Addis Ababa University

School of Business and Economics

Department of Masters of Business Administration

Factors Affecting the Performance of Simien Mountains National Park

Prepared By: Mulugeta Sintayehu

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Factors Affecting the Performance of Simien Mountains National Park.

Prepared By: Mulugeta Sintayehu

Advisor: Ass. Prof. Thewdros Wuhib

August, 2021

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis work entitled " Factors Affecting the Performance of Simien Mountains National Park" submitted to Dr. Tewodros Wuhib is a research work for the partial fulfillment of Masters of Business Administration. The result of this research presented in the thesis have not been submitted to any other school or institute.

Mulugeta Sintayehu Abitew Date Signature

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We, the undersigned members of the Board of Examiners for Mulugeta Sintayehu Abitew final open defense, have studied and analyzed his thesis, " Factors Affecting the Performance of Simien Mountains National Park" as well as the candidate's oral presentation. As a result, this is to verify that the thesis has been approved in partial fulfillment of the Master of Business Administration in Management degree requirement with _____ corrections.

Advisor signature date

Name ---------- ---------- ----------

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Name ---------- ---------- ----------

External examiner signature date

Name ---------- ---------- ----------

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MULUGETA SINTAYEHU ABITEW

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents **Pages**

LIST OF FIGURES

Pages

LIST OF TABLES

Pages

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
SMNP	Simien Mountains National Park
EWCA	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
USD	United States Dollar
WTTC	World Tourism and Travel Commission
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
WTO	World Tourism Organization
UNESCO	United Nations Education Science Culture and Science Organization
HA	Hectare of an Area
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
NPS	National Park Service (USA)

ABSTRACT

In the modern world economic system, the tourism industry has been playing an enormous contribution to the prosperity of countries. Ethiopia with a rich stockpile of tourism resources is far behind in utilizing its tourism reserve for successful transformation from the yoke of poverty into prosperity. The availability of huge tourism potential and the inability to make use of it is a growing concern in the country's tourism industry and is a great **motivation** for this study too. The **purpose** of this study is to enquire in to the main determinants of performance that affect the operation of SMNP. Using a **cross-sectional** analysis this research examined the effects of SERVPERF dimensions on the performance of the park. Data collected from the staff members and tourists on variables were examined and their real effect on the overall and individual effect on the performance of SMNP was analyzed using SPSS version 23. The research **findings** prove the performance of SMNP is responsive to assurance, reliability, and tangibility dimensions. This study proved the question concerning the correlation between the performance of Simien Mountains National Park and SERVPERF dimensions.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. Introduction

In the world economic system, the tourism sector is an indispensable livelihood contributing its big share to the gross domestic products of many economies across the globe. As an emerging and growing industry, the tourism sphere is playing a pivotal role in international business and a means of survival. Performance in the arena of tour and travel shows a dramatic boost worldwide due to the increased pace of globalization. According to WTTC (2019) report, travel and tourism contribute 8.8 trillion USD in terms of GDP, and 319 million people earn their income and job from this area of business (WTTC 2019.)

Like other economic sectors the performance of tourism from a regional perspective shown huge disparity both in terms of tourist flow and revenue receipt out of tourism export. According to UNECA: 2015 international tourism, receipt reaches USD 1.2 billion in 2013. Europe accounted for 42% of all international receipts, the Asia and the Pacific region accounted for 31 % of worldwide receipt, the Americas accounted for 20 %, the Middle East accounted for 4% of the total receipt, and Africa accounted for 3% of total global receipts (UNECA 2015).

Africa as a continent is characterized by immense cultural, natural, historical, archeological, and other heritages. Even though the continent's richness in tourism resources is huge, its performance is very low relative to the worldwide gains from the field. This is due to lack of genuine priority on the sector in terms of investment in tourism support sectors, absence of well-trained manpower, poor integration among stakeholders, poor management of heritage sites, and lack of adequate funds to develop tourism infrastructures around tourist attraction sites among other things.

According to Landry and Chelsea 2018, in comparison with other parts of the world, Africa’s tourism industry’s performance remains relatively underdeveloped. Of the 1.2 billion people traveling internationally in 2016, only 58 million arrived in Africa (Landry and Chelsea 2018). As explained in UNCTAD 2017 report, the performance tourism indicates that the sector in Africa contributes on an average 13.9 billion $ from 1995 to 1998 from the annual common number of 12 million tourists; 40.8 billion$ from 2005 to 2008 from the average

number of 35.2 million tourists; 47.4 billion$ from 2011 to 2014 from an average number of 41.1 million tourists, and 37.7 billion$ in 2015 from 33.9 million tourists (UNCTAD 2017). The figure of performance of revenue generation of the continent is very low and requires vigorous work to enhance the success in the area.

As reported in WTO 2021, the growth in tourist receipt in Ethiopia and the spending in the sector is showing expansion starting in 1995 up to the year 2019 with 103,000 and 812,000 tourists respectively. Similarly the growth in revenue in the sector measured by spending of tourists in different chain of tourism packages were 177 million $ in 1995 and it reached 3.548 billion $ in 2018.

Ethiopia with a diversified climate, topography, culture, and a long period of historical existence should have created immense potential for tourism development. Its climatic and topographic differences across the country give varieties of fauna and flora distribution. The existence of multiple cultural religious and historical varieties is also another important factor suitable for tourism and travel opportunities for economic advancement.

Even though the country is prosperous with wide-ranging tourism resources it is far behind neighboring countries that own less tourism stockpile. According to UNCTAD report cited in Economic Development in Africa 2017, in the years 1995-1998 Ethiopia receives on average 116,000 tourists and generates 164 million Dollars on averages annually; in the years 2005-2008 it receives an average number of 325,000 tourists that enables to secure 787 million Dollar annually and in 2011-2014 Ethiopia receives average numbers of tourists of 643,000 that enable the country to receive on average 1.989 billion Dollar from the sector yearly. Similarly in the same periods, Kenya received 896 thousand, 1.423 million, 1.516 million tourists annually on average and revenue of 975 Million dollars, 1.266 billion dollars, and 1.878 billion dollars on average annually.

On the other hand the WTO 2021 report indicated that Ethiopia received 770,000 tourists in 2014, 864,000 in 2015, 871,000 in 2016,933000 in 2017, and 849,000 tourists in 2018 with corresponding spending of 2.107 billion$, 2.279 billion$, 2.138 billion$, 2.505 billion$ and 3.548 billion$ respectively. Therefore Ethiopia with immense cultural, historical, and natural tourism resources it has to do a lot of efforts to exploit the untapped tourism stockpile. The country is expected to move aggressively in converting its tourism resource pool into various

economic benefits for its citizens. This study aims at investigating key considerations that have a determinant role in affecting the performance of SMNP. The park is a world heritage site and one of the tourist spots of the country that attract a large number of tourists in its natural landscape, being the home of endemic plants and animals and a world heritage site. Therefore making a study on service productivity of such tourist attraction sites is of paramount importance to investigate potential factors that affect the operations of the park in particular and tour and travel business in general.

This introductory chapter begins with introducing the study topic briefly and overview the origins of information of the study topic, problem statement, research questions, study objectives, hypothesis, and scope of the research, significance, constraints of the study, and organization of the study.

1.2. Background of the Study

The tourism and travel field is an important part of the service sector that plays an essential role in the development endeavor of countries directly or indirectly through contributions for GDP and job creation.

Performance in the tourism domain has many disparities globally, regionally, and among countries within the same region based on the sociopolitical and development level of countries. According to World Travel and Tourism Commission 2020 report, in economic benefits travel and tourism contributes 10.3% contribution of global GDP, 10% of global job creation (330 million jobs). Regionally, in terms of the commercial role of tourism and travel brought 2.5 trillion US$ to the Americas, 168.5 billion US$ for Africa, 3 trillion US$ for Asia–Pacific, 245.5 billion US$ for the Middle- East, and 2 trillion US$ for Europe. On the other hand, the employment opportunity created in the tourism and travel industry brought 45.3 million jobs in the Americas, 24.6 million jobs in Africa, 182 million jobs in Asia-Pacific, 6.7 million jobs in the Middle East, and 37.1 million jobs in Europe. In terms of high-performing tourism-service to GDP contribution globally, USA lead with 1.839 trillion US$, China with 1.585 trillion US$, Japan with 359 billion US$, Germany with 347billion US$, Italy with 260 billion US$ hold the top five countries list.

Even though Ethiopia is rich in both natural fauna and flora, fantastic topography, historical, religious, and cultural tourism resources, it is lagging in utilizing its tourism potential for

assorted monetary and non-monetary benefits. In practical terms, the tourist receipt, and the revenue generation from tourists' arrival, is lower relative to African countries such as Egypt, Kenya, Tunisia, South Africa, Morocco, Nigeria, and Mauritius.

As a developing country, the growth, expansion, and sophistication in the domestic tourism sphere would have multiple rewards for the economy, the citizens, and the government of Ethiopia. If the proper emphasis is given towards this sector, it could have contributed its large share to the national GDP.

Experiences in National Park Tourism Performance

National parks are one of the tourist attraction areas that hold various fauna, flora, and topographical resources and served as the main tourist destinations for the tourism market in the world. The issue of the conservation areas and their establishment originated in the western world. As stated in Bacheller.M and Dutra .S 2017, Yellowstone national park was founded in 1872 by Ulysses S. Grant's signature on the act of establishment as a protected area for the privilege of the American people for enjoyment and recreations.

As explained in Dahlberg, A., Rohde, R., & Sandell, K. (2012) the establishment and administration of protected areas usually faced the problem of access rights. Poor and marginalized local communities in developed and developing countries are the victims of the restriction and prohibition of access to natural resources. Many governments and their conservation agencies and international NGOs change and look back on their policies to reconcile the issues of conservation, development, and environmental justice (ibid).

Global Experiences

Yellowstone national park in USA established in the year 1872 a 148 years old park that receives huge tourist annually.as stated in NPS (2021) in USA the park covers an area of 8910 square kilometers. The park is the home of 67 mammals, 11 native fish species, 220 bird species and 1160 plant species. in 2020 the park get $5million from reimbursements, $15 million from visitors fees,$7million from concessions and franchise, $37 million from federal appropriation, and $ 11 million from federal highway that sums to %77 million. This park is visited by 3,806,305 tourists in 2020, 4,020,288 tourists in 2019, 4,115,000 tourists in 2018. In 2019 $647 million is spent by the park visitors in surrounding communities.

African experiences

The national park tourism experience in South Africa in Kruger national park other national parks shows the national park tourism activities needs very focused and comprehensive management to be successful in stiff competition existed in the country national park and reserved area tourism. As stated in Lacea, S., & Ferreira, A. (2014) Kruger National Park with 1982 plant,517 bird,147 mammal,114 reptiles species and an area coverage of 20,000 square kilometers it is countries flagship park that receive annual tourist of 1.4 million.

As reported in Willy, N., & Engelbrecht, H. (2011) the critical success factors emanated from the general management, wildlife experience ,facilities, green management, leisure and hospitality management, interpretation, variety activities, accommodation facilities and luxuries. Therefore Kruger National Park expected to adapt management strategy that can create memorable experience for tourists, fulfilment of tourist expectation, maintain competitive advantage, increased revenue, and return visit, visitor loyalty and sustainability of the park to cop up with the current tight completion.

Ethiopian experiences

Ethiopia has one of the oldest conservation experience in the African continent as reported in EFDR and UNDP report the first conservation effort was done by Emperor Zera Yacob a king of Ethiopian medieval history in (1450s) in the Wochacha mountain area by Junipers tree which is known today as the Menagesha forest. The Menz –Guasa is also another example of conservation by the society's Qero system in the 17th century and continued today with sustainable use together with conservation experience.

Simien Mountains National Park

National parks are among tourism resources that are the center of rich and diversified Geophysical-landscape-aesthetic, fauna, and flora that can attract a huge number of visitors from any corner of the world, provided proper coordination, leadership, development, promotion, and regulation are in place. The problem statement in this study is based on the "factors affecting the performance of Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia. In the current literature, there is no sufficient information on key determinant variables that hamper

the performance of SMNP. Therefore there is a gap in understanding major factors that should be considered in the improvement of tourism service in the park. Based on this shortcoming, this research was undertaken to explore important reflections on performance indicators that play a key role in the service activities of SMNP. The study aimed at exploring the determinant factors that hinder service provision, income making, and raising the tourist stream to the destination.

1.3. Problem Statement

It is a well-known fact there is a wide wealth of tourism stock in the country. With a massive amount of available but not adequately utilized tourism resources, Ethiopia is getting a little size of receipt in the area. The country is expected to work aggressively and comprehensively to boost its income from the tourism industry and to create jobs for its people. According to Alemneh. A (2018), in terms of tourism resources, there are 320 species of mammals (39 endemic), 918 species of birds with 19 endemics, 240 reptiles (16 endemics), 71 amphibians with 30 endemics, 172 freshwater fishes with 38 endemics. These fauna and flora exist in the protected area system of Ethiopia such as national parks, game reserves, controlled hunting areas, and community protected areas.

As cited in Aynalem. (2014), Ethiopia legalized 15 national parks, 4 sanctuaries,8 reserves and,18 controlled hunting areas distributed across the country with a combined area coverage of 33830 km^2, 11032 km^2,24818 km^2,131823 km^2 respectively. According to Mesele. Y and Afework. B 2012 SMNP was nationally gazetted in 1969 and was designed as the world heritage site due to the presence of the high number of endemic species in the park, unique biophysical features, and its international significance. In terms of flora, the park contains many Afro-Alpine vegetation Species and shrubs in the ecosystem. That is, it consists of 57 tree species and herbaceous plants of which 20 are endemic to Ethiopia, 22 large mammals, 13 small mammals, and 180 bird species.

As mentioned by Asfawossen, Metasebia, and Aberra (2012) SMNP is made up of Geophysical-landscape-aesthetic such as rugged canyons, deep gorges, sharp edge mountains, and Sharpe escarpments that sheers1500 with an altitudinal range of 1900-4430 meters above sea level for an extension of 35 km strip of land. In its establishment periods in 1969, the park

has an area of around 120 square kilometers, and today it expanded to cover an area of 412 square kilometers.

Inherited attractions like wildlife diversity in fauna, flora, and breathtaking landscape with created attractions and tourist infrastructures are an ideal source of enormous potential for tourism export. Tourists like bird watchers, hunters, academic researchers; tourists for trekking, adventurers, and other occasional inbound tourists are attracted by astonishing fauna, flora, and landscape diversity. Despite the fact that SMNP is one of world heritage site due to its landscape and its endemic species plant and animals the number of tourists visiting the park and the corresponding spending is not yet reached at the desired goal as other national parks globally visited and become good source of income for the attraction area and the surrounding society.

As shown in the table below the number of tourists visiting SMNP is growing over time but as compared with other national parks such as the Kruger national park of South Africa , the Yellow Stone national park of USA and Banff national park of Canada SMNP is not adequately visited and generated ample income for the community and stake holders. As indicated in Geng, D. C., Innes, J. L., Wu, W., Wang, W., & Wang, G. (2021) Banff National Park in Canada visited by minimum number of more than 100,000 tourists monthly and by a maximum of 700,000 tourists on a monthly basis from the year 2010 to 2019. As reported in Lacea.S, and Ferreira, A. (2014) the Kruger National Park (KNP) of South Africa receives 1.4 million visitors annually which as approximately 167000 tourists monthly on a simple average.

Table 1 the tourist receipt of SMNP for the last two decades compiled from tourism department of the park, 2021.

Tourist flow			
Ethiopian Year	Non Ethiopian	Ethiopian	Total tourist flow
2005	13,937	2,011	15,948
2006	19,939	2,081	22,020
2007	20,111	2,346	22,457
2008	23,251	2,748	25,999

2009	10,685	2,028	12,713
2010	18,758	4,329	23,087
2011	29,486	2922	32,408
2012	28,050	2543	30,612

Source: own computation, 2021

Table 2 revenue earned and number of beneficiaries from tourism operation

Revenue collection In Ethiopian Birr and Beneficiaries				
Ethiopian Year	Government	Community	Total income generated	number of Beneficiaries
2005	4,441,518	3,910,435	8,351,953	11,096
2006	4,544,020	7,210,810	11,754,830	16,587
2007	4,152,450	9,510,120	13,662,570	17,040
2008	5,960,697	19,773,060	25,733,757	18,991
2009	2,379,558	10,351,927	12,731,485	10,860
2010	5,292,562	16,091,877	21,384,439	19,712
2011	7,341,245	31,108,477	38,449,722	26,648
2012	5,448,329	22,621,599	28,069,928	24330

Source: own computation, 2021

From the data in the table it is clear the number of visitors and the amount of spendings by tourists is lower than the other national parks. The determinant issues behind the performance of the park are not well explained so far as far.

Generally, little research is conducted from a performance perspective on Simien Mountain National Park as well as other national parks in Ethiopia. In other words, there is a gap in conducting researches on the tourism business perspective in SMNP specifically on the performance of the park in the current global tourism market of protected areas.

With huge tourism attraction potential and with the lowest tourism and travel income it seems paradoxical situation that raises questions to be answered why did this happen? In the current literature, there is no adequate answer for inquiries why not the tourist destination in Ethiopia

perform well in the tourism market? As part of solving the puzzle, this study will attempt to identify the factors that affect the performance of Simien Mountains National Park in Ethiopia as an integral part of the Ethiopian tourism resource stockpile that has not been yet well exploited and studied from a performance perspective.

1.4. Research Questions

- What is the current level of performance of the park?
- What are the important dimensions that have crucial role on the performance of Simien Mountain National Park?
- How effective is the management of the park in performance dimensions in bringing sustained growth for the park?
- What are the important dimensions that needs the efforts of stakeholders to improve the performance of the park?
- What dimension is determinant that need to be taken seriously to increase the performance of the park?

1.5. Research Objective

1.5.1. General Objective

The general objective of the research is to explore the factors affecting the performance of Simien Mountain National Park.

1.5.2. Specific Objective

- To see the past and current level of the performance level of Simien Mountains National Park;
- To study customer perception on performance dimension that affect the performance of the Park;
- To assess the effectiveness of the management of the park and stakeholders' role in bringing sustained growth of the park ;
- To spot important measures needed to be undertaken to increase the performance of the park;

1.6. Research Hypothesis

In this research, the following hypotheses are formulated to be tested.

- ✓ H1: tangibility of service has a notable and positive impact on the spectacle of SMNP.
- ✓ H2: empathy has a significant and positive impact on the performance of SMNP.
- ✓ H3: reliability of service in the park has an important and positive impact on the tourism and protection operations of SMNP.
- ✓ H4: responsiveness has a significant and positive impact on the spectacle of SMNP.
- ✓ H5: assurance has a big and positive impact on the operation of SMNP.

1.7. Study Scope

This research is intended to explore the factors affecting the performance of Simien Mountains National Park in the year 2020/2021 using cross-sectional data on staff and tourists who visit the park in the same year. The scope of the study limits itself to nature-based tourism from the bunch of classifications of tourism types and it further limits its focus on SMNP among the protected area system of Ethiopia. Finally the research limit the performance of the park in terms of tourist flow, revenue receipt, and the operation of increasing beneficiaries of the park from tourism operation among other things.

1.8. Study Significance

The study is essential because of its contribution to the current literature in the tourism field. The research will add new insight and clues to the stock of existing knowledge on the topic. It will also provide relevant information for the following parties.

- ✓ The policymakers
- ✓ To the park management and stakeholders
- ✓ To other researchers

1.9. Limitations of the Research

In conducting this detailed examination the researcher may come across various limitations that may shadow the accuracy of the research findings. The researcher believes with all limitations in mind the study will be served as a benchmark for future researchers to find gaps

for further study and strengthen the findings. Therefore the researcher recognized the following major limitations transparently in conducting this research.

- ✓ Scope limitation: in looking out all factors of performance the author may underestimate or overestimate variables that may control the performance of the park and their interaction due to narrow scope.
- ✓ Methodological limitations: in designing and selecting the right method of research the author may commit the problem of oversimplification of controlling factors and the problem of subjectivity in qualitative data gathering and analysis.
- ✓ Resource limitations: the researcher faced financial limitations, time limitations, and a lack of repeated experience of research work that may create a shortcoming on the accuracy of the research work.
- ✓ Generalizability of findings: the study of this topic may not apply to similar national parks since this research does not cover the context of other national parks. The narrow focus may create a lack of generalizability to other similar areas within the industry.

1.10. Organization of the Study

The first chapter introduced the overview of the study and it dealt with the background of the study and problem statement, research objective, questions significance, scope, limitation of the study, and organization of the study. Chapter two presents the related literature review of the subject under the study. Chapter 3 deals with research methodology and provides the details on data collecting tools, techniques, and analysis, employed for the study. Chapter four deals with data presentation and analysis. Chapter five presents a summary, findings, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This section provides the general theoretical foundation for the research work and will emphasize concepts of tourism, its impacts in various aspects, Ethiopian tourism at a glance, and protected area tourism and protected tourist attractions in Ethiopia. It will also see the performance management, measurement frameworks, and models applied in the performance-related literature. Finally, it will overview the conceptual framework, empirical studies, and the performance indicators of SMNP.

2.2. Tourism and its Impacts

Nowadays tourism plays a critical role as a major economic activity that comprises of massive component of the GDP of many countries around the world. Its impact as a growing and expanding industry is observed in terms of decent job creation, increase in income, and growth in the GDP for any country globally depending on the level of priority given by each nation and the state of innovation and sophistication of countries in the tourism business domain.

2.2.1. Definition

Because of the existence of wider and growing concepts and concerns in academic literature, it is too difficult to find a single and conventional definition by all academicians due to differences in perspectives and outlook.

As indicated in Leonard and Carlson (1997) the Swiss professors Walter Hunziker and Kurt Krapf, defined tourism as:

"Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents".

According to WTO (1994), tourism is an activity of persons' travel and stay outside their normal residence for some time less than 12 consecutive months for spare time, business, and other purposes.

Another definition provided by Zemla .M (2016) consolidates the attraction, elements of attraction, and tourism infrastructures together and was defined as a geographical area that can capable of giving a tourism product in terms of "landforms and cultural characteristics" with a wide array of amenities, access, accommodation, attractions, and at least one ancillary service.

