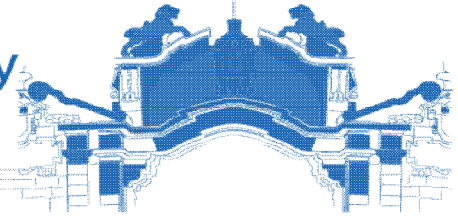




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Social Media marketing practice in tourism and hospitality industry in Ethiopia: Evidences from star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa

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A Thesis Submitted to the Center for Environment and Development Studies, Tourism Development and Management Program, College of Development Studies.

Presented In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Tourism Development and Management

Addis Ababa University

June, 2018

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Acknowledgments

I am deeply indebted to my advisor Dr. Tamirat Tefera for his patience and thorough assistance. Dr. Tamirat's concrete and very helpful guidance has made me to think broad concerning my research Proposal Preparation. Without his advice it was difficult to success.

It is also a pleasure for me to express my deepest love and respect and great indebtedness to my family, friends and colleagues for their support and encouragements.

Finally, I would like to thank for those involved in the in- depth interview for they have given a great deal in supporting me of acquiring information. My thanks are also to those who assisted me for distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAHOA	Addis Ababa Hotel Owner Associations
AACCTB	Addis Ababa City Culture and Tourism Bureau
CTTI	Catering and Tourism Training Institute
ETO	Ethiopian Tourism Organization
ESTMP	Ethiopia Sustainable Tourism Master Plan
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MOCT	Ministry of Culture and Tourism
NTTC	National Tourism Transformation Council
UNCTD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organizations
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WEF	World Economic Forum
WTM	World Travel Market
WB	World Bank

Abstract

The emergence of internet mainly social Medias has shifted the business practice in the world, this recent development has been playing an increasing role in hospitality and tourism industry as well. The purpose of this study is to explore the practices of Social Medias in star rated hotel in Addis Ababa and to bring in to light the main challenges encountered. The study aimed to raise an understanding about the new opportunities offered by social Medias to promote the tourism sectors. The Study employed descriptive research method to understand the extent of social media practice, using both primary and secondary data. Questionnaires was distributed and collected from 63 star rated hotels in Addis Ababa and key informant interview with tourism stakeholders was also conducted as the major instrument of the study to collect the primary data whereas documents used for secondary data. The result of the study shows that, the hotel's practice in social media sites was revealed at an infant stage and immature. As the study assessed, practices of Star rated hotels was ineffective. Poor internet connection and lack of skills were the main challenges encountered. Despite various challenges, the application of social media platforms by star rated hotels in Addis Ababa was found out as an important communication and marketing tools. The study will contributes to better understanding of the Social media adaption and practices in Star rated hotel in Addis Ababa. Hence further research should focus on how to enhance the practice of social medias in future.

Key words: *Hotel e-marketing, hotel digital marketing, social media, social media markng*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is an information intensive sector and has significantly benefited from information Communication Technology (ICT). The distribution of tourism information and products over the internet is the main area where technology innovation has had the most profound impact on tourism enterprise (Daria, 2016).

The expanding of ICT in the world has enables tourism business to market tourism product and service directly to large number of consumer in a relatively low cost and to interact with them and other tourism producer and distributors. The increasing numbers of consumer that use the internet to plan leisure or business trips present a good opportunity for developing countries to organize and develop the tourism offer and its promotion over the internet (UNCTD,2005).

Tourism related business organization such as tour operators, travel agency, hotels and others has undergone on the growing impact from information communication technology (ICT), the majority of the innovation in ICT change the way of hotels and other tourists companies conduct their business. These changes are also forced by the tourist's behaviors which also transformed under the influence of ICT (Daria, 2016).In this days and age emergence of new information and communication technology (ICT) has a growing impact on tourism promotion, Marketing and sales (Yoo &Lee, 2015).

With the advent of new form of tourism; e-tourism has been radically transforming the international tourism industry. More and more people now prefer to search information on tourism destination and offers over the internet. But it is observed that in most case it is not developing countries that benefits from these new tourism opportunities. World tourism is concentrated in a few developed countries which run the business and reap the benefits (UNCTD, 2005).

Recently the development and the progress of ICT, has reached to the era of social media, the internet evolved from broadcasting medium to a participatory platform which allow people to become the 'media' themselves for collaborating and sharing information(Li & Wang ,2011).

Social media have been widely adopted by traveler to search, organize, share and annotate their travel stories and experience through blog, micro blog ,online communities, Media sharing site, social knowledge Sharing and other tool in collaborating ways (Koumelis,2011).

Social media plays an important role in the tourism sector. The dissemination of facts, messages, opinions and pictures through twitter, face book, blogs, flicker and other platforms has gained importance when reporting an event. Consumers as well as journalists are using these platforms to retrieve information while companies and destinations are learning to work with them in an adequate and professional manner (UNWTO, 2012).

Despite the wide adoption of social Media by both tourism consumer and supplier in recent years the successful practice of manipulating and managing social media still remain unknown to practitioner and scholars (Leung & Lee, 2011).

In general, according to UNWTO (2005) the hospitality industry refers to hotels, resorts and other accommodations service giving businesses, which are part of the travel and tourism sector of the economy. In Addis Ababa, according to the ministry of culture and tourism MOCT (2016), there are total of 79 star rated hotels and from that 74 are non-chained hotel, with an average room per hotel of 51 rooms and the star rate category of the hotels are 07 five Star, 14 four star, 28 three star and the remaining categorized as two and one star rated hotels by the ministry.

Nowadays the number of visitors in Addis Ababa is growing very rapidly, in addition to the holiday tourists who use Addis Ababa as the gate for Ethiopia visit, Addis Ababa is well endowed with the potential for the conference tourism owing to the facts that the city is the seat of the headquarters of the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and with the highest number of diplomatic missions in the city (ESTMP, 2015).

In the view of this rapidly growing trends and potentials benefits social media can offer, number of hotels and other tourism related business have been integrating social media applications in to their website to enhance their marketing Promotion and customer communication efforts.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Nowadays the emergence of information and communication technology (ICT) has impacted on all the process of value chain in tourism, hospitality and catering industries (Yoo & Lee, 2017).

The internet has changes all aspect of tourism marketing, distribution and consumption (Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2000). Evidence indicates that an effective application of information technology has turned out crucial for the competitiveness and prosperity of tourism enterprises (Soteriades et al., 2004).

The recent development of Social media marketing is paying an increasing role in the hospitality and tourism industry, it is also changing the traditional way of Marketing (Hsu, 2012). Social media website, if effectively utilized, have the potential to strength brand loyalty and give small tourism business a competitive edge (Tussyadiah & Zach, 2013). Social Media Marketing requires participation, interaction, dedications, time, commitment and resource that are essential for efficient use of social medial marketing (Raza, 2006).

Since the introduction of Social media, most tourism related businesses organization in Addis Ababa mainly hotels have quickly began to use for different purposes such as marketing their service and developing relationships with customers. However not much is known on the star rated hotels' practice and performance level of social Media use.

It is understood that if hotels industry effectively exploiting these ICT opportunities, it will have a potential to promote and raise the level of demand of international tourists and will support the country vision to become one of Africa's top five destinations.

Insufficient practice and implementation of the newly emerged internet technology such as e-tourism and social media will led the developing county to continue the dependency on developed countries to generate ,market and sell the tourism opportunities through online by major international intermediaries companies based in developed countries. With their obvious technological advantage, these provider carryout most of the sales transactions and absorb large share of the profits (UNCTAD, 2005).

Hence the study will focus on the private tourism related enterprise mainly on star rated hotels in Addis Ababa as among the tourism businesses to explore the current practices of social media marketing by star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objectives

In accordance with the research problem stated above, the general objective of this study was to explore the practice of social media marketing by the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa as part of tourism marketing.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To study the current practices of social media platforms by non-chained star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.
- To identify the main challenges encountered during the practice of social media marketing by independent star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.
- To observe the effects of the practices of social media marketing by independent star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

1.4 Significance of the Study

In general the study explored the current practice of social media marketing by independent star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

For the destination development and promotion, the study will help to raise an understanding of the new opportunities offered by social media to brand and to promote the tourism with unlimited and low cost access to the world market. In addition to that the study will also help anyone who wants to undertake further research to investigate the social media marketing in tourism.

Furthermore the study outcome expected to bring about the public and private tourism organization discourse on how to further explore social media opportunity for the country's tourism promotion.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The main theme of the study was tourism marketing through online channels particularly the practice of Social media marketing in tourism. The scope of the study was in Addis Ababa city. Numerous tourism related business in Addis Ababa expected to use social media for marketing their business, however the study select hotels only, due to the fact that hotel organization have an organized and structured marketing management system as compare to other tourism related private businesses organizations.

