



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
COLLEGE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

**MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY FIVE STAR HOTELS IN
ADDIS ABABA DURING COVID-19**

BY

HABTAMU ASFAW

JUNE, 2022

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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**A Thesis Submitted to School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in
Tourism Development and Management**

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JUNE, 2022

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Approval sheet
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SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Habtamu Asfaw, entitled: *“MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY FIVE STAR HOTELS IN ADDIS ABABA DURING COVID-19”*. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Tourism Development and Management complies with the regulations of Addis Ababa University and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this study entitled, “*MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY FIVE STAR HOTELS IN ADDIS ABABA DURING COVID-19*” is my own work. All information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. This study has not been submitted for award of any degree or diploma program in this or any other institution and, I have fully cited, acknowledged and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Researcher’s Name: Habtamu Asfaw

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMA	American Marketing Association
ASA	American Sociological Association
Airbnb	Air Bed and Breakfast
COVID-19	Corona Viral Infectious Disease
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IATA	International Air Transport Association
MICE	Meetings Incentives Conventions and Exhibitions
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats
UN	United Nations
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WHO	World Health Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council

Abstract

The objective of the study is to assess marketing strategies used by Five Star Hotels in Addis Ababa during COVID-19 pandemic. The research design of the study was descriptive and explanatory research design. The research approach of the study was mixed approach. Sources of data were both primary and secondary sources. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percent, mean and standard deviation) were employed to analyze and interpret the data obtained from the field through data collection instruments. The finding of the study indicated that the hotels fully understood the concept of marketing strategies. The hotels is being thoroughly implemented various marketing strategies during COVID-19 pandemic. Five star hotels need to allocate and have budget as prerequisites for the implementation of marketing strategies during a crisis like COVID-19. Five star hotels in Addis Ababa employed or utilized marketing strategies by making excellent use of social media platforms on the arrangement of business meetings and to directly contact/communicate business meeting clients. In addition to this, five star hotels are providing hyperlink on their websites, emails and social Medias for detailed information about business meeting, Regarding to service quality and social media the study indicated that the service quality of business meetings in five star hotels rated as excellent. Business meetings clients tend to exert a higher expectation of service quality in five star hotels. The role of marketing strategies such as social media on business meeting performance during COVID-19 in five star hotels is positive. The study pointed out that the highest average number of meeting before COVID- 19 was recorded in 2019 followed by in 2018 and 2021. The highest number of meetings during COVID-19 took place in 2021 and followed by in 2020 and 2017/18. Concerning the parameters that determine the efficacy of marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa the study pointed out that COVID-19 has negatively affected the hotel industry and has crippled the income earned. Based on the finding of the study the researcher recommends that five star hotels and other stakeholder should promote their service and products are available to customer with the enforcement of WHO and CDC regulations by using various social media platforms. Tourism Minister in collaboration with five star hotels and Addis Ababa Hotels association should conduct study to find-out alternative marketing strategies and understanding that is adopted by five star hotels and arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19. Identify appropriate mechanisms that can be employed in order to utilize alternative marketing strategies by five star hotels. Finally, five star hotels should organize and erect billboard or electronic display that exhibit service and products to customers in public area or in the place where easily seen to public with their effort to make their service area and products free from COVID -19 pandemic

Key words: Alternative Marketing Strategies, Marketing Strategies, Five Star Hotels, Addis Ababa

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

According to Camilleri (2018), the demand for tourism is dependent on whether the potential traveller has the ability to travel (i.e. travel facilitators) or the desire to travel (i.e. travel motivators). Leisure time and disposable income are two of the most important travel facilitators in tourism. They are called facilitators because they are factors that may actually facilitate or enable individuals to travel. There are other factors that may also affect the persons' ability to travel. Alternatively, these may limit the ability to travel. These factors include age can affect the ability to travel either through health restrictions, or through financial limitations; Stage in the family life cycle: Travellers may have the money and the time at their disposal, but family commitment may preclude travelling; Political stability and peace: Although this issue may not prevent travelling; it may limit the tourists' choice of destinations. There may be restrictions that may be imposed on nationals of some countries for political reasons, including; conflicts, wars or acts of terrorism.

Tourism is a complex industry because it is a compilation of various services such as accommodation, transportation, dining, recreation and travel. All these services comprise the tourism experience. Often these services are not offered by one provider who has control over them, but by different providers who might not communicate or collaborate with the remaining providers. Thus, a delayed flight might stigmatize the whole customer tourism experience, resulting in dissatisfaction not only with the particular service provider but with all the others as well (e.g. hotel and restaurants). The long-term existence and effectiveness of tourism services in such a fierce competitive and financially difficult global environment depends not only on their ability to satisfy customers' needs and desires but to strategically respond to current challenges. Therefore, strategic marketing becomes a necessary practice for contemporary tourism services firms (Varadarajan 2010). Marketing is a view point, which looks at the entire business process

as a highly integrated effort to discovery, arouse and satisfy consumer needs. It is a total system of interacting business activities designed to plan, promote, and distribute need satisfying products and services to existing and potential customers (Singh 2002).

Marketing strategies have been adopted by tourism firms in order to respond to current challenges, to achieve competitive advantage and to increase their effectiveness. Strategic marketing has been defined as “an organization’s integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the creation, communication and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enables the organization to achieve specific objectives” A marketing strategy refers to a set of specific ideas and actions that outline and guide a firm’s decisions on managing in the most effective manner its marketing mix and sustain competitive advantage (Varadarajan 2010).

According to UNWTO (2020), the travel and tourism industry was one of the first real sectors to be affected by COVID-19. The crisis has impacted every facet of the industry and demonstrated the vulnerability of the sector’s vast value chain. Since 2000, global travel and tourism revenues have nearly tripled with the sector now contributing 10.4 percent of GDP and providing one out of 10 jobs worldwide. As of mid-April 2020, international travel has ground to a halt. The WTTC estimates global travel could shrink by more than 30 percent in 2020. 100 percent of destinations have some level of travel restrictions in place, with 72 percent of countries completely stopping international travel.

Increasingly, countries are discouraging both international and domestic travel. Latest figures show that globally 100 million jobs are at risk in the sector with a potential global loss of up to \$2.7 trillion in 2020 (WTTC 2020). The outlook for the tourism sector remains highly uncertain. The coronavirus pandemic continues to hit hard, with international tourism expected to decrease by around 80% in 2020. Domestic tourism is helping to soften the blow, at least partially, and governments have taken impressive immediate action to restore and re-activate the sector, while protecting jobs and businesses. Many countries are also now developing measures to build a more resilient tourism economy post COVID-19. These include preparing plans to support the sustainable recovery of tourism, promoting the digital transition and move to a greener tourism system, and rethinking tourism for the future (OECD 2020).

The outbreak of Coronavirus caused massive damage on Ethiopian economy. In order to save human life caused by the pandemic, travel restriction and stay-at-home advice was ordered. As a result, the tourism sector is one of the highly affected economic sectors in the country. In Ethiopia, as the number of cases of COVID-19 slightly increased, the government has declared lockdown causing hindrance of human mobility and any social interactions. This government decision and its consequence have adversely affected all economic sectors in general and the Tourism sector in particular (Mekonnen *et al.* 2020).

In light of this contemporary issue, this study strives to make its own contribution in efforts being made to alleviate the direct consequences of COVID -19 in the hotel industry with specific emphasis on arrangement of business meetings via the marketing strategies that will be forwarded for the sector.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 outbreak and its massive and swift spread halted mobility globally on an unprecedented scale and substantially and abruptly slowed down the consumption of tourism. This outbreak has challenged the global tourism industry in an unprecedented manner. Tourism related businesses are facing severe setbacks as a result of the economic and social consequences of COVID-19 (Seyfi and Hall 2020).

According to WTTC (2020), the travel and tourism industry was one of the first sectors to be affected by COVID-19. Since March 2020, the entire value chain that defines the industry; spanning airlines, bus and train companies, cruise lines, hotels, restaurants, attractions, travel agencies, tour operators, online travel entities, and others has entered a state of suspended animation. While bankruptcies of major airlines and large tour operators have been widely reported, the effects of the crisis are perhaps being most acutely felt by the SMEs that make up around 80 percent of licensed tourism and tourism-related businesses, and are at the greatest risk of failure. Their potential collapse threatens to adversely affect millions of people across the world, including many vulnerable communities, who depend on tourism for their livelihoods as a result of the ongoing pandemic; as many as 100 million jobs supported by travel and tourism are currently at risk.

The COVID-19 pandemic would undoubtedly leave a deep imprint on the structure of the travel and tourism industry. Collapsing consumer demand, low cash reserves, and a lack of access to flexible lines of credit has forced many smaller travel and tourism operators to close. At the same time, while larger firms such as national airlines, tour operators, cruise lines and nationally branded hotel operators are better positioned to withstand the crisis, they are also facing significant challenges as demand is not recovering anytime soon. While some agile players have repurposed their offering, the pandemic is likely to fuel consolidation – and potentially vertical integration – across the sector. While in the short-term there is a risk of widespread discounting to attract visitors to return, in the medium to long-term consolidation may spur price increases and reductions in the range and quality of services. Consequently, the travel and tourism sector that will emerge from the pandemic is likely to be smaller, in terms of both employment and revenue, than it was before. The process of consolidation and vertical integration is also likely to curtail opportunities provided by the sector for operators from developing countries (World Bank 2020)

According to Newell and Dale, returning to “business as usual” will not happen, and we are entering a period of “new normal”. COVID-19 has exposed vulnerabilities that extend beyond pandemic issues, necessitating thinking beyond solely pandemic responses and addressing broader resilience to a range of disturbances (2020).

Ethiopian socio-economic situations have been drastically changed by COVID-19 pandemic. The Ethiopian economy, after COVID-19 induced mobility and activity restrictions around the globe, has faced significant challenges. COVID-19 impacted by global disruptions has been considerably affected tourism and hotel business, exports and imports, and remittances to the country. Currently, Ethiopia has been passing through remittances declining, household consumption significantly affected, impeded economic growth, increased debt risks, high inflation and high unemployment rate, and lowered business and tourism activities (Hailemariam, 2021).

Based on the above scenario, finding a mitigating strategy that rescues the falling apart hotel industry of the country by applying suitable alternative marketing strategies is of an essence. It goes without saying that, this would not be an easy task that results in predictable outcome since the nature of the pandemic was uncertain and emerging trends swift now and then nevertheless;

designing alternative marketing strategies that serve as a stepping stone to build resilience in the business meetings arrangement of hotels is inarguably necessary and timely that requires a scientific study to undertake.

Speaking of other studies conducted on the topic of “ Marketing Strategies Adopted by Five Star Hotels on Arrangement of Business Meeting during COVID-19”Roman (2018) studied about “Analyzing the Practice of Digital Marketing in Promoting Ethiopian Hotels in the Case Addis Ababa” and Wondimagegn (2019) studied about “The Challenges and Opportunities of Event Organizers in Addis Ababa; Ethiopia”. In spite of this, the above studies did not incorporate the impact of COVID-19 on the hotel sector since the former did not occur by the time the studies took place i.e. 2018. Moreover, the concept of marketing strategies noted by the researchers has a totally different theme with this study.

1.3. Research Questions

The study attempted to circumnavigate the available alternative marketing strategies adopted by Five Star Hotels in the city of Addis Ababa On Arrangement of Business Meeting during COVID-19 Pandemic, as a result of which the following basic research questions are posed –

1. What are the marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19?
2. What are contrivances needed to employee or utilize marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19?
3. How can the efficacy of alternative marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19 be verified?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess marketing strategies used by Five Star Hotels in Addis Ababa during COVID-19 pandemic

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To find-out marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19 pandemic.
- To identify mechanisms employed or utilized marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19 pandemic.
- To examine the parameters that determines the efficacy of marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study first and foremost importantly reviews alternative marketing strategies adopted by Five Star Hotels in Addis Ababa during COVID-19 pandemic and suggest strategies that should be enacted by authorities in order to safeguard this sensitive service industry from squelching. Secondly, the study pioneers the topic of how to go about examining alternative marketing strategies adopted by Five Star Hotels in Addis Ababa during COVID-19as a result of which it will have its own academic merit. Lastly, it can serve as a reference for prospective researchers in the topic.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Even though, the study is designed to assess about alternative marketing strategies during the contemporary pandemic COVID-19 for arrangement of business meetings in five star hotels its scope is limited in Addis Ababa city.

