

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE GAMBLING TOURISM IN ADJARA: STRATEGIC MARKETING INSIGHTS

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Abstract. *This research investigates the gambling landscape in Georgia, focusing on strategic marketing approaches to developing sustainable gambling tourism, particularly in the Adjara region. Georgia's gambling industry, encompassing both traditional land-based venues and an emerging online sector, has become a significant contributor to the national economy. Over the past decade, the gambling sector has grown substantially, playing a vital role in Georgia's financial well-being. This study delves into the importance of land-based gambling establishments, such as casinos, in driving tourism, with Adjara emerging as a key destination. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding the strategic marketing strategies employed by these establishments to attract gambling tourists and contribute to sustainable regional development is crucial. Qualitative research methods, including in-depth interviews and data analysis, were employed to examine the marketing strategies utilized by leading land-based casinos in Georgia. The findings reveal a focus on customer satisfaction, promotional campaigns, and collaborations with “junket” operators. Additionally, challenges such as regulatory constraints and geopolitical instability are identified, along with opportunities like targeting tourists from alternative countries and improving infrastructure. Statistical data further highlight the significant contribution of the gaming sector to the economy of the Adjara region, underlining its pivotal role in driving sustainable economic development and growth.*

Keywords: *Sustainable Gambling Tourism, Marketing Strategies, Gambling Marketing, Recreational gambling.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The multifaceted landscape of gambling in Georgia is the focus of comprehensive scrutiny in this research, with a particular emphasis on strategic marketing approaches aimed at fostering tourism within this thriving sector. Georgia's gambling scene encompasses a dynamic mix of traditional land-based venues and an evolving online gambling industry, which has solidified the country's standing as a prominent tourism gambling destination. The surge in online users, particularly during the computer and internet era, has presented significant opportunities for online gambling companies, further enhancing Georgia's position in the global gambling market.

Over the past decade, Georgia has witnessed remarkable growth in its gaming turnover, making a substantial contribution to the country's financial well-being. Revenues generated from gambling constitute a significant share of the national economy, with the presence of numerous casinos, gaming machine salons, and sports betting salons underlining the sector's pivotal role in contributing to budget revenues and fostering employment opportunities.

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE GAMBLING TOURISM IN ADJARA: STRATEGIC MARKETING INSIGHTS

According to data from the Revenue Service (2023), Georgia is home to 17 casinos, 89 gaming machine salons, and 23 sports betting salons, further emphasizing the sector's significance in the national economy. These establishments collectively contribute to the country's financial wellbeing and provide employment opportunities for many.

The tourism sector, with a specific focus on gambling tourism, emerges as a vital component of Georgia's economy. Positioned strategically to attract visitors primarily from neighboring countries such as Turkey, Israel, Russia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan, Georgia enjoys a competitive advantage due to restrictions on gambling in these nations. The economic inflow from tourism significantly contributes to the local economy, making gambling a strategically important field in Georgia, particularly in regions like Adjara.

The Adjara region, recognized as an autonomous republic within the framework of the Constitution of Georgia, accommodates a population of 361,411 inhabitants (National Statistics Office in Georgia, 2024). Renowned for its capital city, Batumi, the region serves as a prominent focal point for tourism within Georgia. Adjacent to the Black Sea coast, Adjara has risen as the second most-visited destination in Georgia, following Tbilisi. The region's well-established tourism infrastructure, including resorts and recreational areas, has played a crucial role in attracting a growing number of visitors. Notably, in the first three quarters of 2023, Adjara experienced a significant influx of international visitors, with a considerable portion specifically drawn to the region for recreational purposes.

According to the National Statistics Office in Georgia (2024), Adjara received over 1.6 million international visitors during this period, with 867.1 thousand visitors specifically attracted to the region for recreational purposes. Tourism holds a pivotal role in the economy of Adjara Autonomous Republic, positioning it as a priority sector. The region strategically markets itself as a prominent tourist destination, leveraging its coastal beauty, mountainous terrains, and cultural offerings to draw visitors. In the same period, Adjara secured its position as the second most visited destination in Georgia, accounting for 723.6 thousand out of the total foreign visitors, according to the National Statistics Office in Georgia (2024).