Even if Addis Ababa has number of hotels, the study was focused only to independent (non Chained) star rated hotel located in the city. Since the international brand hotel in Addis Ababa has expected to bring their international experience of Social media marketing strategy to their hotel operation in Addis Ababa the study are excluded international brand hotels.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The study set as one of the objectives was to explore the practice of social media marketing by independent Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

However Social media marketing is widely adapted by tourism organizations and tourism related business such as airlines, tour operators, travel agencies, tourism attractions, souvenir shops and many more. It will be more accurate and representatives, if the study included all tourism organizations and tourism related business to study their practice and adaption Social Media Marketing in tourism industry.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part reviewed the recent literature on Social Media Marketing in tourism industry in general and hospitality industry in specific.

2.1 Definition and Concepts

2.1.1 Social Media

Social Media is a newly emerged media, as any other social study the term has no universally adopted definition; however some literature defined social media in different context. Kaplan and Haenleni (2010:19) had defined social media as:-

“A group of internet based application that builds on the ideology and technological foundation of web 2.0 that allow the creation and exchange of user generated context.”

In another definition Xiang and Gretzel (2010:8) defined social media as;

“....online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies, it seems to represent a shift from how people discover, read and share news, information and content”

For the purpose this study Kaplan and Haenleni (2010) definition was selected as an operational definition of the purpose of this study.

2.1.2 Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing encompasses the sharing online persuasive marketing information between consumers. (Kirby and Marsdeh, 2015)

Kaplan and Haenleni (2010) argue that there are many Social media sites that can be used for marketing and they need to be distinguished. Since the inception of Social Media, researcher have tried to group to categorized social media in to different group.

Although number of classification found in the literatures, the classification proposed by Kaplan and Henlein (2010) is the most recognized in the field of Social Media. According to Kaplan and Henlein (2010) Social media is classified in to Seven categories which are listed below:-

1. **Blog and Micro Blog**, it is a Websites that allow users to keep logs and share personal experience and insights in a particular area, such as Tumbler and Twitter.
2. **Virtual Social World**, it is an online application that resembles the real world in a 3D environment and is represented by a customized human-like character; users can interact with each other in the virtual world, such as Active Worlds and Second Life.
3. **Social Networking site**, it focus on building relationships among people with similar interests and activities such as face book and MySpace
4. **Collaborative Projects** it is a sites where users interact with each other in the process of content collaboration; these sites help people manage and store collections of links and share bookmarks with others such as Wikis and Social bookmarking sites
5. **Content Communities** it is designed for sharing of materials modified from pre-existing work, allowing users to add, modify or delete content in collaboration with others such as Wikipedia and YouTube
6. **Virtual Game Network** it is a Computer-based online community environments that are designed and shared by individuals so that they can interact with each other in this simulated world through text models such as world of craft.

7. **Social Travel Network** it allows travelers to exchange tips with each other before, during and after a trip; also called online review sites.

2.2 Social Media and Tourism

Travelers today have accesses to opinion rich sites such as Social Media site and can communicate directly with tourism organizations. (Tussyadhiah & Zach, 2013).

Through social Media site, travelers are able to convey information about particular destination, whether good and bad, which can affect the success or failure of that tourism destinations. Traveler could spread negative sentiment through word of Mouth that tarnishes the image of a destination or business concerned. However social media offer a good platform for electronic word of mouth, which has several advantages over traditional form of Marketing namely speed global reach and ease of use (Bronner & De Hoog,2011).

Due to this immense benefit of social media, more tourism business are now using social media to market their product and service and to make a personal conversation with customers.(WTM,2013).Many tourism organizations are beginning to study and craft Social Media marketing strategies to their advantage. (Bronner & De Hoog, 2011).In this web 2.0 era, tourism business that don't implement social media marketing strategies will lack a competitive advantage (Nawaz & Mubarek, 2015).

2.3 Social Media in Hospitality Industry

The growth of internet has allowed the hospitality industry to embark on various social media networking sites providing an effective competitive advantage. The use of internet

marketing through social media platform is an effective medium to drive the company branding strategies (Mohammadia & Mahamodrez,2012).

Successful hotel social media marketing involve creation of connection rather than impressions, referred as a two way process engaging brand audience. Nowadays consumers are heavily engaging in a media communication than ever before, new trend which is refereed as converging culture(Manssson, 2011).

Duet to it huge network connection, Social Media has a wide audience reach globally with non geographic barrier and time zone constraints, allowing company to easily reach out and target profitable niche segment (Ryan D. & Joen C, 2012). Academic source researched upon indicated that four platforms of Social media are predominantly with hospitality industry especially in terms of branding and their usage rate growing exponentially (callarisa, 2012).

The four main platforms for of Social media will be discussed below briefly:-

Twitter

Twitter assist companies to determine customers need and expectations through information gained, which is particularly significant in terms of the brand perspectives in acknowledging different culture of targeted audience (Bough b. 2011).

Facebook

Facebook is the most dominant platform used, which allows company to build and sustain relationships with the stakeholder and customers, get effective message across and attain confidence. (Lanz, 2010). According to Gunelius (2011), social network like Facebook present a significant opportunity for hotels to build relationship that lead to brand awareness, word of mouth Marketing and ultimate sales. Moreover, Jorgen k. (2012) argues that more than eighty percent of social network users prefer to connect with brands through Facebook.

Trip Advisor

Trip Advisor referred as the largest site for unbiased travel review which gives you the real story about hotels, attractions and restaurant around the world (Lanz, 2010).

Excessive online generated content on hotels, travel destinations and travel service have increased due to rapid growth of web 2.0 applications, which allow internet users and traveler to increase social media platform for a travel planning (Chen w., 2011). In order to ease risk of purchase most people rely on travel blog and electronic word of mouth which helps to manager to facilitate brand awareness, ensure quality standard and sustain product improvement (Callarisa L., 2012).

You Tube

According to Jorgen k.(2012) YouTube is social media marketing in action. This medium allows user to produce and consume viral media content which can be disseminate via blog to other online consumer sharing visual and sound audio (Mansson, 2011).

As the part of Social media marketing strategy viral video is particularly important to convey message as entertain your audience to encourage active engagement (Bough, 2011).

2.4 Social Media and Tourism industry in African

This part assessed the extent of the major African tourism organization adoption level and utilize social media platform for marketing and communication purpose. Africa Social Media index in the year 2016 had assessed and evaluated the adoption level and utilization social media by main tourism business organization in the continent.

According to the index among all Africa hotel sector South Africa's Oyster Box Hotel is the top leading hotels in for social media engagement in Africa, with 23,116 Facebook likes, 7,278 Tweeter followers, and strong representation on Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube and Google+. The second top hotels in social media engagement in Africa were Al Salam Rotana hotel in Sudan with 71,100 Facebook likes and 6,224 Tweeter followers. From the airline transport service organization, Air Mauritius and Egypt Air was the leading in social media engagement. Air Mauritius has 712,656 Facebook likes and 14,300 Tweeter followers and Egypt Air has 500,968 Facebook likes and 44,400 Tweeter followers. From the tourism organization in Africa four national tourism boards have proved themselves to be able performers in the social media space. On Facebook, The Seychelles Islands and Egypt Travel seem to dominate; Tweeter is led by South Africa and Magical Kenya (Africa Social Media index, 2016).

The above index has clearly revealed that the adoption and utilization of social media by main tourism organization has an increasingly important role in Africa despite the continent weak economic and infrastructure development.

2.5 Challenges of social media marketing in Tourism

According to various literatures adoption and practices of Social Media marketing faced different challenges as the hotels attempt to implement and practice social media.

Christine, (2012) express the Social media like a “double aged sword” which can cut both ways, that is, it can build and destroy brand reputation at the same time also.

O’Connor (2008) argues that Credibility and reliability are among the most argued challenges of social media. In addition to that, according to competeinc (2006) more than half of their surveyed respondents find the information generated by consumers credible, which is arguably not that high percentage.

Hence social media sites are not viewed as credible and trustworthy as more traditional information sources, such as official tourism websites or airline sites. Moreover, there are different trust levels between different types of social media.

Cox et al. (2009) pointed out that the least trusted were the social networking sites e.g. Face book with 36% of respondents, while the comments or reviews submitted by other travelers were trusted among almost half of the respondents. Furthermore, the clearly user generated content sites such as Trip Advisor is perceived more credible than reviews posted on online travel agencies sites such as Expedia, due to the perceived commercial interest of the latter sites, therefore, being perceived less objective (O’Connor, 2008).