The objective of the study is assessment assess about alternative marketing strategies during the contemporary pandemic COVID-19 for arrangement of business meetings in five star hotels
 Variables Scope: The variable scope of the study is alternative marketing strategies during the contemporary pandemic COVID-19 marketing practice of Five Star Hotels.

Methodological scope: The study employee explanatory and descriptive research designs with qualitative and quantitative approach and to analyze and interpret data the study will employees both descriptive statistics.

Geographic scope: The study was conducted in five star Hotels that are found in Addis Ababa.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The notion of marketing strategies is a broad concept that has interdisciplinary linkage with sound management and thorough implementation, this study will mainly highlight on alternative marketing strategies during COVID-19 pandemic for business meetings in five star hotels in Addis Ababa and yet its practicality is vested on the practitioners.

Furthermore, such alternative marketing strategies are more fitting to specific time of pandemic that creates business crises especially in the hotel industry rather than the usual business period.

The other limitation that occurred in the course of the study was unwillingness of some five star hotels to get involved in the research which was mainly exhibited during data collection phase of the study.

1.8. Organization of the Study

The study has five chapters. The first chapter contains background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and objectives of the study to be achieved, significance, delimitation, limitation of the study and organization of the proposal.

Chapter two discusses reviewed literatures in the topic and conceptual framework of the study is presented. The third chapter describes methodology of the study including description of the study area, the research design, and population of the study, sample and sampling procedure, method of data collection, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter four entails results and discussions part of the study and conclusion and recommendations are forwarded in the fifth chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section of the study deals with review of literature by consulting various theoretical foundations as well as from empirical studies on marketing practices.

2.2 Concepts and Definition of Marketing

“Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large” (AMA, 2007).

Marketing is the function that adjusts an organizations’ offering to the changing needs of the market place. It is a total system of interacting business activities designed to plan, promote, and distribute need satisfying products and services to existing and potential customers (Singh 2002). Marketing is a continuous and sequential process through which industry plans, researches, implementations, controls and evaluation activities are carried out in order to both satisfy customers’ needs and wants as well as meet organizational objectives (Morse 1993).

Kotler notes: “marketing is one of the most dynamic fields within the management arena. The marketplace continuously throws out fresh challenges, and companies must respond; it is not surprising that new marketing ideas keep surfacing to meet the new market- place challenges” (1997).

The marketing concept holds that the key to achieving organizational goals consists in determining the needs and wants of target markets and delivering the desired satisfactions more effectively and efficiently than competitors. A perceptive contrast between the selling and marketing concepts is that, selling focuses on the needs of the seller; marketing on the needs of the buyer. Selling is preoccupied with the seller’s need to convert his product into cash; marketing with the idea of satisfying the needs of the customer by means of the product and the

whole cluster of things associated with creating, delivering and finally consuming it (Singh 2002).

Marketing Management is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (AMA 2007).

2.3 Theoretical foundation

There are various theories in marketing. However, only two are applicable to the influence of marketing strategies in five star hotels in Addis Ababa. This includes marketing mix theory and service marketing theory.

2.3.1 Marketing Mix Theory

Marketing is a continually evolving discipline and as such can be one that companies find themselves left very much behind the competition if they stand still for too long. One example of this evolution has been the fundamental changes to the basic Marketing mix. Where once there were 4 P's to explain the mix, nowadays it is more commonly accepted that a more developed 7 P's adds a much needed additional layer of depth to the Marketing Mix with some theorists even going further. McCarthy (1960) explains Marketing Mix as a tool used by businesses and marketers to help determine a product or brands offering. He reduced the marketing mix into four elements namely product, price, place and promotion.

In the late 70's it was widely acknowledged by Marketers that the Marketing Mix should be updated. This led to the creation of the Extended Marketing Mix by Booms & Bitner (1981) which added 3 new elements to the 4 P's Principle. This now allowed the extended Marketing Mix to include products that are services and not just physical things. They include, People, Processes and Physical evidence. Of all the aspects of the marketing mix, price is the one, which creates sales revenue - all the others are costs. The price of an item is clearly an important determinant of the value of sales made. In theory, price is really determined by the discovery of what customers perceive is the value of the item on sale. Researching consumers' opinions about pricing is important as it indicates how they value what they are looking for as well as what they want to pay. An organization's pricing policy will vary according to time and circumstances

Price Theory is concerned not with economic problems in the abstract, but with how a particular society solves its economic problems. Philip (1776) describes that it is also concerned with explaining economic activity in terms of the creation and transfer of value, which includes the trade of goods and services between different economic agents. A puzzling question addressed by price theory is for example: why is water so cheap and diamonds are so expensive even though water is critical for survival and diamonds are not?

Milton (2007) explains that in economics, the major division is between monetary theory and price theory. Monetary theory deals with the level of prices in general, with repeated and other fluctuations in total output, total employment, and the like. Price theory deals with the allocation of resources among different uses, the price of one item relative to another. Prices do three kinds of things. They transmit information, they provide an incentive to users of resources to be guided by this information, and they provide an incentive to owners of resources to follow this information. Milton Friedman's classic book provides the theoretical underpinning for and understanding of prices. Although figures vary widely from product to product, roughly a fifth of the cost of a product goes on getting it to the customer. 'Place' is concerned with various methods of transporting and storing goods, and then making them available for the customer. Getting the right product to the right place at the right time involves the distribution system. The choice of distribution method will depend on a variety of circumstances. It will be more convenient for some manufacturers to sell to wholesalers who then sell to retailers, while others will prefer to sell directly to retailers or customers. Promotion is the business of communicating with customers. It will provide information that will assist them in making a decision to purchase a product or service. The razzmatazz, pace and creativity of some promotional activities are almost alien to normal business activities. The cost associated with promotion or advertising goods and services often represents a sizeable proportion of the overall cost of producing an item. However, successful promotion increases sales so that advertising and other costs are spread over a larger output. Though increased promotional activity is often a sign of a response to a problem such as competitive activity, it enables an organization to develop and build up a succession of messages and can be extremely cost-effective.

2.3.2 Service Marketing Theory

According to a case study by Christian (1982), service businesses that have direct contact with customers seem to be the last to adopt a customer-oriented marketing concept. He hypothesizes

that general theories or frameworks for service marketing development seems to have followed two different paths. One approach covers services offered by service companies, should be changed in a more product-like manner, enabling the application of existing marketing theories. He compares the second approach which is a notion that services are different compared to physical products, holding that marketing concepts and models have to be developed in a more service-like direction. Wensley (1983) argues that the discipline of marketing is constantly being reshaped by internal and external forces. Occasionally, the pressures for change have been so compelling as in the present period of excitement. The most obvious forces stem from developments from strategic management and planning.

It is also advisable for firms to focus on consumer behavior in order to strategize on how to meet consumer's needs. Murray (1991) explains that though the marketing discipline has directed attention to the field of service marketing in recent years, much of the work in that area has centered on the development of conceptual models with an emphasis on managerial paradigms. He adds that less attention has been given to understanding the behavior of the service consumer though efforts to examine consumer activity are net worthy and highlight the linkage between service consumer behavior and management task.

Jagdish (1995) argues that consumers engage in relational marketing behavior due to personal influences, social influences and institutional influences. Consumers reduce their available choice and engage in relational market behavior because they want to simplify their buying and consuming tasks, simplify information processing, reduce perceived risks and maintain cognitive consistency and a state of psychological comfort. Jagdish adds that they also engage in relational market behavior because of family and social norms, peer group pressures, government mandates, religious doctrines, employer influences and market policies. The willingness and ability of both consumers and marketers to engage in relational marketing will lead to greater marketing productivity, unless either consumers or marketers abuse the mutual interdependence and cooperation. Hauser (1984) explains that it is true that one must understand how managers behave in order to model market behaviour and that one must understand how the markets behave in order to advise managers. The difference is not in the comprehensiveness in the analyses but in the emphasis.

2.4 Marketing Strategies

According to Varadarajan (2010), marketing strategy refers to an organization's integrated pattern of decisions that specify its crucial choices concerning products, markets, marketing activities and marketing resources in the creation, communication and/or delivery of products that offer value to customers in exchanges with the organization and thereby enables the organization to achieve specific objectives.

Development of marketing strategy begins with defining an organization's mission. Planning of a firm's final marketing strategy must include an examination of the market environment as well as SWOT analysis. Marketing strategy determination must be regarded as an overall management decision which will influence and require facilitating policies affecting both production and marketing activities (Smith 1956).

In regard to the distinction between marketing management and marketing strategy, marketing management is concerned with target market selection and the design of the marketing program. Marketing management addresses issues at the level of the individual product or brand. Marketing strategy, on the other hand, addresses issues of gaining long run advantage at the level of the firm or strategic business unit. A potential problem with distinguishing between marketing strategy and marketing management along the above lines is that at the most fundamental level, while the former pertains to the marketing behavior of organizations, the latter pertains to managing the marketing behavior of organizations. However, both an organization's decisions concerning target market selection (choice of where to compete) and design of the marketing program (choice of how to compete) are primarily concerned with its present and/or planned marketing behavior and not with managing marketing behavior (Cunningham and Robertson 1983).

A business organization needs to formulate its broad strategies. These include either growth market strategies or consolidation strategies. With growth market strategies, the organization attempts to gain more sales from an existing business line or penetrate new markets. An alternative growth perspective might lead the firm to develop a new product or service that can

generate sales from existing customers. An organization that implements a consolidation strategy is parting either the services it offers or the markets it serves (Ansoff 1988).

In developing marketing plans, a company must decide which one of the several market positions it will take. The options are to be a market leader, market challenger, market follower, or a market niche (Kotler 1994). Within a single industry, one organization usually tries to be the market leader; the firm that has the largest market share and dominates the competitors in a given market. This market leader dictates the pricing strategies of its competitors and is the first to introduce new products. The market leader defends its position against all new entries and will seek to expand the market or its current market share (Cleverly and Harvey 1992).

A second market position strategy is that of being the market challenger; the form that attempts to confront the market leader. These companies tend to be smaller than the market leader, but aggressive in their strategy formulation. A market challenger strategy can follow several approaches that might involve any one or more of the marketing mix elements such as, price cutting, less costly product alternatives, an improved distribution strategy, or a novel promotional approach (Kirchen and Schifrin 1986).

Thirdly, a market follower strategy implies a business that competes in the marketplace by following the market leader rather than confronting it directly. These companies try to maintain existing customers and attract new ones. A final market position a firm may try to create is that of a market niche strategy, which is achieved by following a strategy of targeting a narrow segment or segments in a large market with specialized products or services (Cohen 1993).

Kotler (2010) defines marketing strategies as the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create customer value and achieve profitable customer relationships. Wilson and Gilligan (2008) state that understanding the strategic situation in an organization is an essential starting point in developing a marketing strategy. Strategic marketing focuses on a business's intentions in a market, the means as well as timing in order to realize those intentions. It's also applicable to businesses within defined boundaries. However, they do change thus strategy at any one time is confined to actions pertaining a specific area of demand as well as competition. By assessing organizational capabilities, threats from environmental forces, competitors strengths and weaknesses as well as competitor needs to develop a marketing mix in which a competitive

strategy is derived. The process undergoes planning, decision making as well as control. In addition, strategic marketing does the following: guides the a firm in its relationship with its immediate environment, affects internal structure as well processes and ultimately affects the firms performance. It has been developed in recent years according to Dickson (1997) and talks about strategic critical thinking that focuses on entrepreneurship inside and outside the organization, on the creation of opportunities by being proactive and innovativeness at very decision-making level as well as the having the premises to manage and shape their environments. All business strategies must be justified by the availability of a viable market. When there is no viable market, even the best strategy will flop. In addition, the development of marketing strategies for each business should be realistically tied to the target market. Wilson et al (2008) advises that in practice of a marketing strategy, a firm has to choose between being a market leader strategy, a market follower strategy, a market challenger strategy and a market nicher strategy. In addition, gaining market share is vital for every firm thus they stated below findings: market share and profitability are strongly tied, a firms relative product service singly affects long run performance as well as most strategic marketing practices that affect return on investment contribute to the long term value. Markets, nature of rules as well as competition have changed thus forming bases for competitive advantage that incorporate marketing mix elements namely: product, price, promotion, place, people, physical evidence as well as process management. Kotler (2010) argues, to find the best marketing strategy and mix, the company engages in marketing analysis, planning, implementation and control.