The first definition focused mainly on the whole sets of relationships that arise due to the travel and stay of non-residents. The second definition differs from the first by the time frame placed on the time horizon of visiting time to be spent by tourists. The third definition translates tourism as the integration of place, inherited and developed product, and related elements of a tourism product.

2.2.2. Impacts of Tourism

Generally, the tourism sector plays positive and negative implications on the socio-economic life of the community in the attraction areas. Foreign currency generation, job creation, infrastructure development, motivation of other sectors of the economy, and minimization of dependency on the certain sector and diversify the livelihood of people in the tourist destination surrounding community. On the other way, the pressure on the cost of living, the introduction of social evils, and environmental degradation are the negative consequence of tourism.

A). Economic Impact

The current trends in the travel business show that a vast proportion of global GDP is collected from the tourism business fueled by globalization, the growth and expansion of information communication technology, and modern fast means of transportation.

In the advanced regions of the world, tourism is the source of a pretty good amount of revenue and origin of decent job creation in their economy and the spectacle of the sector is far better than in developing countries. As clearly explained by World Tourism Organization, (2004), several reasons make tourism an especially suitable economic development sector for LDCs such as creating opportunities for local businesses, income, and job opportunities, help to conserve cultural and natural assets, support other economic activities, creates awareness of

the natural environment and its economic value, reduce vulnerability through income diversification infrastructure benefits(ibid).

According to WTTC (2019) report, travel and tourism contribute 8.8 trillion USD in terms of GDP, and 319 million people in terms of employment in the sector globally (WTTC 2019). The World Travel Organization 2019 report demonstrated that in the year 2018 the tourism sector brings an extra 121 billion USD revenue in travel and passenger transport as compared with 2017. From the aforementioned statement, it can be concluded that a sizeable proportion of the global economy is under the influence of tourism activity in terms of employment as well as revenue receipt.

The tourism sector in Ethiopia is expanding over time in number of visitors and in terms of income earnings. The contributing factors for such positive achievement are: Ethiopian airlines provide international flights to most parts of the world, international organizations have their office in Addis Ababa, a strong effort is underway to improve Ethiopia's image, the government is committed to using tourism as a poverty mitigation mechanism, the involvement of the private sector community and donor agencies is growing significantly and Ethiopia is still an untouched country and many tourists recommend visits to Ethiopia.

The tourism growth level in Ethiopia shows an increasing trend both in terms of receipt and tourist flow. But if one considers the income generation per tourist or a tourist site is at its lowest level as compared with the global, continental and regional average. In the years 1995-1998,2005 -2008,2011-2014 on average Ethiopia receives 164 million$,787 million$,1.99 billion$ from tourism service export (UNCTAD 2017).

B). Social Impacts

With all its hopeful and useful economic and social rewards kept in mind, tourism also brings some undesirable results to the indigenous societies in the tourist attraction areas. Morgan. Et al (2020) explained that tourism consolidation brings hopeful values in growth and development in infrastructures and investments in tourism, cultural recognition, and celebrations. But on the other side, it will bring negative side effects in the form of the rise in the cost of living in the host community, social evils in information exchange with tourists.

As reported in Amutha, D. (2014), Conservation of the socio-cultural and historical landmarks of an area and renewal of pride by residents in their culture when they observe tourists taking an interest in and wanting to learn about the local culture. A cross-cultural exchange between visitors and the host community can lead to mutual understanding, acceptance, and peaceful relationships among people of different cultural backgrounds.

As discussed in (Morgan. W et al 2020) there are also bad consequences of tourism which include change or loss of indigenous identity or values, cultural clashes, physical causes of social stress due to increased demand for a resource, ethical impacts such as an increase in sex tourism or the exploitation of child workers.

C). Environmental Impacts

As stated by Sunlu. U 2003, tourism has optimistic spillover impact on the environmental ecology due to increased protection and conservation efforts to enhance the tourism business, the awareness creation of the economic importance of the environment, and finally the service of tourism as means to fund the protection of nature to raise its economic benefits. As discussed by Morgan. W et al 2020, usually tourism-related negative impacts are related to the overexploitation of natural resources, pollutions (air pollution, noise, sewage, waste, and littering), physical impacts (such as construction activities, marina development, trampling), and loss of biodiversity). Sunlu. U (2003), explains many of these negative impacts are linked with the construction of general infrastructures such as *"roads and airports, and tourism facilities, including resorts, hotels, restaurants, shops, golf courses".*

2.2.3. Tourism in Ethiopia

Tourism is diversifying over time as it evolves many varieties of tourism classifications. Archeological, cultural, pilgrimage, adventure, medical tourism, wildlife tourism, farm tourism, etc. are some of the lists of types of tourism classifications. Ethiopia is well suited for archeological, cultural heritage, pilgrimage, and wildlife in its diversified socio-cultural and geographical, and historical heritages which provide many tourism service potential opportunities due to many reasons that give a credible natural, social, cultural, political, historical, religious tourism resources. As scientific studies suggested, Ethiopia is the home of the first mankind, which can yield a prime tourist attraction role if well promoted and developed into tourism products. The country is naturally gifted with a diversified altitude

between extreme high altitudes like the Ras Dejen Mountains (4620 meters above sea level) and the lowest extreme the Danakil Depression (below 116 meters below sea level) which gives the country abundance and diverse natural and wildlife tourism resources. As a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country, Ethiopia possesses many cultural traditions that can attract tourists such as the Sidama Fiche Chambalala, the Oromo Gada system, the Meskel celebrations (the founding of the true cross), Timket celebrations(Ethiopian epiphany), and many other traditions and cultures. Ethiopia is among the few oldest historical independent nations and is the founding country of the League of Nations and the United Nations, the Organization of African Union that gives the chance to be the headquarter of many international and regional organizations which is a good prospective source of tourism. Historically the country also is known for receiving and advocating the three Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam that gave ample religious tourism opportunities.

The tourism literature marked the 1960's as the starting point of the tourism service in Ethiopia. As stated in Tafesse, A. (2016), tourism as an important element of the economic sector get the attention of the government in the 1960s and was manifested by the formation of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization, invitation of organizations and consultants to the development of Ethiopian tourism, and inventory of monuments, sites, artifacts, tourism priority areas and development of short-term and long-term tourism development plans. In the work of Ali. Y (2016) it was explained the tourism and travel service since 1974 was strongly affected by certain calamities such as the prolonged civil war, recurrent drought and prohibition, and lack of free movement of tourists. As stated in UNCTAD. (2017) the tourism sector in Ethiopia exhibits growth both in terms of tourist and revenue receipts from 1995-1998 to 2015. As explained by Yimer.A 2016 the travel and tourism show growth since 2001 and keep growing afterward. Although the tourism sector maintains its growth over time it is at its infancy stage of development as manifested by different indicators. As stated in the study conducted by Kidane-Mariam .T, the revenue generation performance of Ethiopian tourism was much lower than east African countries of Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda with similar or lower tourism stockpiles with Ethiopia. In 2015 Ethiopia received 460 million USD while Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda receive USD 1.7 billion, 1.2 billion, and 800 million respectively Kidane-Mariam .T (2015).

2.2.4. Nature-Based Tourism

Nature-based tourism is associated with the tourism practice in wildlife and natural settings in protected areas such as controlled and open hunting areas, game reserves, wildlife sanctuaries, community protected areas, and national parks. AS reported by Metin T.C (2019) nature-based tourism is a wide –wave of tourism services conducted in the natural environment with activities such as hiking, comp fire, swimming, picnic, diving, and learning with families and friends.

National parks are places set aside as a protected area for conservation of fauna, flora, and geo-heritage as the demonstration that bridge connection between mankind and nature co-existence. National parks are ideal attraction areas for tourism businesses together with other religious, historical, archaeological, and other various attraction sites.

As indicated in Atiqul Haq, S. M. (2016 pp-3) protected area can be expounded as a specific geographical location assigned, limited, and administered under legal protection to achieve conservation of the natural environment to maximize the ecosystem and other related services.

As reported in Eagles, P. F. J. (2015) the establishment and conservation of national parks are growing globally between the years 1900-1996 and reach 30361 parks in 225 countries with a total landmass coverage of 13,245,527 square kilometers of area.

Though the national park tourism in Ethiopia is growing and expanding over time it is not yet well developed and generates an adequate receipt for the country's economy and its people as compared with other countries.

2.2.5. Ethiopian Protected Areas

As reported in Vreugdenhil, A.D., Tamirat Tilahun, Anteneh Shimelis, Zelalem Tefera, 2012 Ethiopia has 11 national parks and 2 wildlife sanctuaries managed by Ethiopian Wildlife Authority. The regional administrations of the country also manage 13 national parks, 6 wildlife reserves, 21 controlled hunting areas, and 6 open controlled hunting areas. There are also 3 biosphere reserves and 5 community conservation areas (the full list is attached in the appendix).

Table 3 Ethiopian national parks managed by EWCA

s.no	Area	Managed by	Established	Area in hectare
1.	Abijata Shala Lakes	Oromia	1963	88,700
2.	Alatish	Amhara	1997	266,600
3.	Awash	Oromia and Afar	1958	75,600
4.	Bale Mountains	Oromia	1962	247,100
5.	Gambella	Gambella	1966	506,100
6.	Geralle	Somali	1998	385800
7.	Kafta Shiraro	Tigray	1999	250,000
8.	Nechsar	SNNP	1966	51,400
9.	Omo	SNNP	1959	406,800
10.	Simien Mountains	Amhara	1959	41,200
11.	Yangudi Rassa	Afar	1969	473,100
12.	Babile Elephant sanctuary	Oromia and Somali	1962	698,200
13.	Senkele Swayne's Harte-beast Sanctuary	Oromia and SNNP	1964	5,400

Source: Vreugdenhil, A.D., et al (2012)

2.2.6. National Parks and Their Benefits

As one part of the protected ecosystem, the management of national parks targets to achieve the protection of the diversity of fauna, flora, and state of nature of a geographical attraction as a primary objective. Maintaining harmonious exploitation of preserved areas and their resources to the stakeholders of the park may also be taken as the other aim of national parks. Finally, national parks may also try to achieve the goal of perpetuating the value of the protected area as a means of enjoyment, the educational and scientific value of their ecology.

As explained in Stolton, S., Dudley, N., Çokçalışkan, B. A., Hunter, D., Ivanić, K. et al, the protected area presents human beings and its environments with various services that can be classified as supporting, provisioning, regulating, cultural services. The most significant supporting services of protected places revolve around their contribution to the sustenance of the ecosystem, consolidation of the lifecycle, and perpetuation of biodiversity. Another

decisive service of a protected area is in its contribution as an essential source of raw materials, food, medicine, and genetic resources in addition to its role as a controlling power of climate, hazard and positive purification and detoxification input, water and erosion regulating effect. Finally, the preserved area provides human being cultural services such as recreation and aesthetic values, inspiration for arts, education, and research, spiritual and religious practice, cultural identity and heritage, mental well-being, peace, and stability).

2.2.7. Finance Sources of National Parks

According to Leung, Y., Spenceley, A., Hvenegaard, G., Buckley, R., & Groves, C. (n.d.) national parks can secure funds from various sources such as external sources, market-based mechanisms, cost-saving mechanisms. The external source of fund for national parks may gain finance externally in terms of government budgets, donor bi/multilateral grants, environmental trust funds, biodiversity enterprise or challenge funds, taxes and subsidies earmarked for the environment, environmental fines, fiscal transfers between sectors, tax deductions for donations, individual donations, corporate donations, debt-for-nature swaps.

Market-based sources of finance may include tourism revenues (entry fees, concessions fees, activity fees, tourism taxes, bed (lodging) levy, mooring and landing fees), resource extraction user (forestry and timber products, bioprospecting, fishing, biosecurity, hunting fees, agriculture), ecosystem services (carbon, water quality, and water flow regulation), and biodiversity offsets (Mari-culture, petroleum/gas, infrastructure)(ibid).

Cost-saving mechanisms of finance include co-management with the private sector, non-governmental organizations or communities, public-private partnerships, activity-based collaboration, and volunteers and interns (ibid)

2.2.8. Simien Mountains National Park

According to Federal Negarit Gazette regulation No. 337/2014 the park the previous SMNP is decided to be known as "Simien Mountains National Park" is re-demarcated covering 412.0885 square kilometers. The regulation provides the park an advisory committee that includes the chief executives of the surrounding administrative units (woredas) who leads the committee in annual rotation and the administrators of kebeles that border the park are members of the committee as a participatory body (Federal Negarit Gazette 2015).

The geographic location extends from 13°9'57" to 13°19'58" north latitude and from 37°54'48" to 38°24'43" east longitude. It is 120 Kms northeast of Gondar, which is about 741 km away from Addis Ababa. The park has altitudes ranging from 1900 to 4543 meters above sea level Alemayehu, Gizaw, Mekasha, Haile, and Dessie (2011).

Tezera (2015) reported that SMNP is surrounded by four kebele administration from Adi Arkay woreda in the north, seven kebele administrations from Debarq woreda in the west, fifteen kebele administrations from Beyeda woreda in the northeast and east, nine kebele administrations from Janamora woreda in the south, and three kebele administrations from Tselemt woreda in the northeast.

Ethiopia established many protected areas in different regions of the country to protect its biodiversity and to boost the tourism service sector as part of its long-term strategy of diversification of backward rain-fed agriculture as the mainstay of the majority of its people into the service and manufacturing economy. SMNP is established to be conserved as among perpetuated areas of the country to achieve the goal of saving endemic fauna and flora and for the landscape of the area which is magnificent and naturally suitable for tourism.

The park is characterized by its unique topographic features of many highest peaks of mountains, deep valleys, and sharp escarpments that make the area marvelous scenery for the surrounding landscape. Important animal species like the Walia Ibex, Gelada baboon, and Semien fox are extinct mammals that are exceptionally found in the country and are the icons of the park. Due to the height of its mountains and the general elevation of the area the temperature range of a maximum of 11°c to 18°c and minimum of -2.5°c to 4°c.

Asfawossen, Metasebia, and Aberra (2012) discussed that the SMNP is the home of 21 mammal species and some of them are endemic such as Walia Ibex, Semien Fox, Gelda baboon, other species also inhabit the area such as Anubis baboon, Hamadryas baboon, Klipspringer, Golden jackal, etc. it is also inhabited by 137 recorded bird species with 16 endemic bird species and 7 endemic mammal species.

Major Challenges

In general protected areas administrated by federal and regional governments are exposed to a wide range of human pressure-related threats of overgrazing, illegal settlement, farming, animal poaching, wildfire, and environmental degradation.

The interview made by the author proves SMNP faced challenges related to population pressures from surrounding woredas and kebeles in the move to use the resources of the park in an unsustainable way. The challenges related to the park's operations are inadequate funds to undertake conservation and routine operations, unfinished relocation of local communities within the park boundary, the question of fairness on the utilization of the park tourism benefits is also raised by other adjoining woredas to the park and finally lack of rule of law over lawbreakers.

The population pressure is the root cause of all other challenges that bring strong difficulties to the conservation and protection of the SMNP. Conservation challenges over the park's existence are manifested in the form of land grabbing by religious institutions, illegal farming, and grazing, illegal settlement, animal poaching, illegal firewood collection, intentional and unintentional fire setting in the park are the major challenges that pose danger for the park's sustainable growth.

Financial constraints to fund further development activities to support the trekking routes in the park, the rehabilitation, and establishment of new tourist camping grounds and tourist facilities, promotion of the park, construction, and repair of access routes in the park, to conduct research, to enforce law and order is the other major problem.

Incomplete relocation of local people from the park boundary is also a major problem that strengthens the strong pressure on the park in Debarq woreda localities in places such as the Limalimo, Kebero, and Keyafer, etc. that exposed the park for overgrazing and buffer and Main Park for environmental degradation.

2.3. Performance Management

2.3.1. Introduction

As defined in Sen (2017) performance management is a process of matching the spectacle of employees and groups against the big picture of the organization through a perpetual procedure of “identifying, measuring and developing of individuals and teams”.

On the other hand, Gunningle and McDonnell defined Performance management as "a process that enables employees to perform their roles to the best of their abilities to achieve or exceed established targets and standards that are directly linked with the organization's objectives" (Gunnigle and McDonnell, 2008).

In the management of performance different important elements in the success of business organizations in achieving their visions, meeting their objectives with their planned targets Osborne and Hammoud (2017), indicated that advanced technologies, skilled labor, best practices, and education raised the performance of many successful business organizations. As described by Pulakos 2004, in a performance management system it is important to set limited and specific priorities and focus areas for the system to meet its targets and to avoid illusion and lack of focus as to the context of the business organization. There is no one best-fit set of objectives that much the needs and requirements of organizations and in return drive organizations to look for different business needs, organizational culture, integration, and Human Resource systems. Pulakos (2004) also explained that important human resource measures such as "pay increase, promotions, transfers, assignments, reduction force, and other human resource actions" used the appraisal information as a benchmark whenever a performance management system is applied for decision-making objectives.

If the performance management system orientation is on development, the appraisal information may focus on guiding the pieces of training, job experiences, mentoring, and other developmental issues that scale up the capabilities of workers (ibid).

2.3.2. Performance Measurement Frameworks

In the literature of performance measurement, there are a large number of models developed to solve managerial problems such as the DuPont model, Balanced Score Card model, Malcolm Baldridge model, Performance Prism model, European Foundation for Quality

Management model, Performance Matrix model, Strategic Measurement and Reporting Technique model, and Theory of Constraint model are some of the lists.

Yasin and Gomes categorize the performance measurement related publications focus as on operational (efficiency, quality, flexibility, and reliability), customer-related (customer satisfaction, service, and responsiveness), strategic (market share, competitive position, and organizational effectiveness), supplier-related (supplier relationships, material availability, material quality, and certification) and environmental-related (standards, government regulations, and safety standards).

Concerning the issue of performance management systems, different authors raise diverse ideas and conclusions.

> *"The most widely used and adopted performance systems are BSC, EFQM in a way of identification of scale-up opportunities and possible threats using the structural approach to change strategy into attainable goals, targets, and tasks" Striteska, M., & Spickova, M. (2012).*

On the other way, Ossowski, N., Lima, E., & Costa, S. conclude that there is no framework or complete tool to use in a performance measurement system.

> *"Each performance measurement system possesses distinct features and particular target, addressed more to a certain purpose than another, with strength and weaknesses, resulting in positive and negative points" Ossovski, N., Lima, E., & Costa, S. (2013).*

Similarly, Kibira, D., Morris, K. C., & Kumaraguru, S. concluded that Performance measurement systems are becoming obsolete and that new dynamic frameworks are needed. In particular, they observed that current systems cannot balance short-term versus long-term measures, internal versus external measures, and financial versus operational measures Kibira, D., Morris, K. C., & Kumaraguru, S. (2016).

Different performance management models are applied in different organizations and institutions as per the requirements of the internal and external business environment. This research will briefly look at some of the models that are common in business management to measure the performance of business organizations the Balanced Score Card, European Foundation for Quality Management**,** and the Strategic Measurement and Reporting Technique (SMART).

1. The Balanced Scorecard

As stated in Ivanov and Avasilcai the Balanced Scorecard translates the mission and the organizational strategy into a set of performance indicators that offers a model for the performance measurement system. This model considers values of the organization's performance in four perspectives of “financial, clients, learning and growth, and internal processes”. Customer perspective relies on the issue of what customers want in terms of quality, costs, and distribution, and what they want in the future from the organization.

The customer perspective is the collection of important objectives that enable business firms to realize and maintain customer loyalty. The other important value of an organization is the financial perspective that relies on managing financial resources as a very important pillar for the success of the organization. The internal perspective focus on the importance of interpreting how internal processes assist an organization get its objectives and add value to the goods and services for customers and enhance all-round robust performance. The learning and growth perspective is one of the most important perspectives because it influences all the other perspectives. All the results from the four perspectives are strongly related to the training and development of employees (Ivanov and Avasilcai, 2014).

2. European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM)

The EFQM model has been used in different economic sectors mostly in manufacturing and service such as banking and finance, education, and consultancy services. As explained in Howarth, Greenwood (2018) five determinant factors of organizational success within EFQM are leadership, strategy, people, partnership and resource, process, product, and services are outlined as success elements. Accordingly, organizations with a high level of excellence have leaders that build a great future, achieve their objectives with stakeholders, look into improvements of their capabilities, processes and add value to their customers and stakeholders (ibid).

The EFQM is accepted as a good model for long-term success and as a useful tool to address the essential cause-effect connections between the efforts of organizations and their outcome in their strategic direction.

(Ivanov and Avasilcai 2014) believed that EFQM is an important model which serves as a yardstick to measure the spectacle of the innovation process of an organization through "leadership, people, strategy, partnership and resources and processes, products, and services".

3. Strategic Measurement and Reporting Technique

Striteska, M., & Spickova, M. (2012) reported that the performance pyramid has four sets of objectives that impact internal and external efficiency and effectiveness. The broad strategic vision is demarcated in the first level of the performance pyramid while the short-term and long-term goals are indicated in the second level of the pyramid. Routine daily operations and key performance indicators "quality, delivery, cycle time and waste" are illustrated in the third and fourth pyramids respectively.

The main target of SMART is the translation of overall vision and strategy into an operational level of business units and routine tasks aimed at attaining both internal and external efficiencies (ibid).

There are some favorable and unfavorable effects for performance measurement. Yasin and Gomes described the positive and negative effects of performance measurement as follows:

> *"The favorable effects of performance measurement include increased transparency, incentives for output, and improved accountability. In this model main, the detrimental problems include game playing, increased internal bureaucracy, lack of motivation, and innovation"* Yasin and Gomes (2010).

When such bad signs are observed in the system the remedy is that managers should carefully examine their organizational performance measurement system and processes to eliminate any potential negative activities and behaviors that hinder the system.

2.3.3 Performance Measurement Models

In contemporary literature, there is a wide range of performance/service quality measurement models in different fields as per the requirements of the context of the sector. The first established servqual model by Parasurman et al 1985 served as a benchmark to study service quality.

Since the formation of the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al in 1985 many different versions of SERVQUAL models are being proposed that can accommodate the specific

contextual situations in different fields of study such as higher education, health, tourism, etc. Carrasco, R. A., Blasco, M. F., García-madariaga, J., & Pedreño-santos, A. (2018), however, categorize them into two broadly used methodologies of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. In contemporary literature, there is still no consensus reached yet about which one is better. In both cases, they use customer questionnaires to obtain their conclusions.