The Adjara region, renowned for its land-based gambling offerings, attracts a significant number of tourists. Georgia's gambling industry has seen substantial growth, with traditional venues like casinos and betting salons playing a pivotal role in the country's economy. This study focuses on land-based gambling in Georgia, exploring how strategic marketing efforts drive tourism in this sector. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, understanding how these establishments utilize marketing strategies to draw tourists and contribute to regional development is crucial.

While state policies play a crucial role in addressing social challenges like gambling addiction, adult involvement, and financial issues, it's equally imperative to ensure that regulations are adjusted in a manner that doesn't impede the sector's potential as Georgia emerges as a gambling hub. Legal frameworks governing gambling in Georgia encompass laws regulating lotteries, gambling, and winning games. Recent modifications, including amendments to advertising laws, seek to strike a balance between addressing societal concerns and supporting the growth of the gambling industry. This delicate balance is essential for harnessing Georgia's potential as a prominent gambling destination while safeguarding against negative social impacts. This research aims to analyze marketing strategies oriented towards

increasing tourism gambling, with the goal of understanding the industry's potential and investigating specific steps to enhance the flow of gambling tourists.

2. Gambling Destination

Casinos are often seen as effective tools for drawing tourists to destinations, offering various forms of entertainment like shopping, dining, and leisure activities (Yeskel, 2006; Wong & Rosenbaum, 2012). The ambience of a well-designed casino, characterized by comfort and elegance, plays a crucial role in enhancing tourist satisfaction and fostering loyalty (Johnson et al., 2012; Lee, Chung, & Bernhard, 2014). In response to changing consumer preferences, casino resorts are evolving to resemble vacation venues, aiming to better cater to customer needs (Richard, 1997). However, the competitive landscape among gaming destinations has compelled operators to prioritize customer satisfaction and loyalty. Richard (1997) identified several factors influencing consumers' decision to revisit a casino, including its location, hospitality, and gaming offerings. Petrillose and Brewer (2012) highlighted the significance of price and value in influencing customers' return visits. Additionally, traditional quality standards such as security, cleanliness, and friendliness also play crucial roles in shaping revisits. Many casinos implement loyalty programs to foster repeat patronage. While some studies affirm the effectiveness of these programs (Barsky & Tzolov, 2010; O'Brien & Jones, 1995), others suggest that their impact on behavior is limited (Sharp & Sharp, 1997; Uncles et al., 2003). Furthermore, Barsky and Tzolov (2010) argued that loyalty programs are particularly beneficial for specific market segments, such as the Elite Elder Group, while their effectiveness for the majority of customers, termed the Unmoved Members, depends on activation and long-term engagement.

3. Methods

3.1. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach to comprehensively investigate the multifaceted marketing strategies employed by leading representatives of land-based casinos in Georgia and their implications for tourism development, particularly in the Adjara region.

3.2. Sampling Method

In selecting participants for this study, a snowball sampling technique was meticulously employed. Recognizing the specialized nature of the target population – key representatives of major land-based casinos – snowball sampling proved instrumental in facilitating access to individuals with in-depth expertise and insights within the industry. Through initial contacts and referrals from within the industry, a diverse and representative sample of potential participants was identified. Out of the initial pool of 12 potential participants, 5 prominent land-based casinos (Casino Peace Batumi, Casino International Batumi, Leo Grand, Princess Casino Batumi, X Palace Batumi) graciously consented to participate in the interviews, thereby offering a robust and comprehensive sample for the study.

After conducting 5 in-depth interviews, it was observed that there was a notable similarity in the responses obtained, indicating saturation of data. Recognizing this, the decision was made to halt the interviewing process as further interviews were unlikely to yield significantly new insights.

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE GAMBLING TOURISM IN ADJARA: STRATEGIC MARKETING INSIGHTS

In recognition of the need for a comprehensive understanding of the industry, additional efforts were made to enhance the depth of insight obtained. Specifically, the president of the “Ajarian Casino's Association” (ACA) was contacted and engaged in discussions to summarize the findings of the interviews. Given their comprehensive insight and expertise within the field, the president of the association provided valuable perspectives and statistical data that further enriched the study's findings.