2.4.1 Product Strategy

Wilson et al (2008) explains that product strategies reflect the mission of the business unit and the business it is in. It entails placing a brand in that part of the market where it will have a favorable reception compared with competing brands. Its objectives include: to position the product in the market so that it stands apart from competing brands; to position the product so that it tells customers what you stand for, what you are, and how you would like customers to evaluate you. It also states that product strategies specify market needs that may be served by different product offerings.

Clark and Fujimoto (1990) put across different product perspectives. Product repositioning

strategy reviews the current positioning of the product and its marketing mix while seeking a new position for it that seems more appropriate. It aims at increasing life of the product as well as correcting original positioning mistake. At the end, there should be an increase in sales growth and profitability among existing customers. Among new users there is enlargement of the overall market, thus putting the product on a growth route, while increasing profitability. Development of new product uses increases sales, market share as well as profitability.

Hotels offer services. Every hotel has their own unique service that stands out from its competitors. Some are known of their entertainers, special cuisines, spas and many others. These are the unique services that attract customers depending on what their needs are.

2.4.2 Price Strategy

Jerome (1991) defines price as the amount of money customers must pay to obtain product or service. He adds that in setting a price, a company must consider the kind of competition in the market and the cost of whole marketing mix. A firm must also try to estimate customer reaction to possible prices. Besides this, they must know current practices as to mark ups, discounts and other terms of sale. Price must support the elements of the mix and must reflect supply and demand relationship. Pricing a product too high or too low could mean a loss of sales for the organization. Pricing should take into account Fixed and variable costs, Competition, company objectives, proposed positioning strategies and target group and willingness to pay.

Most of the pricing strategies that hotels in Nairobi use include: Bundle pricing where they bundle a group of services at a reduced price. For instance, packages for conferences where they put together room hire, PA system, décor, snacks, and internet connection as a package depending on the number of people involved. Hotels also apply competition pricing. This involves setting a price in comparison with competitors. They lower their prices, price the same or price higher. For example, meals in their restaurants, Business center services such as printing, cyber café, photocopying etc. Hotels also apply this strategy during peak and low season.

They lower accommodation prices during low season and rise them during peak season in order to attract tourists and to maintain their profits. Cost based pricing is also practised where hotels take into account the cost of production then they decide on a mark-up which they would like for

profit to come to their final pricing decision. This applies mostly on food and drinks as well as the quality services being offered in accommodation.

2.4.3 Place Strategy

Kotler (2010) defines place as company activities that make the product available to target consumers. It plays a fundamental role in the marketing mix of a service. The place strategy outlines the how and where a company will place its products and services in an attempt to gain market share and consumer purchases. This component of the 4ps is sometimes referred to as the distribution strategy and may include the stores, both physical and online and any other means by which the company can reach customers.

Jerome (1991) argues that place is concerned with getting the “right” product to the target market’s place. A product is not much good to a customer if it is not available when and where it is wanted. A product reaches customers through a channel of distribution. A channel of distribution is any series of firms or individuals who participate in the flow of goods and services from producer to final user or consumer. It is advisable for an organization to devise ways of reaching its target market easily and for customers to reach them without struggle. Hotels in Nairobi have an online booking system where you can be able to reserve a hotel room or a conference room from wherever you will be. The situation of the hotels from business companies and airport is also vital. There are quite a number of hotels in the Central Business District, Upper hill and west lands where there are many businesses situated thereby making it convenient for them to secure their services. Some hotels are situated near the airport thereby convenient for tourists enabling them not to stay on traffic for long hours.

2.4.4 Promotion Strategy

Promotion strategies are concerned with the planning, implementation, and control of persuasive communication with customers. These strategies may be designed around advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, or any combination of these. Kotler et al (2006) advises of clear-cut objectives and a sharp focus on target customers are necessary for an effective promotional program. An integrated communication plan consisting of various promotion methods should be designed to ensure that customers in a product/market cluster get the right message and maintain a long-term cordial relationship with the company. Promotional perspectives must also be

properly matched with product, price, and distribution perspectives. Strategies for development of promotional strategies include promotional expenditure strategy. Practitioners have developed rules of thumb for determining promotion expenditures that are strategically sound: either take the form of a breakdown method or they employ the buildup method. Another approach regards marketing mix factor; the promotion decision should be made in the context of other aspects of the marketing mix, Porter (1976). The price and quality of a product relative to competition affect the nature of its promotional perspectives. Higher prices must be justified to the consumer by actual or presumed product Superiority. Thus, in the case of a product that is priced substantially higher than competing goods, advertising achieves significance in communicating and establishing the product's superior quality in the minds of customers. An empirical study on this topic has shown that consumers prefer incentives other than price. Price cuts also appear to have little lasting effect on sales volumes.

Gibson (1991) talks of advertising strategies being concerned with communication transmitted through the mass media. Promotional mix strategy involves determination of a judicious mix of different types of promotion. Its objective is to adequately blend the three types of promotion to complement each other for a balanced promotional perspective. Media selection strategy entails choosing the channels (newspapers, magazines, television, radio, outdoor advertising, transit advertising, and direct mail) through which messages concerning a product/service are transmitted to the targets. Its objective is to move customers from unawareness of a product/service, to awareness, to comprehension, to conviction, to the buying action. Advertising copy strategy designs the content of an advertisement with an objective of transmitting a particular product/service message to a particular target. Selling strategy entails moving customers to the purchase phase of the decision-making process through the use of face-to-face contact. Its objective entails achievement of stated sales volume and gross margin targets and the fulfilment of specific activities. Sales motivation as well as supervision strategy entails achieving superior sales force performance with an objective of ensuring optimal performance of the sales force. At the end business objectives are met adequately at minimum expense.

2.4.5 People Strategy.

Hotel service is consumed at the same time as it is produced; both staff and other consumers can influence perceptions of service quality (Smith 2008). This is particularly true for 'high contact' services like fitness centers and hotels where 'staff members' are part of the service being consumed. This strategy involves management of human resources management

policies and practices, developing a customer oriented culture throughout the firm and empowering employees to provide quality services, managing leadership, job re-design, and systems to reward and recognizing outstanding achievement (Berry, 1981). People component in service marketing mix also includes management of the firm's customer mix as other customers who are being served can also influence one's satisfaction with a service Lovelock (1996).

2.4.5 Process Strategy

Identifying process management as a separate activity is a prerequisite of service quality improvement (Lovelock 1996). Processes refer to the steps that a consumer progresses through in order to receive a service and those processes a service provider performs in order to deliver the hotel service (Smith 2008). For example: queuing for booking, submitting to security screening, finding the right room etc. Company processes should be integrative in nature and aimed at meeting the strategic goals of an organization as well as creating, enhancing and delivering customer value and ultimate satisfaction (Mutsikiwa 2012). Processes should also be conducted in an appropriate way so that they do not take away customers' perceptions of expected quality of the product or service and real time delivery.

2.4.6 Physical Evidence Strategy

A hotel service is not tangible and is subjective, making it harder for a marketer to sell it as a commodity, standardized in quality and physical shape (Shibury *et al.*2009). Physical evidence therefore represents visual and/or tangible clues of the service product that make a hotel service more tangible to the customer prior to purchase, during purchasing, and post purchasing it, reinforcing service quality. Physical evidence must be redesigned to be consistent with the personality that the firm wishes to project in the market place (Betts, 1994). Physical evidence includes: the design and construction of the facility, well-groomed employees, clean and well maintained premises, well-manicured lawns, good food and beverage facilities, and attractive hotel room and with excellent presentation. Actual surrounding and other visible cues can have a profound effect on the impression customers' form about the quality of the service they receive (Bitner, 1992).

2.5. Alternative Marketing Strategies

According to Tsiaotso (2012), successful marketing strategies require the recognition and understanding of global business challenges, the development and leverage of distinctive capabilities, the provision of superior customer value and immediate response to competitors' actions. A marketing strategy should make the most of a company's strengths (capabilities) and matches them to the customer value requirements. Furthermore, a marketing strategy should be flexible in order to respond to changes in consumers' needs, desires and preferences and be able to identify new market segments and target them successfully. Then, a marketing strategy can lead to superior business performance and sustainable competitive advantage.

Verma (2017) points out that, the change in technology and economy are eliciting a new set of beliefs and practices on the part of business firms.

1. From organizing by product units to organizing by customer segments.
2. From focusing on Profitable transactions to focusing on customer lifetime value.
3. From focusing on Just the financial scorecard to focusing also on the marketing scorecard.
4. From focusing on shareholders to focusing on stakeholders.
5. From marketing does the marketing to everyone does the marketing. Every employee has an impact on the customer and must see the customer as the source of company's prosperity.
6. From building brands through advertising to building brands through performance.
7. From focusing on customer acquisition to focusing on customer retention.
8. From no customer satisfaction measurement to in-depth customer satisfaction measurements.
9. From over-promise, under-deliver to under promise, over-deliver.

According to Kotler (2017), the strategy and tactics behind marketing programs have changed dramatically as firms have dealt with the enormous shift of the "new economy" in their external marketing environment. Changes in economic, technological, political – legal, sociocultural, and competitive environments have compelled marketers to develop new approaches and philosophies. In the face of tighter budgets and the general demand for greater effectiveness in marketing many marketers are starting to employ more creative and innovative ways to reach out

to their target customers. Many have started marketing cooperatively in order to share costs among two or more marketers who are trying to reach the same consumers. Five major forces of this new economy include:

- i. Digitalization and connectivity through Internet, Intranet and mobile services.
- ii. Disintermediation and re-intermediation via new middlemen of various sorts.
- iii. Customization and customization through tailored products and by providing customers ingredients to make products themselves.
- iv. Industry convergence through the blurring of industry boundaries.
- v. New customers and company capabilities.

Companies are applying brand valuation techniques in order to understand and manage their brands better. Brand valuation involves a detailed examination of a brand from marketing point, a financial and legal prospective. It also examines the brand performance, prospective, market opportunity, and competition. It thus provides an excellent tool for strategy development. A brand is a name or a symbol and its associated tangible and emotional attributes - that is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller in order to differentiate them from those of competitors. At the heart of a brand are trademark rights. A brand designates a product or service as being different from competitors' products and services by signaling certain key values specific to a particular brand. Companies are increasingly recognizing the importance of brand guardianship and management as key to alternative marketing strategy resulting in successful running of any business (Verma, 2017).

2.6. COVID-19 Pandemic

The first human cases of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus causing COVID-19, subsequently named SARS-CoV-2 were first reported by officials in Wuhan City, China, in December 2019. Retrospective investigations by Chinese authorities have identified human cases with onset of symptoms in early December 2019. While some of the earliest known cases had a link to a wholesale food market in Wuhan, some did not. Many of the initial patients were stall owners, market employees, or regular visitors to this market. Environmental samples taken from this market in December 2019 tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, further suggesting

that the market in Wuhan City was the source of this outbreak or played a role in the initial amplification of the outbreak. The market was closed on 1 January 2020 (WHO, 2020).

COVID-19 is both a public health crisis and a real-time experiment in downsizing the consumer economy and many suggest that this pandemic may represent the beginning of a sustainable consumption transition (Goffman 2020). The pandemic is an unprecedented wake-up call, laying bare deep inequalities and exposing precisely the failures that are addressed in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change (UN 2020).

As Barbier and Burgess Notes, *“the COVID-19 pandemic is causing a growing financial burden on all countries, disrupting economies and causing hundreds of thousands of deaths globally. Low and middle-income economies will additionally suffer from the lack of international funding available for achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity conservation. The pandemic is likely to further undermine progress towards the SDGs by 2030, which was already faltering even before the outbreak”* (2020:135).

2.7. Effects of COVID-19 on the Hotel and Tourism Industry

COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the global economy leading to a massive recession and dramatically changed consumer spending. Consumer spending is one of the most important driving forces for global economic growth (Baker et al. 2020), and the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a massive transformation in customer purchasing patterns with many customers grappling with uncertainty (Jones, 2020).