In areas where quality is the most important element of the operation researchers applies the SERVQUAL model. On the other hand in areas where the performance elements have some additional attributes researchers employ the SERVPERF model. The main difference between the two models arises from the application of customer expectation in the measurement of service quality by SERVQUAL while the SERVPERF excludes expectation and relies only on the perception side of customers.

Starting from the regrouping of SERVQUAL dimensions from ten into five by Parasuraman, Zeithmal, and Berry 1990, by adding other attributes as per the requirements of the context of each study other researchers develop additional models such as the HEALTHQUAL to explain the performance of health institutions, HEDQUAL is applied for the measurement of performance of the higher education institutions, and SERVICIO to study the performance of ecotourism.

Dimensions and Definitions of SERVQUAL/SERVPERF

Dimensions

As stated in Kitchroen, K. (2002), listed seven service attributes that adequately embrace the concept of service quality. These include:

> *"Security (confidence as well as physical safety), Consistency (receiving the same treatment for each transaction), Attitude (politeness), Completeness (the availability of ancillary services, Condition of facilities), and Availability (spatial and temporal customer access to services) Training- of service providers".*

Definition of Dimensions

The five dimensions of SERVQUAL/SERVPERF have common definitions used by most of the researchers in the field. The SERVPERF and SERVQUAL dimensions are defined in Buttle, F. (2014) as:

"Tangibles: Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel."

"Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately."

"Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service."

"Assurance: Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence."

"Empathy: Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers"

SERVQUAL Model

As it is explained in Gulc, A. (2017), based on the five dimensions, the researchers and academicians of the SERVQUAL method prepared a questionnaire containing 22 pairs of statements considering service, which have to be valued by customers twice: before the service providing and after it. According to the authors, the questionnaire is not a universal one but it has to be adopted and modified taking into account the specificity of each service regarding five service dimensions.

SERVPERF Model

Cronin and Taylor (1992) explained that more reliable outcome of estimation, better results, greater explained variance are obtained by using the SERVPERF model instead of the SERVQUAL model. The SERVPERF has many applications in diversified areas such as higher education, retail sector, ceramic industries, libraries, automotive repair industry. The questionnaires in this model have about twenty-two items classified as five basic indicators or dimensions.

As mentioned earlier there are no universal questionnaires to be applied for every field of study and every scenario of performance-related literature. In the research period (2020) the whole world was suddenly shocked by a novel coronavirus that spread at an alarming rate and with a huge death rate. Within a short period, the disease reaches the whole world, and countries of the world announce partial closure and complete blockage of their door for travel and movement activities to cope with the spread. Even many countries declare a state of emergency and enforce different regulations that highly limit the movement of people domestically and internationally.

In the years 2020-2021 the tourism business in Ethiopia was challenged by two-fold calamities due to the appearance of coronavirus and the disturbance of the peace and stability

in the country. In Ethiopia the years 2020-2021 were remembered for strong instability in many parts of the country in the form of militant ethnic cleansing, religious institution attack, mass killings, mass displacement of people, and the tension between Tigray regional state administration and the federal government that finally rupture in to an inevitable civil war.

The SERVPERF model for this study used 34 questions and the number of questions increased by ten from the conventional 22 to capture the contextual difference on the tourism business from the normal operational situations due to the scenarios of instability and emergence of the coronavirus pandemic in the study period in Ethiopia.

2.4. Empirical Studies

This section contemplates the experiences of different research works that focus their interest on factors that affect the performance of national parks in the literature.

2.4.1 Factors That Affect Performance of National Parks

The empirical literature in performance-related researches raises different issues with the performance of national parks and tourism based on the perspectives and context of the destination under consideration.

> *"The performance of a national park is affected by its creation and management, a local community near the park, the national policy governing the park, the financial resource base of the park (Muhumuza, M., & Balkwill, K. (2013)."*

The results of the research of Muhumuza, M., & Balkwill, K. Showed that all factors responsible for both the success and failure of conserving biodiversity in National Parks in various contexts were socioeconomic and cultural. Authors suggest that future conservation approaches in National Parks in Africa should place more emphasis on the human dimension of biodiversity conservation than purely scientific studies of species and habitats in National Parks (ibid).

Some researchers look at performance from the perspective of the number of tourists to measure the whole performance of national parks. A research work by September, J., Dolejs, J., Maresova, P., & Kuca, K. found that *"tourist services, marketing of the unique park label, and promotion of diverse regional supply base"* determinants for economic benefits of parks.

They study the relationship between the number of visitors to national parks and five variables: area of the park, number of employees of the park, the budget of the park, average employee salary in the park, and number of researchers. The results show that increasing the economic benefits accruing from national parks regional policy could aim at a qualitative upgrading of tourist services, increased marketing of the unique national park label, and the promotion of a diverse regional supply base Stemberk, J., Dolejs, J., Maresova, P., & Kuca, K. (2018)

Other researchers like Ndege, A. W., & Gichuki, N. N. (2017) look at performance from a conservation and sustainability viewpoint and they establish the factors that influence the performance of wildlife conservation projects and sustainability of their benefits. The study concluded that *"community participation had the greatest influence on the performance of the Lion Rover Project followed, by social-cultural factors, then monitoring and evaluation, project management team competence"* had the least influence on the performance of the Lion Rover Project.

Important management issues were also raised by Poponi, S., Palli, J., Ferrari, S., Filibeck, G., Forte, T. G. W., Franceschini, C., Ruggieri, A., & Piovesan, G. (2020) from the view of hicking guides. The authors investigated *"waste-disposal management, accommodation, and transport*" as critical areas with the potential to impact sustainable development in parks. Certification schemes were also recognized as an important tool with which to encourage ecologically responsible tourism.

Zeleke, A. F., & Biwota, S. M. (2020) examines the factors that affect international tourists' destination choice to Ethiopia. They identify *"fragmentation of the sector, level of general infrastructures and tourist infrastructure, underdevelopment of tourism products, low service quality of the country"* create a negative image of tourist destinations. The study concluded that for Ethiopia, to become a competitive destination in the international tourism market, tourism product development, destination marketing, and service quality improvement are highly required.

Another study conducted by Endalkachew and Endalew (2018) glimpses performance from a quality perspective. They studied and explored that Visitors were satisfied relating to the

major qualities of the tourism product such as weather conditions, the value for money of visitor attractions, accessibility, safety and security, and cleanliness of the local environment.

> *"Service quality based on services delivered by tour guides; cooks; hotels, lodges, and restaurants; scouts; car and field equipment rental services; and the value for money of the service delivery in the SMNP was considered poor. Tourists were not satisfied with the accommodation and park visitors were not satisfied with the park infrastructure. The quality of tourist information delivered by service providers was poor, failing to satisfy tourists who visited the destination." Endalkachew and Endalew (2018)*

2.5. Key Performance Indicators

Performance indicators are the main components of every performance measurement system. As explained by Heini, O. (2007), performance indicators measure the vital few activities and processes that reflect the health of an organization, contrary to plain measures that measure non-critical activities and processes. Furthermore, they align all levels of an organization and ensure that all individuals are 'marching' towards the same goals. Thus, performance indicators are more than plain measures, they are measures that incorporate a context. This context is given by strategy and objectives, as well as by targets.

As cited in Baker, M. S. P., & Mearns, K. (2017), the UNWTO (2004) developed a list of baseline issues and their corresponding baseline indicators, which are suitable to apply in any destination.

> *"These indicators are a) effects of tourism on communities [Social] percentage who believe that tourism has helped to establish new services or infrastructure b) sustaining tourist satisfaction [Economic] and includes the Level of tourist satisfaction, Perception of value for money, and percentage of return visitors c) tourism seasonality [Economic] includes tourist arrivals per month (throughout the year, mean and peaks), occupancy rates for accommodation by month and Percentage of tourist industry jobs which are permanent or full-time (compared to temporary/seasonal jobs) d) Economic benefits of tourism [Economic] Number of local people employed (and the ratio of men to women) in tourism, revenue generated & spent in the area."UNWTO(2004)*

Heini, O. (2007) suggests that there are two basic types of performance indicators in any organization: Internal indicators are typically related to processes, costs, and revenues, and may include measures such as the number of new products, manufacturing costs, productivity, and cycle times. External indicators usually relate to markets, customers, and shareholders and may include measures such as market share and customer satisfaction.

This study will try to explore the key determinant performance dimension that plays a decisive role in hampering the performance of the Simien Mountain National Park. Factors such as infrastructure (electricity, water, road, telecommunication, airport, hospitals, sewerage, etc.) promotion of the destination, satisfaction of (communities, tourists, staffs)with tourism service, quality service, seasonality of tourism, tourist infrastructures, and facilities, the capacity of facilities, availability of skilled human resource, stakeholder coordination, the amount of service charge requirements, the status of peace and political stability of destination, and budget from the central government to carry out activities, entry visa requirements, the use of e-tourism, policy towards tourism and natural resource and biodiversity are assumed to affect the performance of tourism sales in a destination among other things.

2.5.1 Internal Performance Indicators

Internal Performance indicators are those factors that affect the conservation and tourism operation undertaken by the management within the controlling sphere of authority of the management of the park. Factors such as promotion of the destination, satisfaction of (tourists, staffs) with tourism service, quality service, availability of skilled human resources, the amount of service charge requirements, and the use of e-tourism are internal factors that are assumed to affect the performance of tourism sales in a destination among other things.

Promotion in Tourism

> *"Promotion as a marketing mix element is intended to provide support for the placement of a product in the tourism market and to create awareness about it, create the image, and finally and most importantly to conduct its positioning in the market" Cirikovi, E. (2014).*

Tourist attraction sites require a high degree of repetitive advertisement and promotion to get the eyes of actual and potential visitors. National parks need promotional activities to have a good share of the tourism market in the competitive tourism business. Beyond the natural beauty of the attraction center promotion is a key element of a successful tourism business.

Quality of Service

As discussed by Cirikovi, E. (2014) by the quality of the tourism product; will depend on the imaginary and creative human work as well as the direct contact between guests and the direct

executors. Kala, D., & Bagri, S. C. (2014) explained that factors related to hotel management, such "as managerial attitude, average infrastructure, and interior, unskilled employees, non-availability of customized services, lack of innovation in offerings, services, and processes, etc." contribute to poor performance in terms of low level of service quality, low level of customer satisfaction and a moderate level of average occupancy rates.

Tourism destinations provide the chain of services that comprise transport, accommodation, tour guiding, food, beverage, and recreation. In each sector, the service offer needs to fulfill the expectations of the tourists. Tourists desire high-quality service in destinations to spend more time in the area to get an unforgettable experience in their lifetime. To fulfill the needs of tourists' attraction areas must enhance their inherited and created tourism destinations to increase their performance.

Tourist Satisfaction

The service offered for tourists can have both destructive and constructive roles for future come back for the current tourist or may create both positive and negative roles for word of mouth promotion. This implies that the satisfaction of tourists in attraction sites has a determinant role for the performance of the destination.

Service Charge Requirements

> *"Pricing of tourism products (and indeed every other) is a very sensitive job. Under the conditions of intense competition, higher prices could cause a decline in sales and thus influence the total income. On the other hand, the price has to cover production costs and ensure a profit. What will be the price for a particular product will depend primarily on the objectives to be achieved by a defined price? Cirikovi, E. (2014)"*

The amount of service charge that is required by service providers in every step of tourism activities in transport, accommodations, tour guides, and other tourism activities directly affects the choice of destinations by tourists that have big implications on the income-generating capacity of tourism activities of the park. The value of the service given in attraction centers must match the expectations of the tourists before the actual service to satisfy visitors.

2.5.2 External Performance Indicators

External factors such as infrastructure (electricity, water, road, telecommunication, airport, hospitals, sewerage, etc.) seasonality of tourism, tourist infrastructures and facilities, the capacity of facilities, stakeholder coordination, status of peace and political stability of destination, and budget from the central government to carry out activities, entry visa requirements, policy towards tourism and natural resource and biodiversity are assumed to affect the performance of tourism sales in a destination among other things.

General-Infrastructure

General infrastructure comprises a wide array of development endeavors energy, communication, water and sanitation, road, health among other things. As cited in Baker, M. S. P., & Mearns, K. (2017), the UNWTO (2004) describe infrastructures like energy, water, sewage, and solid waste management in tourist destinations as important indicators of the performance of tourist destinations. Accordingly, energy management is the per capita consumption of energy from all sources (overall and per capita per person per day) and the percentage of energy consumption from renewable resources. Water availability and consumption is the water use (total water volume consumed and liters per capita/ [person] per day) and water conservation measures (water saving, percentage reduced, recaptured, or recycled) and drinking water quality treated according to international potable standards. Sewage treatment systems. Solid waste management is the waste volume produced by the destination (tones per annum) (by month) (ibid).

On the other hand transport infrastructures like the road, rail, airport and sometimes marine transport are important factors that make accessibility of destinations easy and comfortable. The development of such infrastructures would increase the performance of attraction sites and the whole growth and development of the tourism business.

Tourism Infrastructures

> *"The scope of tourism infrastructure is broad and related to all those elements in a destination that enable to boost tourism development. In a broader sense, it includes all those facilities that tourists use when they leave their homes, reach their destination and return home. Once developed, infrastructure and facilities highly influence destination competitiveness increases the efficiency of privately producing and distributing tourism services, and in certain cases*

> *makes possible the supply of tourism services (ibid).” Mandic, A., Mrnjavac, Z., & Kordic, L. (2018),*

Tourists' infrastructure can be categorized into primary, secondary, and tertiary according to their immediate importance. According to UNECA, (2015) primary tourist infrastructures such as hotels, resorts, motels, lodges, restaurants, and travel and tour services are very important for tourism service to be complete product together with inherited tourism resources. Secondary infrastructure refers to such facilities as shopping malls or centers, museums, recreation, entertainment, and visitor information centers. Tertiary tourism infrastructure, on the other hand, refers to those facilities and services that are not tourism specific or related but are important in enhancing the visitor experience. These include health services or care, emergency, postal, financial, and personal services (ibid).

The availability and quality of tourist infrastructure together with their accommodative capacity will contribute to an increase of visitors and the exploitation of attraction site tourism potential in income generation from tourism activities for visitors.

COVID Pandemic

> *“The global communities wake up in December 2019 to an outbreak of a disease named novel Coronavirus disease 2019 (Abbreviated as COVID-19). The disease was described as an infectious disease that is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus. The COVID-19 disease has spread to about 196 countries and territories in every continent across the globe. Since then, there has been a concerted effort to curtail the further spread of the infection which is believed to be transmitted by human-to-human. The disease has greatly slowed down economic activities across the world, with many countries coming under partial or total lockdown.” Biwota, S. M. (2020)*

The emergence of the covid pandemic in the world affects not only the tourism industry but also all types of economic activities globally. The tourism industry is highly reliant on the movement of people from place to place which was highly weakened due to full-scale blockage of movement of people. This phenomenon is partially/ completely reduces tourist flow both foreign and domestic tourists from going to tourist destinations that may create an equally painful impact on tourist receipt as well as on tourism revenue. Ethiopia as a country is not unique to the emergence of the Coronavirus pandemic and facing the challenges other countries facing in terms of foreign trade decline, tourism export decline, and other related

issues. Therefore the coronavirus pandemic is one of the determinant factors on the performance of SMNP.

> *"The Ethiopian economy, after COVID-19 induced mobility and activity restrictions around the globe, has faced significant challenges. COVID-19 impacted by global disruptions have been considerably affected tourism and hotel business, exports and imports, and remittances to the country." Zikargae, M. H. (2020)*

Lack of Peace and Stability

As stated in Sonmez, S.F (1998) political upheaval and instability can create "lingering effects "and can hamper travel, and poses a barrier to international tourism operation. The effect of political turmoil is direct and immediately shown by the reduction in the flow of tourists and the related income to be collected from the sector.

> *"any occurrence that threatens the normal operation of a tourism-related business; damage a tourist destination's overall reputation for safety, attractions, and comfort, cause a downturn in the local travel and tourism economy by the reduction in tourist arrivals and expenditure" Paraskevas, A., & Altinay, L. (2013)*

Peace and stability of a place, region, and country can have a determinant role for tourism business to flourish or to die.

Tourism Policy

A holistic economic policy in general and good tourism policy formulation that gives an appropriate weight for tourism in particular, as an important economic endeavor that paves the way for many economic questions of employment, national income, poverty alleviation, economic diversification, and exploitation of tourism opportunities would be an extremely necessary precondition to being a successful actor in the industry as a country.

Budget Allocation

The short term, medium-term and long term plans, development projects, and routine activities of the park can be executed properly if a fair amount of budget is allocated to the park administration by concerning authorities. For the park management to execute its responsibilities at its disposal planning, staffing, organizing, leading, and controlling functions in and around the park and elsewhere it needs good financial allocation. With the

assignment of a little budget without considering the development and usual activity finance requirements, conservation and sustainable use of the park would be impossible to achieve.

Accommodative Capacity of Facilities

The absorbing capacity of the amenities, lodges, resorts, hotels, restaurants, and other related services to the visitors is a very necessary input for tourism activities to exploit the attraction site potential.

If the holding capacity of the accommodations and their associated facilities per night is very high, the stay of tourists in the attraction area is reinforced. Visitors stick around and their spending will also be lofty that is favorable for the increment of tourists and revenue-generating capacity for the park. If the carrying capacities of facilities in the park are lower visitors are obligated to go to the next nearest city to spend the night. As a result, tourists' stay in the park will be minimized due to the capacity of the facilities that have negative implications for tourist arrivals and revenue generation potential of the park.

2.6. Conceptual Framework

This research work applies the SERVPERF model as the basis of analysis which was established earlier by Parasuraman, Zeithmal, and Berry (1988) and later modified by Cronin and Taylor (1992) which reduced the number of items from 22 pairs to just 22 single items that are taken as an adequate instrument to measure the performance of service.

Thirty-four questions are distributed among the five SERVPERF dimensions as follows: 1) seven items are used to measure tangibles (T1, T2, T3, T4, T5, T6, and T7). The tangibility dimension represents Physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel;2)seven items are used to measure the empathy dimension (E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, E6, E7) and stands for Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers; 3) five questions (R1, R2, R3, R4,R5) used to measure responsiveness and that that represents a willingness to help customers and provide prompt service;4) six questions (RE1, RE2, RE3, RE4, RE5, RE6) used to measure the reliability dimension and stands for Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately; 5) nine questions (A1, A 2, A3, A 4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9,) are used to measure assurance dimension that constitutes knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.

From the conventional 22, SERVPERF items additional 12 items are included to capture extraordinary coronavirus pandemic and instability situations in Ethiopia that highly affect the tourism activities in general and the performance of SMNP in particular.

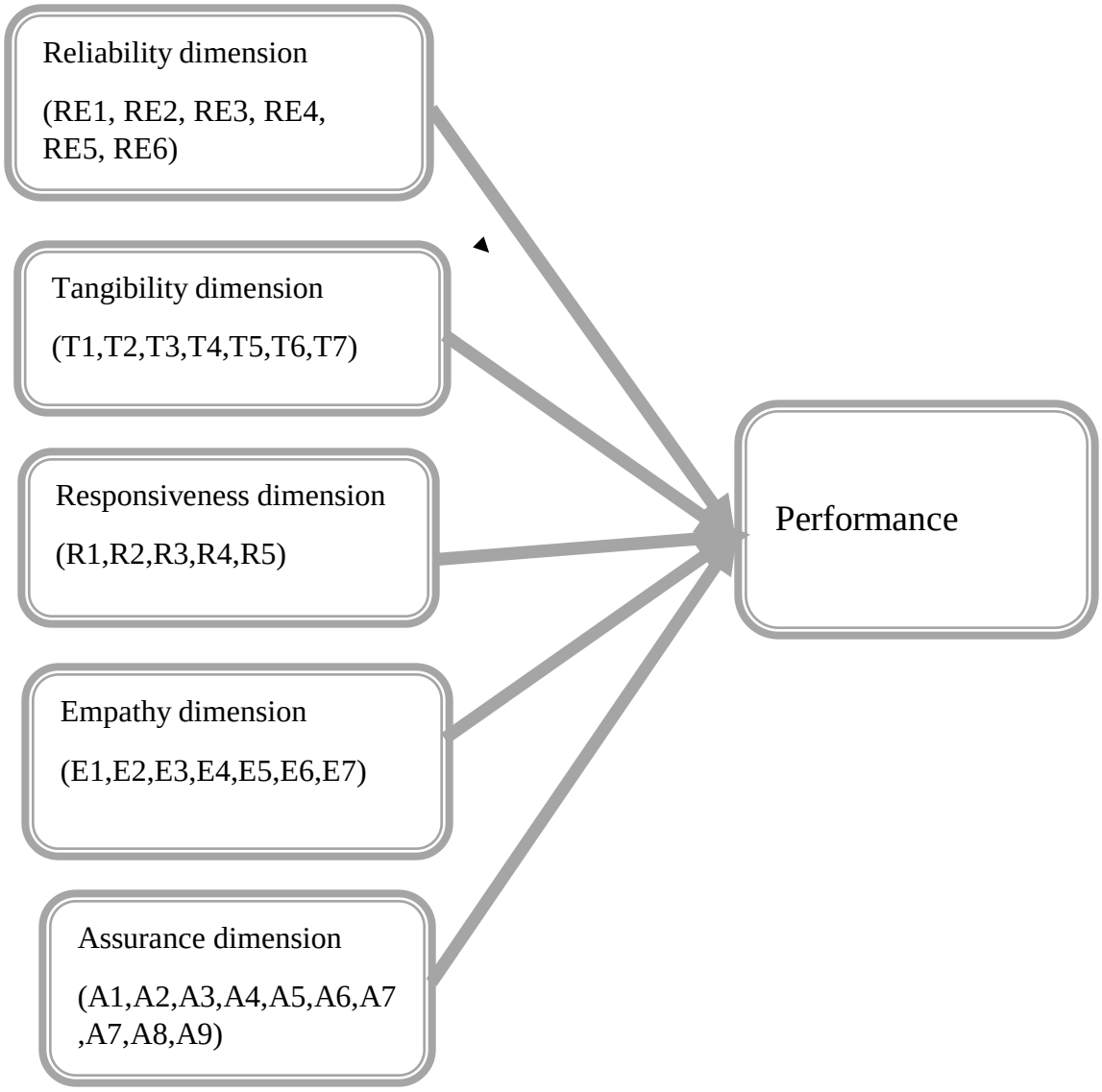

Figure 1. Conceptual connection among dependent variable, dimensions, and items of each dimension.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological synopsis adapted to guide the research path. The methodology revolves around the design, target, sample, administration of the questionnaire, model of the study, data presentation techniques, reliability and validity of the research instruments and data type and sources of the research that would be followed to answer the research questions, attain the research objectives, test hypotheses and finally to arrive at a certain conclusion. The main parts discussed here are the research design, the target population of the study, the sample size and way of determination, data types and sources, administration of the research questionnaire, data analysis and presentation techniques, reliability and validity analysis.