3.3. Data Collection

The data collection process for this study was meticulously planned to capture a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the marketing strategies employed by land-based casinos in Georgia. Structured in-depth interviews were meticulously conducted to explore various dimensions of the casinos' marketing efforts. These dimensions encompassed audience targeting, promotional activities, collaboration with tourism stakeholders, and challenges encountered in their marketing endeavors. To accommodate the geographical dispersion of participants and ensure inclusivity in participation, 5 of the interviews were conducted online using the Zoom platform. This mode of interview delivery was carefully chosen to facilitate participation and minimize logistical barriers while maintaining the integrity and rigor of the data collection process.

Each interview was conducted with a standardized protocol to ensure consistency and reliability across all interactions. Participants were encouraged to share their insights and experiences candidly, fostering an environment conducive to rich and meaningful dialogue. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent to capture their responses accurately and comprehensively. Following the completion of the interviews, the recorded conversations were transcribed verbatim, ensuring meticulous documentation of the data collected.

3.4. Data Analysis

In this study, the qualitative data obtained from the in-depth interviews were meticulously analyzed using NVivo 14, a powerful software tool designed for qualitative data analysis. NVivo 14 facilitated a structured and systematic approach to analyzing the rich interview content, allowing for efficient organization, coding, and interpretation of the data. Using NVivo 14, the textual data were systematically coded to identify themes, patterns, and recurring concepts within the interviews. Researchers applied descriptive codes to segments of text that were relevant to the research questions and objectives. These codes were created iteratively based on the emerging themes and patterns identified within the data. NVivo 14 provided tools for visually exploring and analyzing the coded data. Researchers could generate visual representations of the coded data, such as word clouds, charts, and diagrams, to gain insights into the frequency and distribution of codes across the interview transcripts. These visualizations helped researchers identify prominent themes and patterns within the data, facilitating deeper analysis and interpretation.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process to uphold the rights, dignity, and confidentiality of the participants. Prior to commencing the interviews,

informed consent was diligently obtained from all participants, clearly articulating the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of participation. Participants were assured of their anonymity, and stringent measures were implemented to safeguard their privacy and confidentiality. Additionally, any potentially sensitive information shared during the interviews was handled with the utmost discretion and sensitivity, reinforcing the ethical integrity of the research endeavor.

In summary, the research methodology employed in this study is meticulously designed to provide a robust and comprehensive examination of the marketing strategies employed by land-based casinos in Georgia and their implications for tourism development. By adopting a qualitative approach and adhering to rigorous ethical standards, this study endeavors to generate valuable insights that contribute significantly to our understanding of the complex interplay between the gambling industry and tourism in the region.

4. Results

This data interpretation stems from an investigation into the marketing strategies employed by gambling companies in Georgia, specifically focusing on attracting tourists to gamble and contribute to the development of the Adjara region. The analysis delves into various challenges, collaboration opportunities, marketing strategies, and potential avenues for growth identified through thematic coding of qualitative interview data.

The data interpretation underscores the substantial impact of the gaming business sector on Batumi's tourist season. Over time, there has been a notable extension in the duration and significance of this sector, transitioning from a brief period of one and a half to two months to a year-round operation. This evolution highlights the pivotal role played by the gaming industry, particularly during the extended low season lasting approximately 8-9 months in the Ajara region. Such findings underscore the enduring significance of the gaming sector in driving tourism activity and economic sustainability throughout the year, especially during periods of reduced tourist visitation. During this period, the task of attracting tourists to the region primarily falls upon businesses within the gaming sector. This factor holds significant importance as it not only sustains the gaming industry but also influences other sectors such as local hotels, food establishments, and transportation. The interdependence among these sectors is crucial for ensuring their continued operation with a positive financial balance, particularly during the low season.

Hence, the gaming business sector plays a pivotal role in the economy of the Adjara region, especially during the tourist season, where its significance is paramount for the financial sustainability of local operators. The in-depth interviews with the field experts provide the following insights about sector.