Tourism, which is often regarded to be one of the most labor-intensive sectors of the economy, has been dramatically affected by the pandemic because of the impact on international aviation and travel (Hall et al. 2020). The IATA (2020), forecast, for global enplanements to fall 55% in 2020 compared to 2019. Passenger numbers are expected to rise 62% in 2021 compared to 2020, but still down almost 30% compared to 2019. A full recovery to 2019 levels is not expected until 2023.

According to the UNWTO (2020), the near-complete lockdown imposed by countries around the world in response to the pandemic in May 2020 led to a 98% fall in international tourist numbers in that month when compared to 2019. The UNWTO also reported a fall of 300 million

international tourists representing a 56% year-on-year drop in tourist arrivals between January and May 2020. This translates into a loss of US\$320 billion in international tourism receipts – more than three times the amount during the Global Economic Crisis of 2009.

The COVID-19 crisis has hit the tourism economy hard, with unprecedented effects on jobs and businesses. Tourism was one of the first sectors to be deeply impacted by the pandemic, as measures introduced to contain the virus led to a near-complete cessation of tourism activities around the world. The sector also risks being among one of the last to recover, with the ongoing travel restrictions and the global recession. This has consequences beyond the tourism economy, with the many other sectors that support, and are supported by, tourism also significantly impacted (OECD 2020).

According to ILO (2020), the coronavirus crisis is putting millions of jobs in the tourism sector at risk. Tourism is highly labor intensive and provides a high volume of jobs for low skilled workers, together with higher skilled jobs. The accommodation and food services subsectors alone globally provides employment for 144 million workers, about 30% of whom are employed in small tourism businesses with 2 - 9 employees. Many of these jobs are customer-facing, exposing workers also to the health risks from the virus (e.g. waiters, air stewards, hotel receptionists).

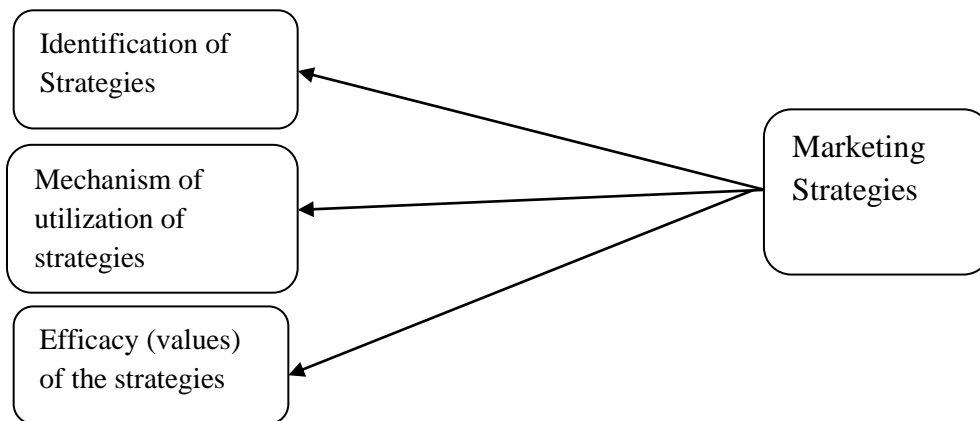
Due to the resulting travel restrictions as well as the slump in demand among travelers, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on lodging, car rental, and cruise lines and airlines and the broader aviation and travel sector. Significant reductions in passenger numbers culminated in the cancelation of flights which drastically decreased airline profits and caused many of them to lay off staff or declare bankruptcy. IATA reported that the airline industry lost \$314 billion in revenues due to the sharp reduction in the number of passengers. They also indicated that airlines would require \$200 billion in bailouts to survive the crisis (Jasper and Philip 2020). Similar to aviation sector, the cruise industry and lodging sector also witnessed sharp declines and a collapse in share prices. For example, Carnival's stock dropped by nearly 60% while Royal Caribbean and Norwegian have lost more than 70% of their value (Cheer, 2020).

Other sectors within the tourism and hospitality industry were also substantially crippled. For instance, short-term rental platforms like Airbnb were affected. Although Airbnb accommodation in particular was increasing in popularity prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, major shifts have been seen in demand for short-term rentals (DuBois 2020).

The COVID-19 crisis has been a huge shock to the tourism economy, severely impacting people’s livelihoods, neighborhoods and businesses. As the pandemic continues to evolve, the full consequences are not yet clear. However, a return to ‘business as usual’ is unlikely. Policy makers will need to learn from the crisis to build a stronger, more resilient tourism economy for the future (OECD 2020).

2.8. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study



Source: Own Formulation/2021

The above conceptual framework represents the sequential steps involved in the task of alternative tourism marketing strategies. Speaking of which, the summation of alternative marketing strategies versus application mechanisms results in value indicating scheme, which is the ultimate objective of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Research methodology is the path through which researchers need to conduct their research. It shows the path through which these researchers formulate their problem and objective and present their result from the data obtained during the study period. The research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework for a study. A very significant decision in research design process is the choice to be made regarding research approach since it determines how relevant information for a study will be obtained (Kassu, 2019).

The research design was exploratory research design. As Kothari (2004) the main purpose of such design is that of formulating a problem for more precise investigation or of developing the working hypotheses from an operational point of view. The major emphasis in such studies is on the discovery of ideas and insights.

3.2. Research Approach

The methodological approach of this study is mixed approach that constitutes both quantitative and qualitative methods. As Combs states “mixed Research, or what is referred to as mixed methods research, involves mixing or combining quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (2011:17).

Mixed approach is selected since the study incorporates a large array of informants; it is seldom possible to reach them out one by one thus quantitative method is necessary. Moreover, in order to verify numerical data and screen large pool of information qualitative method is also essential. As a result of which mixed approach is chosen.

3.3. Population of the Study

Population of the study included hotels, hotel professionals in Addis Ababa, marketing professionals and academicians, professionals from ministry of culture and tourism, independent meeting venues as well as public health professionals from Ethiopian Public Health Institute.

Sample size is small group of respondents drawn from a population about which a researcher is interested in getting the information so as to arrive at a conclusion. This study selected respondents from five star Hotels. The sample size was determined by using the statistical formula by Yamane (1967). Based on the assumption of 95% confidence level and $P = .05$ and the estimated population size more than 5, 000. The target populations of this study were hotel professionals in Addis Ababa, marketing professionals and academicians, professionals from ministry of culture and tourism, independent meeting venues as well as public health professionals from Ethiopian Public Health Institute. Therefore;

$$\text{Sample size} = n \frac{\text{Population size}}{1 + \text{Population size}(e)^2}$$

$$\text{Sample size} = 12,000 / 1 + 12,000(0.05)^2$$

$$\text{Sample size} = 387.096 \approx \mathbf{387}$$

3.4. Sample and Sampling Procedure

Participating the whole population is unmanageable in this study as a result of which, drawing a sample from the given set of population is mandatory. The study used purposive sampling technique.

Purposive sampling is technique is preferred by considering that the knowledge of informants about the alternative tourism marketing strategies for business meetings sector during COVID-19 varies from one another.

3.5. Data Collection

3.5.1 Primary Sources of Data

The primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character. There are several methods of collecting primary data, particularly in

surveys and descriptive researches. Important ones are: observation method, interview method and through questionnaires (Kothari 2004).

Hence, the study was device primary data collection instruments including questionnaires formed in Likert-scale, in-depth interviews with key informants, focus group discussion with a certain set of respondents and use personal observation as a vital source of primary data and a validity instrument for data collected through other means.

3.5.2 Secondary Sources of Data

Secondary data is a data that has been collected by individuals and agencies for purposes of research and other than research. Secondary sources of information can yield accurate data (Green 1993). The study has made use of secondary data sources including books, journals, articles, reports and related internet materials.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

Data analysis is the search for patterns in data and for ideas that help explain why those patterns are there in the first place. It is also a process of explaining and trying to make sense of the data received and reducing it to meaningful accounts (Bernard 2009).

The collected data was analyzed using mixed analysis by punching the analysis of both numerically and qualitatively collected data. Numerical data was analyzed using *SPSS Version-16*. This had an advantage of triangulating and checking the validity of information collected through either of the two methods i.e. qualitatively and quantitatively.

Mixed analyses involve the analysis of one or both data types (i.e., quantitative data or qualitative data; or quantitative data and qualitative data), which occur either concurrently (i.e., in no chronological order), or sequentially in two phases (in which the qualitative analysis phase precedes the quantitative analysis phase or vice versa, and findings from the initial analysis phase inform the subsequent phase) or more than two phases (i.e., iteratively). The analysis strands might not interact until the data interpretation stage yielding a basic parallel mixed analysis, although more complex forms of parallel mixed analysis can be used, in which interaction takes place in a limited way before the data interpretation phase (Combs 2011).

3.7. Ethical Considerations

Every bit of information cited from other authors, journals, reports, proclamations, related internet materials and etc. has been duly acknowledged and credited throughout this study in order to offset plagiarism and adhere to ethical standards to the maximum. The referencing style used is American Sociological Association referencing style.

The cornerstone of ethical research is *informed consent*. The term consists of two important elements, with each requiring careful consideration, that is, 'informed' and 'consent'. Participants must be fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, and what (if any) consequences there could be. The participants must provide explicit, active, signed consent to taking part with the research, including understanding their rights to access to their information and the right to withdraw at any point. The informed consent process can be seen as the contract between researcher and the participants (Fleming and Zegwaard 2018). Likewise, all informants in this study were approached for their informed consent in order to partake in the study. Participant confidentiality was the other ethical consideration in this study over which; participants' identity was only known by the researcher as the data was de-identified and the identity kept confidential.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter looks in to the results and discussion. The data which was obtained from the field by various data collection instrument was analyzed and interpreted in this section. The result has been presented as follows.

4.0 Response Rate

Number of questionnaires distributed to respondents	Number of questionnaires returned back	Response rate
387	312	80.6%

The researcher distributed 387 questionnaires of which 312 80.6% of questionnaires were properly filled and returned back. The response rate was 80.6%

4.1 Background Information of Informants

This section presents background information of the respondents. The background information which was selected in this section was educational level, work experience, age, sex and year of establishment of the hotels and presented as follows.

Table 4.1: Cross tabulation of Educational Level of Respondents and selected Hotels

		Name of the Hotel						
Educational Level of Respondents		Capital Hotel	Elilie International Hotel	Hyatt Regency Hotel	Inter-luxury Hotel	Sheraton Addis Hotel	Getfam Hotel	Total
	Diploma	15	15	0	7	0	0	37
	BA/BSC	39	34	36	41	19	19	188
	MA/MSC	0	5	14	1	33	34	87
Total		54	54	50	49	52	53	312

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.1 showed that educational level of the respondents from five star hotels located in Addis Ababa. Regarding to this, 39 respondents from capital hotel, 34 from Elilie hotel, 36 of them from Hyatt regency hotel, 31 from inter luxury hotel, 19 from Sheraton Addis hotel, 19 from Getfam hotel were BA/BSc degree holders. On the other side, 5 respondents from Elilie international hotel, 14 from Hyatt Regency hotel, 1 from Inter luxury hotel, 33 from Sheraton hotel, 34 from Getfam hotel were MA/MSc holders . From the above information it is possible to conclude that the majority of respondents were BA/BSC holders.

Table 4.2: Cross tabulation of Experience in Years and the selected Hotels

		Name of the Hotel						
Experience in Years		Capital Hotel	Elilie International Hotel	Hyatt Regency Hotel	Inter-luxury Hotel	Sheraton Addis Hotel	Getfam Hotel	Total
	<10 Years	30	34	35	14	0	0	113
	10-20 Years	24	10	7	21	30	19	122
	21-30 Years	0	10	8	14	22	34	77
Total		54	54	50	49	52	53	312

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.2 showed that cross tabulation of Experience in years and the selected Hotels. Of which 30 respondents from capital hotel, 34 respondents from Elilie international hotel, 35 respondents from inter luxury hotel have work experience of less than 10 years. On the other side, 24 respondents from capital hotel, 10 respondents from Elilie international hotel, 7 respondents from Hyatt regency hotel, 21 respondents from inter luxury hotel, 30 respondents from Sheraton Addis hotel, 19 respondents from Getfam Hotel have work experience of 10-20 years. Finally, 10 respondents from Elilie International Hotel, 8 respondents from Hyatt Regency hotel, 14 from inter luxury hotel, 22 respondents from Sheraton Hotel and 34 respondents from Getfam hotel

have work experience of 21-30 years. From the have information it is possible to conclude that the majority of respondents were in the age category of 10-20 years.