3.2. Research Design

To address the research questions, which are characterized by cause and effect relationships between variables, the study applied an explanatory research design based on a survey questionnaire. The data to be collected is restricted within a limited time, a budget that initiated the researcher to choose cross-sectional techniques over the other research designs. The study employed mixed quantitative and qualitative research approaches to analyze data.

3.3. Target Population

The target population for this study includes two population strata, the staff members of the management of Simien Mountains National park, foreign and domestic tourists who visit the park.

During the research period, the SMNP has a total number of 133 staff members that comprise 74 community scouts, 59 support staff. One hundred staff members and 127 tourists who visit the park were selected randomly and given a self-administered questionnaire.

3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

3.4.1 Sample Size

As indicated in Singh, A. (2011), Yamane (1967:886) proposed a straightforward formula that enables the calculation of the exact number of samples to be considered in the study of a population. The sample size of a given population of interest can be arrived at simply by applying the following formula for a 95% confidence interval and ± 5 percent of margin of error the formula is given as:

$n= N/(1+N(e)^2)$

Where n represents the sample size, N is the population size, and e is the level of precision.

3.4.2 Sampling Procedure

To get the necessary information, this study used Stratified random sampling since it is a useful method for data collection when the population is heterogeneous. In this study, the entire heterogeneous population is divided into two homogeneous groups (Strata) of the management and staff members of the park, tourists who visit the park.

The sample size in each stratum is going to be determined using a nonprobability random sampling technique. Sampling had been conducted separately in each stratum using the (Yamane 1967) sample size determination formula.

Table 4 sample size determination

Strata	Target population	Sample determination formula applied	Determined sample size
Staff (total number of employees of the park)	133	Yamane 1967 formula $n= N/(1+N(e)^2)$	101
Tourist (average monthly tourists who visit the park)	186	Yamane 1967 formula $n= N/(1+N(e)^2)$	127

Source: own computation, 2021

To get the appropriate data from the sample respondents the two strata the author went to Debarq town where the head office of the park is located, and to different park camps such as the Sanqaber scout camp, Limalimo lodge area, and Cheneck community lodge area of the SMNP.

In the head office of the park, the author meets the chief warden of the park and gets permission and guidance from the right people for the survey. The relevant information such as the total number of the staff, the total tourist inflow, and related income generation, and the main routine operation of the park was taken from the human resource department, tourism department, and finance department respectively. Information related to stakeholders' roles and the challenges faced by the park and related general administrative issues were taken from the deputy warden of the park. Two tourism experts were assigned to collect relevant data from staff and tourists based on their exposure and work relation. Survey questionnaires from support staff members were taken during the working days while the tourist survey information was taken during their visit, after their visit, and using tour guides in the park.

The total number of scouts and office support staff members were taken as a population and a sample size was selected using the sampling formula to get individuals for the survey. Simien Mountains National Park has a total of 133 staff (staff comprised of the warden, tourism experts, ecology experts, support staff, and community scouts) which is considered as one group of the population for this study.

Table 5 sample size determination and response rate

Strata	Target population	Sample determination formula applied	Determined sample size	Useful response	Response rate
Staff	133	Yamane 1967 formula $n= N/(1+N(e)^2)$	101	81	80%
Tourist	186	Yamane 1967 formula $n= N/(1+N(e)^2)$	127	80	63%

Source: own computation, 2021

From the total number of staff (including 74 community scouts, 5 experts, 1 warden, and 53 support staff) 101 of them were selected to be the population. To obtain relevant information, the sample size is calculated using Yamane 1967 formula and the sample of the management and staff members selected for questionnaire filling were 101 individuals out of which 81 useful questionnaires were returned with a response rate of 80%.

The total number of tourists that visit the park in the last 10 months (July-April) of the Ethiopian fiscal year 2012/13 was 1862. To choose the sample size of the tourist stratum, the monthly average number of visitors in the park for the last ten months of the year was considered as the benchmark. Taking the average number of foreign and domestic tourists (186) that visit the park in all the last months of the fiscal year every month as a benchmark the sample size of tourists was determined to be 127. Out of a total number of 127 questionnaires distributed 80 valuable were returned with a response rate of 63 percent.

3.5. Data Type and Source

This research will apply both primary and secondary data sources to look at theoretical backgrounds about the study topic and related information necessary to show the validity of the research argument.

3.5.1 Primary Data Source

Primary data sources of information were collected from a questionnaire survey conducted on staff members of the park and from tourists that visit the park this year. Staff members were included in the population based on the fact that the more technically the staff members job is routinely on the park field visit the more it is selected to be part of the population and hence staff members that are tourism experts, scouts, and warden are given priority in the survey. Tourists both of domestic and foreign origin were included in the survey to fill the survey questionnaire.

3.5.2 Secondary Data Source

Different books, journal articles, master theses, and annual reports, were used to strengthen the arguments and theoretical and empirical claims of this research.

3.6. Administration of the Questionnaire

3.6.1 Data Collection Tools

The study used a self-administered standard survey questionnaire that was used by Archer, B. D., & Griffin, T. (1969), Andrea B. S., (2012), Emmanuel. N (2010) and Aynalem .D (2014) to collect the primary data. Data gathering instruments used in this research apply the five scales Likert measurement method to obtain relevant information from respondents of the study. As stated in Joshi, A., Kale, S., Chandel, S., & Pal, D. (2015) in Likert measurement scale participants are requested to indicate their reference on items of variables according to their perception to mark as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree based on the observation they faced on the actual service on the ground. The combination of the responses given by each respondent comes together and reveals some trends and dimensions that allow generalization and conclusions about the response and control variables of the whole study.

Questionnaires were delivered to management and staff members face to face in their office, by going direct into their workplace in the park (scouts), using social meetings and gatherings, such as negotiation meetings, informal gatherings, or cooperatives and associations to get an appropriate number of respondents.

3.7. Model Specifications

The study applied both descriptive and inferential statistics data collected using structured questionnaires survey. The data collected were tested using SPSS software in the model below. The performance of the park is assumed to be affected by internal factors such as the quality of tourist service, promotion of the park to potential visitors, and tourist/customer satisfaction. Performance is also affected by external factors such as the emergence of the covid pandemic, supply of adequate tourist infrastructure, availability of general infrastructure. Assuming a linear relationship exists between the dependent variable performances of Simien Mountains National Park the following model is developed. The study treats both internal and external factors within the context of the five dimensions of the SERVPERF scale of performance measurement.

$$y= \beta_0 +\beta_1 X_1+\beta_2 X_2+\beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \theta$$

Where

Y: - is the performance of the park in terms of tourist flow and revenue generation, β_0 is the y-intercept of the model, β_1, β_2, β_3 and β_4 are the slope of each variable, and ɵ- is the error term of the model.X_1 represents tangibility, X_2 represents empathy, X_3 represents responsiveness, X_4 stands for reliability, and X_5 stands for assurance and ɵ represents the error term for the model.

3.8. Data Analysis and Presentation Technique

After the data was collected from SMNP staff and management members and foreign and domestic tourists it was organized and analyzed using SPSS version 23. Statistical tools such as descriptive statistics were used to describe the phenomenon that exists at the time of the study in the form of frequency distribution, mean calculation, and graphical representation; regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis and correlation analysis was done to establish the nature and degree of relationships between the dependent variable (the performance of SMNP) and independent variables (SERVPERF dimensions). Using the best fitting model, SPSS test was conducted using the data collected on variables, and results were interpreted on coefficients (values, t-statistic, and p-values)of each variable, variance analysis(f-value, p-values), R-square's(R-squared, R-square adjusted, R-square predicted) variance of inflation factor and to strengthen the arguments of the finding of the study.

3.9. Reliability and Validity Test

3.9.1. Validity Test

As reported in Taherdoost, H. (2018) validity of a research questionnaire can be measured in terms of face validity, content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity. Face validity is a subjective judgment on the operationalization of a construct. Content validity involves the evaluation of a new survey instrument to ensure that it includes all the items that are essential and eliminates undesirable items to a particular construct domain.

Construct validity refers to the strength and well preparation of the research instrument in terms of the interpretation and conversion of ideas and clues into a workable concept to the real world on the ground. Criterion or concrete validity is the extent to which a measure is

related to an outcome. This study employed face validity, content validity and criterion validity.

3.9.2. Reliability Test

As stated in Said, H., Badru, B. B., & Shahid, M, reliability is the degree of consistency of an instrument. In other words, a reliable instrument is that which gives an identical score at all times.

As explained by Taherdoost, H. (2018), reliability concerns the extent to which a measurement of a phenomenon provides stable and consistent results while the validity of a research instrument explains how well the collected data covers the actual area of investigation. To test the validity and reliability of the data collection process this research will apply Pearson correlation and Cronbach's Alpha in the measurement of validity and reliability. The construct of the questionnaire passed through the reliability test to see whether the questionnaire is well understood and relevant for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will present the major findings of the research survey conducted on SMNP on two groups the management of the park and tourists who visit the park. This section starts with explaining the profiles of the survey respondents, it continues with a descriptive analysis of the study. In the quantitative analysis part of this chapter, the performance of SMNP before the study period and in the study period are briefly overviewed. The validity and reliability test outcomes of the study survey questionnaire were also examined. Preliminary regression and regression analysis tests and their results are presented in a more detailed manner. Finally, a summary of the major findings of the research is presented shortly.

4.2. Respondents' Profile

Survey questionnaires were distributed to 127 foreign and domestic tourists and 101 staff and management members. From the total 228 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 161 were properly filled and returned which gives a response rate of 71%.

From the total number of management and staff members of the park where the sample survey is taken the sex distribution shows 61 (75.8%) are males and 20 (24.2%) are females. And from the total number of 80 tourists in which relevant response is obtained 58 of them were males and 22 of them were female tourists.

Table 6 sex distribution of the respondents

Sex	Tourists		Management and staff members	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Male	58	72.5	61	75.3
Female	22	27.5	20	24.7
Total	80	100.0	81	100

Source: own computation, 2021

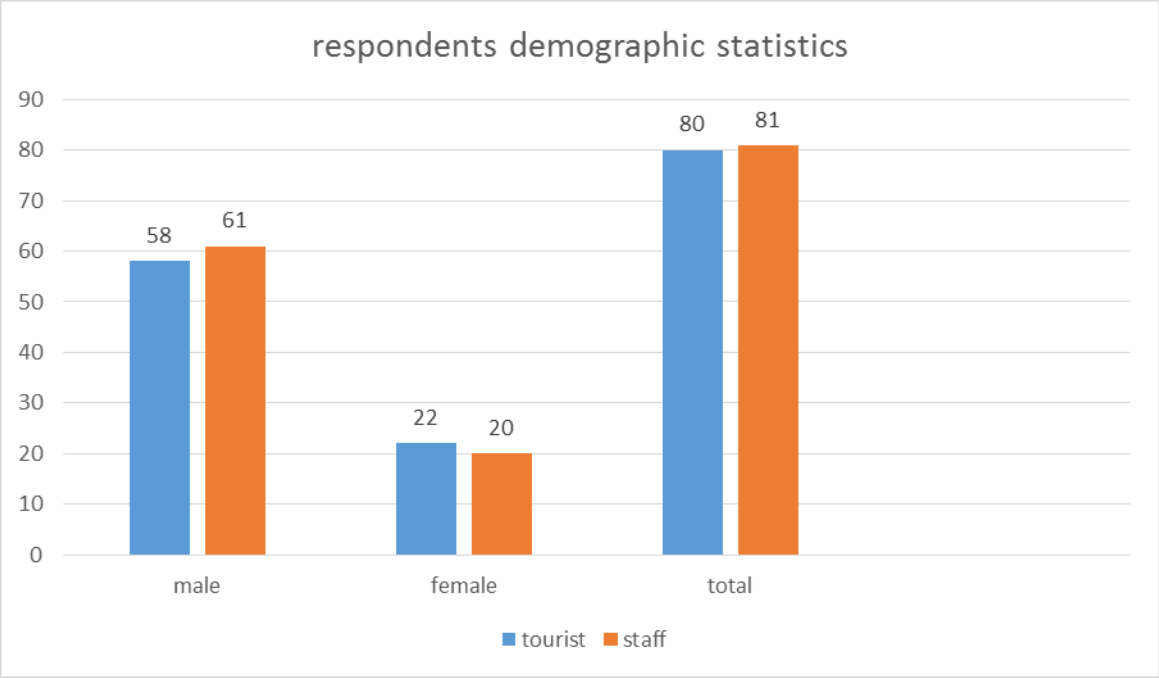

Figure 1graphical presentation of sex distribution

As we look at the age profile of the respondents in the management and staff group 55 of the management and staff members are within the age group of 25-44 that constitutes 67.9 % of the total respondents and 26 of the respondents comprise 32.3% are within the age group of 45-64 and the remaining 4 (4.8%) staff members are within the age group of 18-24. The age group of the respondents in the tourist group composed of 66.3 % (53) within the age group of 25-44 years old, 21.2 % (17) of 45-64 age group, 7.5 % (6) of the visitors within 18-24, and 5% (4) of the age group found in the 65 and above group.

Table 7 age distribution of respondents

	Tourist group		Management group	
Age group	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
18-24 years	6	7.5	3	3.7
25-44 years	53	66.3	55	67.9
45-64 years	17	21.2	23	28.4
65 years and above	4	5	-	-
Total	80	100.0	81	100.0

Source: own computation, 2021

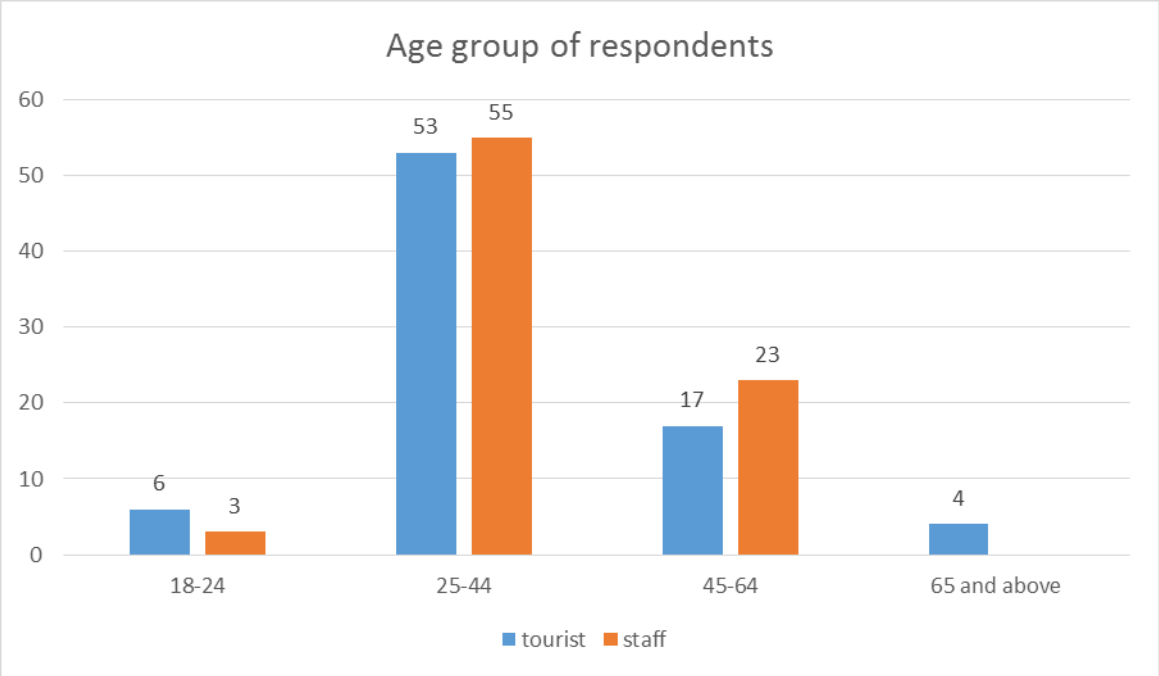

Figure 2 age distribution of respondents

In terms of educational background, 45 of the tourists (55.6%) are degree holders, 17 (21.3%) of the tourists are certificate holders, 10 (12.1%) of the tourists were postgraduate degree holders and the remaining 8 (10.1%) tourists were other levels of education such as high school complete, elementary complete, etc. As we look at the educational background of the management and staff group respondents 26 staff members (32.1%) are certificate holders,20 respondents (24.7%) are bachelor degree holders, 9 respondents (11.1%) are postgraduate degree holders, and the remaining 26 respondents (32.1%) other educational levels below certificate level.

Table 8 education level of respondents

Education level	Management and staff members		Foreign and domestic tourists	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
certificate	17	21.3	26	32.1
Degree	45	56.2	20	24.7
postgraduate	10	12.5	9	11.1
Other	8	10	26	32.1
Total	80	100.0	81	100.0

Source: own computation, 2021

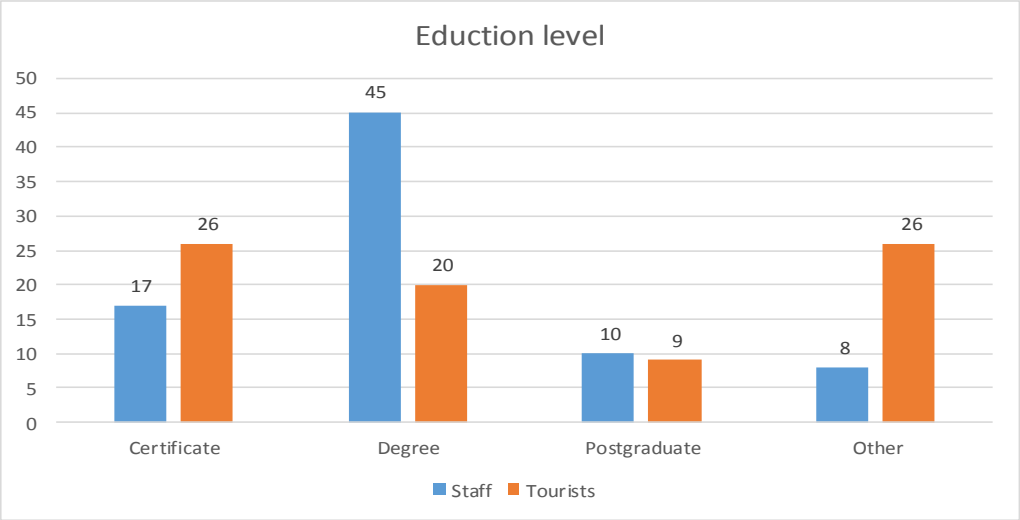

Figure 3 education level of respondents

4.3. Performance of the SMNP

In this research, performance is assumed to represent the production of quality service to the tourists and stakeholders, the parallel expansion of service supply, and the expansion of the number of beneficiaries from the operation. Therefore performance is represented by the boost in the number of visitors and associated maximization of revenue collection. The ability of the Simien Mountains National Park to attract a large number of tourists and generate an appropriate amount of income from the tourism activities in and around the park is the ultimate and desired goal.

4.3.1. Tourists Flow to SMNP

The park since its establishment in 1978 shows growth and expansion of both the park as a major attraction site and its tourism activities. According to African Wildlife Foundation, the park territory grows from its original 136 km^2 in 1978 to 412 km^2 currently after major expansion activities were undertaken in 2005 and 2009. As demonstrated in the following image the park include the Mesarerya area and the Limalimo area in the year 2005 while it added the Silki-Kids Yared and Ras Dejen area in 2009 which helped to expand the wildlife habitat and strengthen the protection activities of the park for the conservation of the endemic plants and animals from extinction and to avoid the park from the list of endangered world heritage site by UNESCO.

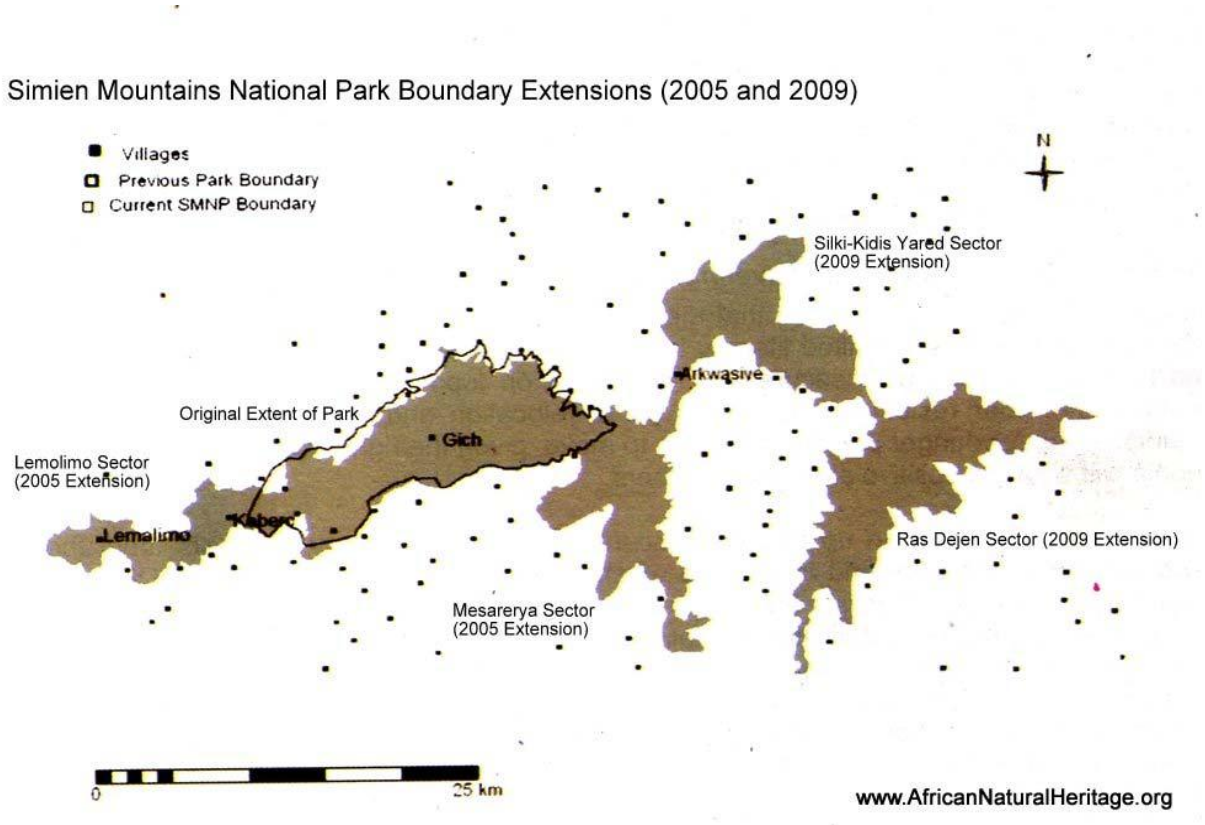

Figure 4 extension of parts if SMNP in different years

Source: www.AfricanNaturalHeritage.org

Available data on foreign and domestic tourists and the related tourism revenue generation since 1992 E.c (attached in the appendix part) demonstrated upward movement and expansion both in tourist flow and income generation except the study period the is characterized by big reduction both in terms of the number of visitors and income collection.

