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PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATION OF CUBAN TOURISM PRODUCTS THROUGH TRAVEL AGENCIES IN SPAIN

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Cuba faces the challenge of expanding its tourism offering to adapt to new market trends. Today, the growing demand for authentic and sustainable experiences leads to the constant diversification of offerings. This tourism growth strategy increases the competitiveness of destinations and differentiates them from their competitors in the Caribbean region. **Methodology:** This article analyzes the communication, promotion, and marketing strategies of Spanish travel agencies in the diversification of the tourism sector in Cuba. The methodology, of a qualitative nature, allows for the examination of the advertising strategies designed by these companies and the way they convey the authenticity of the destination. The content analysis focuses on the study of their websites, with the purpose of identifying messages, resources, and narrative elements that make up their communication strategies. **Results:** The study determined that these agencies play a prominent role in promoting, selling, and providing after-sales service for Cuba in the European market. They offer Cuba as an attractive, diverse space with unique opportunities for travelers to experience things that are uncommon in other destinations. Using digital platforms and promotional strategies has been essential to establishing Cuba's brand image as a tourist destination. **Conclusions:** The challenges to be addressed include improving innovation and adopting new technologies to optimize promotional and advertising strategies. Furthermore, work must be done to personalize the traveler experience, strengthen local capacities, improve digital infrastructure, and foster more effective relationships with international partners. Addressing these issues will ensure competitive, sustainable development.

Keywords: Travel agency; promotion; tourist destination; Cuban tourism; diversification.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a global market where sustainable development and environmental responsibility are increasingly important, the diversification of tourism services is considered a fundamental strategy to ensure competitiveness (Barrientos-Báez et al., 2024). This strategy involves expanding beyond traditional tourism activities to incorporate ecological initiatives and methods (Rodríguez-Márquez et al., 2024) that promote local community development. In this context, the global tourism industry faces constant transformation (Parra-López et al., 2020) due to changes in travelers' preferences and practices. Travelers increasingly seek unique experiences that connect them with their destination in an authentic way.

Cuba is internationally known as a sun-and-beach tourist destination (Vilá Tamarit et al., 2024), but due to the evolution of traveler flows, the country has identified the need to diversify its tourism offerings to reach new market segments. This strategic shift aligns with global tourism trends and the constant need to adapt to a highly competitive environment. Industries that fail to innovate and diversify risk losing market importance, and the tourism industry is no exception.

Implementing strategies aimed at visitors seeking personalized experiences and interested in sustainable and responsible services allows Cuba to position itself as a unique destination that combines history, culture, nature, adventure, and sustainability (González-Pellerano, 2024). These are key elements for attracting tourists who value diversity and seek deeper connections with the places they visit, thus ensuring that current expectations are met and anticipating the future demands of global tourism. However, diversification goals cannot be achieved in isolation from other activities; this requires effective cooperation between diverse actors, both national and international, who play an active role in the development (Barrientos-Báez et al., 2022; Parra-López et al., 2024), promotion, and marketing of this new form of tourism.

Travel agencies are emerging as strategic allies. They are responsible for interpreting the needs of the international market and presenting Cuba as an attractive, diverse, and accessible destination. In this regard, Spanish travel agencies play a particularly important role; more than intermediaries, they act as ambassadors for the destination, contributing to the development and implementation of marketing strategies that highlight its values, charms, and advantages compared to the island's competition.

With their extensive knowledge of the European market, these agencies present themselves as the most viable option for identifying and developing the needs and expectations of tourists. They adapt their campaigns to highlight the most striking aspects for this target audience, who are increasingly aware of sustainable tourism. Their outstanding experience in tourism marketing (Parra-López et al., 2020) makes

them key players in positioning Cuba in an increasingly competitive global environment. They use digital tools and creative strategies to segment and personalize their offers and effectively inform customers about the specifics of their products and services. Their ability to form alliances with other industry leaders on the island, including airlines, sales agencies, and hotel chains, helps create an integrated travel ecosystem that improves the overall experience and facilitates access to destinations for travelers.

1.1. Tourist diversification

The diversification of tourism offerings (Hernández Flores et al., 2024) can be recognized as an important strategy for increasing the competitiveness of a destination. It involves expanding the range of products and experiences offered in order to attract new market segments and reduce dependence on a single type of tourism.