Table 4.3: Cross tabulation of Age of the Respondents and the selected Hotel

		Name of the Hotel						
Age of the Respondents		Capital Hotel	Elilie Internatio nal Hotel	Hyatt Regency Hotel	Inter-luxury Hotel	Sheraton Addis Hotel	Getfam Hotel	Total
	18-25	8	19	14	7	0	0	48
	26-33	38	25	29	13	0	0	105
	34-40	8	0	7	14	9	8	46
	>40	0	10	0	15	43	45	113
Total		54	54	50	49	52	53	312

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.3 showed that cross tabulation of age of the respondents and the selected hotel. In this regards, 8 respondents from capital hotel, 19 respondents from Elilie international hotel, 14 from Hyatt regency hotel, 7 respondents from inter luxury hotel were in the age category. Furthermore, 38 respondents from Capital hotel, 25 respondents from Elilie International hotel and 13 from Inter luxury hotel were categorized in age range of 26-33 years old. On the other side, 7 respondents from Hyatt Regency Hotel, 14 respondents from Inter luxury hotel, 9 respondents from Sheraton Addis Hotel and 8 respondents from Getfam hotel were in the age ranges between 34-40 years old. Finally, 10 respondents from Elilie International Hotel, 15 respondents from Inter Luxury Hotel, 43 respondents from Sheraton Addis Hotel and 45 respondents from Getfam Hotel were categorized in the age group of above 40 years old. From the above information it is possible to conclude that the majority of respondents were in the age category of above 40 years old.

Table 4.4. Cross tabulation Sex of Respondents and the selected Hotel

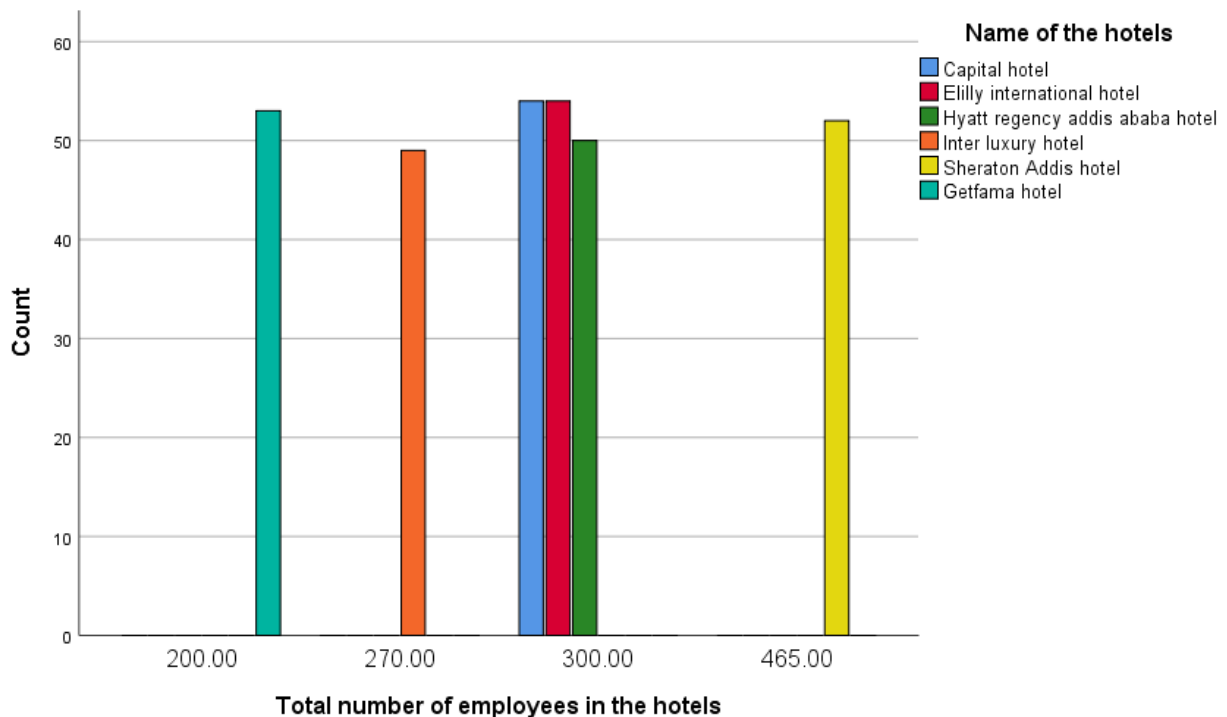
		Name of the Hotel						
Sex of the		Capital	Elilie Internatio	Hyatt Regency	Inter-luxury	Sheraton Addis	Getfam	Total

Respondents		Hotel	nal Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	Hotel	
	Male	39	29	36	35	42	43	224
	Female	15	25	14	14	10	10	88
Total		54	54	50	49	52	53	312

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.4 showed that cross tabulation sex of respondents and the selected hotel. Concerning to sex of respondents 39 capital hotel respondents, 29 Elilie International Hotel respondents, 36 Hyatt Regency respondents, 35 Inter Luxury Hotel respondents, 42 Sheraton Hotel respondents, 43 Getfam Hotel respondents were male. On the other sides, 15 capital Hotel respondents, 25 Elilie International Hotel, 14 Hayatt Regency Hotel respondents, 14 Inter Luxury Hotel respondents, 10 Sheraton Addis Hotel, 10 Getfam Hotel respondents were female. From the above information from selected five star hotel the majority of respondents were male sex category.

Figure 4. 1: Number of employee in the selected five star hotels



Source: Field survey, 2021

Figure 4.1 showed that number of employee in the selected five star hotels. From the selected five star hotel Sheraton Addis has great number of employed which is followed by capital hotel and Elilie international Hotel.

Figure 4.2: Number of Rooms of the Selected Five Star Hotel.

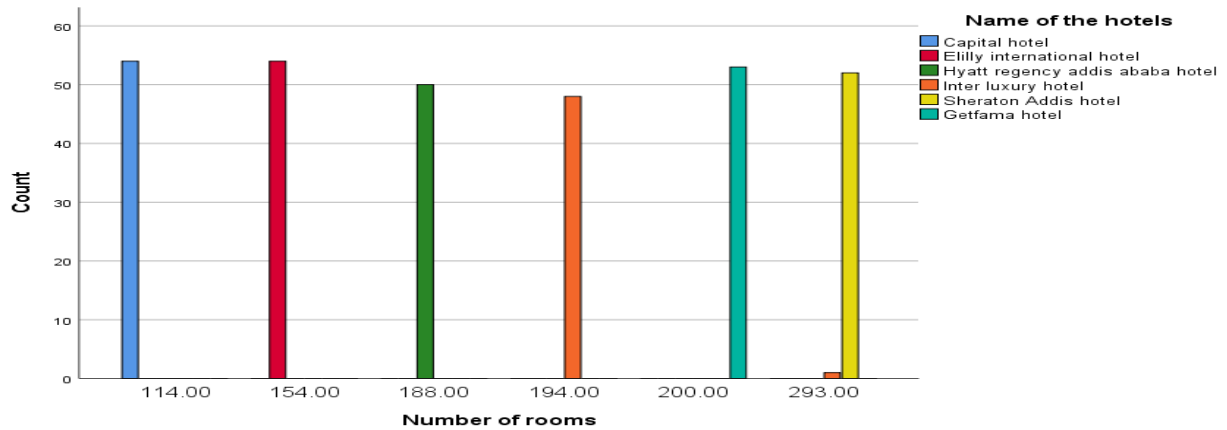
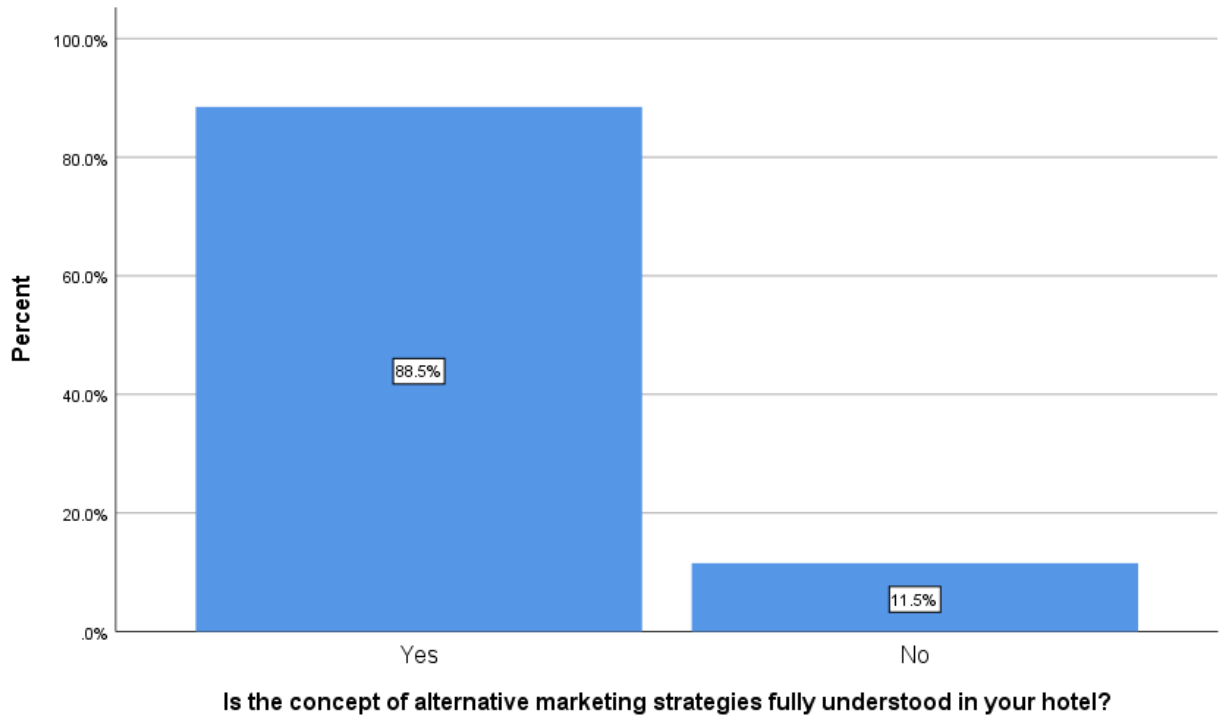


Figure 4.2: Number of Rooms of the Selected Five Star Hotel. Of the selected five star hotel Elilie international hotel has greater number of rooms which is followed by capital hotel, Getfam and Sheraton Addis hotel.

