinations and stream of tourists, visitors and new residents had dwindled. The reputation of the state as a "home of peace and tourism" has suffered calamitously, nationally and internationally. The coloration of the conflicts is mostly religious and ethnic or indigene ship which all bother on the very essence of the Nigerian Constitution and its nationhood. These are very sensitive emotional and sentimental issues. It is therefore very critically important to undertake a SWOT analysis of Plateau State right now given the foregoing antecedents and profile of the state as a tourist destination to know where it stands in the eyes of the prospective assessors/analysts/watchers and residents who experience all or some of the situations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Identification of SWOT is important because they can inform later steps in planning to achieve the objective of developing a tourist destination. First, the decision makers should consider whether the objectives are attainable, given the SWOT analysis. If the objectives are *not* attainable, then different objectives must be selected and the process repeated. Second, the users of SWOT analysis need to ask and answer questions that generate meaningful information for each category (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to make the analysis useful and find their uncompetitive advantages.

SWOT technique is credited to Albert Humphrey, who led a convention at the Stanford Research Institute (now SRI International) in the 1960s and 1970s using data from Fortune 500 companies. A destination with a diversified social structure and complex business environment, also poses many merits and demerits for clients, both of which affect the destination locally and globally. Thus, a SWOT analysis becomes an essential step to be undertaken. SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a destination. A SWOT analysis can be carried out for a product, a place/destination, industry or a person. It involves specifying the objective of the business venture or a destination and identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to achieving that objective.

Any tourist destination may have a number of both "generic" and "specific" strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The generic SWOT is usually common to almost all destinations while the specific SWOT usually applies to individual destinations based on the peculiarities and the intrinsic characteristics of each destination. It was therefore critically important to categorically outline the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that Plateau State exhibits as a tourist destination. A realistic recognition of the weaknesses and threats that exist for your effort is the first step to countering them with a robust and creative set of strengths and opportunities. A SWOT analysis identifies your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to assist you in making strategic plans and decisions. SWOT is a simple yet comprehensive way of assessing the positive and negative forces within and without your organization, so you can be better prepared to act effectively. The more stakeholders you involve in preparing the SWOT, the more valuable your analysis will be. Whatever courses of action you decide on, the four-cornered SWOT analysis prompts you to move in a balanced way throughout your program. It reminds you to:

- build on your strengths
- minimize your weaknesses
- seize opportunities
- counteract threats

Setting the goals and objectives for developing a destination should be done after the SWOT analysis has been performed. This would allow achievable goals or objectives to be set for the destination. The SWOT will at least provide perspective, and at best will reveal connections and areas for action. A SWOT analysis will be most helpful if you use it to support the vision, mission, and objectives you wish to define.

An overview of the four factors: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats is given below:

- Strengths - Strengths are the qualities that enable us to accomplish the destination's mission. These are the basis on which continued success can be made and continued/sustained. Strengths can be either tangible or intangible. These are what you are well-versed in or what you have expertise in, the traits and qualities your employees possess (individually and as a team) and the distinct features that give your organization its consistency. Strengths are the beneficial aspects of the organization or the capabilities of a destination, which includes human competencies, process capabilities,

financial resources, products and services, customer goodwill and brand loyalty. Examples of organizational strengths are huge financial resources, broad product line, no debt, committed employees, etc.

- Weaknesses - Weaknesses are the qualities that prevent us from accomplishing our mission and achieving our full potential. These weaknesses deteriorate influences on the organizational success and growth. Weaknesses are the factors which do not meet the standards we feel they should meet. Weaknesses in an organization may be depreciating machinery, insufficient research and development facilities, narrow product range, poor decision-making, etc. Weaknesses are controllable. They must be minimized and eliminated. For instance - to overcome obsolete machinery, new machinery can be purchased. Other examples of organizational weaknesses are huge debts, high employee turnover, complex decision making process, narrow product range, large wastage of raw materials, etc.
- Opportunities - Opportunities are presented by the environment within which our organization operates. These arise when an organization can take benefit of conditions in its environment to plan and execute strategies that enable it to become more profitable. Organizations can gain competitive advantage by making use of opportunities. Organization should be careful and recognize the opportunities and grasp them whenever they arise. Selecting the targets that will best serve the clients while getting desired results is a difficult task. Opportunities may arise from market, competition, industry/government and technology. Increasing demand for telecommunications accompanied by deregulation is a great opportunity for new firms to enter telecom sector and compete with existing firms for revenue.
- Threats - Threats arise when conditions in external environment jeopardize the reliability and profitability of the organization's business. They compound the vulnerability when they relate to the weaknesses. Threats are uncontrollable. When a threat comes, the stability and survival can be at stake. Examples of threats are - unrest among employees; ever changing technology; increasing competition leading to excess capacity, price wars and reducing industry profits; etc.