In the case of Cuba, diversification means shifting the strategy from sun and beach tourism to services that combine elements of culture, nature, and sustainability. Sun and beach tourism is a crucial source of income for the national economy (León-Gómez et al., 2021); the influx of visitors develops infrastructure, boosts job creation, and drives community and local commerce. However, this growth (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020) cannot compromise the sustainability of the region's cultural and natural wealth. Studies by Streimikiene et al. (2021) define the need to harmonize economic growth with environmental conservation and preservation as a challenge in tourism diversification. If tourist facilities and spaces are not managed properly, they can harm the natural environment, which ultimately undermines tourism values.

Amid the diversification of tourism offerings, natural, cultural, and historical tourism are emerging. "Tourist appeal represents the values of a destination that arouse visitors' interest in its natural, cultural, and historical values" (Cuétara Sánchez et al., 2024, p. 263). These elements, incorporated into the tourist route, contribute to generating income and preserving traditions and customs (Irawan et al., 2022). In this regard, Hernández-Drouet (2024) points out that "the promotion of cultural activities, such as festivals, crafts, and local cuisine, not only diversifies the tourist offer but also strengthens the cultural identity of the community" (p. 442).

Diversification theory indicates that destinations with more diverse offerings tend to be more resilient to changes in demand (Scott, 2021). Offering the destination not only as sun and beach, but also as an ecotourism or cultural space allows Cuba to position itself as a setting for exploring new forms of tourism and attracting visitors who are sensitive and aware of the importance of sustainability (Hall, 2021). This perspective (Hernández-Drouet, 2024) favors the creation of new jobs, boosts the economy, reduces the impact on natural resources, and influences the development of services such as commerce, finance, telecommunications, transportation, health, and education (Minchenkova et al., 2023; Infante Rivera et al., 2024). This makes it possible not only to increase the number of visitors, but also to extend their stay and increase the average

expenditure per tourist. In this way, diversification (Rodríguez-Márquez et al., 2024) becomes the most important tool for the development of sustainable tourism.

Furthermore, diversifying tourism is important, as it helps to address seasonality (Celís Sosa et al., 2024), a persistent problem in traditional sun and beach destinations such as Cuba. By expanding the offer to include segments such as cultural, nature, and health tourism, demand will be spread throughout the year, optimizing available resources and contributing to economic growth and, therefore, a more sustainable economy. This approach (Barrientos-Báez et al., 2024) also helps minimize the negative impacts of mass tourism, promoting more inclusive and sustainable development. Furthermore, diversification (Hernández Flores et al., 2024) also allows destinations to improve their competitive position in the international market. By offering authentic and unique experiences, destinations can stand out from the competition and attract more sophisticated and demanding travelers.

1.2. Role of travel agencies

The studies by Condori-Chura and Flores-Vargas (2023) systematize the positive and negative aspects that mark the work of travel agencies. Among the positive elements are job creation (Sandoval Duque, 2017), investment promotion (González-García et al., 2020), local development promotion (Haro Sarango, 2021), tax revenues (Martel-Zevallos et al., 2019), and improved quality of life (Azcuy, 2020). Similarly, they consider the negative issues related to seasonality (Zuloeta Bravo, 2021; Celís Sosa et al., 2024), competition (Sandoval-Cabrera, 2019), regulation and legislation (Schenkel, 2019), environmental impact and sustainability (Hernández Espinosa et al., 2020), and technology and changes in consumer preferences (Pinargote Montenegro & Llor Chávez, 2021). The ability of travel agencies to innovate and adapt to adverse circumstances leads to the enhancement of creativity in services and offers to respond to increasingly demanding demands; this way of reinventing themselves is key to diversification.