4.1. Marketing Strategies

In light of the data collected, it is evident that the gaming business sector in the Adjara region significantly impacts various aspects, including customer experience, decision-making, and loyalty programs. The sector demonstrates a commitment to providing exceptional customer experiences tailored to the preferences and needs of gambling tourists. This customization extends from specialized services such as separate restaurants with bespoke menus and accommodations for specific dietary requirements to amenities like spa procedures,

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE GAMBLING TOURISM IN ADJARA: STRATEGIC MARKETING INSIGHTS

guided tours, and personal manager services focused on client needs. Furthermore, the sector's swift decision-making process facilitates timely responses to guest inquiries and requests, contributing to a seamless guest experience. Despite the absence of a dedicated marketing department, the sector effectively utilizes word-of-mouth marketing strategies to disseminate information and attract visitors to the region. Additionally, the integration of specialized loyalty programs across all casinos underscores the sector's dedication to fostering customer loyalty and satisfaction. These findings underscore the multifaceted role of the gaming sector in shaping tourism dynamics and highlight the importance of customer-centric approaches for sustainable growth and development.

4.2. Promotional Campaigns and Events

Contests, PR Events, Shows: Innovative promotional campaigns and events such as contests, PR events, and shows offer avenues for increasing visibility and attracting tourists to Adjara. Engaging and immersive experiences, such as interactive contests and high-profile entertainment events create buzz and excitement around gambling tourism in the region, driving interest and participation among potential tourists. Such type of information is speeded by special apps, contact persons and direct call. ROI: Respondents mentioned that measuring the return on investment (ROI) of promotional campaigns is essential for evaluating effectiveness and optimizing resource allocation.

4.3. Online and Digital Marketing

None of the enrolled casinos currently operate online gambling platforms. The prevailing sentiment among these establishments is that digital platforms are perceived as ineffective due to the absence of mass-produced products and lack of prior experience in promoting their casinos through international media channels. Instead, their marketing efforts primarily revolved around outdoor advertising through banners, a strategy that was employed until it was prohibited.

4.4. Collaboration and Partnership

Junkets, typically individuals or agencies with access to databases of potential clients, primarily comprise former gambling industry personnel or casino managers who retain connections with a network of gamblers. They offer diverse tour packages, including family-style recreation, across different countries. Collaborating with junkets presents an opportunity to augment the visibility and allure of gambling offerings in Adjara. By leveraging established networks, casinos can attract high-value customers. Partnering with junket operators facilitates access to affluent clientele, enabling casinos to provide exclusive perks and privileges, thereby enhancing revenue streams and solidifying the region's status as a premier gambling destination.

Previously, casinos in the Adjara region had engaged with traditional tour agencies/operators in an attempt to attract and retain customers. However, this approach was found to be ineffective in achieving desired outcomes. Despite efforts to leverage the services of these entities, the casinos experienced challenges in effectively attracting and retaining customers. As a result, the reliance on traditional tour agencies/operators as partners in customer acquisition and retention proved to be suboptimal.

4.5. Segmentation

Following the pandemic period, changes in the economic and political landscape have led to a shift in the segment of tourist gamblers visiting the Adjara region. Currently, the majority of gamblers originate from Israel, followed closely by tourists from Turkey, with others comprising a smaller proportion. Demographic characteristics vary significantly between these two primary segments.

Tourists from Israel primarily consist of elderly individuals with higher disposable incomes. They perceive Georgia as a desirable gambling destination and opt for leisurely holidays with their families. This segment prioritizes spending quality time and indulging in pleasurable experiences during their stay in the region.

In contrast, the segment comprising tourists from Turkey tends to be younger, typically ranging from 25 to 50 years old, and generally possess lower levels of disposable income compared to their Israeli counterparts. These individuals are attracted to the gambling offerings in Adjara but may have budgetary constraints that influence their spending habits and preferences during their visit. The remaining portion of the tourist gambling segment is characterized by a mix of various demographics and preferences, contributing to the diverse visitor profile observed in the region.

4.6. Opportunities

Direct Flights and Airport Infrastructure: Increased availability of direct flights presents an opportunity to enhance accessibility and attract tourists from a wider geographic area. Improving air connectivity to Adjara can facilitate easier travel arrangements for potential tourists, reducing travel time and logistical barriers, and expanding the reach of gambling tourism marketing efforts to new markets.