One way of utilizing SWOT is *matching* and *converting*. Matching is used to find *competitive advantages* by matching the strengths to opportunities. Converting is to apply conversion strategies to convert weaknesses or threats into strengths or opportunities. An example of conversion strategy is to find new markets. If the threats or weaknesses cannot be converted a destination should try to *minimize* or *avoid* them. A SWOT analysis can offer helpful perspectives at any stage of an effort. You might use it to:

- Explore possibilities for new efforts or solutions to problems.
- Make decisions about the best path for your initiative. Identifying your opportunities for success in context of threats to success can clarify directions and choices.
- Determine where change is possible. If you are at a juncture or turning point, an inventory of your strengths and weaknesses can reveal priorities as well as possibilities.

- Adjust and refine plans mid-course. A new opportunity might open wider avenues, while a new threat could close a path that once existed.

SWOT also offers a simple way of communicating about your initiative or program and an excellent way to organize information you've gathered from studies or surveys. The SWOT analysis is an extremely useful tool for understanding and decision-making for all sorts of situations in business, organizations and destinations. The SWOT analysis headings provide a good framework for reviewing strategy, position and direction of a destination or business proposition, or any other idea. Completing a SWOT analysis is very simple, and is a good subject for workshop sessions. SWOT analysis also works well in brainstorming meetings. Use SWOT analysis for business planning, strategic planning, competitor evaluation, marketing, business and product development and research reports. You can also use SWOT analysis exercises for team building games. A SWOT analysis measures a destination, a proposition or idea; A SWOT analysis is a subjective assessment of data which is organized by the SWOT format into a logical order that helps understanding, presentation, discussion and decision -making. SWOT analysis template is normally presented as a grid, comprising four sections, one for each of the SWOT headings: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The SWOT analysis is a valuable step in your situational analysis. Assessing your destination's strengths, weaknesses, market opportunities, and threats through a SWOT analysis is a very simple process that can offer powerful insight into the potential and critical issues affecting a destination. The SWOT analysis begins by conducting an inventory of internal strengths and weaknesses in your destination. You will then note the external opportunities and threats that may affect the destination, based on your market and the overall environment. Capture the factors you believe are relevant in each of the four areas. You will want to review what you have noted here as you work through your marketing plan. The primary purpose of the SWOT analysis is to identify and assign each significant factor, positive and negative, to one of the four categories, allowing you to take an objective look at your destination. The SWOT analysis will be a useful tool in developing and confirming your goals and your marketing strategy. Some experts suggest that you first consider outlining the external opportunities and threats before the strengths and weaknesses. The aim of any SWOT analysis is to identify the key internal and external factors that are important to achieving the objectives of developing a tourist destination. These come from within the destination's unique value chain. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

- Internal factors – The *strengths* and *weaknesses* internal to the destination.
- External factors – The *opportunities* and *threats* presented by the external environment to the destination.

The internal factors may be viewed as strengths or weaknesses depending upon their effect on the destination's objectives. What may represent strengths with respect to one objective may be weaknesses for another objective. The factors may include all of the 4Ps; as well as personnel, finance, manufacturing capabilities, and so on.

The external factors may include macroeconomic matters, technological change, legislation, and socio-cultural changes, as well as changes in the marketplace or competitive position. The results are often presented in the form of a matrix. SWOT analysis is just one method of categorization and has its own weaknesses. For example, it may tend to persuade its users to compile lists rather than to think about what is actually important in achieving objectives. It also presents the resulting lists uncritically and without clear prioritization so that, for example, weak opportunities may appear to balance strong threats. The usefulness of SWOT analysis is not limited to profit-seeking destinations. SWOT analysis may be used in any decision-making situation when a desired end-state (objective) has been defined. Examples include: non-profit organizations, governmental units, and individuals. SWOT analysis may also be used in pre-crisis planning and preventive crisis management. SWOT analysis may also be used in creating a recommendation during a viability study/survey.