Travel agencies play a substantial role in the tourism value chain, connecting supply with demand and acting as intermediaries between destinations and tourists. Soto Fajardo (2022) argues that “travel agencies are key as intermediaries between businesses and tourists, implementing mandatory biosafety measures to protect the physical integrity of their visitors” (p. 6). Various studies show that their interventions develop existing services and influence the creation of new experiences in line with global trends (Hall, 2021). When it comes to adapting tourism services to changing tourist preferences, travel agencies play a fundamental role. After analyzing market data, these organizations can anticipate consumer needs and provide tailored solutions with a proactive attitude that allows companies to remain relevant and attractive in a highly competitive environment.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on a qualitative methodology designed to analyze the role of Spanish tour operators in the diversification of Cuban tourism. This approach examines the advertising strategies used by these companies and studies how they convey Cuba's unique characteristics as a tourist destination. To this end, a content analysis is conducted of the official websites of Spanish tourism companies with high visibility in digital media and a consolidated track record in promoting Cuba as a destination. This analysis focuses on identifying key messages, visual resources, and narrative elements used to present the diversity of Cuba's tourism offerings with approaches related to sustainability and authenticity.

Table 1.

Selected travel agencies.

No	Travel agencies	Web page
1	Onlinetuours	https://onlinetuours.es/
2	Iberojet	https://iberojet.com/
3	Carrefour Viajes	https://www.viajes.carrefour.es/
4	Viajes El Corte Inglés	https://www.viajeselcorteingles.es/
5	Atrápalo	https://www.atrapalo.com/
6	Logitravel	https://www.logitravel.com/
7	Nautalia Viajes	https://www.nautaliaviajes.com/
8	World2fly	https://www.w2fly.es/es-es
9	B The Travel Brand	https://www.btravel.com/
10	Voyage Privé	https://www.voyage-prive.es/

Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the websites of the selected agencies.

In addition, semi-structured interviews are conducted with representatives of these travel companies, providing more detailed information on the strategies implemented, the challenges facing the market, and opportunities for international expansion. The use of these two complementary methods contributes to an understanding of the phenomenon under study, also taking into account the external manifestations of advertising strategies, as well as the participants' perceptions and experiences.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Tourist diversification in destination promotion

Spanish travel agencies promoting Cuba offer a wide range of tourism products designed to serve diverse market segments. However, the promotional work of these agencies must be understood within a context marked by instability and the slow recovery of international tourism to Cuba. In 2019, the island received more than 4.2 million visitors, but restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented collapse, reducing that figure to just 355,000 in 2021. Although the rebound observed in 2023, with 2.43 million arrivals, reflects a partial recovery, the European market – key for Spanish agencies – remains particularly lagging, with only

648,000 visitors, compared to the 1.23 million recorded before the health crisis (Oficina Nacional de Estadística e Información¹ [ONEI], 2024, p. 361). This uneven recovery is leading agencies to rethink their promotional strategies.

The persistence of uncertainty in the European market has favored a focus on traditional, high-demand products, such as sun and beach packages, to the detriment of cultural and alternative tourism offerings. However, this situation also opens a window of opportunity to review tourism narratives and focus on more diverse narratives that respond to the new values of the contemporary traveler: authenticity, sustainability, and connection to the local area.

The travel agency OnlineTours positions itself as a highly specialized agency in Cuba that prioritizes immersive experiences focused on cultural tourism. It offers a wide range of options in close collaboration with Iberojet and World2fly, including more than 40 comprehensive travel packages with flights, transfers, accommodations, and tours of major heritage cities such as Havana, Trinidad, and Cienfuegos; ecotourism proposals in areas such as Viñales or the Ciénaga de Zapata municipalities; and interactions with local communities and cultural activities. It differentiates itself from other agencies by offering tourism products aimed at both first-time and repeat travelers.

This reinforces the perception of Cuba as a diverse destination, with options for all types of travelers. It encourages personalized experiences, inviting users to combine activities based on their interests, such as gastronomy, music, or history. This generates a higher level of satisfaction and loyalty while promoting an insight into everyday Cuban life through homestays and activities with local communities, responding to the growing demand for experiential tourism.

On the other hand, the travel agencies Viajes El Corte Inglés, B The Travel Brand, and Voyage Privé target a premium traveler segment, offering luxury options that include exclusive accommodation and personalized services. They leverage their brands' reputations to capture a market segment seeking convenience and confidence in their travel planning. Their packages include a combination of cultural experiences in cities like Havana, Trinidad, and Santiago de Cuba, with stays at five-star all-inclusive resorts on beaches like Varadero or the northern keys (Cayo Coco and Cayo Santa María). This approach responds to the traditional demand for sun and sand, but adds cultural value by promoting packages specially designed for families, groups, and honeymooners, highlighting exclusive services such as private airport transfers and special activities for children.

