

Deconstructural Appraisal of the Destination Akwa Ibom Campaign and its Role in Promoting Arise Park and Godswill Akpabio Stadium

Ogbonnaya, Nnenna Ugomma
Akwa Ibom State University
Mkpat Enin, Nigeria

Umoren, Philomina Effiong (Ph.d)
Akwa Ibom State University
Mkpat Enin, Nigeria

Abstract

This study undertook a deconstructive appraisal of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign and its role in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study was motivated by concerns about the extent to which promotional activities create public awareness, shape perceptions and encourage engagement with the two facilities. The study adopted a qualitative research design and relied on in-depth interviews with 19 participants selected through snowball sampling. Data obtained from the interviews were analysed thematically, with recurring themes identified across the five research questions and supported with frequency counts and percentages. The study was anchored on Media Richness Theory and complemented by Management by Objectives Theory. Findings indicated that the campaign employs a combination of traditional and digital communication channels, although digital and visual media were more prominent in audience engagement. The findings further showed relatively high public awareness of the two facilities, while positive perception was comparatively lower. Media richness and communication effectiveness were identified as important aspects of the campaign, but audience interaction and feedback remained areas requiring improvement. The study also identified communication and media-related challenges, institutional and coordination issues, and operational and sustainability concerns. Participants identified integrated digital marketing and audience targeting, stakeholder participation and strategic partnerships, and systematic monitoring and evaluation as key strategies for improving campaign effectiveness. The study concludes that the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has contributed to the visibility of Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium but requires more consistent, interactive and strategically coordinated communication to convert awareness into sustained engagement and patronage.

Keywords:

Destination Akwa Ibom, Destination Marketing, Destination Branding, Tourism Promotion, Arise Park, Godswill Akpabio Stadium, Media Richness.

1.0 Introduction

Destination marketing has become an important approach to increasing the visibility of tourism attractions, creating destination awareness and encouraging visitor patronage. In Nigeria, the need to effectively promote tourism resources has become more important as states seek to utilise tourism, recreation and sporting facilities for economic and social development. Etuk (2021) observed that sustaining appreciable tourist patronage remains a challenge for some destinations in Akwa Ibom

State and identified destination branding as an important means of improving the attractiveness and competitiveness of tourism resources.

Akwa Ibom State possesses diverse tourism and recreational resources, including cultural attractions, hospitality facilities, sporting infrastructure and urban leisure spaces. The state has consequently promoted its attractions through the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign, aimed at projecting the state as an attractive destination for residents and visitors. This campaign is particularly relevant to facilities such as Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium in Uyo. Arise Park provides a contemporary recreational and leisure environment, while the Governor Akpabio Stadium serves as a major sporting facility and venue for football and other large-scale events.

The promotion of these facilities is significant because the existence of tourism and recreational infrastructure does not automatically guarantee public awareness, positive perception or patronage. Etuk (2021) found that deficiencies in experiential and cultural differentiation could affect tourism patronage in Akwa Ibom State, highlighting the importance of presenting destinations in ways that create memorable and satisfying experiences. Similarly, Udofia et al. (2025) identified prevailing challenges affecting tourism and cultural resources in Akwa Ibom State, demonstrating that the development and promotion of tourism attractions require attention to both the resources themselves and the conditions supporting their use.

The emergence of digital communication has further changed the way tourism destinations are promoted. Abiola-Oke and Aina (2019) found that online travel booking and social media have implications for tourism destination marketing in Nigeria, while Ayetutu et al. (2025) emphasised the potential of social media to improve tourism visibility, promotion and audience engagement in Nigeria. These developments provide opportunities for destination campaigns to use visual content, social media interaction and other digital platforms to communicate the experiential value of tourism and sporting facilities.

Despite the tourism potential of Akwa Ibom State and the increasing promotion of its attractions, limited empirical attention has been given to the effectiveness of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in promoting specific facilities such as Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium. It is therefore necessary to examine whether the campaign is creating adequate awareness, shaping public perception and effectively communicating the value of these facilities. This study consequently critically appraises the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign and its role in promoting Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium, with emphasis on its communication strategies, public awareness and perception, media choices, challenges and strategies for improving its effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Akwa Ibom State has continued to develop and promote tourism, recreational and sporting facilities as part of its efforts to position the state as an attractive destination. Facilities such as Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium in Uyo have become prominent features of the state's tourism and sporting landscape. The Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has also provided a platform for showcasing these and other attractions to residents, visitors and audiences outside the state. Despite these efforts, there appears to be a gap between the visibility of these facilities and the level of sustained public engagement and patronage they attract.