SWOT Analysis is best used as a guide, and not as a prescription. Successful destinations build on their strengths, correct their weakness and protect against internal weaknesses and external threats. They also keep a watch on their overall business environment and recognize and exploit new opportunities faster than its competitors. SWOT Analysis helps in strategic planning in following manner: -

- It is a source of information for strategic planning.
- Builds destination's strengths.
- Reverse its weaknesses.
- Maximize its response to opportunities.
- Overcome destination's threats.
- It helps in identifying core competencies of the destination
- It helps in setting of objectives for strategic planning.
- It helps in knowing past, present and future so that by using past and current data, future plans can be chalked out.

SWOT Analysis is not free from limitations. It may cause organizations to view circumstances as very simple because of which the organizations might overlook certain key strategic contact which may occur. Moreover, categorizing aspects as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats might be very subjective as there is great degree of uncertainty in market. SWOT Analysis does stress upon the significance of these four aspects, but it does not tell how an organization can identify these aspects for itself.

There are certain limitations of SWOT Analysis which are not in control of management. These include

- Price increase;
- Inputs/raw materials;
- Government legislation;
- Economic environment;
- Searching a new market for a product/service due to import restrictions; etc.

Internal limitations may include

- Insufficient research and development facilities;
- Faulty products due to poor quality control;
- Poor industrial relations;

- Lack of skilled and efficient labor; etc

A scan of the internal and external environment is an important part of the strategic planning process. Environmental factors internal to the destination usually can be classified as strengths (S) or weaknesses (W), and those external to the destination can be classified as opportunities (O) or threats (T). Such an analysis of the strategic environment is referred to as a SWOT analysis. The SWOT analysis provides information that is helpful in matching the destination's resources and capabilities to the competitive environment in which it operates. As such, it is instrumental in strategy formulation and selection. The following diagram shows how a SWOT analysis fits into an environmental scan:

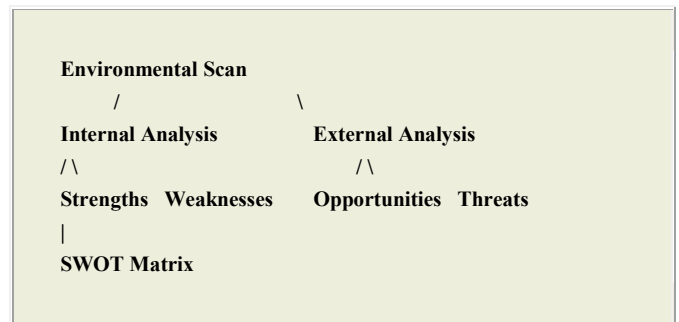


Figure 1. SWOT Analysis Framework:

Strengths

A destination's strengths are its resources and capabilities that can be used as a basis for developing a competitive advantage over other competitors. Examples of such strengths include as for a tourist destination:

- Patent
- Attributes/resources/potentials
- Human resources
- Affordable prices
- strong brand identity
- good reputation among customers
- cost advantages from proprietary know-how
- exclusive access to high grade natural cultural resources
- favorable access to distribution network set

Weaknesses

The absence of certain strengths may be viewed as a weakness. For example, each of the following may be considered weaknesses in a tourist destination:

- lack of patent protection
- a weak brand identity
- poor reputation among customers
- high cost structure
- lack of access to the best natural resources
- lack of access to key distribution channels
- internal conflicts /insecurity
- poor planning/development
- bad image projection

In some cases, a weakness may be the flip side of strength. Take the case in which a firm has a large amount of potentials.

While these potentials may be considered a strength that competitors do not share, it also may be a considered a weakness if the large potentials prevent the destination from reacting quickly to changes in the strategic environment.