As it is depicted in the charts below the growth of tourists who visited SMNP demonstrated an upward trend both in Ethiopian and non- Ethiopian tourists with different slopes. The first graph indicates the growth of Ethiopian tourists who visited SMNP since 2000 and illustrates more flat slopes that imply the lower growth rate of domestic tourists relative to the growth trends in foreign tourists indicated by the next chart.

The growth difference may be deep-rooted from different reasons such as the income level of tourists, the attitude towards tourism, lack of promotion, or many other things but the reality on the ground shows that the Ethiopian tourists who visited the park for the last two decades

grow at a lower rate than that of the foreigner tourists. This difference may bring many policy issues and plan implications as to how to increase the number of domestic tourists to the park in particular and the countries tourism sector in general.

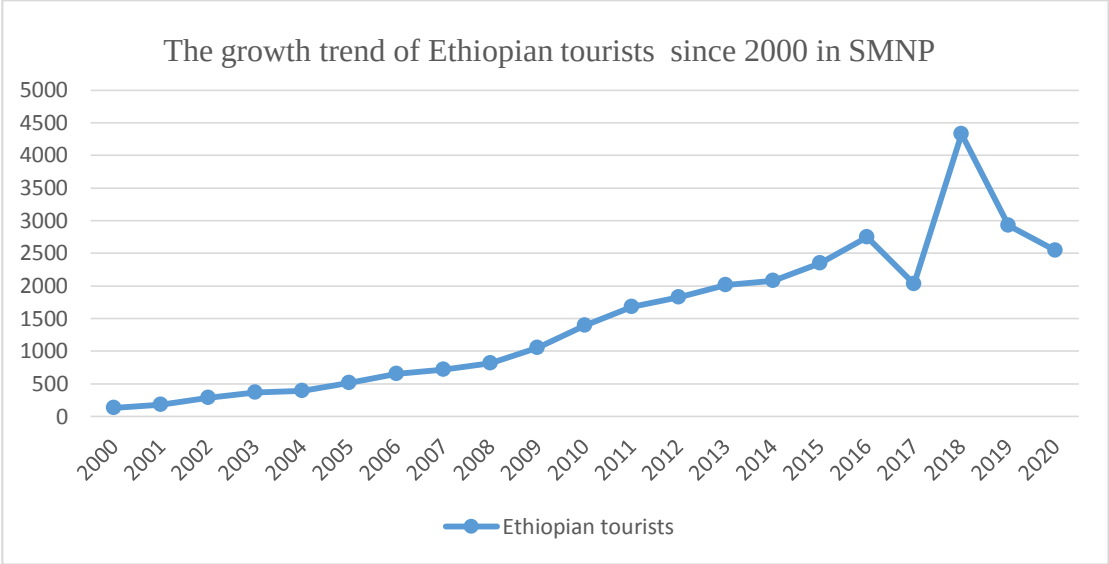

Figure 5 the growth trend of Ethiopian tourists in SMNP

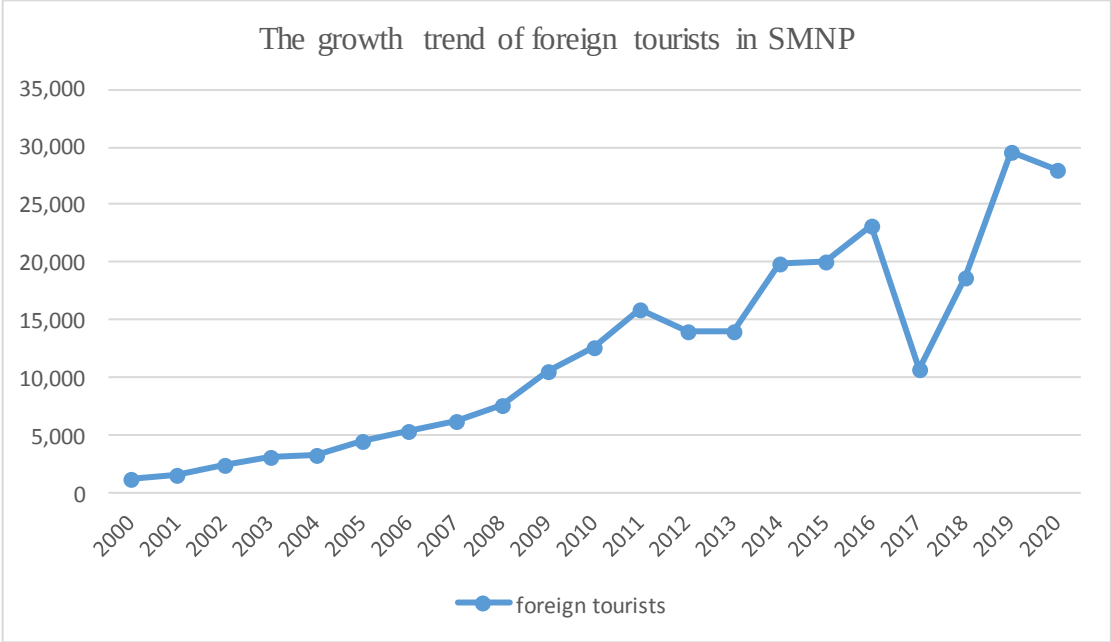

Figure 6 the growth trend of foreign tourists in SMNP

The flow of foreign and domestic tourists to SMNP in 2000 G.C (the year in which available data is obtained) were 1161 and 128 respectively while the revenue collected from the tourism activity to the government and the community were 210,303 Birr and 230,000 Birr respectively. After 2000 the tourism operation in SMNP demonstrated smooth growth. After two decades in the year 2020 the flow of foreign and domestic tourists who come to visit the park reach 28,050 and 2543 respectively. The respective revenue generation in 2020 was 5,448,329 Birr to the government and 22,621,599 Birr to the community.

The general trend of the foreigner tourist flow shows an increasing trend as portrayed in the above chart except for a single your downfall in 2017. The year 2017 was characterized by upheavals in Ethiopian politics and there was a power struggle between the old EPRDF and the new coming political elites within EPRDF. The political struggle was shown in the form of popular uprising and direct disobedience, blockage of access roads, and violent demonstrations in different parts of the country that causes the loss of many lives of the youth and devastations of different infrastructural and factories in different parts of the country. The political power struggle and its process resulted in dissolving EPRDF and bring a new party called the prosperity party to the leadership of the country. This political confusion affects the flow of tourists to the park that can be easily illustrated by the number of tourists in 2016 and 2017. The 2016 tourism inflow to the park indicated 23251 foreign tourists and 2748 domestic tourists visited the park while 2018 shown 18,758 foreign tourist inflow and 4329 domestic visitors access the park. In the year 2017, the SMNP was visited by 10685 foreign tourists and 2028 domestic tourists which is the manifestation of a reduction in the number of tourists. Therefore the park's tourism operation was highly affected by the political instabilities in different parts of the country that pose a security and safety threat for domestic and foreign tourists who desire to visit the park.

4.3.2. Revenue Collection of the Park

Income receipt from the tourism-related activities in the park goes to different tour operators in the form of taxes to the government and service fees to the government and other actors in either for different services or supply of commodities in accommodations, access, attractions, or amenities parts of the chained package of tourism services. More generally the tourism revenue flows in two major categories the government and the community portion. The sales

revenue from the tourism service is growing for the last twenty years and the growth proved continuous increments from year to year except for the year 2017 that shown an abrupt decline. In the year 2017 since there was a decline in the number of domestic and foreign tourists the corresponding income from the tour operation also shows a sheer decline in parallel with the number of tourists. As stated in Aynalem .D (2014) among the Ethiopian national parks Simien Mountains National Park is the leading one in terms of revenue collection surpassing the tourist paradise Nechsar National Park and the Awash National Park which is the home of diverse fauna and flora in the Ethiopian rift valley ecology.

In normal circumstances, the park is serving the community as the main source of income diversification and reduce dependency on rain-fed agriculture as the mainstay of the local community. The level of income in the two streams shows almost equal magnitude until the year 2009 and then onwards t

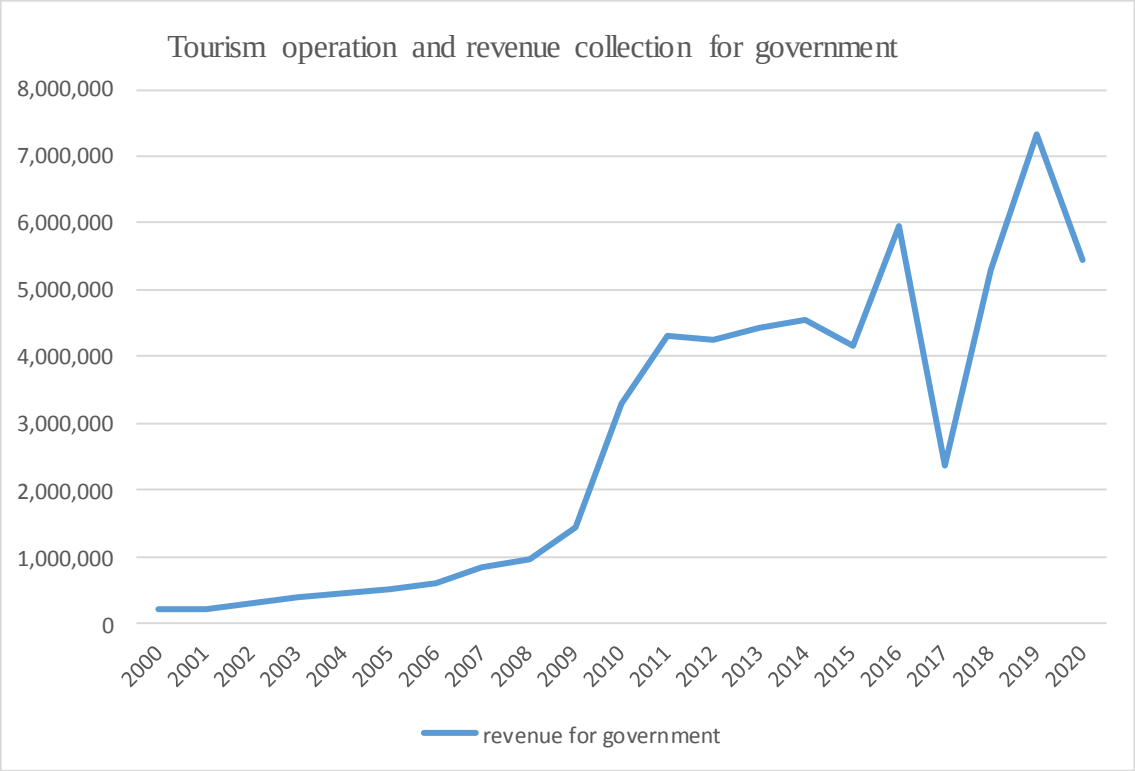

Figure 7 trends in revenue collection since 2000 in SMNP

the income stream of the community shows a higher level in magnitude that shows the increase of service to the tour operations in the park from time to time.

When the tourist flow becomes excellent the local community supplies pack animals for the transportations of the tourists and their luggage during their tour and trekking to different camping sites and parts of the park. The locals also supply tourists with food items in the community lodges that create other sources of income.

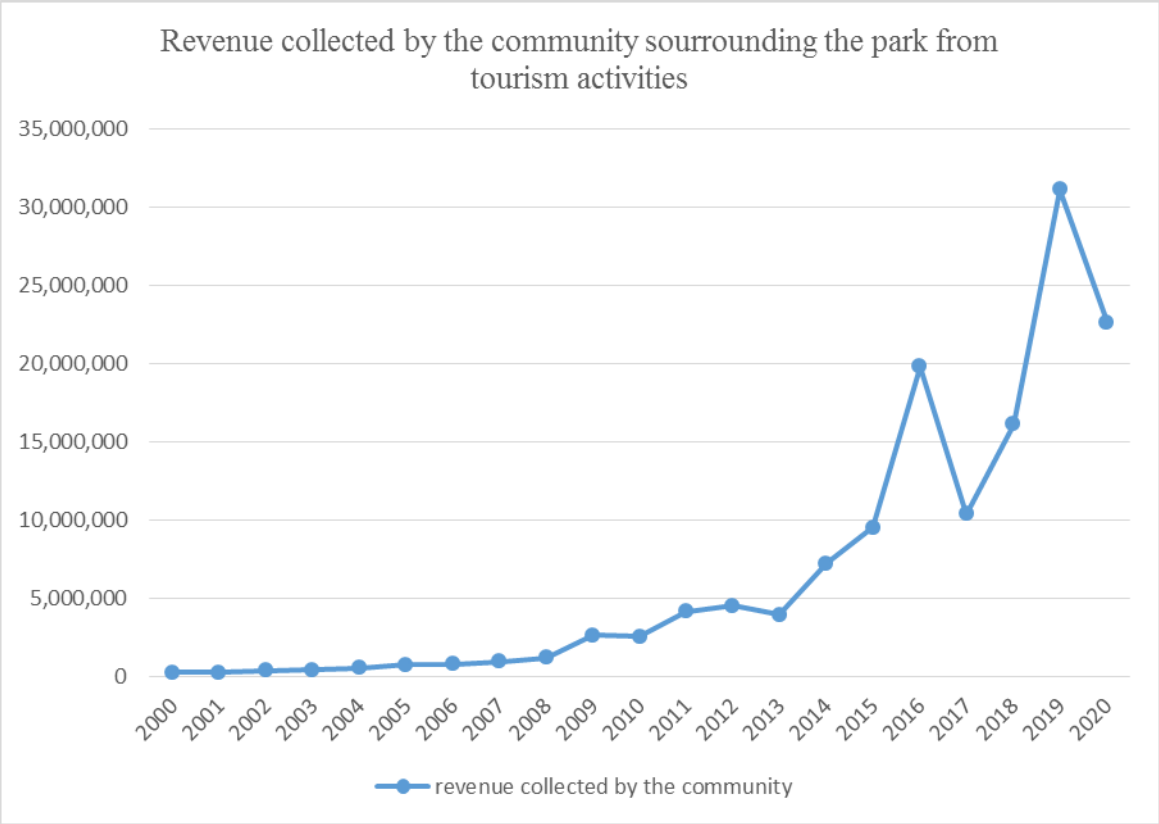

Figure 8 revenue collected by the community from different tourism activities

4.3.3. Beneficiaries of the Tourism Operation

The total number of the beneficiaries in the tourism operation of SMNP had exhibited a similar fashion with the trends in the tourist flow of the park and is directly related to revenue collection in each fiscal year over the last 20 years. In the same instance, the number of beneficiaries increases proportionally with tourist flow and revenue collection. This is true as far as the tourism operation grows the number of beneficiaries would raise due to the increased tourism operation in the area.

The tourism operation in the park gives good opportunities for beneficiaries directly or indirectly in accommodation, transportation, attraction areas near and around the park and

those farmers that participate either in one of the cook associations, tour guides and guards, mule associations, and direct and indirect supply of different good and services in community lodges and camping sites during the peak seasons in the park

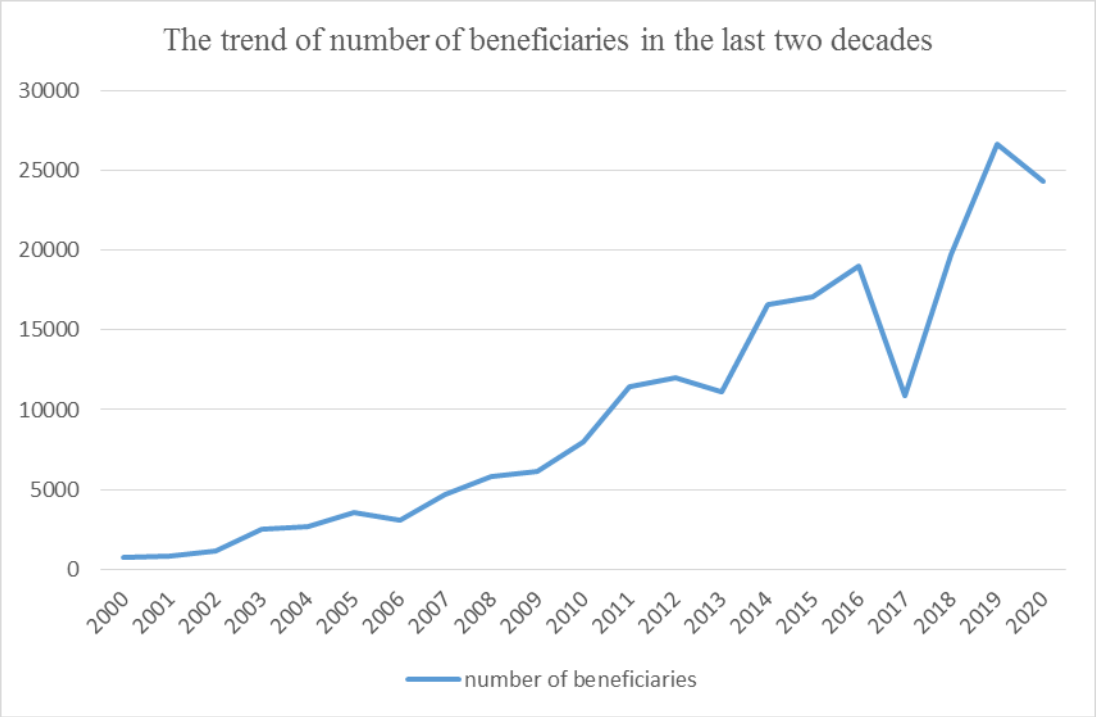

Figure 9 the number of beneficiaries from tourism activities since 2000

Source: data compilation of the tourism department of SMNP.

4.3.4. Performance in the Study Period

In the year 2021, the performance of the park exhibited a big downturn both in terms of tourism inflow and revenue generation due to the breakout of coronavirus all over the world and political turmoil in Ethiopia that pose safety and security problems to the tourism operation and the tourists who want to visit the park.

The novel coronavirus first found in china Wuhan at the beginning of 2020, takes a very short time to spread all over the world at an alarming rate. Following the widespread of the disease, the number of victims and related death toll hit hardly many countries in the world that forced for partial and full blockage of the movement of people. This is a deadly incident for tourism operations that is highly dependent on the movement of people from place to place.

When the research survey was conducted the total number of foreign and domestic tourists that visit the park reaches 1862 (from July 2012 to April 2013 E.C). Before the research period in the 2011/2012 Ethiopian fiscal year, an annual flow of 30,593 tourists has visited the park before the emergence of the Covid pandemic.

Complete and partial blockage of the movement of people from place to place because of the fast pace of covid pandemic distribution and dangerous exposure, it was observed a very huge reduction in the number of visitors from international and domestic sources. The incidence of the covid pandemic was not the only disturbing factor for Ethiopian tourism but also the disturbance of peace and instability in different parts of the country brings safety and security threats on the free movement of people.

The political tension and the later break out of the war in the northern province of the country and ethnic-based attack in many parts of Ethiopia was the biggest challenge together with the covid pandemic. The result of these two phenomena reduced the tourist from domestic and foreign sources with a historic downturn in the operation of the park.

Table 9 the number of tourists who visited SMNP in the year 2021

Month	Ethiopian Citizens	Foreign Tourists Reside In Ethiopia	Foreign Tourists	Monthly Sub-Total
July	32	5	0	37
August	13	2	5	20
September	58	11	5	74
October	212	123	84	419
November	6	3	5	14
December	42	5	43	90
January	97	14	111	222
February	341	77	26	444
March	77	38	96	211
April	211	18	102	331
Group sub-total	1089	296	477	1862
Total				

Source: own computation, 2021

Usually, in the normal circumstance, the park receives a large number of tourists starting from September up to May in the year which is considered as the suitable period for visiting the park. As illustrated in the above table a very huge sharp decline is observed in the number of foreign and domestic tourists that hit the mark of 1862 (10 months performance) which is the biggest decline since 2003 in the performance of the park in the number of visitors.