Arise Park, for instance, is a recreational facility with the potential to serve residents and visitors, yet public knowledge of its activities and attractions appears to depend largely on occasional publicity and events. Similarly, although the Governor Akpabio Stadium has considerable recognition because of its sporting history and major events hosted there, its promotion as part of a wider tourism destination appears less pronounced than its identity as a sporting venue. The extent to which the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has successfully connected these facilities to the broader tourism identity of the state therefore remains unclear.

There are also observable concerns regarding the consistency and reach of promotional communication. While billboards, conventional publicity and social media provide opportunities for promoting the facilities, the extent to which these channels are consistently used to engage different categories of audiences is uncertain. There is also limited visible evidence of sustained audience interaction, feedback and participatory promotion that could encourage potential visitors to move from awareness to actual visitation.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of promoting these facilities may be affected by issues beyond publicity, including facility maintenance, accessibility, and continuity of promotional activities, stakeholder participation and coordination. When the experience available at a facility does not correspond with the image created through promotional messages, sustained patronage and positive destination perception may be difficult to achieve.

Although tourism and destination branding have received attention in studies of Akwa Ibom State, limited attention has been given specifically to how the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign promotes Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium and how audiences respond to such promotion. This creates the need for an empirical appraisal of the campaign, particularly its communication strategies, contribution to public awareness and perception, media choices, challenges and possible strategies for improving its effectiveness. This study therefore examines the role of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in promoting Arise Park and the Godwill Akpabio Stadium.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to critically appraise the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign and assess its role in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the communication strategies and media channels employed by the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium.
- ii. Assess the level of public awareness and perception of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium attributable to the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign.
- iii. Evaluate the extent to which the campaign's choice of media aligns with the principles of media richness in achieving effective destination promotion.
- iv. Identify the challenges confronting the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in its efforts to promote Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium.
- v. Recommend strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in promoting tourism and sporting assets in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Questions

In line with the objectives above, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What communication strategies and media channels does the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign employ in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium?
2. What is the level of public awareness and perception of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium as a result of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign?
3. To what extent does the campaign's choice of media reflect the principles of media richness in promoting the two facilities?
4. What challenges confront the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in its promotion of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium?
5. What strategies can enhance the effectiveness of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign going forward?

2.0.Literature Review

Concept of Destination Marketing and Promotion

Destination marketing is a broad concept concerned with the deliberate process of presenting a geographical location to selected audiences in ways that create awareness, develop a favourable image and encourage visitation. Morrison (2023) describes destination marketing as a continuous management process through which tourism organisations and destination stakeholders identify, communicate and deliver value to visitors. The definition places emphasis on the coordinated activities required to present a destination and its attractions to existing and potential visitors.

Similarly, Pike and Page (2014) explain destination marketing as the management of marketing activities undertaken to attract visitors to a particular geographical area. Their perspective emphasises the role of destination marketing organisations in coordinating promotional activities and creating a favourable image of the destination. Destination marketing, therefore, extends beyond advertising to include the coordination of information and experiences associated with a destination.

Kotler et al. (2021) view place marketing from a broader perspective, explaining that places can be deliberately positioned and promoted to attract visitors, businesses, residents and investment. From this perspective, destination promotion becomes part of a wider place-marketing process through which a location communicates its distinctive characteristics to target audiences.

Destination promotion represents a more specific component of destination marketing. Kotler et al. (2021) describe promotion as the communication activities through which information about a tourism product is transmitted to existing and potential customers. In destination marketing, such communication may involve advertising, public relations, sales promotion, events, personal communication and digital media. Promotion therefore serves as the communication mechanism through which the attractions and experiences of a destination are brought to the attention of target audiences.

Morrison (2023) further explains that destination marketing requires an integrated approach because visitors interact with destinations through several sources of information rather than through a single promotional channel. This makes the coordination of traditional and digital communication particularly important in contemporary destination promotion.

In the context of this study, destination marketing refers to the organised activities through which Akwa Ibom State communicates its tourism, recreational and sporting attractions to residents and potential visitors, while destination promotion refers specifically to the communication and publicity activities used to create awareness and encourage interest in those attractions. The concepts are therefore relevant to examining how the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign presents Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium to its target audiences.

Concept of Destination Branding

Destination branding refers to the deliberate process of creating and communicating a distinctive identity for a place in order to differentiate it from competing destinations. Blain et al. (2005) define destination branding as a combination of marketing activities that support the creation of a destination name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic representation that identifies and differentiates the destination. Their definition further suggests that destination branding involves communicating a memorable travel experience that becomes associated with the destination.