Opportunities

The external environmental analysis may reveal certain new opportunities for investment. Some examples of such opportunities include:

- an unfulfilled customer need
- arrival of new technologies like blogging
- loosening of regulations
- removal of international trade barriers

Threats

Changes in the external environmental also may present threats to the destination. Some examples of such threats include:

- shifts in consumer tastes away from the destination's products/services
- emergence of new destinations/competitors
- new regulations
- increased trade barriers

A destination should not necessarily pursue the more lucrative opportunities. Rather, it may have a better chance at developing a competitive advantage by identifying a fit between the destination's strengths and upcoming opportunities. In some cases, the destination can overcome a weakness in order to prepare itself to pursue a compelling opportunity. To develop strategies that take into account the SWOT profile, a matrix of these factors can be constructed. The SWOT matrix is also known as a TOWS Matrix.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	S-O strategies	W-O strategies
Threats	S-T strategies	W-T strategies

Figure 2. Swot / Tows Matrix

- S-O strategies pursue opportunities that are a good fit to the destination's strengths.
- W-O strategies overcome weaknesses to pursue opportunities.
- S-T strategies identify ways that the destination can use its strengths to reduce its vulnerability to external threats.
- W-T strategies establish a defensive plan to prevent the destination's weaknesses from making it highly susceptible to external threats.

According to Stabler, M.J. (1988) SWOT can help you handle both ordinary and unusual situations in your destination or development initiative, by giving you a tool to explore both internal and external factors that may influence your work.

METHODOLOGY

The study area, Plateau State is located in the middle belt zone of Nigeria and lies between latitudes 8°30' and 10°30' North and longitudes 7°30' and 8°37' East. The state shares common boundaries with Bauchi State in the North, Taraba State in the

East, Nasarawa State in the South and Kaduna State in the West. The state has an area of landmass covering 26,899 square Kilometers. Plateau state has been widely known and acknowledged as a tourist haven of both natural and cultural uniqueness and beauty. The state has been referred to as a land of very beautiful, unique natural sceneries, rich and colourful cultural and historical heritages, clement weather as well as very hospitable and peace loving inhabitants. The state is therefore frequently described with phrases such as 'tourist haven', 'the land of beauty', 'the temperate region', 'a miniature Nigeria' and 'a home of unity in diversity' among other sobriquets that describe her attractiveness – all as her tourism brand names. For quite a long time, the image of the state had been positive and favorable. It was the preferred destination choice of many tourists, both national and international.

Plateau State had enjoyed a long period of positive image as a tourist destination. Incidentally, recent communal crises and conflicts in the state appear to have dented that image. After more than a decade of deadly communal crises, Plateau State is beginning to reset itself as the prime tourist destination in Nigeria. However, it has to, first, launder and reconstruct its image. To do this, requires information on the SWOT analysis of the state, and important factors that influence these tourists' perceived image of a destination; in this case, Plateau State be established. This was the challenge that this study- explores.

The researchers, with the advice of the staff of the Plateau State Tourism Corporation purposely identified and selected some experts, practitioners and professionals for interactive sessions on a detail group discussion on the SWOT analysis of Plateau State. All in all, 19 respondents were purposely identified and invited for interactions but only 13 showed up at the first interactive session which generated hot arguments and debates. The first interaction ended in an adjournment to a second interaction when the SWOT analyses were finalized resulting in a very detail and comprehensive SWOT analysis of Plateau State. The second interaction had only 11 discussants in attendance. The arguments were quite educative and elaborate over each factor enlisted/mentioned under each heading in the SWOT compilations. The results are presented here in the next section of the report. Suffice it however, to note that results of a SWOT analysis at any time could not be sacrosanct or a blueprint, but could rather be very dynamic in our ever increasingly changing world. For instance, it was noted that weaknesses outlined today in a SWOT analysis could subjectively be an opportunity or even strength tomorrow.

The sampled discussants who are reputable known tourism experts responded in attending the two sessions were from nine (9) tourist resorts including: Assop Falls, Jos National Museum, Hill Station Hotel, Museum of Traditional Nigeria Architecture (MOTNA), Pandam Game Reserve, Rayfield Resort Jos, Zoological Garden and Jos Wildlife Park, Crest Hotel and two seasoned Senior Professors from the University of Jos, two tourism private practitioners, as well as some few regular tourists /visitors (known destination loyalists) found available on site. The sampled tourists were properly briefed and given copies of unstructured questionnaires to fill at their leisure by researchers or staff of the Hill Station Hotel on their SWOT analysis of Plateau State as a tourist destination. Seven (7) respondents including tourists /visitors/loyalists or revisit loyalists responded and their responses were all filtered

thoroughly by the experts/research team and inputted in the final SWOT results. The two interactive sessions all took place at the Hill Station Hotel, Jos each day.