Nautalia Viajes and Logitravel are expanding their offerings to a more general market, addressing both families and groups with affordable packages that combine beach, nature, and culture. This diversity allows Cuba to be perceived as an inclusive destination, capable of satisfying the demands of different types of travelers. They

¹ National Office of Statistics and Information

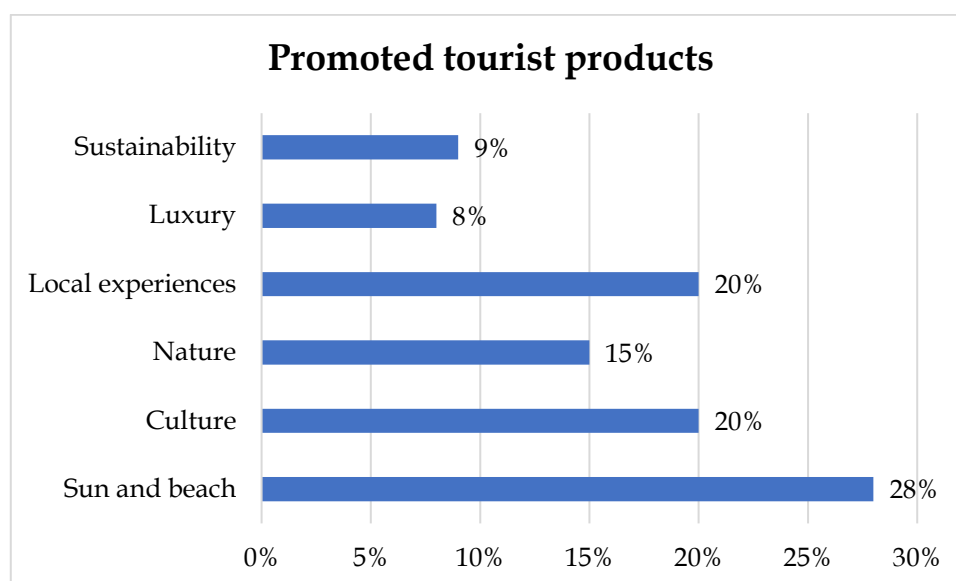
combine the promotion of affordable packages (Barrientos-Báez, 2019; Caldevilla-Domínguez et al., 2019) with authentic experiences that connect travelers with the reality of the island. They offer tours that include activities such as visits to tobacco plantations, Cuban music and dance workshops, and classic car rides. In addition, they integrate ecotourism options in national parks and rural areas. An interesting aspect is that travelers are allowed to customize their itineraries by choosing combinations of cities and natural destinations, increasing customer satisfaction by being able to organize their own travel packages based on their interests.

These agencies are geared toward travelers who are looking for a wide range of options when planning their visit to Cuba. Their strategy is based on emphasizing circuit tourism, offering complete packages, always combined with stays in resorts, with a variety of accommodation categories ranging from private hostels to luxury hotels, thus attracting different types of travelers. They also work to attract new market segments by promoting themed experiences such as weddings in Cuba, honeymoons, and health tourism.

It is necessary to strengthen communication and marketing of diverse tourism products. According to the data analyzed (Figure 1), 28% of the products advertised are related to sun and beach tourism, confirming Cuba's traditional positioning. However, it can be seen that activities related to cultural tourism and the promotion of local experiences follow with 20% of the total, showing that, although to a lesser extent, work is being done to diversify the offer. Activities related to nature tourism, sustainability, and luxury tourism rank as secondary segments with 15%, 9%, and 8%, respectively, indicating an opportunity for growth in these niches where there is a trend toward responsible and high-end tourism.

Figure 1

Composition of the main tourist products



Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the tourist packages sold on their websites.

A critical aspect of Cuba's tourism market is its strong seasonal concentration; in 2023, the busiest months were March (263,000 visitors), December (259,000), and January (249,000), while months traditionally considered “low season”, such as September and October, received only 147,000 and 158,000 visitors, respectively (ONEI, 2024, p. 361). This difference of more than 100,000 visitors between high and low season reflects the structural challenge of deseasonalization. Spanish travel agencies implement diverse and effective strategies to address seasonality in tourism to the destination, aimed at maintaining a constant flow of travelers throughout the year. These strategies are grouped into three main approaches: promotion of cultural and thematic events, economic incentives and special promotions, and diversification of the tourist offer towards non-seasonal activities.