Breed (2011) assert that positive comments that are made on social media are likely to increase customers' purchase intentions regarding the purchase a product or service in tourism, because such comments serve to reduce the risks involved in making the purchase.

However the research conducted by the University of Kentucky shows that negative comments that are placed on social media sites might lead to a decrease in customers' purchase intentions relating to the product(s) and service(s) in question (University of Kentucky, 2011).

It is understood from the literatures that social media marketing has challenges faced by the user tourism business organization alike to a good opportunity for developing countries to organize and develop the tourism offer and its promotion over the internet.

2.6 Empirical Review

Social studies have been conducted in the past decades on the importance of electronic marketing in tourism and hospitality. (Stavrakantonakis et al, 2013). In a compressive study, chuan & Guillet (2011), investigate the marketing performance of 67 Hotel in Hong Kong on 23 social media and the result showed that Hong Kong hotel suffer from poor performance.

Alamedina (2013) argue that a key objective for companies when using social media should be interaction with customers. Stavrakantonakis & et al (2013) analyze that consumer generated content on hotels in Lisbon on trip advisor with results showing that 74% of generated content is about hotels.

In another study, chuan & Guillet (2011), attempted to show how the use of image and video clip on websites could have a positive effect on marketing. By examining electronic tourism, innovation and growth in South Korea ,they found out that designing a website that include the above capabilities can motivate users to shop online and increase their satisfaction from their purchases. (Stavrakantonakis et al ,2013)

According to chuan & Guillet (2011), internet has revolutionized the tourism information dissemination and sales. According to the study result Korean Small and Medium enterprise in Tourism by using innovative and developed website and access tourism marketing effectively and chose social media is one of the most important decision for the hotel s in the field of electronic Marketing .

From Jan, 2015 to Jan, 2016 Social media has experience a 10 % increase in number of users and has reached 2.3 billion active user globally (chaffy, 2016).The literature on social media marketing in the hospitality sector shows that some hospitality business specially chain hotel in developed countries, have embrace social media for Marketing, though their usage and effectiveness varies.

A study of hotel in Hong Kong found that twitter and facebook were commonly used social media, but there were not used extensively. This hotels lack commitment to sustain social media marketing efforts (chuan & Guillet,2011).

According to Mekonen(2016) identify the major information source tourism obtain about the image of Ethiopia. As the study result shows that the mean ranking of informant source showed that internet service, Friends& relatives and education occupied from the first to the third rank serving as the information source tourism receive about Ethiopia.

Although using different medial used for the source of information about Ethiopia, it is very advisable and vital design a strategy with the growing importance of internet.

2.7 A Policy Review

The government of Ethiopia has huge responsibilities to promote the country's tourism development by formulating a policy, strategies and a strategic plan and enhance the participation of stakeholders. In accordance with this, culture and Tourism Ministry issue a policy in 2009 but there is no officially known marketing and proportion strategy (Mekonnen, 2015).

Ethiopia, for a long period of time, there was no clear policy and Strategies that would show the direction for the cooperation and coordination that should exist among various stake holder. As the result, it has not been possible for the country to obtain adequate return from the sector and the sector growth has remained less coordinated underdeveloped (ETO, 2015).

Although the country industry is underdeveloped and market share is insignificant, Ethiopia continues to demonstrate a steady growth in the number of visitors in the last three decades (MOCT, 2015). Ethiopia government has three offices under the federal government and several bureaus in the regions and woreda level. According to MOCT, (2015) the main government institutions are Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the National Tourism Transformation Council (NTTC) and Ethiopia Tourism Organizations (ETO) and the regional tourism Offices at each region.

Private sectors in Ethiopia Tourism consisted of Accommodations provider (Hotels & Lodges), Transportation Companies (Air lines, Car rentals and etc) Travel and tourism

Businesses as well as Guides. Furthermore religious institutions, higher learning institute, community at Destinations are all consider as stakeholders (MOCT, 2015)

World Bank, 2012 stated that, the country negative image still exist and fast response to design and reflect its peculiar image trough marketing strategy is required

Following various recommendations regarding on Ethiopia Tourism promotion, Ethiopian government recently develop a well conceptualized and brand focus marketing Plan, which deals with tourism promotion of the National and regional level and which facilitate the possible marketing positioning and demand growth over the next five years for the year 2016- 2020. (ETO, 2015) The strategy document has eight section and 134 pages with the sequential span extending from 2016 to 2020. It began with introduction that elucidates about the commitment of the government to strength the sector.

The second section illustrate international tourism trend, it present both performance of global tourism and the relevance of global tourism trends to Ethiopia. The third section narrates about the issue of Marker performances, tourism competitiveness and Market SWOT analysis. Section four is concerned with the vision, objective, principle and Marketing success factors.

The main objective of the Marketing strategy of Ethiopia for the periods of 2016-2020 is

- To increase tourism arrival by an average annual growth rate of 13% per annum to 3 Million.
- To increase the receipt per visitor by a n average of annual rate of 1.6% per annum to reach US \$ 1,100 USD.

- Increase total tourism receipt by an average rate of 15% per annum to US \$ 34 Billion.

The new marketing Strategy clearly indicates vision, objective and procedure of implementation and evaluations. The document properly explains the role of various tourism stakeholders and target market analysis and segmentation are suitable carried out and appropriate strategies for different niche Market are proposed. The document proposed to use strong digital advertising and social media focus with matching languages.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study Digital Marketing Framework adopted as conceptual framework for the study which was first proposed by Kierzkowski *et al.* (1996).

Digital Marketing Framework suggested that there are five steps that a business should follow to market itself successfully through digital technologies. The Digital Marketing Framework is the most popular and widely used e-marketing framework. (Chan and Guillet, 2011)

The first step specified by Kierzkowski *et al* (1996) is to attract the audience, customers and prospective customers to voluntarily visit an interactive application. In relationship to social media, there are various ways in which a business attracts customers to its social media site. Chan and Guillet (2011) suggest the creation of a profile page with content that catches the attention of customers. Marketers at this stage should utilize the correct tools to attract the types of customer they are targeting. A number of marketing communication tools should be used to spread the business's web presence so as to maximize the effectiveness of digital marketing. After attracting the attention of the

customer, marketers need to develop strategies for retaining the customers. Thus, the next step of the Digital Marketing Framework is to engage customers.

To engage customers, marketers need to generate interest and encourage participation on their web page (Kierzkowski *et al.*, 1996). Generating interest and participation encourages visitors to continue revisiting the site, and this can lead to a successful interaction or transaction. Posting creative content of high quality which is valuable to customers should engage the customers and create a user-friendly site. Once customers have been attracted and engaged, marketers need to retain them, which is the third step. Relationships with customers can be built by maintaining contact with them (Kierzkowski *et al.*, 1996).

Continuous renewing of content by marketers on their profile pages can create a reason for customers to revisit their profile pages. The focus of marketers at this stage is to lure customers to interact with the business or other users of that web page. According to Kierzkowski *et al.* (1996), at this stage marketers can “make use of the switching cost concept by increasing the time and energy that the customers spend on the site” or to develop a virtual community on the web. Chan and Guillet (2011) add that if the business invests more resources and establishes relationships with customers, it could retain customers by preventing them from switching to competitors’ sites. Learning about the customers is the fourth step of the digital marketing Framework.