Alternative Countries: Targeting tourists from Gulf countries represents an untapped opportunity, leveraging their high disposable income and interest in luxury tourism experiences. Gulf countries, known for their affluent population and penchant for luxury travel, present a lucrative market segment for gambling tourism in Adjara, offering the potential for significant revenue generation and market growth.

Business Consideration: An opportunity for the advancement of gambling tourism in Adjara lies in the consideration of policy development and stakeholder engagement. In this context, stakeholders within the gambling sector possess the capacity to articulate their perspectives, express positions, and substantiate arguments during decision-making processes. This participatory approach fosters transparency and inclusivity, enabling the sector to contribute constructively to policy formulation and implementation.

Furthermore, ensuring that decisions affecting the sector are communicated in advance is paramount. By providing timely information regarding preparation and implementation plans, particularly those with financial implications, stakeholders can adequately prepare and adapt to forthcoming changes. This proactive approach not only facilitates effective sectoral response but also cultivates an environment conducive to sustainable growth and development within the gambling tourism industry in Adjara.

Regulations: A less frequent escalation of taxes within the gambling tourism sector has the potential to cultivate a more stable investment environment. This stability engenders

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE GAMBLING TOURISM IN ADJARA: STRATEGIC MARKETING INSIGHTS

predictability and reduces perceived risk, thereby fostering investor confidence and facilitating long-term planning. Moreover, by providing operators with greater financial predictability, infrequent tax adjustments enable more efficient resource allocation and promote business expansion. The resultant perception of government commitment to sectoral growth further enhances the sector's attractiveness to potential investors, potentially stimulating increased investment and sectoral expansion in Georgia.

4.7. Challenges

Airport Infrastructure: The adequacy and efficiency of airport infrastructure emerged as a significant challenge, potentially hindering the influx of tourists interested in gambling tourism in Adjara. Limited capacity and outdated facilities may impede the seamless arrival and departure of visitors, impacting the overall travel experience and deterring potential tourists.

Competitors in Cyprus: The presence of competitors in nearby destinations like Cyprus poses a competitive challenge, requiring strategic differentiation and positioning to attract tourists to Adjara. Cyprus, with its established gambling industry and robust tourism infrastructure, presents a formidable competitor for Adjara, necessitating innovative marketing strategies to carve out a distinct market niche.

Direct Flights: Limited availability of direct flights to Adjara presents a barrier to accessibility for potential tourists, impacting the ease of travel to the region. The absence of direct air routes may deter travelers seeking convenience and efficiency in their journey, leading them to opt for alternative destinations with better flight connectivity.

Regulations: Regulatory constraints and frequent changes in tax policies create a turbulent environment for gambling companies, necessitating adaptability and compliance. Uncertainty surrounding regulatory frameworks and taxation policies can impede investment and expansion efforts, posing challenges for sustainable growth and development in the industry.

In the past, there have been instances where the government unexpectedly raised or imposed taxes on the gaming sector without prior notice or consultation with industry stakeholders. Two recent cases serve as examples of such occurrences.

- On December 30, 2022, the Batumi City Council passed a resolution to increase local fees imposed on businesses, including the gaming sector, by approximately 40%. This decision, which came into effect just two days later on January 1, 2023, was communicated to the public through mass media channels. The sudden and disproportionate nature of this fee hike has placed significant pressure on the gaming sector, leading to a range of challenges and difficulties that stakeholders are still grappling with.
- Tax changes were adopted on December 13, 2023, through amendments to the Tax Code, which came into effect on January 1, 2024. These changes introduced several new taxes affecting the business sector, including the gaming industry. However, stakeholders in the gaming sector were not adequately informed about the proposed changes, as they learned about the existence of the bill only during the parliamentary hearing stage. This lack of prior notification prevented stakeholders from presenting their opinions and defending their interests effectively during the legislative process. As a result, the gaming sector, represented by Casinos, found itself in a particularly challenging position following the

implementation of the new tax regime. In response to the increased tax pressure, businesses in the gaming sector have been forced to take measures such as reducing employee numbers and cutting costs. Despite these efforts, navigating the new tax landscape remains a significant challenge for stakeholders in the gaming industry.