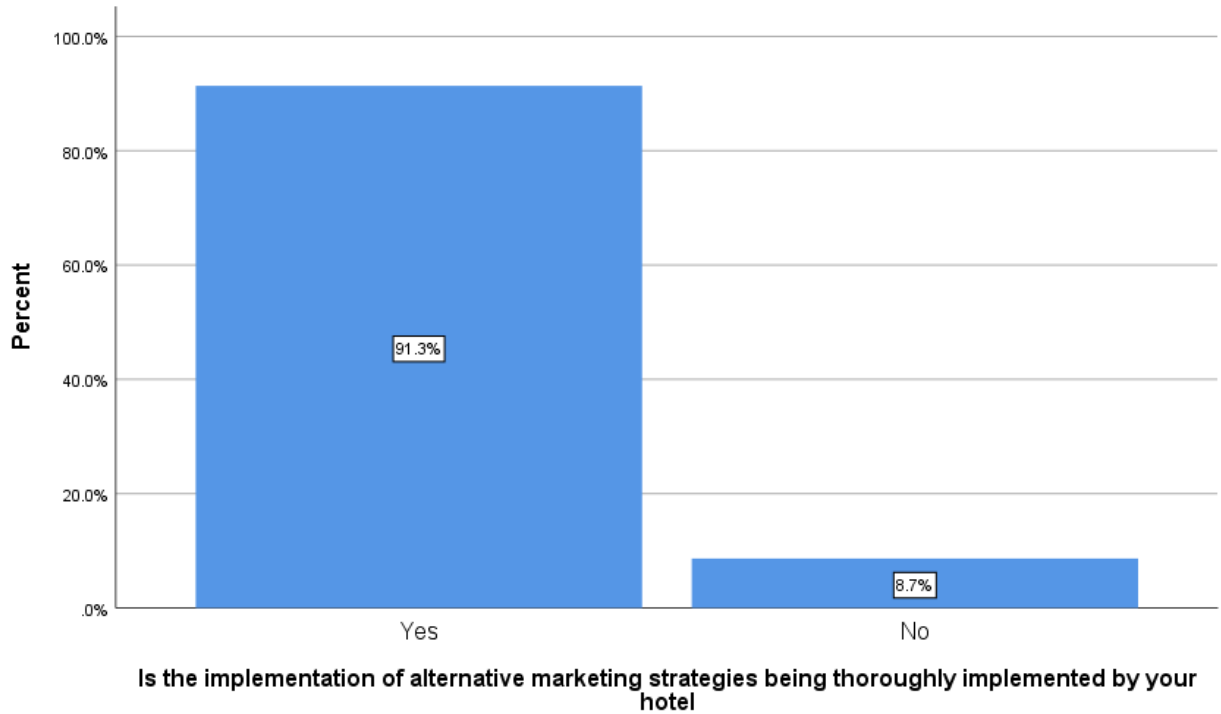
Figure 4.3: Hotels level of understanding of the concept of alternative marketing strategies



Source: Field survey, 2021

Figure 4.3 showed that hotels level of understanding of the concept of alternative marketing strategies. In this regards, the respondents were asked that *was the concept of alternative marketing strategies fully understood in your hotel?* .For this question 88.5 % of the respondents replied that affirmative and 11.5% of the respondents replied negative. From the above information it is possible to conclude that the concept of alternative strategies fully understood by the hotels.

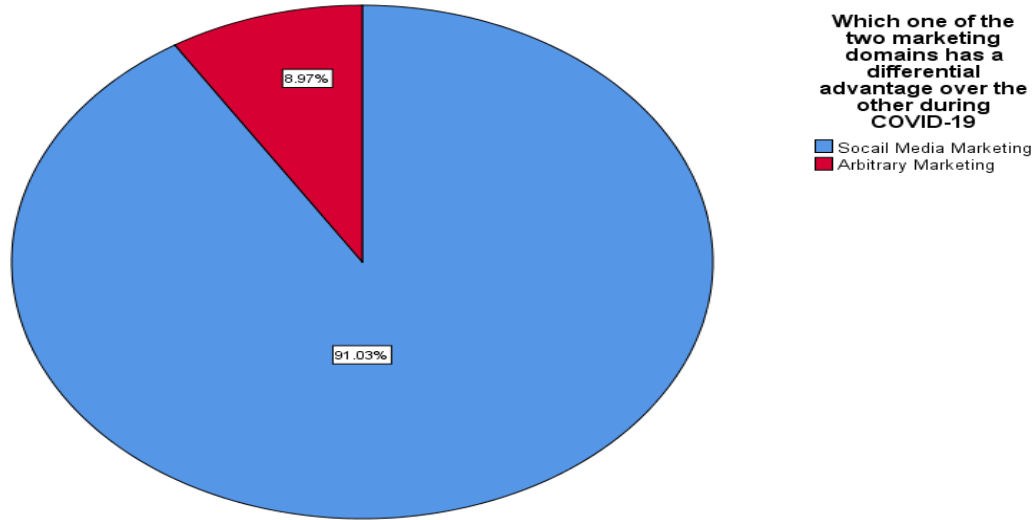
Figure 4.4: Implementation of alternative marketing strategies by the hotels



Source: Field survey, 2021

Figure 4.4 showed that implementation of alternative marketing strategies by the hotels. Regarding to this, respondents were asked that *was the implementation of alternative marketing strategies being thoroughly implemented by your hotel?* Thus, 91.3% of the respondents replied yes, whereas 8.7% of the respondents said no. From the above information it was possible to conclude that alternative marketing strategies is being thoroughly implemented by the hotels.

Figure 4.5. Marketing domains which have advantage during COVID -19



Source: Field survey, 2021

Figure 4.5 illustrated that marketing domain which have advantage during COVID -19 .in this regards, 91.03 % of the respondents were said that arbitrary marketing is one of marketing domain which has a differential advantage over the other during COVID 19 where as 8.07 % of the respondents replied that social media marketing is the domain which has a differential advantage over the other during COVID-19. From the above information it is possible to conclude that arbitrary marketing is one of marketing domain which has a differential advantage over the other during COVID- 19.

Table 4.5: Effectiveness and prerequisites for the implementation of alternative marketing strategies by five star during COVID-19

		Frequency	Percent
Do you think the effectiveness of alternative marketing strategies by five star during COVID-19 is measurable?	Yes	289	92.6
	No	23	7.4
	Total	312	100.0
Which one of the following prerequisites is a must for the implementation of alternative marketing practices by five star hotels during a crisis like COVID-19?	Expertise in human resource	158	50.6
	Technical infrastructure	67	21.5
	Budget	87	27.9
	Total	312	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2021

Respondents were asked that do you think the effectiveness of alternative marketing strategies by five star during COVID-19 is measurable. From figure 4.6 above 289 (92.6%) of the respondents said yes whereas 23(7.4%) of the respondents said no. from the above information it is possible to conclude that alternative marketing strategies by five star during COVID-19 is measurable and effective. On the other side respondents were asked that what are the prerequisites must for the implementation of alternative marketing practices by five star hotels during a crisis like COVID-19. In this regards, 158(50.6%) of the respondents were said that expertise in human resource is the prerequisites for the implementation of alternative marketing practices by five star hotels during a crisis like COVID-19 whereas 87 (27.9%) of the respondents said that budget is the prerequisites for the implementation of alternative marketing practices by five star hotels during a crisis like COVID-19.

Table 4.6: Mechanisms employed to utilize alternative marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa

		Frequency	Percent
Are Five Star hotels in Addis Ababa making excellent use of social media platforms as an alternative marketing strategy on arrangement of business meetings?	Yes	258	82.7
	No	54	17.3
	Total	312	100.0
Are Five star hotels utilizing social media platforms to directly contact/communicate business meeting clients?	Yes	244	78.2
	No	68	21.8
	Total	312	100.0
Are five star hotels providing hyperlink on their websites, emails and social medias for detailed information about business meeting?	Yes	300	96.2
	No	12	3.8
	Total	312	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.5 showed that mechanisms employed to utilize alternative marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa. In this regards respondents were asked about whether Five Star hotels are in Addis Ababa making excellent use of social media platforms as an alternative marketing strategy on arrangement of business meetings. Regarding to this 258(82,7%) of the respondents were said yes whereas 54(17,3%) of the respondents said no. from the above

information it is possible to conclude that five Star hotels in Addis Ababa are making excellent use of social media platforms as an alternative marketing strategy on arrangement of business meetings.

The respondents asked the question five star hotels are utilizing social media platforms to directly contact/communicate business meeting clients. Regarding to this, 244(78.2%) of the respondents said yes whereas 68(21.8%) of the respondents said no. From the above information it is possible to conclude that five star hotels are utilizing social media platforms to directly contact/communicate business meeting clients.

Regarding to five star hotels providing hyperlink on their websites, emails and social medias for detailed information about business meeting, 300(96.2%) of the respondents said yes whereas 12(3.8%) of the respondents said no. From the above information it is possible to conclude that five star hotels are providing hyperlink on their websites, emails and social Medias for detailed information about business meeting

Table 4.7: Service Quality and Social Media

Items	Responses	Frequency	Percent
How is the service quality of business meetings in five star hotels rated as?	Excellent	167	53.5
	Good	106	34.0
	Average	24	7.7
	Total	297	95.2
	Missing System	15	4.8
	Total	312	100.0
Do business meetings clients tend to exert a higher expectation of service quality in five star hotels?	Yes	304	97.4
	No	7	2.2
	Total	311	99.7
	Missing System	1	.3
	Total	312	100.0
What is the role of alternative marketing strategies such as social media on business meeting performance during COVID-19 in five star hotels?	Positive	270	86.5
	Negative	16	5.1
	Neutral	25	8.0
	Total	311	99.7
	Missing System	1	.3
	Total	312	100.0
Which of the followings online meeting	Zoom	168	53.8

methods/social media is most frequented by business meeting clients as a result of COVID-19 pandemic?	Skypc	30	9.6
	Video calling	106	34.0
	Instagram	7	2.2
	Total	311	99.7
	Missing System	1	.3
	Total	312	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.6 showed that Service quality and social media. Regarding to this the researcher asked the following questions.

Respondents were asked about how is the service quality of business meetings in five star hotels rated as. To this question 167(53.5%) of the respondents said excellent whereas 106(34.0%) of the respondents said good. From the above information it is possible to say that the service quality of business meetings in five star hotels rated as excellent.

Respondents were asked the question about do business meetings clients tend to exert a higher expectation of service quality in five star hotels. Regarding to this 304(97.4%) of the respondents said yes. From the above information it is possible to say that business meetings clients tend to exert a higher expectation of service quality in five star hotels.

Questions presented to respondents which is sated as what is the role of alternative marketing strategies such as social media on business meeting performance during COVID-19 in five star hotels. To this question 270(86.5%) of the respondents were said that positive whereas 25(8.0%) respondents were neutral. From the above information it is possible to conclude that the role of alternative marketing strategies such as social media on business meeting performance during COVID-19 in five star hotels is positive.

Lastly the respondents were asked about which of the followings online meeting methods/social media is most frequented by business meeting clients as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. Regarding to this question, 168(53.8%) of the respondents said zoom whereas 106(34.0%) of the respondents said video calling. From the above information it is possible to say zoom is online meeting methods/social media is most frequented by business meeting clients as a result of COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4.8: Average number of meeting before and since COVID-19 emerge
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Average number of meeting before COVID-19(2021 trending)	103	4.00	350.00	130.0388	151.35907
Average number of meeting before COVID-19(2020 trending)	93	5.00	400.00	118.6559	151.18039
Average number of meeting before COVID-19(2019 trending)	105	3.00	400.00	159.5333	164.45821
Average number of meeting before COVID-19(2018 trending)	79	5.00	400.00	139.4937	169.37304
Average number of meeting before COVID-19(2017 trending)	101	5.00	500.00	122.4356	187.19115
Average number of meetings since COVID-emerged(2021)	163	2.00	300.00	64.2086	88.59859
Average number of meetings since COVID-emerged(2020)	148	3.00	200.00	44.0473	59.63498
Average number of meetings since COVID-emerged(2019)	69	3.00	100.00	17.4058	34.25910
Average number of meetings since COVID-emerged(2018)	26	6.00	100.00	42.1538	46.63706
Average number of meetings since COVID-emerged(2017)	26	5.00	100.00	42.1538	46.64392
Valid N (listwise)	26				

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.7 showed that average number of meeting before and since COVID-19 emerges. The highest mean was 159.53 with standard deviation 164.46 which is given by average number of meeting before COVID-19(2019 trending). The next highest mean was 139.4 with the standard deviation of 169.37 which is explained by Average number of meeting before COVID-19(2018 trending). The highest mean of since COVID 19 emerge was 64. 21 with standard deviation was 88.60 explained by average number of meetings since COVID-emerged (2021). From the above information the highest average number of meeting before COVID- 19 was recorded in 2019 followed by in 2018 and in 2021. The highest average number of meetings since COVID emerged recorded in 2021 and followed by in 2020 and 2017/18.