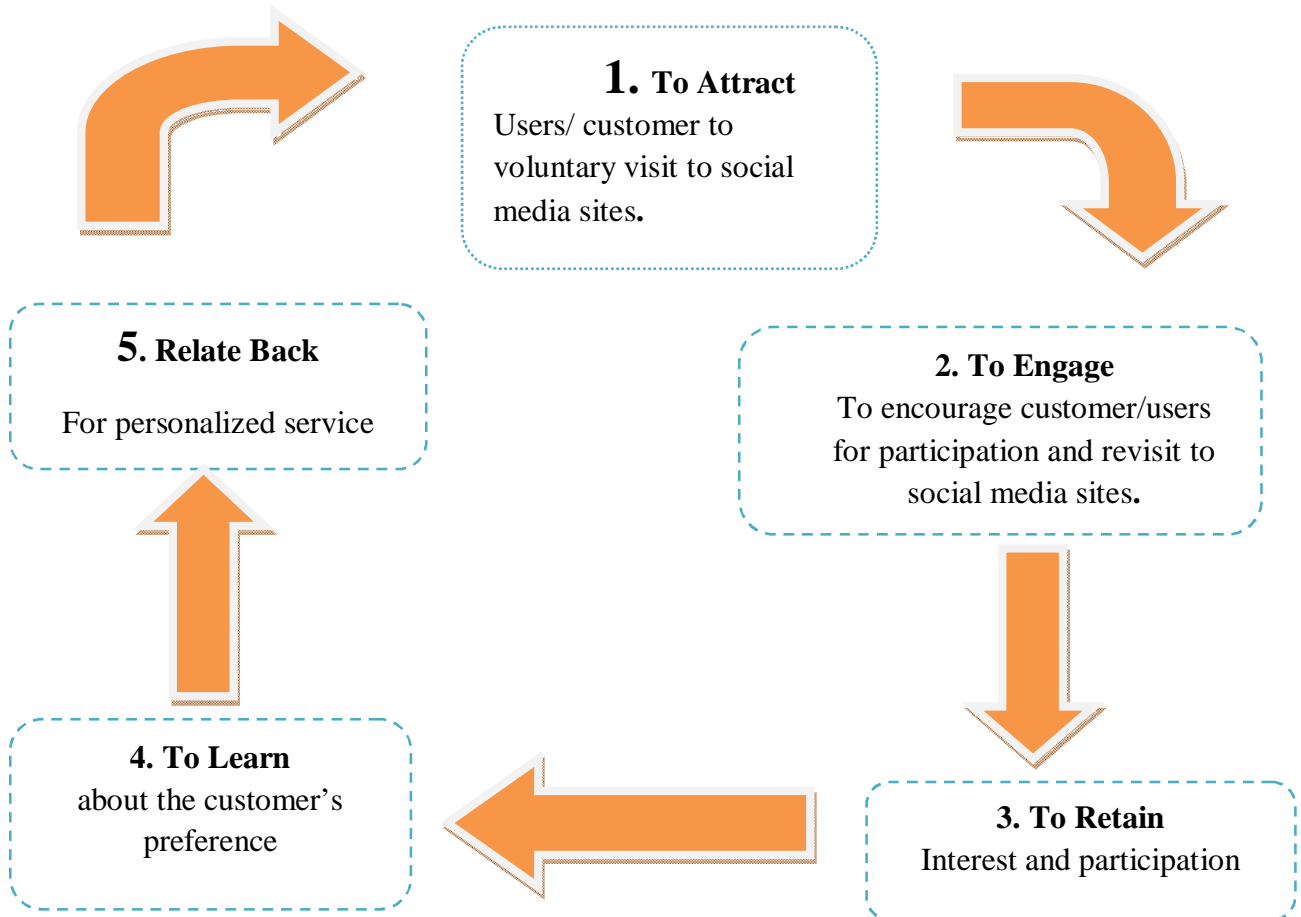
With their interactive nature, social media sites provide an opportunity for marketers to learn about the preferences of their customers, which help the business to enhance its

future service. At this stage marketers can make use of digital media to test their services or products and get feedback from customers.

The final step of the Digital marketing Framework is to relate back to the customer. Because of the two-way communication offered by interactive media, marketers have the opportunity to deliver a personalized service or communication about the availability of a personalized service. At this final stage, Kierzkowski *et al.* (1996:6) emphasize that marketers need to maximize the “full potential of the interactive media, especially those particularly applicable to the business’s product/service category”.

The Digital Marketing Framework, as proposed by Kierzkowski *et al.* (1996), is presented in Figure

Figure 1: The Digital Marketing Framework



Source: Adapted from Kierzkowski et al. (1996)

The study adopted the digital marketing theoretical framework for this study as presented in the above diagram, each Social media activities of Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa assessed by using digital marketing frameworks in order to see how star rated hotels perform in social Medias platforms. According to digital marketing framework that there are five steps that a business should follow to market itself successfully through digital technologies. The steps are attract, engage, retain, learn relate back to customers, hence activities of the star rated hotels in their social media platform will be assessed in contrasts with each stages of the conceptual frameworks.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methods

This study was a descriptive research to understand the current practice of social media marketing and in addition to reveal the main challenges of social media practices from the point of view of non-chained star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

For this study a mixed approach was used, using both quantitative and qualitative research method in the research design and collect both primary and secondary data source which was essential to generate in-depth knowledge with reasoning.

3.2 Research Area and Participants

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa city, focusing on the star rated hotels. Hence the population of the study was all non chained star rated hotels in Addis Ababa, rated by ministry of culture and tourism on 2016. The total non chained star rated hotel in Addis Ababa was 74, due to the manageable study populations, the study adopted a census method for 74 respondents with questionnaires and also and in depth Interview and key informant interview for some selected respondents.

3.3 Data Source of the study

The study used both primary and secondary data source. The primary sources were helpful to get the first hand information from the respondents in order to know the level and current practices of social media marketing by independent star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

The following table illustrates type of primary data collection from different respondents for the purpose of the study.

Table 01 –Source of data collection

S.N	Methods of Data collection	Total Population	Respondents	Number of participants
1.	Survey Questionnaires	74	General Managers, Marketing managers and owners of all star rated Hotels in Addis Ababa	74
2.	Key informant Interview		Respondents from MOCT,ETO, CTTI, AAHOA and AACCTB	05
3	In depth Interview		Managers, Marketing Manager and sales supervisors of Star rated Hotel	10

3.4 Data Analysis

As specified earlier, the study used both qualitative and quantitative data gathering techniques. Then data was analyzed based on appropriate quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Quantitative data that was collected through questionnaire analyzed by using the percentage and the result was presented in the form of charts, tables and statements with detail concepts of the research results. The analysis of quantitative data was conducted with the help of Microsoft Excels.

In addition, the information collected through qualitative instrument have been presented and analyzed by narration and tables; and based on the specific objective of the study, thematic analysis has been done to discuss the finding and the relevant topics on the data gathered.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

At the very beginning, letter of support was written by Center for Environment and Development, College of Development Studies, Addis Ababa University to all respective offices to assist the researcher in providing support for the research work. Following the letter researcher will contact all independent star rated Hotels in Addis Ababa and respective stakeholders. Inform the respondents' right not to respond for any specific question (s), to stop the interview at any time and stage, and the right not to involve in the research at all.

Confidentially was given importance throughout the interview all hotel respondents was kept anonymous including the hotel itself. Respondent was not identified by name and not even by actual name of the hotels.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to explore how social media marketing being practiced by non-chained star rated hotel in Addis Ababa, moreover the study aimed to identify the challenges encountered during the practices of Social media marketing by non-chained star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

To achieve the main and the specific objectives of the study, both primary and secondary data were gathered, analyzed and discussed. Thus this chapter reports the results from the set of questions designed and distributed to non chained star rated hotels in Addis Ababa and interviews of key informants from public and private tourism organizations. In addition to that this section includes an insightful discussion and analysis of the questionnaire results.

In order to gather the response of star rated hotels in Addis Ababa, 74 questionnaires were distributed and from the total survey questionnaire 63 were returned. The response rate was 85%; the respondents of the questionnaires on the behalf of the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were Marketing Managers, General Managers and Sales Managers or Supervisors. In addition to that, key informants were purposely chosen from Public and private tourism organization for a face to face semi- structured interviews.

According to Ministry of Culture and tourism of Ethiopia (MOCT, 2016), from the total star rated hotel in Addis Ababa 94 % of the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were locally owned and managed non-chained hotels and the remaining only 6% were Chained international hotels.

This implies that the main ownerships and management of the hospitality industry in Addis Ababa were local business owners. This has an enormous benefit in reducing the economic leakages of the country's tourism industry, however this low number of internationally chained hotels in Addis Ababa have an impact in the development of the country's hospitality industry competitiveness with the global market.

International chained hotels were expected to bring their international practice and standardize their operations in social media adoption and practice for marketing and customers communications, hence for the purpose of this study, all international chained hotels were excluded from the study and this study include all non chained star rated hotel in Addis Ababa . As the number of star rated categories illustrate in the above table, more than 50% of the Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa are categorized in three and four star rate category whereas 9% of star rated hotels were categorized in five star and 10 % of star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were categorized in one star rate category respectively. This implies that most start rated hotel in Addis Ababa targeted middle income market of customers and hence it implies that there are limited choices of star rated hotels for high class luxury market in Addis Ababa.

4.1 Profile of the Respondents

The first section of the questionnaire which was distributed to the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa was included educational level, years of hotel operations experience and current position at the hotels in order to identify the respondent's background information that helps to conceptualize the finding and formulation appropriate recommendations to enable for a better utilizations of social media for hospitality industry in Addis Ababa.