Pike (2016) explains destination branding as the process of developing a unique identity and positioning for a destination in the minds of its target markets. From this perspective, branding is concerned with creating associations that enable audiences to distinguish one destination from another. A successful destination brand should therefore communicate attributes that are meaningful and relevant to the audiences being targeted.

According to Morrison (2023), destination branding involves developing a distinctive identity and image for a destination and consistently communicating that identity to selected markets. The concept therefore extends beyond the creation of a name or visual identity to include the experiences, attractions and values associated with the destination. The identity communicated by destination managers must consequently be supported by the actual characteristics and experiences available at the destination.

Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) conceptualize place branding as a process through which the identity of a place is continuously constructed through interactions between the place and its various stakeholders. This perspective suggests that destination branding is not exclusively controlled by government or destination marketing organizations. Residents, businesses, visitors, media organizations and other stakeholders can also contribute to how a destination is understood and represented.

Destination branding is therefore closely related to destination image, although the two concepts are not identical. Branding represents the deliberate effort to create and communicate a desired identity, whereas destination image refers to the perceptions and associations held by audiences about the destination. Effective branding requires some degree of consistency between the identity communicated and the actual experience associated with the destination.

Therefore, it is accepted to state that destination branding refers to the process through which Destination Akwa Ibom seeks to establish and communicate a distinctive identity for Akwa Ibom State by showcasing its tourism, recreational and sporting resources. Within this context, Arise Park

and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium constitute specific assets through which the broader destination identity can be communicated to residents and visitors.

Communication Strategies and Media Channels in Destination Promotion

Communication strategies in destination promotion refer to the planned approaches through which information about a destination, its attractions and experiences is developed and transmitted to identify audiences. The concept involves decisions about the content of promotional messages, the audiences to be reached and the communication channels through which the messages are delivered. Tran and Rudolf (2022) explain that contemporary destination communication increasingly incorporates social media and user-generated content, creating opportunities for destinations to communicate with audiences while also allowing visitors to participate in the construction of destination-related information.

Communication channels refer to the platforms or media through which promotional messages are transmitted. These may include traditional channels such as television, radio, newspapers, billboards and outdoor advertising, as well as digital channels such as websites, social networking platforms and video-sharing platforms. Rather (2021) notes that digital and social media have become important components of destination marketing because they facilitate communication between destinations and audiences while supporting the development of destination-related perceptions and behavioural intentions.

The nature of the message communicated through these channels is also important. Abbasi et al. (2022) explain that tourism-generated social media communication can contribute to destination brand awareness and brand image by exposing audiences to information and experiences shared by tourism users. This suggests that destination communication is no longer controlled entirely by official destination promoters because visitors and other users can also create and distribute content about destinations.

Another important dimension of communication strategy is audience interaction. Moro and Rita (2022) argue that social media provides tourism organisations with opportunities to communicate with audiences, receive responses and develop relationships through interactive content. Consequently, destination communication can move from a predominantly one-way process towards a more participatory process in which audiences respond to, share and contribute to promotional content.

The effectiveness of a communication strategy therefore depends on more than the number of channels employed. Li et al. (2022) explain that destination social media communication can influence destination-related perceptions and behavioural responses, indicating that the characteristics of communication and the manner in which audiences engage with content are important to destination promotion. A campaign that uses several channels without coordinating its messages or engaging its audiences may therefore achieve visibility without necessarily achieving sustained interest or patronage.

For this study communication strategies refer to the planned promotional approaches employed by the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign to communicate the attractions, experiences and value of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium. Media channels refer to the traditional and digital platforms through which these promotional messages are communicated. Examining these concepts provides a basis for assessing whether the campaign's communication approaches are sufficiently diverse, appropriate and engaging for promoting the two facilities.

Public Awareness and Destination Perception

Public awareness refers to the extent to which people recognize, know about and have information concerning a destination or tourism attraction. Rather (2021) explains that destination-related communication through social media can shape what audiences know and how they evaluate a destination. Awareness is therefore an important initial outcome of destination promotion because people are more likely to consider attractions that they know or have encountered through promotional communication.

Destination perception refers to the impressions, beliefs and feelings that individuals associate with a destination. Li et al. (2022) note that destination-related social media communication can influence audience perceptions and subsequent behavioural responses. Perception therefore extends beyond

simple knowledge of an attraction to include how attractive, accessible, desirable or valuable the audience considers it to be.