RESULTS

Swot analysis of plateau state

Strengths

Strengths describe the positive attributes, tangible and intangible, internal to your destination. They are within your control. What you do well, the resources you have and the advantages you have over your competitors. You may want to evaluate your strengths by area, such as marketing, finance, manufacturing, and organizational structure. Strengths include the positive attributes of the people (human resources) involved in the destination, including their knowledge, backgrounds, education, credentials, contacts, reputations, or the skills they bring to bear on the destination. Strengths also include tangible assets such as available capital, equipment, credit, established customers, existing channels of distribution, copyrighted materials, patents, brand identity, potentials, information and processing systems, and other valuable resources within the destination. Strengths capture the positive aspects internal to your destination that add value or offer you a competitive advantage. This is your opportunity to remind yourself of the value existing within your destination. Then obtainable tourism strengths of Plateau State include:

- Abundant natural and man-made tourist attractions which form the capital stock required for the development of a viable and sustainable eco and cultural tourism industry in the state.
- The state has a powerful brand identity and name
- Its central location within Nigeria and its closeness to Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria (about 300km) makes the state easily accessible to all parts of the country and can be developed as the “tourism gateway” to Nigeria
- Comparative advantage over competitors
- The State’s vast tourism potentials are already acclaimed both at home and abroad
- The diversity of its attractions (natural and cultural) means the state can attract and cater for the interest of different tourists both domestic and international.
- The state has recently been designated as the ‘Hub’ or center of the Nature Scenic Cluster or zone in the National Tourism Master Plan etc.
- Strong commitment of the President of Nigeria and the Governor of Plateau State to include tourism and cultural sectors among their priority areas for development.
- Good access by road, rail and air.
- Skill Training Institutions
- Unique climate – Jos town is the coldest state capital in Nigeria
- English and French Speaking
- Hospitable and accommodating inhabitants
- Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Tourism Board (Corporation)
- NTDC branch office
- JUTH and Stadia

Weaknesses

Note the weaknesses within your destination. Weaknesses are factors that are within your control that detract you from your ability to obtain or maintain a competitive edge. The areas you might need improvements. Weaknesses might include lack of expertise, limited resources, lack of access to skills or technology, inferior service offerings, or the poor location of your destination. These are factors that are under your control, but for a variety of reasons, are in need of improvement to effectively accomplish your marketing objectives. Weaknesses capture the negative aspects internal to your destination that detract from the value you offer, or place you at a competitive disadvantage. These are areas you need to enhance in order to compete with your competitors. The more accurately you identify your weaknesses, the more valuable the SWOT will be for your assessment. The tourism weaknesses of Plateau State noted include mainly:

- Inadequate luxury hotels and standard tourist facilities.
- Jos-Bukuru metropolis has developed into a plan-less city, making it difficult to name and number the streets thereby impeding ease of movement within the town.
- Erratic power supply virtually affects every activity in the state
- Dearth of data base for effective planning and development
- Poor political will and commitment.
- Absence of a State Tourism Policy and Plan that will regulate the development of the tourism sector.
- Ignorance of business opportunities in the industry by the indigenous population.
- Capital flight by the private investors who are mostly non-indigenes
- Image distortion due to intermittent communal conflicts/insurgencies/terrorism
- Insecurity, lack of confidence and mutual suspicion among the different ethno-religious groups.
- Poor packaging
- Inadequate professional considerations in appointments to key positions in the sector.
- Corruption and misappropriation
- Gross inadequate funding
- Inadequate public - private cooperation
- Multiple taxation
- Political instability
- Poor Marketing and Promotion Strategies
- Poor Branding and Positioning Activities
- Weak Competition
- Failure to implement plans
- Deferred implementation
- Outright lack of interest and neglect
- Lack of prioritization
- Poor investment
- Budgetary delays and non-release of funds
- Inexperienced management
- Corruption and misappropriation
- Misuses of tourist attractions
- Absence of strategic plan
- Poor image projection
- Over reliance on other sectors
- Poor marketing
- Poor data base