Table 4.9: The parameters that determine the efficacy of alternative marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COVID-19 has negatively affected the hotel industry	311	1.00	5.00	4.7395	.68133
COVID-19 has affected the quality of service rendered by hotels	311	1.00	5.00	3.2090	1.49991
COVID-19 has decreased the motivation of staff	311	1.00	5.00	3.9936	.94012
COVID-19 has crippled the income earned by hotels	311	2.00	5.00	4.6045	.66806
COVID-19 has resulted in malfunction of the common marketing practices employed by five star hotels in Addis Ababa	311	2.00	5.00	4.1608	.71833
COVID-19 has obliged marketing practices in five star hotels to be online-oriented	311	1.00	5.00	3.9839	.95869
There is a remarkable liaison between hoteliers and public -private partnership in business meeting sector since COVID-19 broke out	311	1.00	5.00	3.4244	1.08356
Alternative marketing practices such as social media outlets are becoming the new normal in the business meeting industry of five star hotels in Addis Ababa	311	1.00	5.00	4.3055	.78284
Valid N (list wise)	311				

Source: Field survey, 2021

Table 4.8 showed that the parameters that determine the efficacy of alternative marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa. In this regards the highest mean was 4.73 with standard deviation .68 which is explained by COVID-19 has negatively affected the hotel industry. The next highest mean was 4.6 with the standard deviation of.66 which is explained by COVID-19 has crippled the income earned by hotels. The third highest mean was 4.31 which explained by Alternative marketing practices such as social media outlets are becoming the new

normal in the business meeting industry of five star hotels in Addis Ababa. From the above information it is possible to say that COVID-19 has negatively affected the hotel industry and has crippled the income earned by the hotels.

Concerning the effects of COVID-19 on the hotel and leisure businesses in the country and Addis Ababa; respondent from an international hotel said:

“As an industry the hospitality industry has been hit hard by the pandemic. Most specifically the hotel industry has been primarily affected by COVID-19. Interviewee added that “we used to work with international corporations and agents to reach customers but now those bodies are advising their client ‘our guests’ not to travel overseas. On the other hand it seems that the vaccination against the virus bringing about some hopeful trends to sustain in the business”.

Thus, the above result tells that the hospitality industry is affected by COVID-19 pandemic but effort is made to have vaccines while tourists travel to overseas that helps to sustain business of hotel industry.

The impacts of COVID-19 are specifically harder on the hotel and leisure sector. As worse as it gets some hotels have downsized their staff members and also started converting hotels into other business forms.

Apparently the impact is huge financially, emotionally and socially. This can further be elaborated as nationally COVID-19 has affected the hotel and tourism sector with drain of tourist inflow. Since the announcement that declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic in January 2020 unto September 2020 there was Zero guest arrival from abroad that decreased revenue by 80% on average of five star hotels in the city. Nowadays it is showing a little progress to 65% with only 15% of improvement

Next to the discussion above; share of business meetings in five star hotels with regard to retaining clients and generating income is, business meetings and conferences are one of the main pillars that define a five star hotel. The quality of service given in this regard determines the longevity of the client. Aside from room sales, international conferences and workshops were being held in major five star hotels before COVID-19 but then presumably the pandemic has

crippled the business performance very much to the extent the only clients now are of local origin. The share of business meetings and conferences was as high as 50% of total revenues in some five star hotels before COVID -19. And yet, when compared with the anticipated damage, the real consequence is somehow better.

Thirdly, about alternative marketing strategies for business meetings in five star hotels initiation before COVID-19 was events are generally held based on protocols given by managing partners abroad. Additionally, the WHO and CDC regulations should be enforced too. For instance: meeting halls are accommodating 1/4th of their capacities. Furthermore, a hybrid form of meeting that includes both physical and virtual techniques using Zoom, Microsoft Teams is being underused. And so, relying on digital marketing than sales call/outreaching customers by sales teams visitation is the alternative marketing strategy. Social media outlet is the particular digital marketing tool being used extensively. Meeting strategies include researching the kind of client in hand, how to retain them, how to expand services and how to offset impacts of COVID-19 on the business meeting sector.

Fourthly alternative marketing strategy adopted by five star hotels as a response in the combat against COVID-19 is that of, converting spacious venues to other purposes as per necessary. The other strategy is focusing on local market by contacting governmental bodies and NGOs. And also price reduction in services rendered.

Fifthly discussing the liaison between hoteliers and the public and private sector in alternative marketing strategy adoption since the outbreak of the pandemic is that of; liaison with “Addis Ababa Hotels Association” and “Ministry of Culture and Tourism” by communicating regulations and the like.

Yet another respondent replied to this by saying “*The relationship with public bodies was warmer during the initial phase of the pandemic outbreak yet it is somehow loose now*”.

Next to that, concerning challenges encountered owing to COVID-19 during implementation of alternative marketing practices with regard to business meetings and mitigating strategies is that, challenges include clients’ complaints from 1/4th carrying capacity of halls, sudden change in guidelines from government bodies obliging shuffle of modes accordingly. Having coped up to those challenges, they now are adaptable despite decrease in revenues. Strategies enforced

include cleansing and disinfecting of meeting rooms, public areas, door knobs and etc. Overall the impacts of the pandemic and associated regulations have obliged five star hotels to act below potential by merely covering overhead costs.

Additionally, when it comes to coping up to the COVID-19 effects on business meetings in five star hotels, strategies are mainly shaped by guidelines given by health ministers hoping that things get better and so as protocols. Other measures include: disseminating face masks, sanitizers, and social distancing. And also, shifting to the local market and digitizing marketing strategies is a way of coping up.

Lastly, five star hotels have suggested to the government and other stakeholders; consistent implementation of guidelines enacted; concurrent carrying out of promotional activities on collective basis that accommodates the new-normal pandemic; Ethiopian Tourism Organization needs to carry out its task of promoting the country amidst COVID-19 impacts; Government needs to introduce tax reliefs and tax holidays as well as interest free loans permitted; Request for vaccination of frontline employees; Ease of travel restrictions and visa processing and formation of convention bureaus by exemplifying other nations in order to distribute conferences and events to respective hotels.

4.2 Discussions

The combat the health impact of COVID-19 pandemic the government of Ethiopia is responding to the pandemic on multiple fronts and various strategies. Some of the strategies were capacities for testing and treatments are being built. Arrivals from abroad are required to stay isolated for 14 days in designated hotels. Social (or more appropriately physical) distancing is highly encouraged. Schools and universities are closed. Most government offices are manned by a fraction of their staff with the rest working from home as much as practicable. Some regional states have closed their borders or restricted movement across or within certain zones or towns. The municipal administration of Addis Ababa, the capital city, has issued the rule (with serious penalties for noncompliance) that all public transport vehicles should carry half as many passengers as their capacity permits, with passengers on private minibuses required to pay twice as much as the regular fare. On the explicitly economic front, the central government ear-marked funds for COVID-19 specific responses and provided a credit facility for banks from the central

bank. Temporary tax exemptions for businesses are introduced, some rent forgiveness is encouraged. In fact, a five-month state of emergency has been declared on April 9th, 2020. During the period of the state of emergency: rent increases and tenant evictions as well as firing of workers under contract (unless there are exceptional circumstances) are banned; bars and night clubs are closed, and factories and businesses are encouraged to operate with specified preventive measures in place. All these measures are appropriate and will bear fruit if effectively implemented or complied with. In this regard, a number of issues should be emphasized. First, it appears that the pandemic has yet to reach its peak. In parallel, the full impact of the disruptions will occur with some delay. The worst of both may happen together in a few weeks. Action now, including as much preparation as possible, is thus indispensable. Second, coordination of effort and information in all aspects of the response to the pandemic and at all levels of government (within and across federal, regional, and local institutions) is critical. Third, clear, comprehensive, accurate, and regular updates of what the government is doing are extremely essential. Moreover, all government organs should convey a consistent message and implement mutually reinforcing actions. Such updates/actions will help the public to make informed choices, calm an anxious population, and make preventive measures more complied with and effective as a consequence. The first appears to occur with growing urgency, the second is improving, and the third requires more attention.

Moreover, governments in most advanced economies have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with dramatic and unprecedented policy responses. Huge swaths of the economy have been ordered shut down and millions of workers required to-stay home indefinitely. To cushion against the loss of income, governments have sent direct transfers to workers affected by the lockdowns, in addition to making regular social insurance payments. Unemployment benefits, in particular, have reached levels many times larger than at any prior point in history. The total costs of these and other transfers may even reach 10 percent of GDP in some countries.(Titan Alon, 2020).

“The impact of COVID-19 in Addis Ababa has seen 88% of hotels either full or partially closed and the market will take some time to recover. The opening up of the economy represents the most significant opportunity to fuel this recovery, as this would increase the number of multinationals that are based in the country,

and in doing so increase hotel demand,” says Wayne Godwin, Head of Hotel Advisory, JLL Hotels & Hospitality Group.

The finding of the study indicated that COVID-19 has impact on Five Start Hotel arranging Business meeting. COVID-19 is having an unprecedented impact on the Ethiopian hotel industry. The full fallout is unknown, as the ultimate scale of the outbreak is yet to be determined. However, travel restrictions and social distancing policies have had a dramatic effect on the industry. Hotel occupancy in the Ethiopia has dropped to 43% and revenue per available room has declined by 30.5% for the week ending March 14, according to Smith Travel Research (STR). The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) in 2020 estimates that more than 50 million jobs in the travel and tourism sector could be at risk globally. The hotels and hospitality sector is a major revenue earner, with potential of creating thousands of jobs annually. The hotels and hospital subsector of the tourism industry have also had their own share of the challenges from the COVID-19 lockdown policy of the government of Ethiopia. With government announcement of “stay-at-home policy” and “social distancing” movement restriction, most restaurant businesses were greatly affected. This led to rapid shutdowns in cities and states to control the spread of the COVID-19 disease, which threw many restaurants and hotels across the country into sudden shock. Many hotels have recorded decline in bookings due to the health scare, while restaurants in major towns in the country are now restricted to offering only delivery services. Since most restaurants operate with fresh food products, which are difficult to keep in stock as demand fluctuates, they are bound to incur losses. Hotels across the globe perceived booking cancellations worth billions of dollars, and the hotel industry required a \$150bn bailout (O. Ozili P, Arun T , 2020).

Resorts and hotels that were booked by excited vacationers and corporate conference-goers before the present COVID-19 pandemic are receiving calls to postpone plans or cancel entirely their earlier proposed events. This has made most of the hotels and restaurants to embark on temporary suspension of normal operations which puts the estimated loss of jobs to 24.3 million globally, and 3.9 million in the US alone due to the decline in hotel occupancy during the pandemic period. The economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hotel industry was enormous. The impact of COVID-19 will make it extremely difficult for many of the tourism industry’s players to continue paying staff with a sharp drop in sales and income, resulting in job

loss. Many hotels are already closing down because of low patronage and inability to meet up with payment of worker's salary and electricity bills.

According to respondents that participated in focused group discussion, it is seldom possible to say indeed COVID 19 has brought alternative marketing strategies that are more convenient than traditional marketing strategies since the former is short lived and cannot be regarded as a mainstream alternative. In addition to that respondents unanimously pledged that it is not the appropriate time to determine the future of five star hotels with COVID 19 at large.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The general objective of the study was to assess alternative marketing strategies used by Five Star Hotels in Addis Ababa during COVID-19 pandemic based on this objective the researcher attempted to answer the following research questions

1. What kind of marketing strategies are adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19?
2. What contrivances can be employed or utilized marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19?
3. What is the efficacy of marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19 be verified?

Based on the above research questions the finding of the study presented as follows. The concept of marketing strategies fully understood by the hotels. Alternative marketing strategies is being thoroughly implemented by the hotels. Arbitrary marketing is one of marketing domain which has a differential advantage over the other during COVID- 19. The respondents said that budget is the prerequisites for the implementation of alternative marketing practices by five star hotels during a crisis like COVID-19.

Regarding mechanisms employed to utilize alternative marketing strategies by five star hotels in Addis Ababa.. Five Star hotels in Addis Ababa are making excellent use of social media platforms as an alternative marketing strategy on arrangement of business meetings and are utilizing social media platforms to directly contact/communicate business meeting clients. In addition to this, five star hotels are providing hyperlink on their websites, emails and social Medias for detailed information about business meeting

Regarding to service quality and social media the finding of the study indicated that the service quality of business meetings in five star hotels rated as excellent. Business meetings clients tend to exert a higher expectation of service quality in five star hotels. The role of alternative

marketing strategies such as social media on business meeting performance during COVID-19 in five star hotels was positive.

In connection to average number of meeting before and since COVID-19 emerge. The finding of the study pointed out that the highest average number of meeting before COVID- 19 was recorded in 2019 followed by in 2018 and in 2021. The highest average number of meetings since COVID -19 emerged recorded in 2021 and followed by in 2020.