According to Abbasi et al. (2022), tourism-related social media communication can contribute to destination brand awareness and image through information and experiences shared by both organizations and users. This suggests that public perception may be influenced by official promotional messages as well as content generated by visitors and other users.

Promotion of Recreational and Sporting Facilities

Recreational and sporting facilities are important components of destination development because they provide spaces for leisure, entertainment, physical activities and organised events. Getz and Page (2020) explain that events and event-related facilities can contribute to destination attractiveness by creating experiences that encourage people to visit and engage with particular places.

Sport tourism further expands the promotional value of sporting facilities. Hinch and Higham (2020) describe sport tourism as travel associated with sporting activities, competitions, venues and experiences. Sporting facilities can therefore function not only as venues for competition but also as attractions capable of contributing to the identity and visibility of a destination.

Kaplanidou (2021) emphasises that sport-related destination experiences can influence how visitors perceive a place and their willingness to engage with it. This suggests that the promotional value of a sporting facility depends partly on the experiences and activities associated with the facility rather than its physical existence alone.

For the present study, the promotional significance of Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium lies in their potential to contribute to leisure, recreation, entertainment and sport tourism in Akwa Ibom State. Their effective promotion therefore requires communication that presents not only the physical facilities but also the experiences and activities available to residents and visitors.

Challenges of Destination Promotion

Destination promotion can be affected by several challenges that limit the ability of campaigns to achieve sustained awareness, positive perception and patronage. Morrison (2023) identifies issues such as inadequate resources, weak coordination, inappropriate communication and poor understanding of target markets as factors that can reduce the effectiveness of destination marketing activities.

Another challenge is the difficulty of maintaining consistent communication across different media platforms. Tran and Rudolf (2022) observe that contemporary destination branding involves multiple actors and communication channels, making consistency and coordination important in maintaining a clear destination identity.

Audience participation also presents a challenge. Abbasi et al. (2022) explain that social media allows tourists and other users to generate and circulate destination-related content. While this provides opportunities for greater visibility, it also means that destination organisations have limited control over the information and perceptions associated with a destination.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Media Richness Theory (MRT) and complemented by Management by Objectives (MBO) Theory. Media Richness Theory serves as the principal theoretical foundation because the study primarily examines how communication strategies and media channels are used to promote Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium. However, because media richness alone does not adequately explain whether a campaign has clearly defined objectives or mechanisms for evaluating its performance, Management by Objectives Theory is incorporated as a complementary perspective.

Media Richness Theory

Media Richness Theory was developed by Daft and Lengel (1986) to explain differences in the capacity of communication media to convey information, provide feedback and reduce uncertainty. The theory proposes that communication media differ in their richness, with some media capable of transmitting multiple cues and facilitating immediate feedback, while others provide fewer cues and limited interaction.

The theory is particularly relevant to destination promotion because tourism attractions are largely experiential. A billboard or poster can provide basic information about an attraction, but photographs, videos, live broadcasts and interactive digital platforms can communicate more detailed visual and experiential information. For a campaign promoting Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium, the richness of the selected communication media may therefore influence how effectively the facilities are presented to potential visitors.

Accordingly, this study is anchored on Media Richness Theory because it provides the principal lens for examining the campaign's communication strategies, media channels, message presentation, audience engagement and feedback. It helps explain whether the media employed by the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign are appropriate for communicating the experiential qualities of the two facilities.

However, Media Richness Theory has a limitation in relation to the present study. Its primary concern is the communication capacity of media and their suitability for transmitting information. It does not sufficiently explain whether the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has clearly defined promotional objectives, how those objectives are implemented, or how campaign performance is monitored and evaluated. A campaign may use rich and interactive media but still fail to achieve its intended objectives. This limitation necessitates the consideration of a complementary theory.

Management by Objectives Theory

Management by Objectives Theory is associated with Drucker (1954) and emphasises the establishment of clearly defined objectives, participation in goal setting, performance monitoring and evaluation. The theory proposes that organisational activities should be directed towards specific objectives and that performance should be assessed against those objectives.

The theory complements Media Richness Theory by shifting attention from how the campaign communicates to what the campaign intends to achieve and how its achievement can be assessed. Applied to destination promotion, MBO provides a basis for examining whether the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has clear objectives relating to public awareness, destination perception, audience engagement, visitation and patronage of promoted facilities.