- Decay in facilities/infrastructures
- Insufficient funding
- Slow response in addressing problems

Opportunities

Opportunities assess the external attractive factors that represent the reason for your business to exist and prosper. These are external to your business. What opportunities exist in your market, or in the environment, from which you hope to benefit?. These opportunities reflect the potential you can realize through implementing your marketing strategies. Opportunities may be the result of market growth, lifestyle changes, resolution of problems associated with current situations, positive market perceptions about your business, or the ability to offer greater value that will create a demand for your services. If it is relevant, place timeframes around the opportunities. Does it represent an ongoing opportunity, or is it a window of opportunity? How critical is your timing?. Opportunities are external to your business. If you have identified “opportunities” that are internal to the organization and within your control, you will want to classify them as strengths. The tourism opportunities in Plateau State include:

- Employment generation and poverty alleviation.
- Implementation of tourism projects
- Rural and Urban tourism
- Public - private partnership
- Comprehensive tourism legislation.
- Conference facilities
- Privatization.
- Image promotion and branding
- Data base development
- Marketing and promotion
- Eco-tourism
- Cultural tourism monuments
- Sports tourism
- Medical tourism
- Educational training
- Dark tourism
- Local festivals and events
- Accommodation-hotels
- Restaurant business
- Craft and retail enterprises.
- Tour operation
- Safety and security challenges
- Special security
- Tour Guiding
- Facilities and amenities
- Visitor information centers
- Parks and gardens
- Environmental enhancement and sanitation
- Infrastructural development

Threats

What factors are potential threats to your destination? Threats include factors beyond your control that could place your marketing strategy, or the destination itself, at risk. These are also external – you have no control over them, but you may benefit by having contingency plans to address them if they should occur. A threat is a challenge created by an unfavorable trend or development that may lead to deteriorating revenues or profits.

Competition – existing or potential – is always a threat. Other threats may include intolerable price increases by suppliers, governmental regulation, economic downturns, devastating media or press coverage, a shift in consumer behavior that reduces your sales, or the introduction of a “leap-frog” technology that may make your products, equipment, or services obsolete. What situations might threaten your marketing efforts? Get your worst fears on the table. Part of this list may be speculative in nature, and still add value to your SWOT analysis. It may be valuable to classify your threats according to their “seriousness” and “probability of occurrence.”

The better you are at identifying potential threats, the more likely you can position yourself to proactively plan for and respond to them. You will be looking back at these threats when you consider your contingency plans. The tourism threats to Plateau State include:

- Insurgency and terrorism
- Political interference
- Deferred implementation
- Ethno-religious crises and mutual mistrust
- Poor investment
- Unreliability of key utilities.
- Non-attraction of private investment
- Central control
- Poor image projection
- Competitors
- Over reliance on other sectors
- Decay in facilities/infrastructure
- Ignorance
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of urgency in addressing problems
- Poormarketing

The implications and recommendations arising from swot analysis

Arising from the results of SWOT analysis and the action needed you should always:

Capitalize on opportunities that play to your strengths

- Opportunities that match your strengths may prompt you to pursue a strategy of aggressive expansion.
- Diversifying away from areas of significant threat to more promising opportunities.
- Focusing on turning around weaknesses in areas of significant opportunity.
- Taking defensive measures in areas of threat where you are weak.

Address your weaknesses

- Decide which weaknesses need to be addressed as a priority.
- Other weaknesses must be acknowledged and respected until time and resources allow a solution.
- Some weaknesses can be turned into strengths or opportunities.
- Some weaknesses have a clear solution.
- Some weaknesses will take time and money to address.

Protect yourself against threats. For example

- Build relationships with suppliers and customers.
- Foster good employee relations.
- Ensure you have clear and reasonable contracts with suppliers, customers and employees.
- Take out insurance cover against obvious potential disasters.
- Draw up realistic contingency plans to cope with potential crises.
- Introduce the right types of service contracts for key personnel.
- Invest in legal protection for your intellectual property.
- Take advantage of low fixed interest rates over your overdraft to long-term loans.