The promotion of cultural and themed events is a tool for attracting tourists outside the traditional periods of high demand, used by OnlineTours and Nautalia Viajes, which differentiate themselves in this regard by including events such as the Santiago de Cuba Festival and the Habano Festival in their calendars. These festivals take place during the months with fewer tourists and attract audiences interested in the authenticity and cultural richness of a particular place. Similarly, Viajes El Corte Inglés and Atrápalo link their offers to special dates such as Christmas or Valentine's Day, promoting romantic or family trips that coincide with holidays around the world. In contrast, World2Fly and Logitravel focus on ongoing cultural experiences, such as visits to local markets and historical tours of Havana, which are relevant at any time of the year. Another strategy commonly used to combat seasonality is to take advantage of off-season discounts and promotions. Viajes Carrefour and Voyage Privé offer promotions with lower prices during low-demand months such as September, October, and November, encouraging travelers to choose other vacation dates. Similarly, Iberojet, World2fly, and B The Travel Brand promote packages with special rates for early bookings or low-season stays, emphasizing the tranquility and privacy of the destination. Viajes Carrefour uses the emphasis on the affordability of travel to promote the idea that traveling to Cuba is affordable throughout the year, highlighting all-inclusive packages at competitive prices. On the other hand, Voyage Privé combines affordable luxury with seasonal promotions, attracting a market segment interested in high-quality experiences at a lower cost. These strategies manage to maintain the competitiveness of the destination, even in periods when other destinations may have difficulty attracting tourists.

In addition, agencies such as OnlineTours and World2Fly promote lesser-known attractions such as Baracoa or Topes de Collantes, expanding the possibilities for travelers and redistributing tourist flows to less saturated areas, promoting more sustainable and inclusive tourism by integrating activities such as hiking, visits to national parks, and Cuban music workshops, options that can be enjoyed regardless of the season. This approach allows tourists to see Cuba as a comprehensive destination and not just as an exclusive sun and beach location.

This diversification of products strengthens Cuba's positioning vis-à-vis other Caribbean destinations by emphasizing cultural authenticity and unique landscapes as differentiating elements, highlighting tangible and intangible heritage, such as its colonial architecture and musical traditions, compared to destinations that prioritize beach tourism exclusively. By presenting Cuba as a comprehensive destination that combines culture, sustainability, and hospitality, Spanish agencies are strengthening their competitiveness in the global market.

3.2. The role of travel agencies in marketing

Personalization is one of the core elements that positions Spanish agencies as effective connectors, playing an essential role as a mediator between Cuban tourism offerings and international demand, connecting European travelers with authentic experiences on the island.

The OnlineTours agency offers travelers the opportunity to enjoy holidays in Cuba, while advising them on how to optimize their experience, generating a perception of trust and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Logitravel uses advanced technologies with recommendation algorithms that identify customer preferences to offer a more personalized package sales service, presenting its offers in an attractive and relevant way for each traveler profile, thereby increasing sales conversion rates.

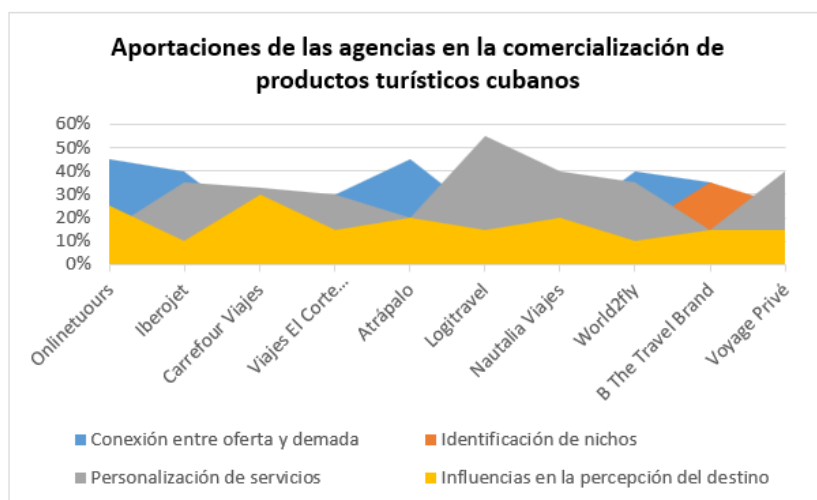
On the other hand, Viajes El Corte Inglés works harder to make it easier for travelers to plan their trips, offering all-inclusive packages that include airfare, luxury hotel reservations, and organized activities, connecting travelers directly with their destinations and eliminating logistical barriers that may discourage them from traveling, which is more convenient from an organizational standpoint. For their part, Iberojet and World2fly combine the sale of airline tickets with tourist circuits that integrate multiple experiences in Cuba, from resort stays to tours of heritage cities, offering a complete tourist product and maximizing the connection between the destination's attractions and customer expectations.