The theory is also relevant to the study's concern with stakeholder participation and campaign improvement. Effective destination promotion requires coordination among government agencies, facility managers, tourism stakeholders, communities and communication practitioners. MBO provides a useful perspective for considering whether these actors work towards clearly established objectives and whether mechanisms exist for monitoring campaign outcomes.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design to undertake a deconstructive appraisal of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign and its role in promoting Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium. The campaign was examined through its major components, including communication strategies, media channels, public awareness and perception, audience engagement, challenges and improvement strategies.

Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with 19 participants who possessed relevant knowledge or experience relating to the campaign, tourism promotion, or the two facilities. Participants were selected using snowball sampling, whereby initial participants identified and referred other individuals considered knowledgeable about the subject. The technique was appropriate because relevant stakeholders constituted a specialised population that was not readily identifiable through conventional sampling procedures. Interviews continued until sufficient thematic information had been obtained to address the research questions.

The interview guide was structured around the five research questions, covering the campaign's communication strategies and media channels, its contribution to public awareness and perception, media effectiveness, challenges, and strategies for improvement. The interview data were subjected to thematic analysis. Responses were transcribed, coded and categorised, after which recurring patterns were grouped into themes corresponding to the research questions.

The frequency with which each theme was mentioned by participants was recorded and converted to percentages using the 19 participants as the denominator. These frequencies and percentages were used only to demonstrate the relative prominence of themes within the qualitative data and were not

treated as statistical generalisations. The resulting themes were interpreted in relation to Media Richness Theory, the anchoring theory, and Management by Objectives Theory, the complementary theory. Participants' identities were kept confidential, and the information obtained was used strictly for academic purposes

4.0 Results and Discussion

The data obtained from interviews with 19 participants were analysed thematically in line with the five research questions. The analysis involved identifying recurring ideas in participants' responses, coding the responses, and grouping related codes into broader themes. The frequency and percentage of participants whose responses reflected each theme were calculated to indicate the relative prominence of the themes. Since participants could discuss more than one issue during an interview, the frequencies are not expected to sum to the total sample size or to 100%.

Table 4.1 Summary of Major Themes Emerging from the Interviews (N = 19)

S/N	Major Theme	f	%
1	Integrated communication strategies	17	89.5
2	Digital media engagement	16	84.2
3	Public awareness	16	84.2
4	Public perception and destination image	14	73.7
5	Media richness and communication effectiveness	15	78.9
6	Audience engagement and feedback	13	68.4
7	Institutional and communication challenges	14	73.7
8	Political and operational challenges	11	57.9
9	Integrated destination marketing	16	84.2
10	Stakeholder participation and monitoring	12	63.2

Source: Field interview data, 2026.

The findings indicate that integrated communication strategies constituted the most prominent theme, identified by 17 participants (89.5%). This was followed by digital media engagement, public awareness, and integrated destination marketing, each reported by 16 participants (84.2%). Media richness and communication effectiveness were identified by 15 participants (78.9%), while public perception and destination image and institutional and communication challenges were each mentioned by 14 participants (73.7%). Audience engagement and feedback emerged from 13 participants (68.4%), stakeholder participation and monitoring from 12 participants (63.2%), while political and operational challenges recorded the lowest frequency at 11 participants (57.9%).

The pattern suggests that the effectiveness of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign is strongly associated with the communication approach adopted, the use of digital platforms, the ability to create public awareness, and the quality of interaction with target audiences.

Analysis of Research Question One

What communication strategies and media channels are employed by the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium?

Analysis of the interview data revealed two major themes: integrated communication strategies and digital media engagement. The frequency and percentage of participants whose responses reflected each theme are presented below.

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Integrated communication strategies	17	89.5
Digital media engagement	16	84.2

Theme 1: Integrated Communication Strategies

The findings show that 17 of the 19 participants (89.5%) identified the use of multiple communication strategies in promoting Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium. The responses indicate that the campaign utilizes a combination of traditional and contemporary promotional channels, including television, radio, billboards, public events, social media and other publicity platforms. A participant explained: *“The Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has been using different channels to showcase what the state has, especially the recreational and sporting facilities.”* The prominence of this theme suggests that the campaign adopts an integrated communication approach, enabling it to reach audiences through different media platforms. The use of multiple channels is particularly relevant to destination marketing because potential visitors differ in their media preferences and patterns of information consumption.

However, the findings also suggest that the effectiveness of an integrated communication strategy depends not simply on the number of channels employed but on the consistency of the message, coordination of the channels and ability to reach clearly defined target audiences.