Successful businesses focus on capturing market niches and creating 'barriers to entry' to reduce potential competition.

DISCUSSION

A SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat). The analysis guides you to identify the positives and negatives inside your destination (S-W) and outside of it, in the external environment (O-T). Developing a full awareness of your situation can help with both strategic planning and decision-making. The SWOT method (which is sometimes called TOWS) was originally developed for business and industry, but it is equally useful in the work of community health and development, education, and even personal growth. Plateau State has a number of both "generic" and "specific" strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The generic SWOT is common to almost all destinations while the specific SWOT usually applies to individual destinations based on the peculiarities and the intrinsic characteristics of each destination. It was critically important to categorically outline the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that Plateau State exhibits as a tourist destination. Findings of the research shows that SWOT analysis is an extremely useful tool for understanding and decision-making for all sorts of situations in business and destination. SWOT is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats.

The SWOT analysis headings provide a good framework for reviewing strategy, position and direction of a company or business proposition, or any other idea. Completing a SWOT analysis is very simple, and is a good subject for workshop sessions. SWOT analysis also works well in brainstorming meetings. Use SWOT analysis for business, planning, strategic planning, competitor evaluation, marketing, business and product development and research reports. You can also use SWOT analysis exercises for teambuilding games. See also PEST analysis, which measures a business's market and potential according to external factors; Political, Economic, Social and Technological. It is often helpful to complete a PEST analysis prior to a SWOT analysis. See also Porter's Five Forces model, which is used to analyze competitive position.

A SWOT analysis measures a business unit, a proposition or idea; a PEST analysis measures a market. A SWOT analysis is a subjective assessment of data which is organized by the SWOT format in to a logical order that helps understanding, presentation, discussion and decision -making. The four dimensions are a useful extension of a basic two heading list of pro's and con's (freepro's and con's template here).

SWOT analysis can be used for all sorts of decision-making, and the SWOT template enables proactive thinking, rather than relying on habitual or instinctive reactions. The SWOT analysis template is normally presented as a grid, comprising four sections, one for each of the SWOT headings: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The free SWOT template below includes sample questions, whose answers are inserted into the relevant section of the SWOT grid. The questions are examples, or discussion points, and obviously can be altered depending on the subject of the SWOT analysis. Note that many of the SWOT questions are also talking points for other headings - use them as you find most helpful, and make up your own to suit the issue being analyzed. It is important to clearly identify the subject of a SWOT analysis, because a SWOT analysis is a perspective of onething, be it a company, a product, a proposition, and idea, a method, or option, etc. Here are some examples of what a SWOT analysis can be used to assess:

- a company (its position in the market, commercial viability, etc)
- a method of sales distribution
- a product or brand
- a business idea
- a strategic option, such as entering a new market or launching a new product
- a opportunity to make an acquisition
- a potential partnership
- changing a supplier
- outsourcing a service, activity or resource
- an investment opportunity

Be sure to describe the subject for the SWOT analysis clearly so that people contributing to the analysis, and those seeing the finished SWOT analysis, properly understand the purpose of the SWOT assessment and implications.

Conclusion

SWOT Analysis is the most renowned tool for auditing and analyzing the overall strategic position of a tourist destination and it is a structured planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a destination. It involves identifying the internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to a destination. Plateau State, with her diversified social structure and complex business environment, poses many merits and demerits for clients, both of which affect the destination locally and nationally. Thus, a SWOT analysis becomes an indispensable exercise to be undertaken for Plateau State as a destination. The SWOT analysis has become an indispensable exercise to be undertaken for Plateau State as a destination given her profile and antecedents. This would prepare grounds to draw up achievable goals or objectives for the destination afterward. The SWOT analysis guides you to identify the positives and negatives inside(S-W), and outside (O-T) the destination. Developing a full awareness of your situation can help in both strategic planning and decision-making. The SWOT analysis is there useful fora tourism destination strategic planning, development, marketing oran evaluation exercise. The SWOT matrix of Plateau State has clearly revealed its daunting challenges which require urgent responses if the destination is to forge ahead sustainably. Most of her weaknesses and threats can be converted to opportunities and even strengths in a

strategic overhaul and revolutionary actions with very little efforts/resources over a short period of time given a good will.

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