War in Neighbor Countries: Political instability and conflicts in neighboring countries pose geopolitical challenges, potentially affecting tourist arrivals to the region. Turbulence and unrest in neighboring nations may disrupt regional travel patterns and deter tourists from visiting Adjara, impacting the overall demand for gambling tourism in the region.

Weather: Weather conditions influence tourist preferences and travel patterns, impacting the appeal of Adjara as a gambling tourism destination. Unfavorable weather, such as inclement conditions or seasonal variations, may deter tourists from engaging in outdoor activities and exploring the region, limiting the overall tourist influx and revenue generation potential.

The assertion outlined above is unequivocally supported by statistical evidence obtained from a comprehensive dataset comprising information from ten casinos in the Adjara region, as provided by the Adjara Casino's Association. Analysis of the collected data for the years 2022- 2023 reveals the following trends:

- By the land-based casinos operating in the Adjara region during the year 2022, revenue generated from services such as hotels, transportation companies, and local food and beverage service establishments amounted to approximately 82,300,000 (eighty-two million three hundred thousand) GEL.
- According to the data from the first three quarters of 2023, expenditures made by landbased casinos in the Adjara region on services provided by hotels, transportation companies, and local food and beverage establishments amounted to approximately 69,100,000 (sixty-nine million one hundred thousand) GEL.
- Furthermore, concerning the tourism sector in the Adjara region, the influx of foreign visitors is notable. Specifically, in the year 2022, the total number of foreign visitors amounted to 1,126,086 individuals, with 88.3% originating from foreign countries.
- According to data from the third quarter of 2023, the number of visitors to the Adjara region amounted to 1,047,988 individuals. Notably, 91.1% of these visitors were foreign citizens.

The gaming business sector also represents a significant source of local employment within the Adjara region. It is imperative to acknowledge that the salaries offered within this sector are among the highest compared to other industries operating within the country.

- In 2022, the gaming business sector in the Adjara region disbursed approximately 80,800,000 (eighty million eight hundred thousand) GEL as the salary fund for its employees. By the third quarter of 2023, this figure increased to approximately 105,600,000 (one hundred five million six hundred thousand GEL). Additionally, the average salary of employees within this sector experienced growth over the specified period. For instance, the average salary of a secretary amounted to 2,392 GEL in 2022, and by the third quarter of 2023, it increased to 2,520 GEL.
- The gaming business sector also holds a significant position as one of the largest contributors to the tax revenue across the country. The total tax paid or generated by the gaming sector, referred to as land-based Casino, is directly correlated to the budget of the

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE GAMBLING TOURISM IN ADJARA: STRATEGIC MARKETING INSIGHTS

Adjara region. Specifically, in 2022, the taxes paid directly by the gaming sector amounted to 57,500 (fourty seven million five hundred thousand) GEL, constituting 14.9% of the region's budget for that year.

- Indirectly generated as a consequence of the operations of the gaming sector in 2022, the total tax revenue amounted to 36,200,000 (thirty-six million two hundred thousand) GEL. This figure represents approximately 9.3% of the region's budget for the same year. Consequently, the combined direct and indirect tax contributions from the gaming sector in 2022 amounted to 25.2% of the region's budget.
- In 2023, the direct taxes paid by the gaming sector amounted to 91,860,000 (ninety-one million eight hundred sixty thousand) GEL. This figure represents 19.2% of the region's budget for the year 2023.
- In 2023, the indirect tax revenue generated as a consequence of the operations of the gaming sector amounted to 55,700,000 (fifty-five million seven hundred thousand) GEL. This figure represents approximately 11.4% of the region's budget for the same year. Consequently, when combined with the direct tax contributions, the total tax revenue generated by the gaming sector in 2023 amounted to 30.2% of the region's budget.