Theme 2: Digital Media Engagement

Digital media engagement emerged from the responses of 16 participants (84.2%). Participants identified social media and other online platforms as important channels through which information about Arise Park and the Governor Akpabio Stadium can be communicated to residents, visitors and audiences outside the state. One participant noted *“Social media can take the information about these places beyond Akwa Ibom because people outside the state can see the pictures, videos and activities taking place there.”*

The finding highlights the importance of digital platforms in contemporary destination promotion. Unlike conventional advertising, digital media can combine text, photographs, video, audio and interactive features, thereby providing richer representations of tourism and recreational experiences. Nevertheless, the findings suggest that the campaign could derive greater value from digital media by increasing interactive content, audience feedback, live coverage, user-generated content and targeted promotion rather than relying primarily on informational posts.

Discussion of Research Question One

The findings indicate that the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign employs a relatively broad communication mix, with 89.5% of participants identifying integrated communication strategies and 84.2% identifying digital media engagement. This suggests that the campaign recognizes the importance of using multiple channels to promote Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium.

The prominence of digital media is particularly significant because tourism and sporting facilities are experiential products. Potential visitors are more likely to develop an understanding of such facilities when promotional communication provides visual and interactive representations of the environment, activities and experiences available.

The finding also provides support for Media Richness Theory, which proposes that communication media vary in their capacity to convey information, transmit multiple cues and facilitate interaction. While the campaign's use of multiple media provides a useful foundation, greater emphasis on rich and interactive digital content could enhance its ability to convert awareness into interest, engagement and eventual visitation.

Research Question Two

What is the level of public awareness and perception of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium as a result of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign?

Analysis of the interview data revealed two major themes: public awareness and public perception and destination image. The frequency and percentage of participants whose responses reflected each theme are presented below.

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Public awareness	16	84.2
Public perception and destination image	14	73.7

Theme 1: Public Awareness

The findings indicate a high level of public awareness of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium associated with the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign. This theme was reflected in the responses of 16 out of the 19 participants (84.2%).

Participants generally indicated that the campaign has increased the visibility of the two facilities through different promotional activities and media platforms. The campaign appears to have helped position the facilities as important recreational, tourism and sporting assets within the state. One participant observed “The Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has made these facilities more visible. People now hear about Arise Park and the stadium through different media, especially when there are events or activities there.”

The high frequency of this theme suggests that awareness represents one of the strongest perceived outcomes of the campaign. The finding implies that the campaign has been relatively successful in communicating the existence and relevance of the two facilities to its target audiences.

Theme 2: Public Perception and Destination Image

Public perception and destination image emerged from the responses of 14 participants (73.7%). This indicates a substantial level of perceived influence of the campaign on how Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium are viewed by the public. Participants associated the campaign with the presentation of the facilities as attractive components of Akwa Ibom's tourism and recreational identity. However, the responses also suggest that promotional messages alone do not determine public perception; actual experience, accessibility, cleanliness, security, maintenance and the quality of activities available at the facilities are also important.

one of the participants explained “*The campaign gives people a good picture of what Akwa Ibom has, but what people experience when they visit the facilities will determine whether that good impression remains.*” This finding suggests that the campaign's role in shaping destination image is closely connected to the quality of the actual experience provided by the facilities.

Research Question Three

To what extent does the campaign's choice of media reflect the principles of Media Richness Theory in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium?

Analysis of the interview data revealed two major themes: media richness and communication effectiveness and audience engagement and feedback. The frequency and percentage of participants whose responses reflected each theme are presented below.

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Media richness and communication effectiveness	15	78.9
Audience engagement and feedback	13	68.4

Theme 1: Media Richness and Communication Effectiveness

The findings indicate that **15 out of the 19 participants (78.9%)** discussed the richness and effectiveness of the media used to promote Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium. Participants generally recognized the value of combining visual, audio-visual and digital media with conventional promotional channels. One participant explained “When you use videos and pictures to show the park or what is happening in the stadium, people understand it better than when you only put the information on a billboard.”

The response illustrates the importance of using media capable of communicating the experiential characteristics of tourism and sporting facilities. A static message may provide basic information, whereas photographs, videos and live coverage can communicate the physical environment, activities, atmosphere and experiences associated with a destination.

The finding therefore suggests that the campaign demonstrates a considerable degree of media richness in its promotional activities. However, the extent of richness depends not simply on the availability of digital or audio-visual platforms but on how effectively these platforms are used to communicate with target audiences.