4.1.1 Education Level of the Respondents

Table 02. Educational Level of the respondents

Educational Level	No of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
High school	0	0
certificate	2	3%
Diploma	13	21%
First Degree	44	70 %
Masters Degree	4	6%
Above Master Degree	0	0%

Source: From own Field Survey, 2018

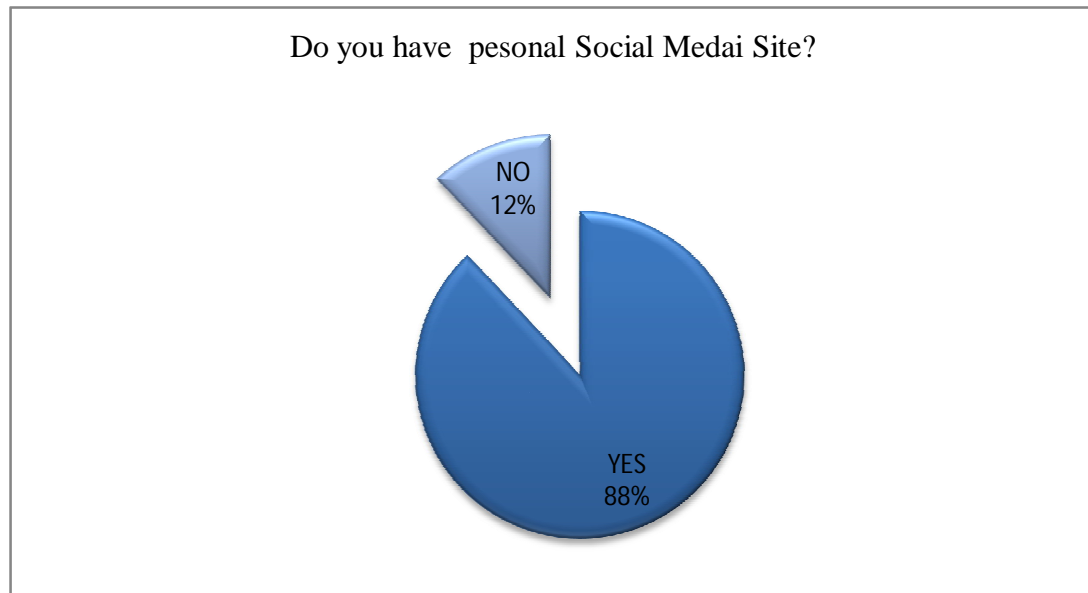
As it can be seen in table 03, out of the total respondent 21% of the respondent have the diploma in educational background and 69 % of the respondent have a first degree and only 6% have the second degree.

This indicate that most of the respondents were educated, which implies that respondents expected to have good understanding and skills on application of the new digital technology and social media application which is essential to implement for hotel and tourism industry.

4.1.2 Personal Social Media Status of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they had a personal page and membership in any of the social media sites in order to discover their familiarity with the social networking site.

Figure. 03 Personal Social Media Status of the Respondent



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

The findings represented in figure 03 were in line with expectations, as they indicate that a majority of the respondents use social media platform for their own personal uses, from the total respondents 88 % of the respondents were member of social media sites, while 12 % of the respondents had no personal social media pages. Since most of the respondents have their own personal Social media accounts and practice social media for their own personal communication and interactions, the respondents have expected to be familiar with the purpose and functions of the social media platforms.

4.1.3 Years of Hotel's Experience of the Respondent

Respondent were requested their years of experience in hotel industry to observe the respondents years of hotel management work experience in star rated hotels.

Table 03: Years of Experience of the respondents in the Hotel industry

Year of Experience in category	No of Respondents in the category	Percentage of Respondents in the category
0-3 Years	19	30%
4-6 Years	24	38%
7-10 Years	15	24%
>10 Years	5	8%

Source: From own Field Survey, 2018

The years of respondent's experience in hospitality industry was categories in three years interval from one to ten years. Out of the total respondents 38% of the total respondent served the hotel industry form 4 to 6 Years, of the total respondent 92% of the respondents had less than 10 years experience.

This indicated that the study included well experienced hotel management employees in the hotel industry and the result showed that most of the respondents served the hotel industry from 4-10years (92%) which implies that more experienced staff has participated on the survey which expected to forwarded valuable inputs.

4.1.4 The Respondents Positions in the Star rated Hotels

This study has attempted to survey about Social media marketing adaption and current practice by non-chained star rated hotels in Addis Ababa. To this end the hotels' marketing manager, Sales Manager, General manger were asked about the hotel's current adaption and practice of social media marketing.

From the total respondent of the survey questionnaires nearly 7% were General Managers, 52 % were marketing managers and 41 % were Sales manager /supervisors. Hence as it can be easily observed from the above respondent’s position at star rated hotels, the study include mostly top and middle managers which entail that the respondents were the right persons to respond for the questions as most of them are decision maker in the hotels.

4.2 Profile of the Targeted Star rated Hotels in Addis Ababa

The questionnaire of the study were included the hotel establishment’s year of operation in the hospitality business and the hotels star rate categories. The respondent answer summarized and presented at the below tables.

Table 04: Respondent Star Rated Hotels’ Year of Operation

Years of Hotel service in the Business	Respondents' hotel Year of service in the Business	Percentage of Respondents in the below Educational level
0-5 Years	15	24%
6-10 Years	21	33%
11-15Years	11	17%
16 -20Years	7	11%
21 -25Years	2	3%
26 -30Years	3	5%
>30 Years	4	6%

Source: From own Field Survey, 2018

The above table 06 shows that from the total targeted star rated hotels in Addis Ababa nearly 57% of the hotels have less than 10 Years of hotel operation years of experience. Those hotels that have been in the business for more than 20 years were only 14 % of the total targeted hotels.

It was also observed that more than half of the star rated hotels in the study were new to the hospitality industry and expected to brought and implement new information and communication technology to their hotel management and communication system. Those recently established and being operational Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa has also the advantage to embrace easily the new and innovative technologies in their building design and structure of the hotels, whereas those hotels with the old building design and structure has been encountered challenges to put up communication technologies in the hotels building.

Table 05: Respondent Hotels' star rated Category in Addis Ababa by MOCT

Respondent Hotels' Star Rated Category	Star Rated Hotel Count	Percentage (%)
Five Star	3	5 %
Four Star	12	19 %
Three Star	24	38 %
Two Star	19	30 %
One star	5	8 %

Source: From own Field survey, 2018

As it was witnessed in the above table, the study had attempted to incorporate all non chained star rated hotels in Addis Ababa from all star rate categories i.e. from one star to five star hotels. However as the table shows that nearly 90% the total Star rated hotel in the study were concentrated in two star, three star and four star rated categories only.

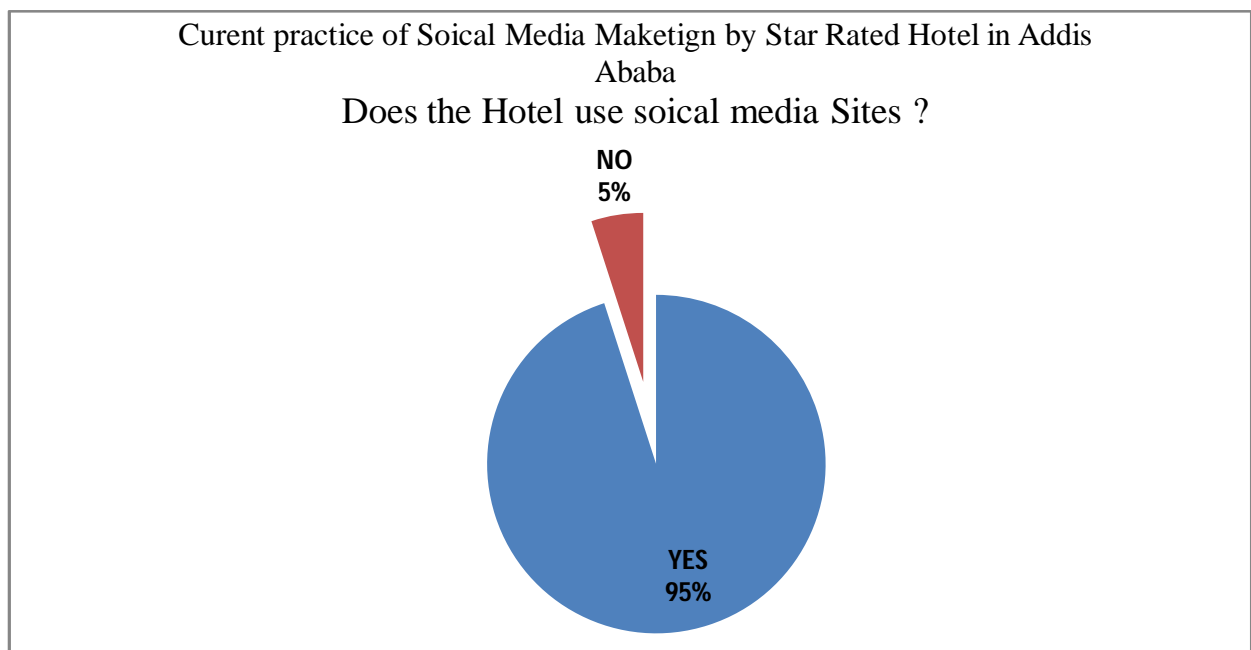
Hence the study outcomes expected to represent mostly the above mentioned rated categories of hotels in Addis Ababa, whereas in the study the percentage of five star rated

and One star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were only 5 % and 7 % respectively. This implies that the market target of the hospitality industry in Addis Ababa mainly focused to middle income hotel customers group and it was observed the hotel industry in Addis Ababa less focused on the up-market group of hospitality customers. Hence the result to the study will be more representative of the middle star rated hotels such as two, three and four star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

4.3 Practice of Social Media Marketing by Star Rated Hotels

The study was mainly focused on the current practice of non chained star rated hotels among the various hotels and tourism related business in Addis Ababa. To this end, the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were asked during the time of the field survey whether their hotels were using social Media's platform or not.