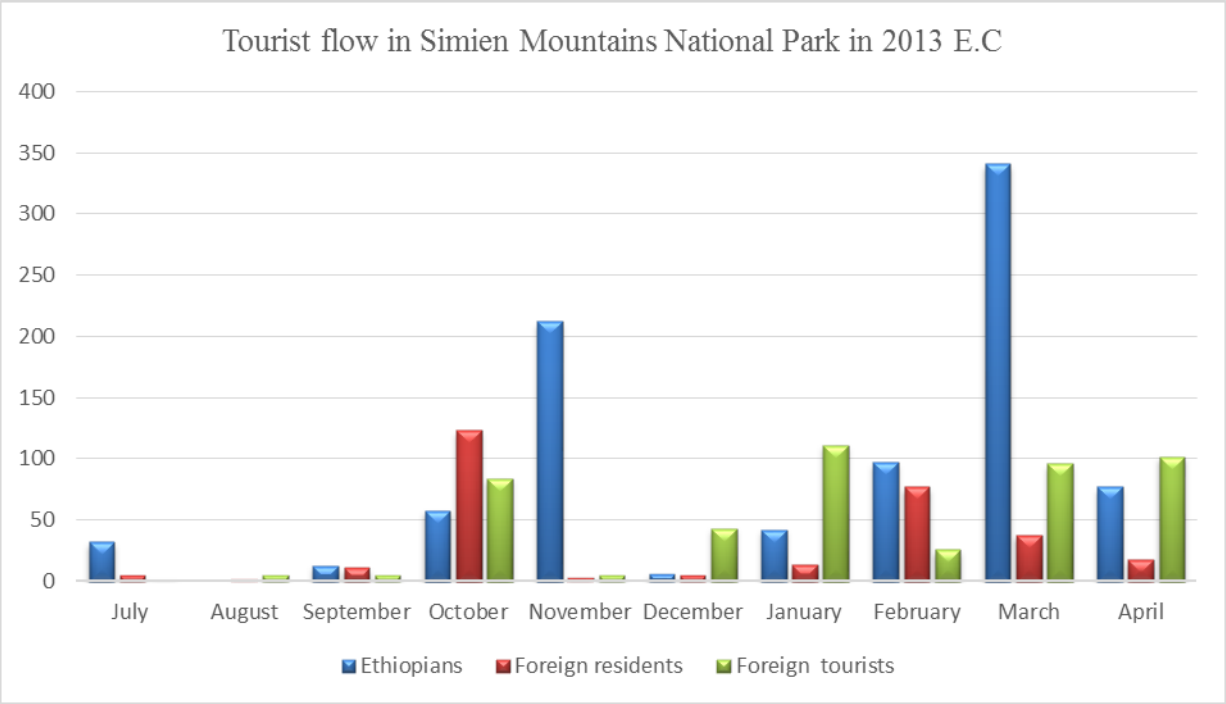

Figure 10 tourist flow in 2021 in SMNP

Under the shadow of a covid pandemic, the highest number of tourists who visit the park was shown in October, November, January, February, March, and April while July, August September, and December are the slowest seasons for the performance of the park in terms of tourist inflow to the park in 2021.

Table 10 government revenue collection from tourism operations in 2021

Month	Revenue for government	Revenue for community	Total
July	250	4000	4250
August	400	3500	3900
September	2456	8321	10777
October	617650	122345	739995
November	555624	10,101	565725
December	10710	72000	82710
January	61758	119200	180958
February	62124	315600	377724
March	631400 (filming)	292000	923400
April	157780	328000	485780
Total	2,100,152	1,275,067	3,375,219

Source: own computation, 2021

As shown in the table above in the 10 months operation the park secures 3,375,219 Birr in which 2,100,152 Birr goes to the government while 1,275,067 Birr distributed within the community as a return for the supply of different tourism-related services.

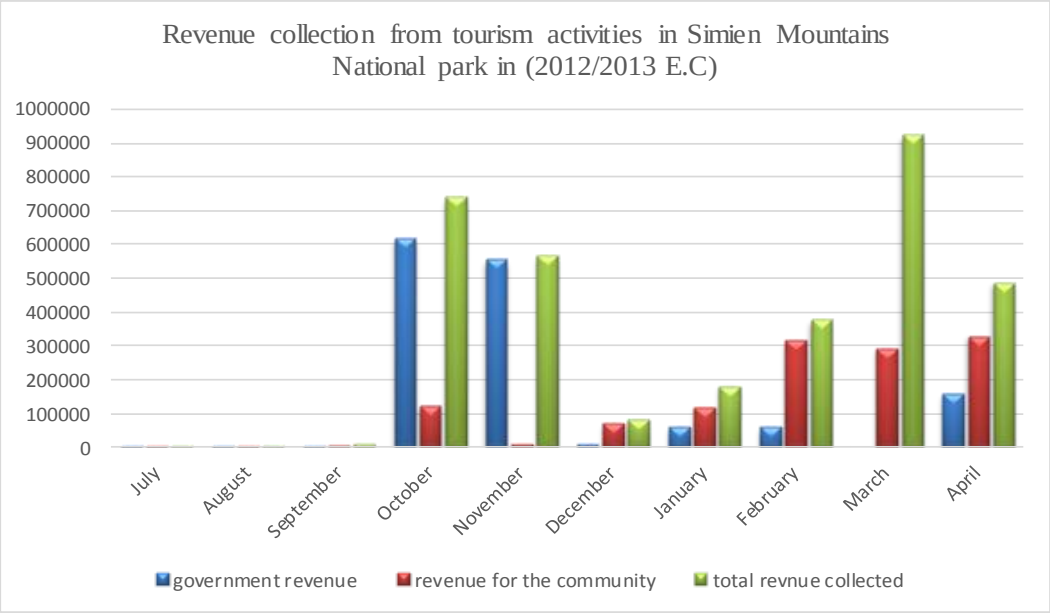

Figure 11 revenue collection from tourism operations in 2021 in SMNP

The income collection performance of the park shows the lowest record in the operation of the park since 2010 and a very huge slump compared with the last year's revenue collection. The revenue gathered this year reached the mark of 3,375,219 Birr in the last 10 months of the Ethiopian fiscal year which is 12 % of the income collected last year the lowest revenue in the park history since 2009. Last year operation in income generation recorded 28,069,928

The tourism operation in the SMNP brings good opportunities in terms of direct and indirect income and job possibilities for tour operators such as the hotel owners, lodge owners, community lodge owners, community scouts, the community itself, cook associations, backpack associations (mule association), and guard associations, etc.

The above chart demonstrates the fact that the number of beneficiaries in the tourism operation of the park is directly and positively related to the total number of inflow of tourists to the park. Both the number of visitors and number of tourists show an upward movement over the years between 2000 and 2017. In the year 2017, the number of visitors indicates sudden reduction and follows normal trends starting from 2018 to the year 2020.

Table 11 the number of beneficiaries of SMNP in 2021 from tourism operations

Months	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	Total
Beneficiaries	12	6	39	346	16	117	298	315	222	337	1708

Source: own computation, (2021) from tourism department report of SMNP

The number of beneficiaries in the year 2020 as shown in the table reached 1708 in the same instance the beneficiaries of tourism operations in the park last year in 2019 was 24330 people. The number of beneficiaries exhibits similar trends with the number of tourist flow and the collection of revenue and shown an abrupt reduction. The number of beneficiaries recorded in 2020 is the lowest since 2003 and is the reflection of the weakened operation due to the covid pandemic emergence and the instability in the political environment of the country.

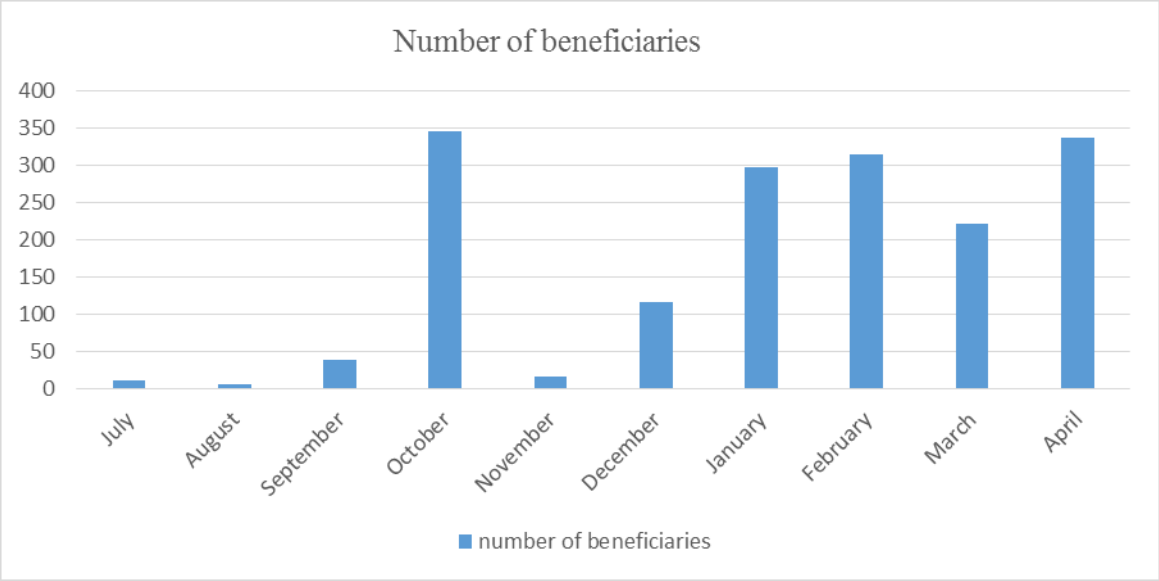

Figure 12 number of beneficiaries in 2021 in SMNP

4.4. Analysis of Instrument Validity and Reliability

4.4.1. Validity Test

The validity of a data collecting questionnaire can be judged by its inclusiveness of all essential items, the exclusiveness of undesirable items, its quality of being a well-translated concept, and by the extent of its relation to an outcome it intends to measure. Since the research applied a sample size total of 160 tourists and park staff the validity test was conducted on each case against the sum of it for all variable items.

The validity test was conducted on each variable item together with the total score of each case. The bivariate correlation test of each case against its total score gave an outcome that indicates the questionnaires are significant as we look at the Pearson correlation coefficient for each question not only at the conventional 95% confidence level but also at a p-value of 0.0001. Therefore it can be concluded that the questionnaire used to collect data for the study is significantly valid case-wise as demonstrated by the bivariate correlation test Pearson's correlation value of below 0.05.

4.4.2. Reliability Test

The reliability of the questionnaire measures the internal consistency of the instrument used to collect the intended data. This section illustrates the scales of the variables tangibility, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance.

Table 12 reliability statistics of performance dimensions

Reliability Statistics			
Performance dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
Tangibility	0.72	0.80	7
Empathy	0.65	0.79	6
Reliability	0.69	0.83	7
Responsiveness	0.69	0.71	5
Assurance	0.71	0.87	9

Source: own computation, (2021) regression of reliability from the survey questionnaire

To show the reliability of the variables the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency test is applied. According to Hukpati 2005 cited in Aynalem 2014, a statistic equal to or greater than 0.7 is assumed to be good. The variables in this research have Cronbach's Alpha statistics of 0.7 which is a good indication of reliability. The reliability analysis of the dimensions of the performance as indicated in the table above are approximately seven and above which shows the questionnaires are well understood by the respondents and are relevant to collect the intended data.

4.5. Results of the Quantitative Analysis

4.5.1. Assumption for Regression Analysis

A). Linearity Assumption

As explained in the work of Casson, R. J., & Farmer, L. D. M., there are six assumptions of linearity. The first assumption can be tested using a scatterplot by plotting the response variable against the independent variable and the rhythm must show more or less linear. The

regression result of the five dimensions of service performance against the response variable performance is depicted in the following five charts.

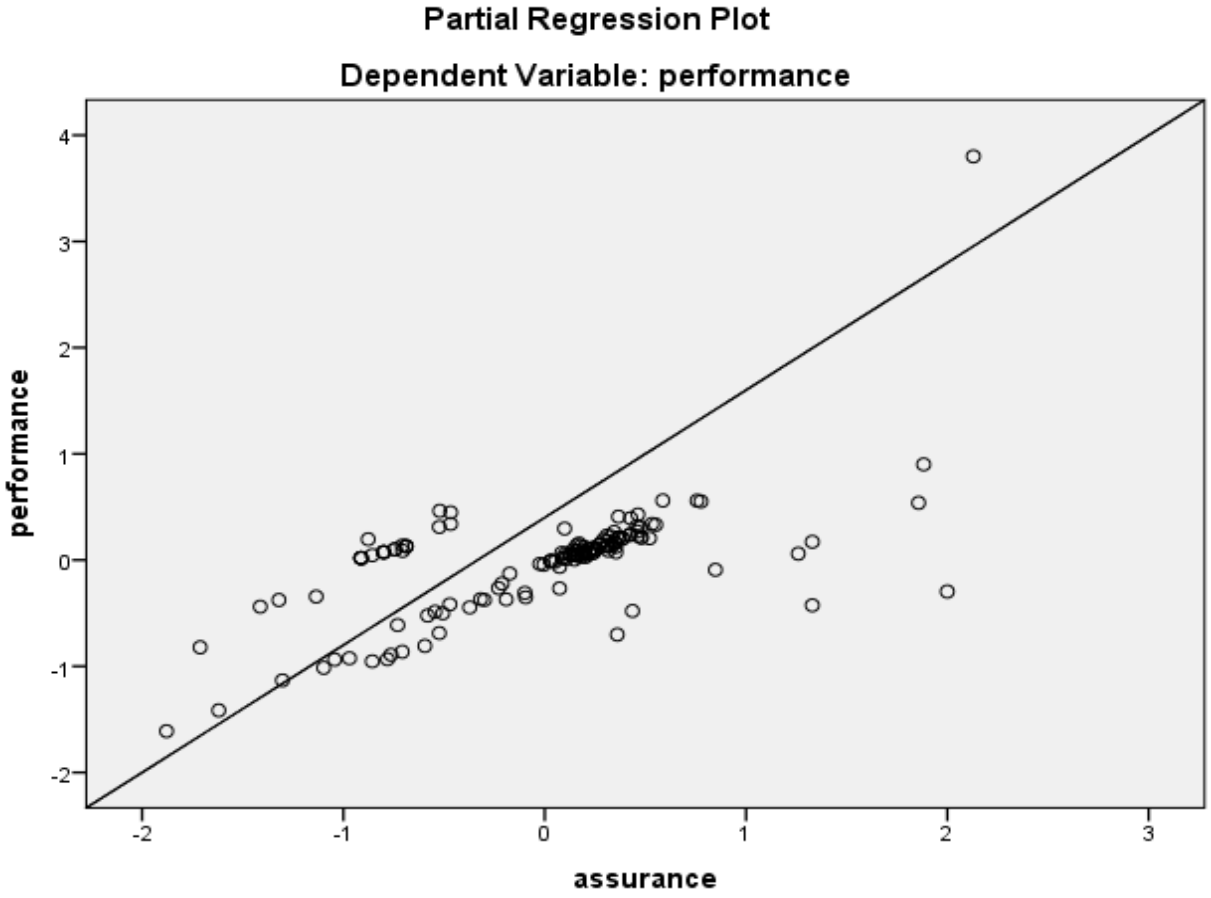

Figure 13 the regression performance against assurance dimension

As indicated in the chart above the relationship between dependent variable performance and the independent variable assurance can be modeled using the straight-line scatter plot and it can be fairly concluded that they are linearly related. The partial regression of performance against the independent variable tangibility can also be modeled with a straight line as depicted below and it is also fairly linearly related with each other.

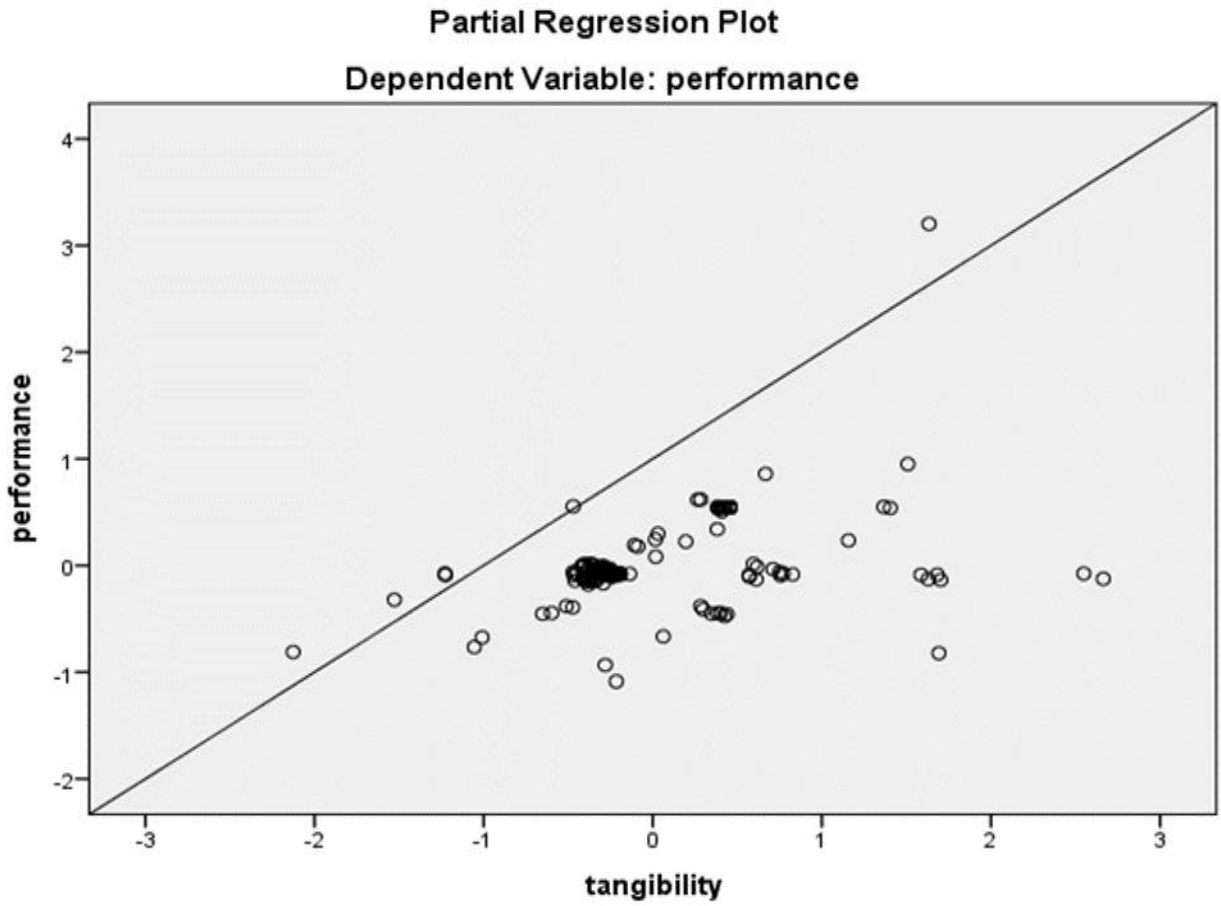

Figure 14 the regression of performance against tangibility dimension

The regression of performance against reliability dimension demonstrated that the relationship between the independent and dependent variable can be modeled using a straight line as indicated in the chart below. The points seem to be compressed around zero both from the y axis and from the x-axis but there are also dots randomly placed within the rectangle showing the relationship is fairly linear.

The regression of performance with empathy and responsiveness dimensions also exhibits a similar fashion as indicated in the following two charts. By looking at the distribution of the dots in the rectangle it can be fairly concluded that the two explanatory variables and the response variable are linearly related and the relation can be plotted with a straight line and is the manifestation of the linear relation between the independent and dependent variable in this analysis.