Concerning the parameters that determine the efficacy of alternative marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in Addis Ababa the study finding pointed out that COVID-19 has negatively affected the hotel industry and has crippled the income earned by the hotels.

Speaking of the effects of COVID-19 on the hotel and leisure businesses in the country and Addis Ababa; respondents said that as an industry the hospitality industry has been hit hard by the pandemic. Most specifically the hotel industry has been primarily affected by COVID-19. Interviewee added that “we used to work with international corporations and agents to reach customers but now those bodies are advising their client ‘our guests’ not to travel overseas. On the other hand it seems that the vaccination against the virus bringing about some hopeful trends to sustain in the business”.

The impacts of COVID-19 are specifically harder on the hotel and leisure sector. As worse as it gets some hotels have downsized their staff members and also started converting hotels into other business forms.

Apparently the impact is huge financially, emotionally and socially. This can further be elaborated as nationally COVID-19 has affected the hotel and tourism sector with drain of tourist inflow. Since the announcement that declared COVID-19 as a global pandemic in January 2020 unto September 2020 there was Zero guest arrival from abroad that decreased revenue by 80% on average of five star hotels in the city. Nowadays it is showing a little progress to 65%.

Next to the discussion above; share of business meetings in five star hotels with regard to retaining clients and generating income was business meetings and conferences are one of the main pillars that define a five star hotel. The quality of service given in this regard determines the longevity of the client. Aside from room sales, international conferences and workshops

were being held in major five star hotels before COVID-19 but then presumably the pandemic has crippled the business performance very much to the extent the only clients now are of local origin. The share of business meetings and conferences was as high as 50% of total revenues in some five star hotels before COVID -19. And yet, when compared with the anticipated damage, the real consequence is somehow better.

Additionally, concerning alternative marketing strategies for business meetings in five star hotels; event initiation before COVID-19 was generally held based on protocols given by managing partners abroad. Additionally WHO and CDC regulations are enforced too. For instance: meeting halls are accommodating 1/4th of their capacities. Furthermore, a hybrid form of meeting that includes both physical and virtual techniques using Zoom, Microsoft Teams is being underused. And so, relying on digital marketing than sales call/outreaching customers by sales teams visitation is the alternative marketing strategy. Social media outlet is the particular digital marketing tool being used extensively. Meeting strategies include researching the kind of client in hand, how to retain them, how to expand services and how to offset impacts of COVID-19 on the business meeting sector.

Next to that, alternative marketing strategy adopted by five star hotels as a response in the combat against COVID-19 is that of, converting spacious venues to other purposes as per necessary. The other strategy is focusing on local market by contacting governmental bodies and NGOs. And also price reduction in services rendered.

In total, discussing the liaison between hoteliers and the public and private sector in alternative marketing strategy adoption since the outbreak of the pandemic is that of; liaison with “Addis Ababa Hotels Association” and “Ministry of Culture and Tourism” by communicating regulations and the like.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study the researcher recommends that

- The five star hotels and other stakeholder should promote their service and products are available to customer with the enforcement of WHO and CDC regulations by using various social media platforms.

- Culture and tourism office in collaboration with five star hotels and Addis Ababa Hotels association should conduct study to find-out alternative marketing strategies and understanding that is adopted by five star hotels and arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19. Identify appropriate mechanisms that can be employed in order to utilize alternative marketing strategies by five star hotels
- The five star hotels should organize or erect billboard or electronic display that exhibit service and products to customers in public area or in the place where easily seen to public with their effort to make their service area and products free from COVID -19 viruses.
- The five star Hotel should collaborate with Ethio-telecom to arrange business meeting by physical and virtual techniques using Zoom and Microsoft Teams.
- The five star hotel should arrange greater number of meeting hall so as to organize more number of meeting with the capacity of ¼ with WHO regulations.
- The media at large should propagate in a way that bridges the gap between five star hotels and potential customers by also highlighting COVID-19 safety protocols concurrently

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ANNEX

APPENDIX 1

Questionnaire

Addis Ababa
University
(Since 1950)



Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Development Studies

Tourism and Development and Management Program

Dear Respondents!

I am conducting a thesis in partial fulfillment of Tourism Development and Management MA Program at Addis Ababa University under College of Development Studies with a title of *(Alternative Marketing Strategies Adopted by Five Star Hotels on Arrangement of Business Meeting during COVID-19)*. I would appreciate your participation in this questionnaire, which will assist me to find out what alternative marketing strategies are adopted by five star hotels on arrangement of business meeting during this COVID-19. I would like you to know that all the information you will provide today will be strictly confidential. Your background information and anything you mention will not be given to third party. Since the quality and success of this study depends on your kind and genuine information, please take your time to fully think about your answers. I would like to assure you that your personal information will not be disclosed and your identities will remain *anonymous* and all information and opinion you shall state hereby will be solely *confidential*.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation and timely responses!

Sincerely, Habtamu Asfaw

Phone: +251-921-766-157

Email: biniarfaw1212@gmail.com

PART I: Background Information

Please kindly choose and tick (√) the most suitable response to the statements on the respective spaces provided.

1. Level of Education: Diploma holder/TVET BA/BSC holder

MA/MSc holder PhD holder

2. Experience in years: <10 10 - 20 21- 30 >30

3. Age: 18-25 26 – 33 33 -40 >40

4. Sex: Male Female

5. Name of the hotel: _____

6. Year established: _____

7. Location of the hotel: _____

8. Number of rooms: _____

9. Total number of employees in the hotel: _____

Back of the house: _____

Front of the house: _____

10. Package services provided by the hotel: _____

PART II: Main Questions

1. Is the concept of alternative marketing strategies fully understood in your hotel?

Yes No

If your response is no, please explain why?

2. Is the implementation of alternative marketing strategies being thoroughly implemented by your hotel?

Yes No

3. Which one of the two marketing domains has a differential advantage over the other during COVID-19?

Social Media Marketing Arbitrary Marketing

4. Do you think the effectiveness of alternative marketing strategies by five star during COVID-19 is measurable?

Yes No

5. Which one of the following prerequisites is a must for the implementation of alternative marketing practices by five star hotels during a crisis like COVID-19?

Expertise in human resource

Technical Infrastructure

Budget

6. Are Five Star hotels in Addis Ababa making excellent use of social media platforms as an alternative marketing strategy on arrangement of business meetings?

Yes No

If your response is no, please explain why?

7. Are Five star hotels utilizing social media platforms to directly contact/communicate business meeting clients?

Yes No

8. Are five star hotels providing hyperlink on their websites, emails and social medias for detailed information about business meetings?

Yes No

9. How is the service quality of business meetings in five star hotels rated as?

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

10. What do you reckon about business meetings trend year by year in five star hotels of Addis Ababa?

No.	Year	Average number of meetings before COVID-19	Average number of meetings since COVID-emerged
1.	2021 (trending)	-	
2.	2020	-	
3.	2019		-
4.	2018		-
5.	2017		-

11. Do business meeting clients tend to exert a higher expectation of service quality in five star hotels?

Yes No

If your response is no, what do you think is the underlying reason to that

12. What is the role of alternative marketing strategies such as social media on business meeting performance during COVID-19 in five star hotels?

Positive Negative Neutral

13. Which of the following online meeting methods/ social media is most frequented by business meeting clients as a result of COVID-19 pandemic?

Zoom

Skype

Video calling

- Telegram
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Tumblr
- YouTube
- Google +
- Trip Advisor

If there is other please add _____

Now using a scale from **1 to5** where 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided/don't know, 4=Agree and 5= Strongly Agree please choose and tick (√) the most suitable response to the statements on the respective spaces provided.

Alternative Marketing Strategies						
No.	Parameters	1	2	3	4	5
14.	COVID-19 has negatively affected the hotel industry					
15.	COVID-19 has affected the quality of service rendered by hotels					
16.	COVID-19 has decreased the motivation of staff					
17.	COVID-19 has crippled the income earned by hotels					
18.	COVID-19 has resulted in malfunction of the common marketing practices employed by five star hotels in Addis Ababa					
19.	COVID-19 has obliged marketing practices in five star hotels to be online-oriented					
20.	There is a remarkable liaison between hoteliers and public-private partnership in business meeting sector since COVID-19 broke out					
21.	Alternative marketing practices such as social media outlets are becoming the new normal in the business meeting industry of five star hotels in Addis Ababa					

Thank You So Much for your Time!

APPENDIX 2

Interview Guideline



Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Development Studies

Tourism and Development Program

Dear Respondents!

I am conducting a thesis in partial fulfillment of Tourism Development and Management MA Program at Addis Ababa University under College of Development Studies with a title of *Alternative Marketing Strategies Adopted by Five Star Hotels on Arrangement of Business Meeting during COVID-19*. I would appreciate your participation in this interview, which will assist me to find out what alternative marketing strategies are adopted by five star hotels on arrangement of business meeting during this COVID-19. I would like you to know that all the information you will provide today will be strictly confidential. Your name and anything you mention will not be given to anyone outside this purpose. If you would rather not answer a question please let me know. Please take your time to fully think about your answers. The information you will provide today will be written up in a thesis report and distributed, which you will be freely able to access.

Thank you, in advance, for your cooperation!

Sincerely, Habtamu Asfaw

Phone: +251-921-766-157

Email: biniASFaw1212@gmail.com

PART I: Background Information of Key Informants

- A. Name of Interviewee: _____

- B. Age: _____

- C. Level of Education: _____

- D. Position: _____

- E. Experience in years: _____

PART II: Interview Guide

1. It is evident that COVID-19 has brought a global crises since its emergence in January 2020; how much has it affected the hotel and leisure businesses in the country and Addis Ababa?

2. How much is the share of business meetings in five star hotels structure within Addis Ababa in terms of retaining clients and generating income for the particular five star hotels?

3. Has alternative marketing strategies for business meetings in five star hotels been initiated before COVID-19? If the answer is “yes” how was the performance, if “no” why?

4. Can you please describe in detail what alternative marketing strategies are being adopted in five star hotels (your hotel) as a response in the combat against the influences COVID-19 has had and is making in the business meeting services?

5. How do you describe the liaison between five star hoteliers and the public-private partnership in alternative marketing strategies adoption for the business meeting sector since the outbreak of COVID-19?

6. What are the challenges encountered in the course of enforcing alternative marketing practices in five star hotels with regard to business meetings as a result of COVID-19 and what mitigating strategies do you propose?

7. It goes without saying that, there are global sectors at which COVID-19 is wrenching and making permanent changes in, amongst which is the hotel and leisure industry that is hardly hit by the pandemic hence, how much are you preparing to cope up with the changes COVID-19 will embed on business meetings in five star hotels?
8. What do you suggest to the government as well as other concerned stakeholders in contributing their shares in the fight against impacts of COVID-19 with regard to business meeting in five star hotels of Addis Ababa?

APPENDIX 3

Checklist for Focus Group Discussion



Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Development Studies

Tourism Development and Management Program

Dear Respondents!

I am conducting a thesis in partial fulfillment of Tourism Development and Management MA Program at Addis Ababa University under College of Development Studies with a title of *“Alternative Marketing Strategies Adopted by Five Star Hotels on Arrangement of Business Meeting during COVID-19”*. The focus group discussion I will have with you will assist me to understand your reflections about alternative marketing strategies that are adopted by five star hotels on arrangement of business meeting during COVID-19. All the information you provide will entirely remain confidential that would solely be consumed for the purpose of this study. The information you will provide today will be written up in a thesis report and distributed, which you will be freely able to access.

Thank you very much for your cooperation!

Sincerely, HabtamuAsfaw

Phone: +251-921-766-157

Email: biniASFaw1212@gmail.com

Checklist for Focus Group Discussion

1. How can we describe the effectiveness of the common marketing practices before and after COVID-19 in five star hotels of Addis Ababa?
2. Is there uniformity or variety in the alternative marketing strategies adopted by five star hotels in arrangement of business meetings in Addis Ababa and how is that seen from competition perspective?
3. Is it possible to say that COVID-19 has favorably brought alternative marketing strategies rather to the common marketing practices for business meetings in five star hotels of Addis Ababa?
4. What do you think is the future of five star hotels in Addis Ababa with the influence COVID-19 has had on the industry?

APPENDIX 4

Field Data Collection



Source: Own Photography/2021