Figure 04. The Practice of Social Media Marketing by Star Rated Hotels in Addis Ababa



Source: From own field survey, 2018

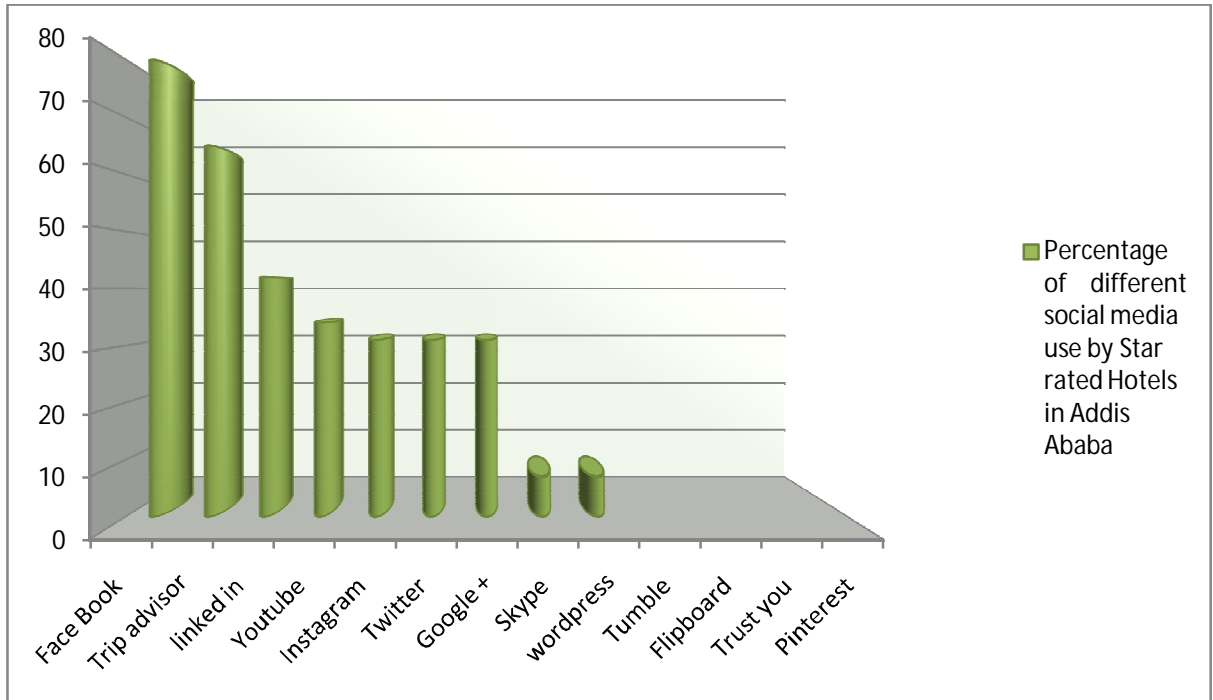
According to the above response, out of the total respondents of the Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa 95% of the respondents were confirmed that their hotels have been practice and use Social media platforms. The remaining 5 % of the total respondent of star rated hotel in Addis Ababa were not using social media at all during the time of the survey. As the above data shows that the practice of social media platforms among the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa which was 95% were very significant

As the above data indicate that, the Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were very responsive and adaptive to new and innovative technologies, respondents from the star rated hotels also confirmed that social media has been an important innovation and a good alternative opportunity to promote their hotels products and service to customers with very low cost and to reach the potential customers wider area coverage.

However, it was also observe that nearly 5% start rated hotels in Addis Ababa were not used social media platforms at all during the time of the survey, these star rated hotels remains doubtful on the social media sites and not considering social media sites as appropriate marketing and promotion tools.

From the above data, it was not known about the type of social Medias and how effectively the star rated hotels has been used these social media platforms. Hence in order to study more about the practice of social media marketing of those Star rated hotels, who have been used social media platforms in Addis Ababa during the time of the survey were asked to list out the type of social media platforms they were using. The responses of the Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were summarize and presented by the below diagram.

Figure. 05 current practice of Social Media marketing by Star Rated Hotels in Addis Ababa



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

As the finding displayed in the above diagram, the respondents from the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were asked to list down the top social media sites they have been used, as the result of the respondents indicated that Facebook, Trip advisor, Linked In, YouTube and Instagram were amongst the top five social media platforms used by star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

Among others social medias, Facebook and trip advisor were predominantly used by most star rated hotel in Addis Ababa, as the data shows that more that 80% of star rated hotels confirm that their hotels mainly adapt and practice Facebook from the social media

platforms, Whilst from the social medias list Skype and word press are the least applied and Tumbler and flip board are not used at all by all star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

The study indicated that, Facebook was one of the most popular social media sites for most star rated hotels (80%) in Addis Ababa, according to the respondents the main reason to choose facebook sites amongst many available social media sites were the respondents personal acquaintance with face book sites, easy to register, easy to use and widely applied by competitors' star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were the main reasons listed by the respondents. However it was observed that no star rated hotel in Addis Ababa had done a prior study to identify what social media platform the targeted segment of customers uses or put up clear criteria to choose the right social media sites for hotels industry from numerous available social media sites.

4.4 Purpose of Use of Social Media Platform by Star Rated Hotels

The presence of star rated hotels in social media platforms indicate not much by itself, it is important to understand the reasons why the hotels were participating in the social media platforms, hence respondent were asked to identify the main purposes of social media application by their hotels and their response summarized by the following tables and presented below.

Table 06. Purpose of use of Social Media platforms by Star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

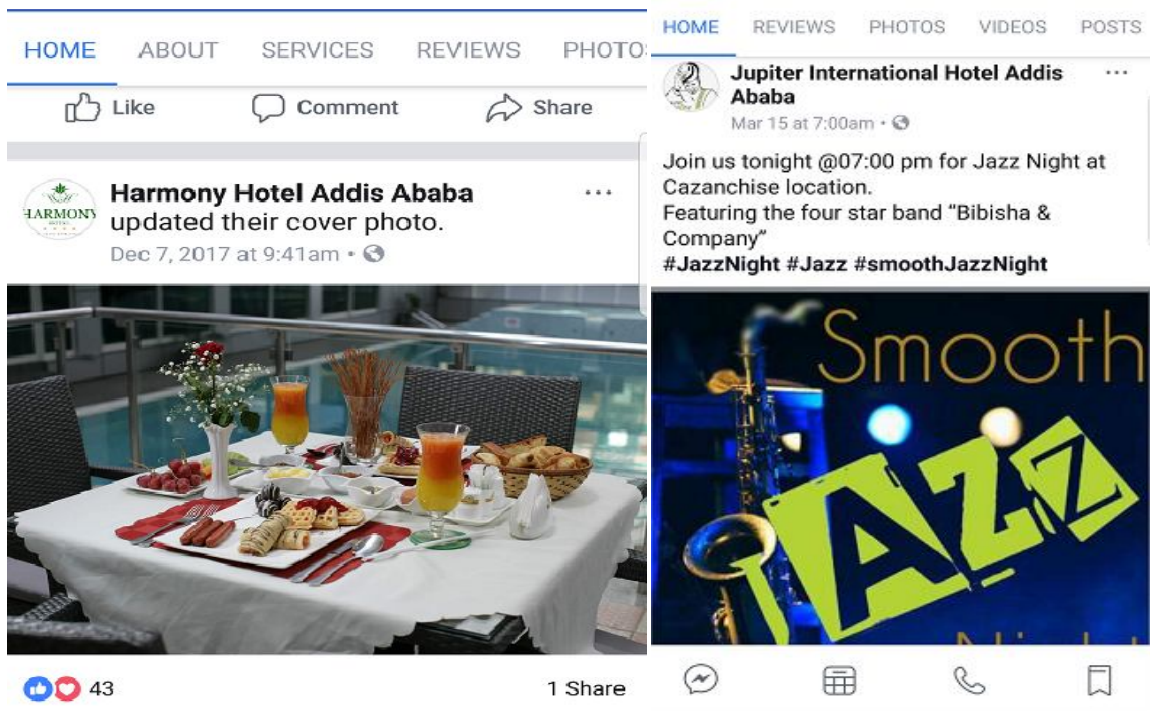
Main purpose of use Social Media platforms by Star rated Hotels in Addis Ababa	Respondents Count	Respondents percentage %
For Marketing and Promotion of Hotels' Products and Service	61	97%
To share information about the Hotels	55	87%
To Improve customer relations of the Hotels	50	79%
To facilitate communication with Customers	27	43 %