Knowledge of the source market and the ability to adapt Cuba's offerings to international trends are key elements of this strategy. These agencies also act as mediators, connecting tourists with the most authentic and sustainable experiences Cuba has to offer.

The diversity of strategic approaches in the marketing of Cuban destinations presents an opportunity for two-way development. OnlineTours, World2fly, and Atrápalo stand out as leaders in connecting supply and demand (Figure 2), facilitating structured and semi-customized packages, seeking to attract different tourist profiles.

Figure 2

Contributions of agencies in the marketing of tourism products



Source: Elaborated by the authors, based on the tourist packages sold on their websites.

The success of travel companies in promoting Cuba depends not only on their ability to match supply and demand, but also on their influence on perceptions of a particular destination and their adaptability to global tourism trends. These marketing strategies are evident in the promotional narratives, the products they develop, and the technologies they use to meet tourists' expectations, while also playing a key role in shaping the island's image as an attractive, authentic, and diverse destination.

OnlineTours presents Cuba as an exciting place, emphasizing the uniqueness of the Cuban people, its multiculturalism, and history with descriptions that spark curiosity and emotions, with a clearly effective strategy for travelers seeking experiences beyond mass tourism and wishing to gain a deep understanding of the destination's culture.

Exclusivity and luxury are the hallmarks of the campaigns implemented by Voyage Privé and B The Travel Brand to promote their offerings on the island. Aimed at the high-end market segment, they showcase a refined Cuba that offers more than just accommodation with exclusive personalized services associated with comfort and high quality. In contrast, Nautalia Viajes and Atrápalo seek to humanize the destination through culture, promoting activities that connect visitors with local life, such as dance classes, visits to rural communities, or live music nights, using a strategy that shows Cuba beyond its tangible local value. Cuba is not only an attractive tourist destination, but also a country with a vibrant culture, attracting visitors interested in interacting with the community. Social acceptance is particularly effective in influencing and motivating undecided or first-time travelers to embark on the journey. With this sustainability-oriented approach, Iberojet and Logitravel integrate sustainable activities into their travel packages, visits to national parks, ecotourism tours, and visits to protected areas. They also encourage participation in community events, such as workshops with local artisans and visits to agricultural cooperatives,

with the aim of attracting tourists who value sustainability and seek to have a positive impact through their travels, in line with the growing demand for environmentally friendly experiences.

An important tool identified is the use of social media to connect with a younger, tech-savvy audience, strengthening the emotional connection with their target audience through campaigns on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, using images and videos that highlight the authenticity and beauty of the destination, creating direct interaction with customers. This attractive visual content is one of the pillars of the digital marketing strategy used to inspire and build an emotional connection with tourists visiting Cuba. Voyage Privé and B The Travel Brand stand out in this space by promoting images and videos that showcase resorts, romantic dinners on the beach, and luxury spas. On the other hand, companies such as Logitravel and OnlineTours integrate interesting visual content that highlights Cuba's cultural identity and natural beauty; their promotional videos feature panoramic shots of idyllic beaches, walks through colonial streets, and presentations of traditional music and dance that evoke strong emotions in tourists. Iberojet and World2fly use a similar strategy, but with a more narrative approach; their works combine images of landscapes and events with descriptions that encourage the viewer to imagine themselves as a participant in these particular activities.