Theme 2: Audience Engagement and Feedback

The theme of audience engagement and feedback was reflected in the responses of 13 participants (68.4%). Participants acknowledged that social media and other digital platforms provide opportunities for audiences to interact with promotional content, make comments, ask questions and share information about the facilities. One participant noted “Social media gives people the opportunity to react and ask questions, but the campaign can do more by allowing people to participate and give their own feedback about the places.” The finding suggests that although the campaign has access to interactive media, the opportunities for two-way communication and audience participation may not be fully exploited.

Research Question Four

What challenges confront the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium?

Analysis of the interview data revealed three major themes: institutional and coordination challenges, communication and media-related challenges, and operational, political and sustainability challenges. The frequency and percentage of participants whose responses reflected each theme are presented below.

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Institutional and coordination challenges	13	68.4
Communication and media-related challenges	14	73.7
Operational, political and sustainability challenges	11	57.9

Theme 1: Institutional and Coordination Challenges

The findings indicate that 13 of the 19 participants (68.4%) identified institutional and coordination issues as challenges affecting the campaign. These included concerns relating to coordination among relevant agencies and stakeholders, continuity of promotional activities, campaign planning and monitoring. One participant observed “There needs to be better coordination among those responsible for tourism promotion because everybody has a role to play in making the campaign successful.”

The finding suggests that effective destination promotion requires clearly defined institutional responsibilities and effective coordination among government agencies, tourism stakeholders, facility managers, media organizations and other relevant actors.

Theme 2: Communication and Media-Related Challenges

Communication and media-related challenges were the most frequently identified, appearing in the responses of 14 participants (73.7%). Participants' responses pointed to issues such as inadequate or inconsistent publicity, limited audience targeting, insufficient interactive content and the need for stronger digital engagement. One participant explained “The publicity should be more consistent and should reach people outside the state. It is not enough to advertise only when there is an event.”

The finding indicates that the effectiveness of the campaign may be constrained where communication is irregular or insufficiently targeted. It also reinforces the earlier finding that digital platforms provide opportunities for reaching wider audiences and sustaining engagement.

Theme 3: Operational, Political and Sustainability Challenges

Operational, political and sustainability issues were identified by 11 participants (57.9%). Participants referred to issues associated with facility maintenance, accessibility, continuity of government initiatives and the sustainability of promotional activities. One participant commented “Promotion can bring people to the facilities, but the facilities must be properly maintained and the programme should continue regardless of changes in government.”

This finding highlights the relationship between destination promotion and the actual visitor experience. Sustained campaign effectiveness requires the facilities being promoted to remain functional, accessible and attractive over time.

Research Question Five

What strategies can enhance the effectiveness of the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium?

Analysis of the interview data revealed three major themes: integrated digital marketing and audience targeting, stakeholder participation and partnership, and monitoring, evaluation and sustainability. The frequency and percentage of participants whose responses reflected each theme are presented below.

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Integrated digital marketing and audience targeting	16	84.2
Stakeholder participation and strategic partnerships	14	73.7
Monitoring, evaluation and campaign sustainability	12	63.2

Theme 1: Integrated Digital Marketing and Audience Targeting

The findings indicate that 16 of the 19 participants (84.2%) recommended greater use of integrated digital marketing and audience-specific promotional strategies. Participants emphasized the need to combine social media, video content, online publicity, events, influencer engagement and conventional media to reach different categories of audiences. A participant observed “The campaign needs to use social media more strategically, especially videos, because people want to see the places before deciding to visit. Different groups should also be targeted with different messages.”

The finding suggests that the campaign could be strengthened by moving from general publicity towards targeted destination marketing, in which messages and communication channels are matched with specific audience groups, including residents, domestic tourists, sports enthusiasts, young people and potential visitors from outside the state.

The strategy also aligns with the earlier finding on Media Richness Theory. Video, live coverage and interactive digital content can provide richer representations of the facilities than static promotional materials.

Theme 2: Stakeholder Participation and Strategic Partnerships

Stakeholder participation and strategic partnerships emerged from the responses of 14 participants (73.7%). Participants emphasized greater involvement of tourism operators, local communities, hospitality businesses, sports organizations, media organizations, private-sector actors and other stakeholders in promoting the facilities. A participant stated: “Government cannot do everything alone. Hotels, transport operators, event organizers, the media and the communities should all be involved in promoting the destination.”

The finding suggests that destination promotion should be approached as a collaborative process rather than solely as a government communication activity. Partnerships can increase the reach of promotional activities while also creating complementary tourism products and services around the facilities.

Greater stakeholder involvement could also improve the authenticity of campaign messages by incorporating local experiences and community perspectives into destination promotion.