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

As it can be indicated from the above summarized table , 97 % of Star rated hotel use social media platform mainly for marketing and promotion of the hotels product and service, however less than 50% of the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa use social media to improve customer relations and to facilitate communication with their customers.

From the respondent star rated hotel's social media sites, it was observed that three and four star hotels were perform better as compare to others star rated hotels in Addis Ababa in practicing promotion of their hotel's brand, products and service. The following images presented as an example of four star rated hotels (Jupiter international Hotel and Harmony Hotels) observed while practicing promotion of their hotels' products and service using facebook sites. The screen shot images were taken on March, 2018.

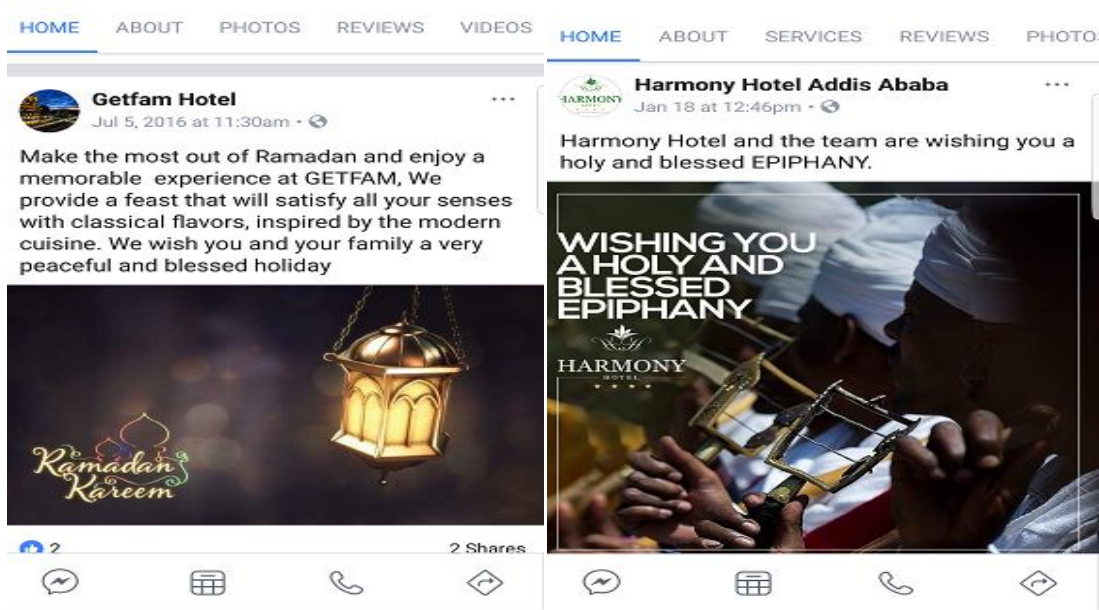
Image1: Examples of Social media Promotions of Hotels' Products and Service



Source: Screen Shot of Social Media site of Jupiter and Harmony Hotels (Accessed March, 2018)

Even though social media platforms was seen as new method to have two ways communications with customers, most of three, four and five star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were observed while involved with customers relations and communications using social medias platforms whereas five star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were observed as very active and very responsive in communication through social media to improve customer relations. The images presented below taken from four and five star rated the star rated hotel's social media sites in Addis Ababa.

Image2: Examples of customer relations on Social media site of Star rated Hotels

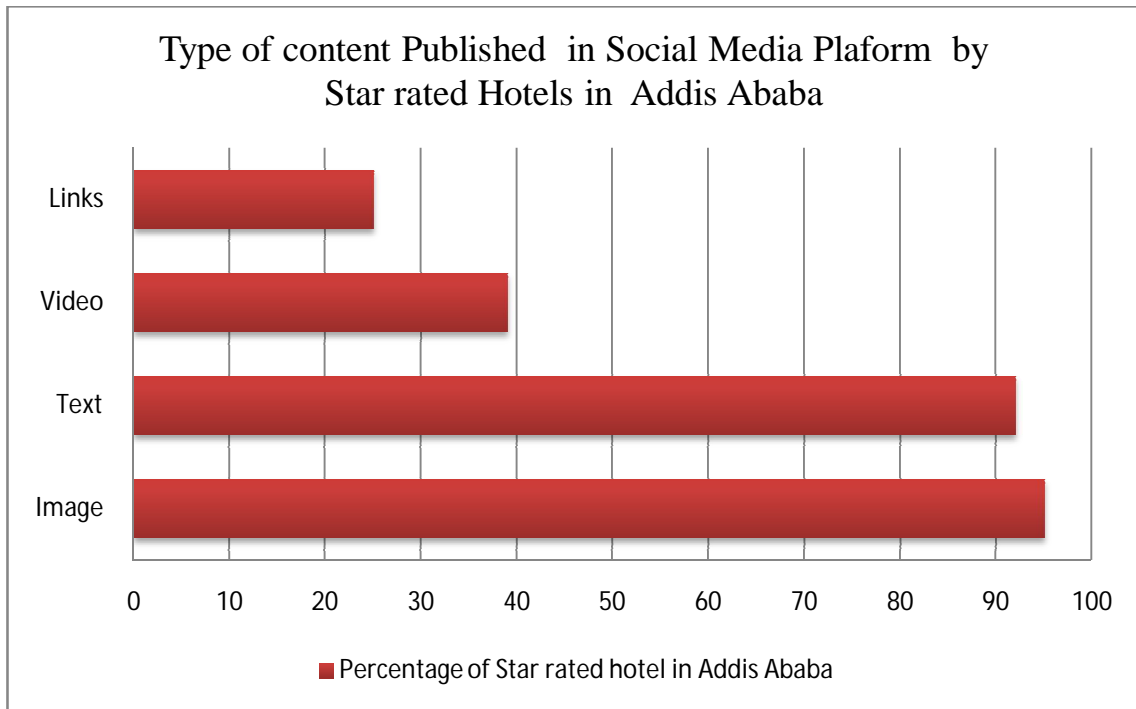


Sources: Screen Shot of Social Media sites of Getfam and Harmony Hotels (Accessed May, 2018)

4.5 Content Published in Social Media Platform by Star Rated Hotels

The second section of the questionnaire distributed to star rated hotel in Addis Ababa were to ask all non chained star rated hotel to indentify the type of contents the hotels regularly published on their social media sites. The following diagram summarizes and presents the published content types of Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa.

Figure 06. Content type published in Social Media Platforms by star rated hotels in Addis Ababa



Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

Out of the total respondents 95% of the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa primarily published images in their Social media sites about their star hotel's product and service, where as 92 % of star rated hotels published a text content in their social media platforms to promote their hotel product and services. In addition to that, it is also observed that most of the star rated hotels used text and Image contents published in the social media platforms. As it is indicated in the diagram publishing video and links were the least practiced and performed by star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

while comparing and contrast the Content type published in Social Media Platforms amongst different star rated hotels in Addis Ababa, it was observed that two star and three star rated hotels in Addis Ababa employed mostly images and texts content published in their social media sites to communicate customers through their social media sites where as links and video content not often used to published by two and three star rated hotels, however four star and five star rate hotels in Addis Ababa published video and links on the in their social media sites together with Pictures and texts content commonly.

It was learnt that from the above four type of contents; Video and links require budget and skills to from the Star rated hotels to regularly published in the social media sites, hence among the star rated hotels five and four star rated hotel publish regularly as compare to others star rated hotels.