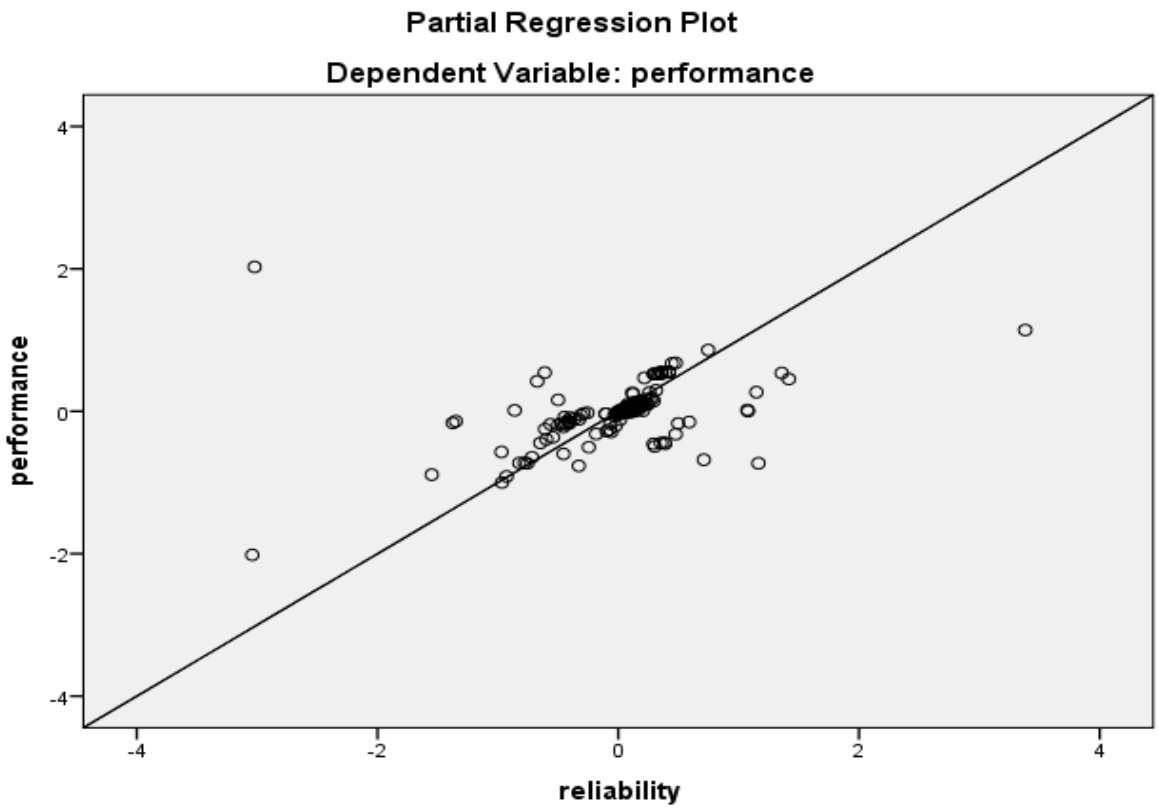

Figure 15 partial regression of performance against reliability dimension

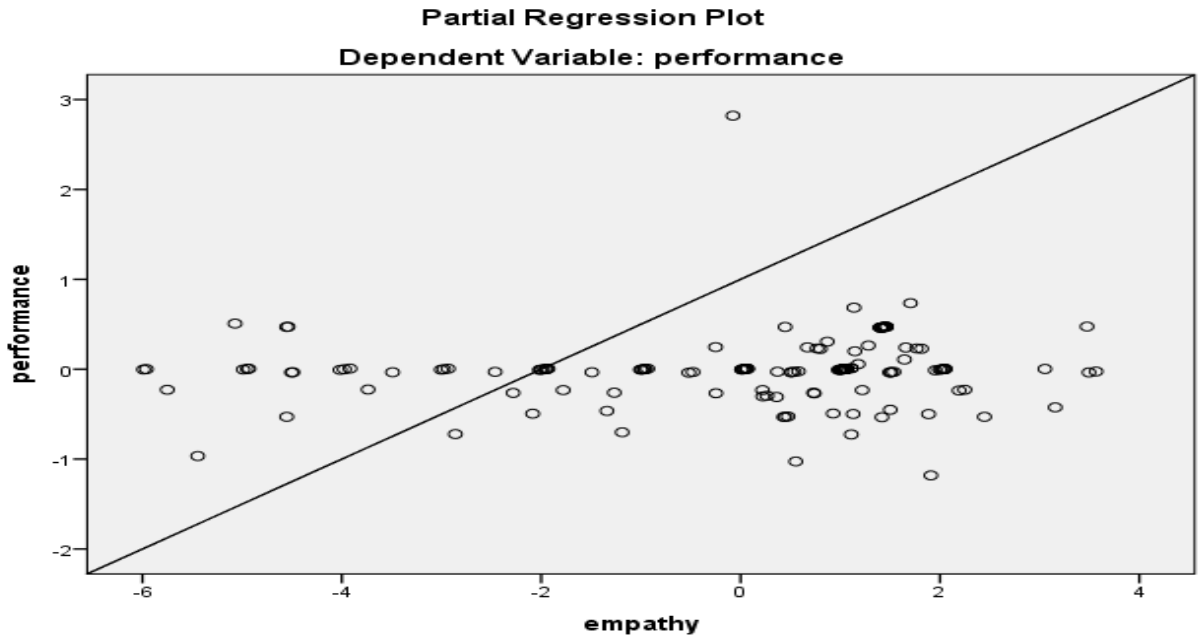

Figure 16 the partial regression of performance against empathy dimension

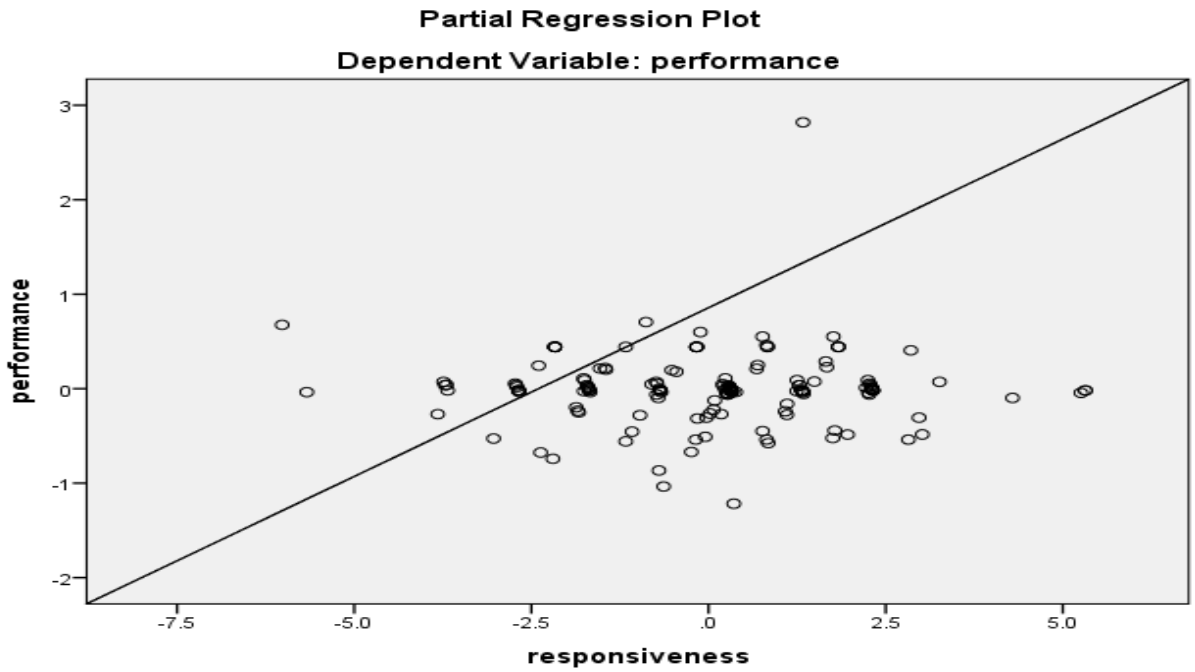

Figure 17 the partial regression of performance against responsiveness

B). Correlation Assumption

The second assumption presumes that there must no strong correlation among the predictor variables with each other. This can be tested using linear regression analysis in SPSS.

As it is explained in Schober, P., & Boer, C. (2018), the outcome of the correlation coefficients between variables have different interpretations and there are no clear-cut points that are commonly accepted by all academicians and in the literature. The critical points of the correlation coefficients are subjective, debatable, and inconsistent and can be applied carefully. While most researchers would probably agree that a coefficient of <0.1 indicates a negligible and >0.9 a very strong relationship, values in between are disputable. The correlation test of the model indicates that the five dimensions have a significant Pearson correlation at the p-value below 0.05. The assurance dimension has a strong positive correlation with performance with a value of 0.752 which is nearer to a perfect correlation. Reliability and tangibility have a moderate correlation with the value of 0.396 and 0.603 respectively which are a bit farther from the perfect correlation point. On the other hand responsiveness and empathy have a weak correlation with performance with values of 0.359 and 0.354 respectively are farther from the perfect correlation cut point of 1.

Table 13 correlation coefficients among performance dimensions

Correlations							
		performance	assurance	tangibility	Reliability	empathy	Responsiveness
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
Assurance	Pearson Correlation	.883**	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000					
Tangibility	Pearson Correlation	.680**	.688**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000				
Reliability	Pearson Correlation	.761**	.610**	.503**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000			
Empathy	Pearson Correlation	.212**	.217**	.036	.166*	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.006	.653	.036		.
Responsiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.119	-.146	-.096	.007	.001	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.135	.065	.226	.935	.986	
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).							

Source: own computation, 2021

The correlation coefficients in the table illustrate that the maximum value of the correlation coefficient is 0.7 which is safe at the usual conventional level of correlation. If the correlation coefficients between two independent variables exceed 0.8 it proves the coefficient is approaching one and it implies there is a strong correlation among independent variables and that poses a problem on the predictive power of the model. The above table indicates the maximum value of correlation that exists between tangibility and assurance dimensions with a value of 0.688. Assurance and reliability dimensions have a correlation coefficient with a value of 0.610. Tangibility and reliability dimensions have a correlation coefficient with a value of 0.503. The remaining seven pairs of correlations between the five dimensions are below 0.22. The three maximum values of correlation (0.688, 0.610, and 0.503) are fairly well

below the perfect collinearity point 1. Therefore it can be concluded that the model does not have the problem of multi-collinearity.

Another method of detecting the multi-collinearity case is the test for collinearity statistics as depicted in the table below. In the test for multi-collinearity, the absence of perfect collinearity is met when the value for a variance of inflation is below 10 and when the value of the tolerance score is above 0.2.

Table 14 collinearity diagnostics of performance dimensions

Coefficients			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Assurance	.291	3.437
	Tangibility	.322	3.108
	Reliability	.527	1.897
	Empathy	.950	1.053
	Responsiveness	.964	1.037
a. Dependent Variable: performance			

Source: own computation, 2021

As we see in the table the variance inflation factors for all the performance dimensions are well below 10 and the tolerance scores for each dimension are above 0.2 and therefore it will be fair to conclude that the model does not have the problem of a multicollinearity problem.

C). Autocorrelation Assumption

The third assumption dictates that the values of the residuals are independent of each other. This assumption supposes that the error terms must not be correlated with covariates as a result of omission of key independent variables or large measurement inaccuracy that are correlated with the included covariates.

Table 15 regression model summary

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.931[a]	.867	.863	.386	1.739
a. Predictors: (Constant), responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibility, assurance					
b. Dependent Variable: performance					

As explained by Huitema, B., & Laraway, S. (2015) autocorrelation is important because it creates influence on the predictive power of linear statistical analysis because it can affect the validity of inferential statements associated with conventional hypothesis tests and confidence intervals; knowledge of the presence of autocorrelation can lead a researcher to select more appropriate statistical analysis and finally accuracy of forecasting made by using regression equation can be improved using prior information. This assumption can be tested by using the Durbin –Watson statistics

The Durbin –Watson test has critical values between 0 and 4 demonstrating that on a scale of 2 no autocorrelation, the closer to zero the more positively auto correlated the error terms are, and the more the scale is closer to 4 the more negatively auto correlated the error terms are. The autocorrelation test for the model of this study gives the result of 1.739 which is closer to 2 which is an illustration of no serial correlation between the successive error terms of the model.

D). Homoscedasticity Assumption

The fourth assumption is the homoscedasticity implying that the variance of the residuals is constant across the model for each data point. The regression of response variable performance against the residual gives us the following graph that shows a fairly normal distribution around zero. Therefore the error/residuals of the model are normally distributed as indicated in the next chart and the homoscedasticity assumption is met.

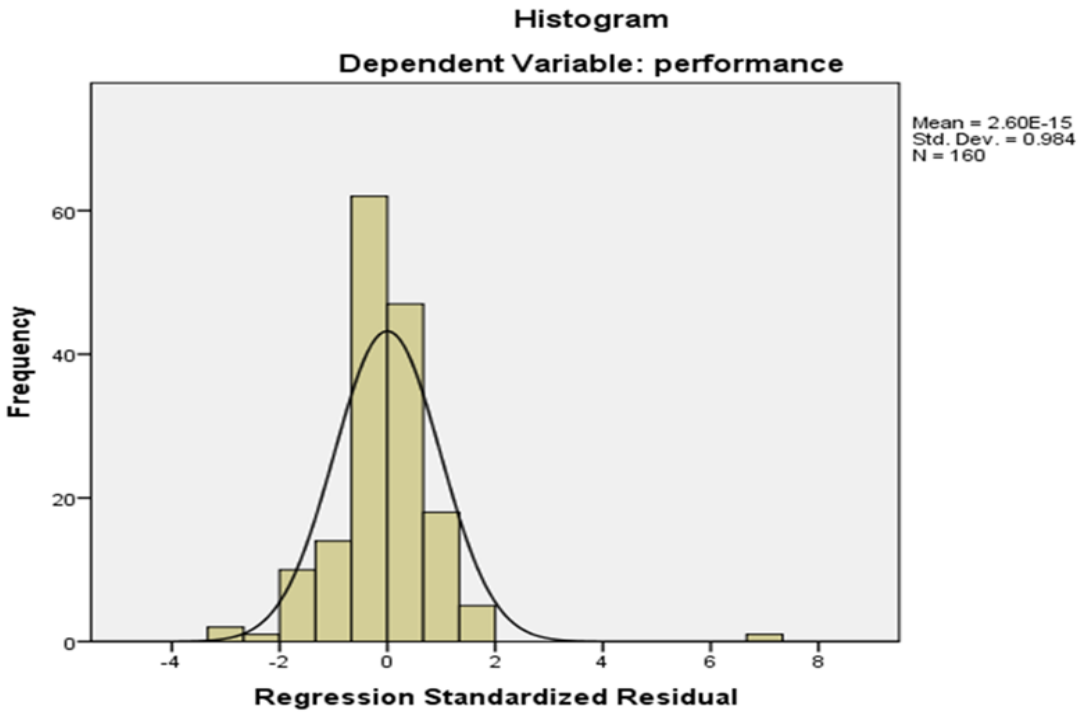

Figure 18 scatter plot showing the regression of residuals against the predicted values

E).Constant Variance of Errors

The fifth assumption (constant variance of errors) this assumption implies that the residuals which come from the same distribution have constant variance. This can be seen from the probability plot in the next chart that shows the normal distribution of the residuals across all the data set of the model.

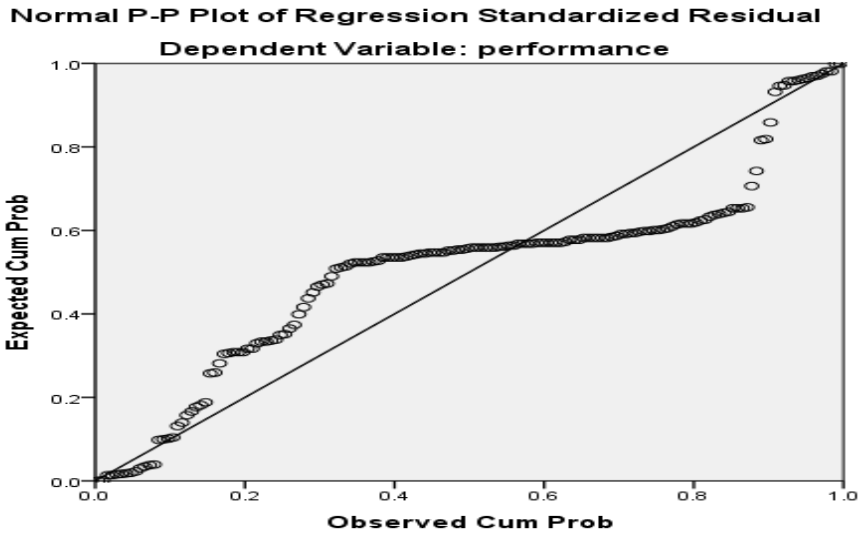

Figure 19 the normal probability plot showing the distributions of the errors of the model

F). Independent of Error Terms

The sixth assumption presumes there must be no outliers that bias the model (uncorrelated errors). The distributions of variance of errors should be constant and each observation should not affect the error of the other observation. This can be tested using Cook's statistics for each case in the model and can be corrected outliers by removing those cases with a Cook's value greater than one. The regression test shows only one case with a Cook's value greater than one and that outlier is removed and the remaining 160 cases utilized for analysis of the model.

4.5.2 Regression Analysis

Data Interpretation

In chapter three portion of this thesis in the methodological chapter, the following model was devised to measure the relationship between dependent and independent variables of the study.

$y= \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \theta$

Having in mind the model established in chapter three, the data collected in the survey questionnaire was tested using SPSS version 23. The regression of performance against SERVPERF dimension results in the following output in the table below.

Table 16 regression model summary Durbin-Watson test

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.931[a]	.867	.863	.386	1.739
a. Predictors: (Constant), responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibility, assurance					
b. Dependent Variable: performance					

Source: own computation, 2021

Goodness of Fittest

The model summary of the regression gives the value 0.867 for R^2, 0.863 for adjusted $R^{2,}$ and standard error of the estimate of 0.386. The value of R square indicates that on average 86.7 percent of the variance in the performance of SMNP is captured by the explanatory variables of the model.

Significance of the Model

As we see in the table below the overall regression model was significant, F (5,154) =201.3, $p<0.0001$, $R^2= 0.867$. This proves that the regression analysis of the model as a group is statistically significant and the SERVPERF dimensions significantly predict the response variable performance of SMNP. In other words, the model is significant and it is accounted for 86.7 % of the variance of performance scores of the Simien Mountains National Park.

Table 17 ANOVA table of the model

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	150.126	5	30.025	201.267	.000[b]
	Residual	22.974	154	.149		
	Total	173.100	159			
a. Dependent Variable: performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibility, assurance						

Source: own computation, 2021

Significance of Independent Variables

The table below illustrates the regression test for the dimensions of the SERVPERF model with standardized and unstandardized coefficients, standard error, the student T statistics, and the significance level of dimensions.

Table 18 regression coefficients of the regression of performance dimensions

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.146	1.085		1.978	.050
	assurance	.460	.047	.533	9.792	.000
	tangibility	.233	.046	.260	5.030	.000
	reliability	.263	.049	.219	5.405	.000
	empathy	.018	.014	.038	1.263	.208
	responsiveness	-.002	.016	-.004	-.118	.906
a. Dependent Variable: performance						

Source: own computation, 2021

From the result of the regression table above, it is indicated that each SERVPERF dimension has a p-value below the conventional 0.05 for assurance, tangibility, and reliability. This implies that the amount of unique variance each of these explanatory variables account is significant statistically. Or in other words, the unique variations accounted for by each explanatory variable on criterion variable is not by chance 95 % of the time. The probability of each explanatory variable accounted by chance for variations in the response variable is less than 5%.

On the other hand, the empathy dimension has a p-value of 0.208 and the responsiveness dimension has a p-value of 0.906 which is higher than the conventional p-value of 0.05, and can be concluded that they have more probability of being accounted by chance and we fail to conclude that a significant controlling impact on performance. The confidence level for these

two variables is lower than 95% which implies the probability they account for the variation in the response variable by chance is greater than the conventional 5%.

Hypothesis Testing

Since the p-value for the three performance dimensions is well below the 0.05 level we reject the null hypothesis that the coefficients of the assurance, tangibility, and reliability are zero. On the other hand empathy and responsiveness, dimensions have insignificant p-value at the conventional level of 95% confidence interval. The empathy dimension has a p-value of 0.208 and the responsiveness dimension has a p-value of 0.906 which is higher than the conventional p-value therefore we fail to reject the null hypothesis that the coefficient for empathy and responsiveness is zero.

Table 19 hypothesis summary table

Hypothesis	dimension	(p–value)	Null hypothesis	Alternate hypothesis
H_1: assurance has a significant and positive impact on the performance of SMNP.	Assurance	.000	Rejected	Accepted
H_2: tangibility of service has a significant and positive impact on the performance of SMNP.	Tangibility	.000	Rejected	Accepted
H_3: reliability of service has a significant and positive impact on the performance of SMNP.	Reliability	.000	Rejected	Accepted
H_4: empathy has a significant and positive impact on the performance of SMNP.	Empathy	.208	Fail to reject	Reject
H_5: responsiveness has a significant and positive impact on the performance of SMNP.	Responsiveness	.906	Fail to reject	Reject

Source: own computation, 2021

The regression of performance on SERVPERF dimensions provides us with the level of significance and the regression coefficients. Since the significance level of tangibility, reliability, and assurance gives below 0.05 p-value we reject the null hypothesis that these variables/dimensions have no relation with performance. In this case, we accept the alternate hypothesis that the coefficients of assurance, tangibility, and reliability are different from zero. Therefore the alternate hypotheses H_1, H_2, and H_3 are accepted while the alternate hypotheses H_4 and H_5 are rejected. In other words, we fail to reject the null hypothesis for H_4 and H_5 and we reject the null hypothesis for H_1, H_2, and H_3. Therefore it can be concluded that there are positive and significant tangibility, reliability, and assurance effects on the performance of SMNP.

Coefficients of Variations and Significance Level

$y= \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \theta$

Where

Y: - is the performance of the park in terms of tourist flow and revenue generation, β_0 is the y-intercept of the model, β_1, β_2, β_3 and β_4 are the slope of each variable, and ɵ- is the error term of the model.X_1 represents tangibility, X_2 represents empathy, X_3 represents responsiveness, X_4 stands for reliability, and X_5 stands for assurance and ɵ represents the error term for the model.

Based on the regression test for significance level two of the five dimensions are dropped from the analysis since they have no significant impact on the performance of the SMNP. After the determination of the significance level of the explanatory variables the model specified in the methodological portion will take the form of the following equation.

Performance SMN=2.146+0.46assu+0.263rel+0.233tan+0.386

From the above equation, we can see that all the significant variables of SERVPERF dimensions have a positive and significant effect on the performance of SMNP. The significance level of the SERVPERF dimensions proved that each explanatory variable explains a unique and significant amount of the variance in the performance of SMNP.

The assurance dimension with a positive coefficient has a large unique impact on performance relative to the rest dimensions in absolute terms. A one percent change/increase in assurance in terms of the safety, security, and adequate information for visitors in the attraction area and surrounding environment by an excellent intervention of the parks management system on average uniquely explains a 46 percent change in the performance score of SMNP in revenue, tourist inflow and raising the number of beneficiaries. A study conducted by Endalkachew and Endalew (2018) glimpses performance from a quality perspective. They studied and explored that Visitors were satisfied relating to the major qualities of the tourism product such as weather conditions, the value for money of visitor attractions, accessibility, safety and security, and cleanliness of the local environment. From safety and security perspective Endalkachew and Endalew's findings contradicts with this study due to the contextual difference in terms of the peace and stability situations in Ethiopia and the occurrence of novel corona virus pandemic that posed safety and security issues to be significantly changed assurance dimension in 2020/2021. Safety and security issues were factors that satisfied the tourists during the 2018 but later on different scenario is created in the country and tourists are no more satisfied with the current situations of Corona virus pandemic and instability in the country to visit the SMNP and other attraction sites.

The assurance dimension brings relatively strong unique change on performance since it holds the safety and security elements like the stability and random incidence like that of Covid pandemic that abruptly slow down the tourism pace of operation. The two elements coronavirus pandemic appearance and the occurrence of instability in Ethiopian politics in the study period indicate that the assurance dimension is a strong and a good explanatory dimension for the performance of the SMNP in terms of controlling the tourist flow, income generation and benefiting the stakeholders of the park.

The performance of SMNP (revenue generation, tourist flow, and several beneficiaries) will respond to a unique positive 26.3 percent change on average for an additional one percent change in the quick reaction of improvements in reliability elements of differentiating the product, supply of authentic product, making the story of the park match with the real theme and the supply of unique tourism product, in creating good learning experience by the park management. The finding of this research indicated that service quality from reliability dimension will bring huge change for a unit change in improvement in reliability items which

is a symptom of a lot is ahead to make many enhancements to enrich service quality. A study conducted by Endalkachew and Endalew (2018), take similar conclusion that tourists were not satisfied with accommodation, park infrastructure, quality of service and information delivery.

The reliability dimension has a unique strong positive impact on performance because an increase in the supply of dependable and accurate operations of the promised service for tourists will attract new tourists through the "word of mouth" effect of visitors and the desire to re-visit by those who already tested the experience of the tourism service.