Theme 3: Monitoring, Evaluation and Campaign Sustainability

The theme of monitoring, evaluation and sustainability was identified by 12 participants (63.2%). Participants emphasized the importance of regularly assessing the performance of promotional activities and ensuring continuity of the campaign beyond individual events or administrative periods.

One participant explained: “There should be a way to know whether the publicity is actually bringing people to the facilities. The campaign should be monitored and continued rather than stopping after a particular event.”

The finding suggests that the campaign would benefit from clearly defined performance indicators and periodic evaluation. These could include campaign reach, social media engagement, visitor numbers, visitor satisfaction, repeat visitation and awareness levels. This theme has a direct connection with Management by Objectives Theory, which emphasizes clear objectives, performance measurement, monitoring and evaluation. A systematic evaluation framework would allow campaign managers to determine which promotional strategies are producing the desired outcomes and where adjustments are required.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate that the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has contributed considerably to the visibility of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium. The use of integrated communication strategies (89.5%) and digital media engagement (84.2%) suggests that the campaign employs multiple channels to reach its audiences. However, the findings also indicate the need for more consistent, targeted and interactive communication to improve the conversion of awareness into actual interest and patronage.

Public awareness recorded a relatively high frequency of 84.2%, while public perception and destination image recorded 73.7%. This suggests that the campaign has been more successful in creating awareness than in shaping deeper perceptions of the two facilities. The finding highlights the importance of ensuring that promotional messages correspond with the actual quality, accessibility and visitor experience of the facilities.

The findings also demonstrate the relevance of Media Richness Theory. Media richness and communication effectiveness recorded 78.9%, while audience engagement and feedback recorded 68.4%. This indicates that although the campaign uses richer media such as photographs, videos and social media, the interactive potential of these platforms may not be fully exploited. Greater use of interactive content, live coverage, audience-generated content and feedback mechanisms could strengthen audience engagement.

Three major challenges emerged: communication and media-related challenges (73.7%), institutional and coordination challenges (68.4%), and operational, political and sustainability challenges (57.9%). These findings indicate that campaign effectiveness depends not only on publicity but also on effective coordination, continuity, facility maintenance and sustainable institutional support.

The findings further show that participants recommended integrated digital marketing and audience targeting (84.2%), stakeholder participation and strategic partnerships (73.7%), and monitoring, evaluation and sustainability (63.2%). These recommendations reinforce the relevance of Management by Objectives Theory, particularly the need for clearly defined objectives, performance indicators, monitoring and evaluation.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign has established a meaningful foundation for promoting the two facilities, particularly in terms of awareness and media visibility. However, its long-term effectiveness requires richer and more interactive communication, stronger stakeholder collaboration, systematic evaluation, and sustained attention to the quality and management of the facilities being promoted.

5.0 Conclusion

The study critically appraised the Destination Akwa Ibom campaign and its role in promoting Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium. The findings indicate that the campaign has contributed substantially to public awareness and visibility of the two facilities through integrated communication strategies and digital media. However, the gap between awareness and deeper public perception, as well as limitations in audience engagement, institutional coordination and operational sustainability, constrains its broader effectiveness.

The study concludes that the long-term success of the campaign depends not only on increased publicity but also on the strategic use of richer and interactive media, stakeholder participation, effective monitoring and evaluation, and the continuous maintenance and accessibility of the facilities. A more coordinated and participatory destination marketing approach would strengthen the

contribution of the campaign to tourism development, sporting activities and the destination image of Akwa Ibom State.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. **Strengthen digital and interactive promotion:** The campaign managers should increase the use of high-quality videos, live event coverage, interactive social media content and audience-generated content to improve engagement with potential visitors.
- ii. **Adopt targeted communication:** Promotional messages should be designed for specific audience segments, including residents, domestic tourists, sports enthusiasts, young people and visitors outside Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. **Improve stakeholder collaboration:** Government agencies should work closely with local communities, tourism operators, hospitality businesses, sports organizations, media practitioners and private-sector stakeholders in promoting the facilities.
- iv. **Establish systematic monitoring and evaluation:** Clear performance indicators should be developed to measure campaign reach, public awareness, audience engagement, visitor numbers, visitor satisfaction and repeat visitation.
- v. **Ensure continuous facility maintenance:** The physical condition, accessibility, cleanliness, security and functionality of Arise Park and the Godswill Akpabio Stadium should be sustained to ensure that visitors' actual experiences correspond with the image communicated through the campaign.
- vi. **Ensure campaign continuity:** Destination marketing activities should be institutionalized to ensure continuity beyond individual events or political administrations and to support the long-term branding of Akwa Ibom State.

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