An analysis of the strategies and narratives used to promote Cuba reveals different approaches tailored to distinct market segments. Each agency highlights unique aspects of the destination to attract a diverse audience and strengthen Cuba's position. OnlineTours, which has a history of emphasizing Cuba's multiculturalism, portrays the country as full of contrasts and fun. The company's strategy is based on practical advice and a friendly tone to build trust with clients. It emphasizes promoting Cuban cultural identity with packages that invite tourists to experience everyday life, primarily targeting repeat travelers and those curious about more authentic experiences beyond circuit tourism and all-inclusive resorts.

In contrast, World2Fly focuses on Havana, positioning it as the epicenter of tourism on the island. The company combines the city's cultural, architectural, and natural aspects with an emotional approach aimed at customers interested in cultural tourism. Logitravel and Viajes Carrefour, on the other hand, use a narrative that combines emotional and practical elements to position themselves. Both agencies describe Cuba as a place of cultural contrasts and passion and offer vacations that combine cultural exploration and relaxation. These diverse, visitor-oriented narratives attract a wide range of tourists. However, the generic nature could be improved by emphasizing more authentic, local elements to differentiate themselves from competitors. Market selection and segmentation efforts are evident and integrated with the brand's communication policies.

These marketing strategies, carried out by the selected travel agencies, focus on the efficient use of social media, digital advertising, and technological innovation. They are committed to building emotional connections with potential visitors through

striking visual content, such as stunning photographs, virtual reality experiences, customer stories, and immersive videos that clearly and compellingly convey the unique essence of destinations. Using these digital platforms allows for audience segmentation, enabling agencies to tailor messages to each group's interests, thereby increasing engagement and fostering customer loyalty.

Marketing is a fundamental tool for promoting Cuba as a tourist destination that is reinventing itself to become more attractive and competitive in the Caribbean. Using modern, fun, and immersive technology increases personalization and simplifies trip planning, making the destination exciting from the moment you start planning your trip.

To develop their marketing strategies, the agencies analyzed data using tools that allowed them to segment audiences and identify specific groups to which they could send persuasive, personalized messages. Visual content plays a key role in conveying emotions and highlighting Cuba's natural beauty and cultural heritage. This content captures audience attention by creating unique images that impress potential tourists and entice them to visit the island. While these strategies have proven effective in highlighting Cuba's uniqueness as a tourist destination, stronger narratives emphasizing local resilience and authenticity must be incorporated. Additionally, more community-based and ecotourism initiatives should be promoted. Failing to emphasize the value of local sustainability diminishes Cuba's ability to attract tourists who value sustainability and environmental responsibility. It also hinders Cuba's ability to position itself as a benchmark for responsible and sustainable tourism in the Caribbean region.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The diversification strategies implemented by Cuban travel agencies and tourism companies allow potential tourists to organize trips at any time of year. These strategies distribute tourist arrivals to the island throughout the year and integrate service packages that combine resorts with cultural and natural activities. This boosts tourism during the off-season. These strategies also emphasize the importance of promoting local events and festivals. These initiatives reduce dependence on peak seasons and promote the sustainable use of tourism resources. They act as a key link between Cuban tourism services and international demand by personalizing services, integrating complementary products, adapting to global trends, and using advanced technologies. They facilitate access to the destination and ensure that Cuban services are perceived as relevant, attractive, and accessible to audiences worldwide, strengthening Cuba's position in the market. Perceptions of Cuba as a tourist destination depend largely on the stories created and utilized in digital marketing strategies. The use of new technologies ensures these strategies resonate with young audiences.

Despite progress in promoting and growing tourism in Cuba, research results highlight challenges. These include insufficient transportation infrastructure

development and modernization, as well as unreliable land connections between popular tourist destinations like Havana and Varadero and up-and-coming high-value destinations like Trinidad, Camagüey, and Baracoa. Addressing these challenges would allow for the introduction of more innovative and advanced tourism products. Failing to address these limitations would negatively impact the quality of the tourist experience and restrict Cuba's tourism development potential. Similarly, technological limitations, such as unreliable internet and electricity, hinder the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, limiting the capacity of tour agencies and operators.

However, the study's results also show notable progress in cultural tourism and community and local experiences. Moving forward, Cuba must comprehensively address these challenges and continue to foster public-private partnerships that integrate travel agencies, local governments, tourism microentrepreneurs, and community operators. This will help position Cuba as a leading Caribbean destination that harmonizes authenticity, innovation, and sustainability.

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