The figures presented above unequivocally underscore the significant contribution of the gaming sector, represented by Casino, to the economy of the Adjara region. They highlight the pivotal role played by both the gaming and tourism sectors in driving economic development and growth across the region.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the multifaceted landscape of the gaming industry in the Adjara region of Georgia, emphasizing its significant contribution to the local economy and tourism sector. Through in-depth interviews and data analysis, we have uncovered valuable insights into the marketing strategies, challenges, and opportunities faced by land-based casinos in attracting tourists and sustaining growth in the region. The findings highlight the pivotal role of the gaming sector in driving tourism dynamics, employment, and tax revenue generation in Adjara. Despite facing challenges such as regulatory constraints, infrastructure limitations, and sudden tax changes, the gaming industry remains resilient and adaptable, leveraging collaborations, customer-centric approaches, and strategic partnerships to enhance its competitiveness. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of stakeholder engagement, transparency in policymaking, and proactive measures to address the needs and concerns of businesses operating in the gaming sector. Moving forward, policymakers, industry stakeholders, and regulatory authorities must work collaboratively to create a conducive environment for sustainable growth and development of the gaming industry, ensuring its continued contribution to the economic prosperity of the Adjara region. Overall, this research provides valuable insights and recommendations for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and academics seeking to understand and enhance the role of the gaming sector in regional development and tourism promotion. By addressing the challenges and capitalizing on the opportunities identified in this study, the gaming industry in Adjara can continue to thrive and contribute to the overall prosperity of the region.

6. Limitations of the Research

Sample Size: The study relied on a limited sample size of interviews conducted with representatives from a select number of land-based casinos in the region. As a result, the findings may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives and experiences within the gaming industry.

Generalizability: Due to the specific focus on the Adjara region, the findings of this study may not be generalizable to other regions or countries with different socio-economic contexts and regulatory environments.

Self-reporting Bias: The data collected through interviews and surveys may be subject to self-reporting bias, where participants provide responses that are influenced by social desirability or their own perceptions of the topic.

Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the gaming industry in the Adjara region and serves as a foundation for further research in this area.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for stakeholders within the gaming industry, policymakers, and researchers:

1. **Diversification of Marketing Strategies:** Gaming establishments in the Adjara region should explore diversifying their marketing strategies beyond traditional methods like outdoor advertising. Investing in digital marketing channels, including online platforms and social media, can help reach a wider audience and adapt to changing consumer preferences.
2. **Long-term Planning and Monitoring:** Developing long-term strategic plans for the sustainable development of the gaming industry in Adjara is essential. This includes monitoring trends in tourist demographics, market demand, and regulatory changes to adapt strategies accordingly and ensure the continued growth and success of the industry.
3. **Responsible Gambling Practices:** Gaming establishments should prioritize responsible gambling practices to mitigate potential social and ethical concerns associated with the industry. Implementing measures such as age verification, self-exclusion programs, and promoting responsible gambling education can help foster a safer and more sustainable gambling environment.
4. **Continued Research and Collaboration:** Continued collaboration between academia, industry stakeholders, and policymakers is vital for advancing knowledge and addressing challenges within the gaming industry. Further research is needed to explore emerging trends, evaluate the impact of marketing strategies, and identify opportunities for innovation and growth.
5. **Host Congresses and Events:** Organize congresses, conferences, and trade shows focused on the gambling and tourism industries. These events provide platforms for networking, knowledge exchange, and business development opportunities. By hosting such gatherings in Georgia, the country can showcase its potential as a prominent gambling tourism destination and attract stakeholders from around the world. **Invite Investors:** Extend invitations to investors interested in the gambling sector to explore investment opportunities in Georgia. Highlight the country's favorable business climate, market potential, and opportunities for growth in the gambling industry. By

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE GAMBLING TOURISM IN ADJARA: STRATEGIC MARKETING INSIGHTS

facilitating meetings and discussions with key stakeholders, Georgia can attract investment to develop new gambling facilities, infrastructure, and tourism offerings. Engage Representatives of Gambling Companies: Reach out to representatives of leading gambling companies to participate in industry forums, roundtable discussions, and site visits. Provide opportunities for them to learn about Georgia's market dynamics, competitive advantages, and investment potential.

By fostering direct engagement with industry leaders, Georgia can cultivate partnerships, collaborations, and investments that drive the development of its gambling tourism sector. Collaborate with Tourism Promotion Agencies: Partner with national and international tourism promotion agencies to coordinate marketing campaigns and promotional activities targeting investors and gambling companies. Leverage their expertise and networks to amplify Georgia's message as a desirable destination for gambling tourism investment and development.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can work towards enhancing the competitiveness, sustainability, and positive impact of the gaming industry in the Adjara region, contributing to the overall economic development and prosperity of the region.

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