This study illustrates that if the park management and stakeholders improve the tangibility dimension in terms of quality of accommodations (hotels, lodges, camping sites, gift shops, lecture rooms, and restrooms), quality of restaurants(eating facilities and services), amenities (baths, shower, toilets), the quality of information communication technologies of the park service and the enhancing the visitors' service (recreational grounds, playgrounds, garden area, swimming pool) by one percent on average the performance of the park (revenue, tourist flow and the number of beneficiaries) will increase by 23.3 % on average independent of explanatory variables. Zeleke, A. F., & Biwota, S. M. (2020) examines the factors that affect international tourists' destination choice to Ethiopia. They identify *"fragmentation of the sector, level of general infrastructures and tourist infrastructure, underdevelopment of tourism products, low service quality of the country"* create a negative image of tourist destinations. The findings of Zeleke and Biwota agree with this study due to the fact that these researchers concluded general and tourist infrastructure, underdevelopment of tourism product and low service quality which are quite the same with the some of the tangibility dimension of my study.

The tangibility dimension contains a strong explanatory score since personnel (skilled human resource), the physical facilities (buildings, services, and equipment such as in hotels, lodges, and tourist camps, scout camps), general and tourist infrastructure and communication materials (signage, websites, advertisements, brochures, video, announcements, press releases, etc.) are important elements of this dimension that have big impacts on performance.

The constant value of the model is 2.146 which tells us that the y-intercept of the model crosses the Y line at 2.146 when all the values of the independent variables are zero. Or in

other words, the park will have a performance score of 2.146 units if all other factors of performance are assumed to be zero.

4.6. Summary of Major Findings

According to the available data collected the performance of the park since 2000 demonstrates an upward growth trend in terms of tourist flow, revenue collection, and the number of beneficiaries from the tourism operations in the park. The performance of the park in the study period however shows a historical downturn in tourist flow, revenue collection as well as the number of beneficiaries from tourism activities in the park.

The major reasons for the decline in all performance elements are the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic, the instability and lack of peace in different parts of the country, and the political turmoil which are altogether considered as the assurance items.

The second group of reasons are items of reliability dimension that responsible for the declined performance of the park include the failure of stakeholders to create well-integrated efforts to create good learning experiences, maintaining the story and the theme of the park the same, keeping the tourism products of the park unique and different from other common tourism products in the minds of tourists.

The third group of factors that hinder the performance of the park are the shortcomings of stakeholders in the supply of adequate and quality telecommunication access, accommodations (lodges, hotels, camping sites), restaurants (quality eating facilities and services), tourism facilities, and amenities, visitor services (recreational grounds, playgrounds, gardens) all are summarized under the heading of tangibility dimension.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This study was conducted with the main objective of examining the factors that affect the performance of Simien Mountains National Park. To attain the objective of the research diverse works of literature were reviewed, different documents of the management of the park were referred, tourism experts were consulted, and different staff members were interviewed.

Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires from tourists and staff of the management. Descriptive data analysis was conducted, the performance of the park is described, and quantitative data analysis was also made on major findings. This part is devoted to the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the research.

5.2. Conclusion

This research was carried out to analyze factors affecting the performance of SMNP. To accomplish the objective the study was guided by the following questions:

- What is the current level of performance of the park?
- What are the important dimensions that have crucial role on the performance of Simien Mountain National Park?
- How effective is the management of the park in bringing sustained growth for the park?
- What are the important dimensions that needs the efforts of stakeholders to improve the performance of the park?
- What dimension is determinant that need to be taken seriously to increase the performance of the park?

To answer the research questions primary data were collected through structured survey questionnaires. The chief warden of the park, tourism experts of the park, and management staff members of different departments like human resource, finance, and tourism and scout

managers were interviewed. Based on the findings of qualitative and quantitative analysis the following conclusions have arrived.

SMNP was established in 1969 as one of the oldest parts of the country and registered as one of the world heritage sites in 1978 by UNESCO. The park is known for its deep rugged canyons, sheer escarpments, marvelous landscape that holds a chain of mountains most of which is the highest peak in the country such as Ras Dejen, Buahit, Weynober, Kidus Yared. The park is also endowed with many endemic animals such as Walia Ibex, Gelada Baboon, Red fox, and different endemic plant species to the country in addition to other common plant and animal species found in other protected area systems of the country.

According to the findings of the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, the park has an immense capacity in attracting tourists and generating income from tourism operations. Endowed natural beauties such as the astonishing scenery, endemic plant, and animals plus the good weather conditions are the primary attraction elements of the park. The research finding shows that the current tourism operation of the park is highly being challenged by the outbreak of novel coronavirus appearance and disturbance and instability in the country that results in a historic downturn and lowest performance is recorded in 2021.

The tourist receipt, revenue collection, and the number of beneficiaries in the last 20 years show expansion and growth. As indicated in the table in the appendix the economic benefit for the government and the community shows growth over the years. The inherited attraction gifts could be brought more economic benefit for the government, community, and tour operators had it been well backed by good service quality, availability of tourist facilities, good access routes, good knowledge of service providers, and good promotion. The growth in the facilities and tourism service also shows growth and improvements but in normal circumstances in the peak tourist seasons, visitors faced the problem of a quality camping ground with adequate internal facilities and they come back with short stay due to the lack of comfortable tourist facilities in the park.

Stakeholders such as the community near and around the park, tour operators, tourism business owners, government bodies, and NGOs are expected to do their best support to develop and assure sustainable use of the park. However, the study shows that the park is highly pressurized by farmland encroachment, overgrazing of buffer zone, illegal settlement,

fire setting, and animal killings. The relocation of communities within the park boundary is not adequately done and the already relocated communities from the Gich village also have a big complaint about the way they were relocated and the livelihood arrangement done by the government bodies. The surrounding community based its livelihood on degraded and rugged topography with a low level of productivity. In good tourist flow seasons, the community gets alternative business opportunities related to tourist supply of goods and services for tourists otherwise highly dependent on agriculture. Among the stakeholders, African Wildlife Foundation is currently supporting the park in carrying out conservation and park development activities. It is supporting the park in funding awareness programs, task force campaigns, and other conservation activities. Other stakeholders including government bodies have weak participation in supporting the park's sustainable growth and the park is considered as a cash cow that lacks further investment and development venture.

5.3. Recommendations

The Simien Mountains National Park is one of the tourism spots and an irreplaceable gift of nature that requires great attention, protection, and wise use to sustain the topographic, fauna, and flora ecosystem. However, this study found that the park is still exposed to huge pressure in different directions that threaten its existence.

Based on the study findings the following recommendations are forwarded

- First and for most the park must be preserved, and protected from the man-made pressures of land encroachment (settlement, farming, grazing, tourism investment, and religious rituals), unsustainable use of the park's resources. The current conservation effort of the park administration, the African Wild Life Foundation, and the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority enable the park and its ecosystem to maintain its current status. The coming pressure however is beyond the capacities of the park management, EWCA, AWF and it requires the intervention of many stakeholders from the grass-root level to the higher government bodies in terms of knowledge-based social, economic, and political actions to avert the threats of the existence of the park. Responsible stakeholders, the park management, and the local community of SMNP should work to maintain and improve the current status of the park in terms of

conserving the natural fauna and flora ecosystem to harvest the benefits accruing from the tourism business.

- The park's tourism operation in the study period was highly affected by the instability of the country in different parts. At the federal, regional, and local levels the government should work out various tasks to maintain the peace and security of their respective sphere of influence and to avoid bad perceptions by potential and actual visitors. Internal peace and stability are the first and most important preconditions for the tourism industry to flourish. Assurance of peace and security at various levels up to the park surrounding is a basic and important integral part of the tourism service. Therefore stakeholders at all levels must give stability and peace as the first and most important priority agenda to the development of tourism in particular and the whole economic system in general. Stakeholders at different levels should solve differences through dialogue and discussion instead of using anti-peace disastrous alternatives.
- The park would operate better than the current score had it been supported by good quality general and tourism infrastructures such as the amenities, accommodations, access routes, and various tourist posts added to the head office located in Debark. Therefore stakeholders and government bodies have to work hand in hand to promote the SMNP as the best tourist destination for better performance.
- The data compiled by the tourism department of the park proved that the park is mainly visited by foreign tourists which is a warning symptom for the failure of stakeholders in developing the domestic tourism culture and attitudes of Ethiopians. Starting from the local government and non -government partners, the park management and other zonal, regional, and federal culture and tourism institutions and other stakeholders need to work aggressively in promoting domestic tourism in national parks through different government and private institutions, associations, in promotions and awareness creation to increase the domestic tour and travel culture.
- Income generated from the tourism operation of the park must be fairly and equitably distributed to different parts of tour operators such as the community who share territory and participate in tour operation activities, to different stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the tourism operations, and the government bodies based on

international benchmarks and experiences. To best satisfy its stakeholders and so that they exert their maximum effort to protect the park's ecology and apply sustainable use of it the benefit-sharing scheme must be understood and accepted by all parties. These issues can be addressed by establishing different tourist posts in different parts of the park in the five woredas, rehabilitation and construction of access routes to tourist posts, promoting investment in accommodations in near towns in the adjoining woredas, investing in basic amenities, and fair participation of the local community in tour operations and the introduction of new infrastructure to the park's neighboring localities by the park management , EWCA ,regional investment commission and in cooperation with NGOs and other stakeholders.

- The study findings explored the existence of huge population pressure in the five woredas adjoining the park that creates continuous disagreement between the park scouts and the local community in resource sharing in and peripheries of the park. The local people need to develop a sense of ownership as the beneficiary of the park. Stakeholders of the park at various levels should work in a continuous awareness creation in pieces of training, conferences, and seminars to raise awareness of the local community in the park surrounding protection, tourism service, alternative livelihood opportunities, and business issues to divert the pressure on the park.
- Tourism training institutions at different levels should give regular trainings for tour guides, cook associations, scouts, mule associations, and other operators should get proper capacity and skill-based training and development in communication skills, customer handling, and other relevant knowledge and skill areas which are prerequisites to provide the best quality tourist service for visitors.

5.4. Future Research Directions

This academic research was conducted based on the data gathered on the perception of tourists who visit the park and the staff and management members of the SMNP. The study may bring more robust findings conclusions and recommendations had it been studied based on the data gathered on many stakeholders that are directly or indirectly impact the performance of the park or impacted by the operations of the park. Due to the time, budget, and human resource constraints the research is limited its focus on the study of the perception

of tourists and staff members and it could not include other stakeholders such as local administrative units (Woredas, Kebeles, culture and tourism offices, agriculture and environment offices), the local community and different associations that are directly or indirectly linked to the routine and long-run operations of SMNP. The research can be applied to other Ethiopian national parks that are the tourist attraction spot of the country by eliminating the shortcoming listed. Those who are interested in tourism and especially in nature tourism and the performance of the tourism business can have a good opportunity to explore key determinant factors that hinder the tourism performance at the park level as well as the protected area system of the country.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Number of Foreign and Domestic Tourists and Revenue Generated From the Tourism Operation in SMNP 2000-2020 G.C

Tourist flow					Revenue collection			
Ethiopian Year	Year	Non Ethiopian	Ethiopian	Total tourist flow	Government	Community	Total income generated	Total number of
1992	2000	1,161	128	1,289	210,303	230,000	440,303	724
1993	2001	1,642	183	1,825	205,678	241,031	446,709	801
1994	2002	2,370	282	2,652	307,083	355,997	663,080	1,114
1995	2003	3,125	370	3,495	402,036	395,907	797,943	2,521
1996	2004	3,375	392	3,767	454,215	517,848	972,063	2,687
1997	2005	4,560	511	5,071	516,147	736,567	1,252,714	3,543
1998	2006	5,366	653	6,019	593,678	745,049	1,338,727	3,098
1999	2007	6,277	714	6,991	828,724	930,398	1,759,122	4,707
2000	2008	7,648	812	8,460	956,071	1,161,992	2,118,063	5,836
2001	2009	10,598	1,050	11,648	1,439,790	2,602,000	4,041,790	6,094
2002	2010	12,624	1,392	14,016	3,281,275	2,523,484	5,804,759	8,012
2003	2011	15,884	1,682	17,566	4,314,591	4,127,423	8,442,014	11,455
2004	2012	14,056	1,827	15,883	4,260,510	4,498,875	8,759,385	12,034
2005	2013	13,937	2,011	15,948	4,441,518	3,910,435	8,351,953	11,096
2006	2014	19,939	2,081	22,020	4,544,020	7,210,810	11,754,830	16,587
2007	2015	20,111	2,346	22,457	4,152,450	9,510,120	13,662,570	17,040
2008	2016	23,251	2,748	25,999	5,960,697	19,773,060	25,733,757	18,991
2009	2017	10,685	2,028	12,713	2,379,558	10,351,927	12,731,485	10,860
2010	2018	18,758	4,329	23,087	5,292,562	16,091,877	21,384,439	19,712
2011	2019	29,486	2922	32,408	7,341,245	31,108,477	38,449,722	26,648
2012	2020	28,050	2543	30,612	5,448,329	22,621,599	28,069,928	24330

Source: Simien Mountains National Park tourism department report.

APPENDIX B) ETHIOPIAN PROTECTED AREAS

s.no	Area	Managed by	Established	Area in hectare
National parks managed by EWCA				
1.	Abijata Shala Lakes	Oromia	1963	88,700
2.	Alatish	Amhara	1997	266,600
3.	Awash	Oromia and Afar	1958	75,600
4.	Bale Mountains	Oromia	1962	247,100
5.	Gambella	Gambella	1966	506,100
6.	Geralle	Somali	1998	385800
7.	Kafta Shiraro	Tigray	1999	250,000
8.	Nechsar	SNNP	1966	51,400
9.	Omo	SNNP	1959	406,800
10.	Simien Mountains	Amhara	1959	41,200
11.	Yangudi Rassa	Afar	1969	473,100
National parks and Sanctuaries managed by regions				
12.	Bahir Dar Blue Nile River Millennium park	Amhara	2008	472,900
13.	Arsi Mountains	Oromia	-	-
14.	Borena Sayent	Amhara	2009	4,400
15.	Chebera Churchura	SNNP	2007	119,000
16.	Dati Wolel	Oromia	2008	43,100
17.	Denkoro Chaka	Amhara	1999	38,117
18.	Gibe Sheleko	SNNP	2010	24,800
19.	Kuni Muktar	Oromia	-	150,000
20.	Leka	SNNP	-	-
21.	Loka Abaya	SNNP	2010	50,000
22.	Mago	SNNP	1984	194,200
23.	Maze	SNNP	2007	20,200
24.	Yabello	Oromia	1978	250,000
Biosphere Reserves				
25.	Kaffa- Bonga	SNNP	2010	-
26.	Yayu	Oromia	2011	-
27.	Lake Tana	Amhara	2011	-

Wildlife Sanctuaries Managed by EWCA				
28.	Babile Elephant sanctuary	Oromia and Somali	1962	698,200
29.	Senkele Swayne's Harte-beast Sanctuary	Oromia and SNNP	1964	5,400
Wildlife Reserves Managed by Regions				
30.	Alledeghi	Afar	193,389	
31.	Awash west	Afar	415,000	
32.	Bale	Oromia	127,922	
33.	Chelbi	SNNP	421,200	
34.	Gewane	Afar	-	
35.	Mille Serdo	Afar	650,354	
Community Conservation Areas				
36.	Abune Yosef	Amhara	-	-
37.	Guasa Menz	Amhara	-	-
38.	Tama	SNNP	-	166,500
39.	Simien Gibie	SNNP	2001	4,900
40.	Garameba	SNNP	2001	2,500
Controlled Hunting Areas Managed by Regions				
41.	Abassheba Demero	Oromia	2004	21,000
42.	Adaba Dodola	Oromia	2010	73,600
43.	Aluto	Oromia	-	28,000
44.	Arba Gugu	Oromia	2005	34,100
45.	Besemena-Oddo Bulu	Oromia	2003	35,000
46.	Bilen Hertalie	Afar	-	109,000
47.	Chifra	Afar	1998	51,000
48.	Dembel Ayisha Adigala	Somali	-	91,000
49.	Dindin	Oromia	-	28,000
50.	Hanto	Oromia	2001	19,000
51.	Hurufa Suma	Oromia	2000	21,500
52.	Haro Aba Dika	Oromia	2010	20,000
53.	Milke Sadi	Afar	-	-
54.	Munessa	Oromia	2003	11,100

55.	Murulle	SNNP	-	69,000
56.	Shedem Berbere	Oromia	1988	17,000
57.	Shinilie Meto	Somali	-	48,400
58.	Sororo Torgum	Oromia	2000	7,800
59.	Telalk Dewe	Afar	-	72,820
60.	Welshet Sala	SNNP	2000	35,000
61.	Worgan Bula	Oromia	2010	7,800
Open Controlled Areas Managed by the Regions				
62.	Debre Libanos	Oromia	-	3,100
63.	Gara Gumbi	Oromia	-	14,000
64.	Gara Meti	Oromia	-	24,000
65.	Gelila Duru	Afar	-	14,000
66.	Jibat	Oromia	-	10,000
67.	Sinana	Oromia	-	1,500

SOURCE: Vreugdenhil,D.Vreugdenhil,A.D.,Tamirat Tilahun, Anteneh Shimelis, Zelalem Tefera,2012

APPENDIX C) STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE SURVEY

Dimension	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree
1.Performance	1.1 The tourist flow of the park show increasing trend					
	1.2. Financial performance of the park this year is positive and profitable					
	1.3. The management plan of the park is important and effective					
	1.4. Major improvements are shown in general and tourist infrastructure is shown					
	1.5. The overall service quality of the park this year is good					
	1.6. Actual and potential tourists are well understood and have good image about the destination.					
	1.7. The attraction center becomes the source of additional decent employment opportunity for local community.					
2.Assurance	2.1.I felt safe to be in the wilderness					
	2.2.It was such a joy to see wild and endangered animals (in front of me)					
	2.3.The climate is conducive and attractive for tourist activities					
	2.4. The appearance of the novel coronavirus is a series threat to tourist movement.					
	2.5.The emergence of the novel coronavirus can affect the tourism activities					

	2.6. The overall performance of the park tourism activities is strongly affected by the breakout of the corona virus pandemic.					
	2.7. The instability and lack of peace in the country affects the tourism operation of the park					
	2.8. The disturbance of peace and political turmoil reduce the flow of tourists to the park					
	2.9.Lack of peace and stability strongly affect the operation tourism in the park					
3.Responsiveness	3.1.The supply of amenities is adequate to serve tourists					
	3.2.The current infrastructure is satisfactory to provide quality service					
	3.3. I learned many new aspects of nature and wildlife					
	3.4. The health facilities and services infrastructures available around the park are satisfactory.					
	3.5.The local transportation infrastructure efficiency and quality are adequate to provide quality service					
4.Reliability	4.1. It was a good learning experience					
	4.2. The park has a unique tourism product					
	4.3.The story of the park and the theme match each other					
	4.4.The product was different from other common tourism product					
	4.5. This experience made me visit more nature parks.					
	4.6. The ICT infrastructure available is adequate to provide quality service					

5.Empathy	5.1. I had a pleasant time					
	5.2. I felt the products of this park were authentic					
	5.3. I made easy interactions with locals					
	5.4. I would like to visit the park again					
	5.5. I felt I was indifferent nature					
	5.6. The service provided by the park is promoted through international media					
	5.7.The service of the park is promoted through its well-designed website					
6.Tangibility	6.1. The quality of accommodation is good					
	6.2. The quality of access to telecommunication is good					
	6.3. The quality of restaurants is good					
	6.4. The quality level of tourism facilities and amenities is very good					
	6.5. There are adequate accommodations with necessary utilities					
	6.6. The existing accommodations are adequate to handle the current tourist flow					
	6.7.The development and improvement of infrastructure facilities are critical for tourist attraction					

APPENDIX D) TOURISTS' QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE SURVEY

Dimension	Items	1	2	3	4	5
		Strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree
1.Assurance	1.1. I felt safe to be in the wilderness					
	1.2. It was such a joy to see wild and endangered animals (in front of me)					
	1.3. The climate is conducive and attractive for tourist activities					
	1.4. The appearance of the novel coronavirus is a series threat to tourist movement.					
	1.4. The emergence of the novel coronavirus can affect the tourism activities					
	1.5. The overall performance of the park tourism activities is strongly affected by the breakout of the corona virus pandemic.					
	1.6. The corona virus appearance play prohibitive role in the tourism					
	1.7. The instability and lack of peace in the country affects the tourism operation of the park					
	1.8. The disturbance of peace and political turmoil reduce the flow of tourists to the park					
	1.9. Lack of peace and stability affect the potential visitors of the park not to come.					
2.Responsiveness	2.1. The supply of amenities is adequate to serve tourists					
	2.2. The current infrastructure is					

	satisfactory to provide quality service					
	2.3. I learned many new aspects of nature and wildlife					
	2.4. The health facilities and services infrastructures available around the park are satisfactory.					
	2.5. The local transportation infrastructure efficiency and quality are adequate to provide quality service					
3. Reliability	3.1. It was a good learning experience					
	3.2. The park has a unique tourism product					
	3.3. The story of the park and the theme match each other					
	3.4. The product was different from other common tourism product					
	3.5. This experience made me visit more nature parks.					
	3.6. The ICT infrastructure available is adequate to provide quality service					
4. Empathy	4.1. I had a pleasant time					
	4.2. I felt the products of this park were authentic					
	4.3. I made easy interactions with locals					
	4.4. I would like to visit the park again					
	4.5. I felt I was indifferent nature					
	4.6. The service provided by the park is					

	promoted through international media					
	4.7. The service of the park is promoted through its well-designed website					
5. Tangibility	5.1. The quality of accommodation is good					
	5.2. The quality of access to telecommunication is good					
	5.3. The quality of restaurants is good					
	5.4. The quality level of tourism facilities and amenities is very good					
	5.5. There are adequate accommodations with necessary utilities					
	5.6. The existing accommodations are adequate to handle the current tourist flow					
	5.7. The development and improvement of infrastructure facilities are critical for tourist attraction					

APPENDIX E) INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

1. **What are the major challenges that affect the performance of the park operations?--------**

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2. **Which are the stakeholders of the park that directly or indirectly support the tourism operations of the park and how do you evaluate their support?----------**

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3. **How do you evaluate the tourism and general infrastructure that exists in the park?**------

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4. **How do you evaluate the participation and benefit to the society in the parks' tourism operation and protection activities?**----------

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