4.6 Social Media Marketing Practice by Star Rated Hotels in Addis Ababa

For the purpose of this study digital marketing framework were adapted as theoretical framework, the framework suggests that there are five steps that businesses should follow to market itself successfully through digital technologies. These five stages of digital marketing framework are attracted, engage, retain, learn and relate back with customers (Chan and Guillet, 2011). Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were requested to identify their hotels activities while practicing marketing through social media sites, consequently this study attempted to assess the hotels level of use of the social media sites effectively by comparing the star rated hotel's marketing activities in social media sites with each stages of digital marketing framework .

4.6.1 Attract Customer to Social Media Sites

The star rated hotel in Addis Ababa were asked the following activities if it was performed by the hotels to attract customers to their social media sites. In addition to the respondents reply for the survey, observation also has done on the social media site of the hotels and their activities on their social media sites to reconfirm. The respond from the hotels representative were summarized, presented and discussed below table.

Table 07. Respondent social media activities to attract customers

Activities		Alternate			
		YES		NO	
	To Attract customer to the Hotels' Social Media Sites	Number	%	Number	%
1	Present pictures of the company at Social Media profile pages.	60	97%	3	3%
2	Present product & service discount on the social media site	37	59 %	26	41%
3	Show the website links & address of the hotel on the social media sites	55	87%	8	13%

Source: From own field survey, 2018

When star rated hotels in Addis Ababa were asked to indicate the activities they perform to attract customers to their social media sites, it was found out that, nearly all star rated hotels (97%) present a profile page on the social media site in order to attract customers. More over more than half (59%) of the of star rated hotel in Addis Ababa presents

discount on their products and service in their social media sites and lastly 87% of the star rated hotels show their hotels website and telephone number in their social media sites. It was observed that, generally most star rated hotel perform well in first stage of digital marketing theoretical framework in order to attracting customers to their social media site, however it is observed that most of two and one star rated hotels' use a profile pictures with low quality and less attractive and also their website links and address were not completed.

4.6.2. Engage Customers to Hotel's Social Media Sites

The following table summarizes the response of the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa for the questions which aims to identify the activities of the star rated hotels in order to engage their customers to their social media sites.

Table 08. Respondent social media activities to engage customers

Activities		Alternate			
		YES		NO	
	To Engage customer in the Hotels' Social Media Sites	Number	%	Number	%
1	Answers direct customers inquires on Social media sites	24	38%	39	62%
2	Handle customer complaints on social media sites	26	41%	37	59%
3	Allow for the discussion on their social media wall sites	12	19%	51	81%
4	Engage customers in a lucky draw	8	13%	55	87%

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

As presented in the above table, 38% of the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa answer directly to their customer inquiries on their social media sites, 41% star rated hotels handle customer's complaints using social media sites and nearly 20 % of the star rated

hotels invited discussions on their social media sites. Lastly 13% of Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa respond that their hotels engaged their customer in a lucky draw.

In general as the above summarized respond of the star rated hotels indicate that, the actions of star rated hotel in Addis Ababa in order to engage their customer to their social media site by activities such as answering customer inquires directly, handling of customer complaints and organizing a discussion forum on the social media site was very low. The star rated hotel in Addis Ababa has not successfully used to the opportunity offered by social medias for two way communication with customers.

4.6.3 Retain Customers in the Hotels' Social Media Sites

In this stage the star rated hotel in Addis Ababa were asked whether they performed the following activities in order to retain their customers on their social media sites, the following below table summarize and presented the star rated hotels respond.

Table 09: Star rated Hotels activities to retain customer on Social media sites.

Activities		Alternate			
		YES		NO	
Retain customers in the Hotels' Social Media site		Number	%	Number	%
1	Present contests and forum in the social media sites	14	22%	49	78%
2	Provide hyperlink on social media page to relate to other hotel's Sites.	46	73%	17	27%
3	Listen and respond negative comments immediately	40	64%	23	36%

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

From the above tables, only 14 % of Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa present a forum on their social media sites and 46% of the hotel provides hyperlinks on their social media sites to redirect their customers to their own other sites. Less than half of star rated hotels

(40%) listen and respond to the negative comments in their social media sites immediately.

It was also observed that most of the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa didn't respond immediately to their customers negative comments in their social media sites, the hotels respond lately or not responded at all to customer negative comments. From the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa it was observed that only five star hotels provide hyper links in their social media sites to redirect customers to the other site the hotels, such as hotel websites.

4.6.4 To Learn about Customers from hotel's Social media sites

The star rated hotel in Addis Ababa were requested identify to how well the hotels use social media sites to learn about their customers. The following table summarizes the respond of star rated hotels in Addis Ababa for the question to identify their activities in order to learn customers to their social media sites.

Table 10 Respondents social media activities to learn about their customers

Activities		Alternate			
		YES		NO	
	To Learn about their customers	Number	%	Number	%
1	Record valuable and potentials customers information	9	16%	54	86%
2	Use social media sites to carry a study on the Customers' preference and future need.	15	24%	48	76%

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

It was observed that the star rated hotels under this study were performed poorly on using Social media sites to learn about their valuable and potential customers. Only 24% of the

star rated hotels in Addis Ababa use social media carry out research and 16 % of hotels have a record of valuable and potential customers' information in their social media sites.

4.6.5 To relate back to the Customers through Hotel's Social Media

Star rated hotels under this study was asked whether they perform or not the following activities which was incorporated under the last stage of digital marketing framework.

The response of the star hotels summarized and presented below table.

Table 11 Respondent social media activities to relate back to their customers

Activities		Alternate			
		YES		NO	
		Number	%	Number	%
1	Update customers about new content	29	46%	34	54%
2	Engage in real time interaction with the customers	8	12%	55	88%
2	Respond directly to individuals	19	30%	44	70%

Source: Researcher's own survey, 2018

The above summarize table 13 shows that, 46 % of Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa update about their new content to the customers on their social media. On the other side only 12% of the star rated hotels engage in real time interaction with the customers over the social media and 30 % of the hotels directly respond to the individual customer.

The finding from the above assessment of the Star rated hotels' social media's activities and practices in Addis Ababa using the five stages of digital marketing framework revealed that significant amount of star rated hotels in the study has shown better practice and attempt to attract customers to their social media sites at the first and second stages of

digital marketing framework, however in the subsequent third and fourth stages nearly all hotels were unsuccessful to consistently update their social media sites ,not keep posted their customer regularly, shown poor activities to engage and retain valuable and potential customers .

Finally in the last stage of digital marketing framework, the practices of star rated hotels to relate back with customers using social media site were very weak.

4.7 Challenge of Practice of Social Media Marketing by Star Rated Hotels

As already mentioned in the literature review, it is understood that there are challenges faced tourism business organization during the practice of social media sites. Hence this study has focused to find out the major challenges encountered the star rated hotels in Addis Ababa in their attempt to adapt and practice social media platforms.

As the result the study summarized major challenges which were pointed out by star rated hotel's respondents during the interviews were unreliable, erratic and poor internet connection in the country, lack of skilled and trained expert specialized in the application of Social media sites, the fear of deliberately bad comments in their social media sites with intent to damage their business, few support from top management of the hotels for adoption of social media sites.

Almost all respondents of the star rated hotels representative were utterly express the country's problems of weak internet connections and its erratic nature that caused major challenges not to rely on online platforms opportunities including social media channels. The key informant representatives from Ethiopia tourism organization (ETO) explained

about the challenges of Star rated hotel in the practice social media platforms present as below:-

“Number of tourism business organizations and hotels come to the ETO office to plead for support and assistance to solve the weak internet connection problems and frequent interruption, ETO as the government main stakeholder admit the problem and currently working closely with Ethio-telecom the only internet service provider to solve and minimize the challenges faced the tourism business organizations.”

Interview Date & Time: April 5/2018 10:00 at ETO office Addis Ababa

The above cited problem was the major challenge that limits the use of the innovative opportunities offered by the internet technology to develop and promote the tourism products and services to the valuable and potential customers worldwide. Nowadays it will be very difficult to be competitive in the market by relying only on the traditional offline medias.

The other major challenge for the use and implementation of Social media platforms were lack of Skill and trained man powers that specialized in Social media platform applications. The key informant from Addis Ababa Hotel Owner Association (AAHOA) explained the problems of skilled and trained man power in social media application present below:- .

“ Social media is very innovative way to promote the hotel product and service to valuable and potential customers, however it is observed that the adoption and practice of Social media sites are at infancy stage and immature. The main reason for this problem is limited skilled manpower are available in the market. The association has the future plan to organize trainings on digital marketing and social media application for its member’s hotels.”

Interview Date & Time: April 6/2018 13:30hrs At Association office Addis Ababa

Another major challenge pointed out by the respondents were intent to damage their hotels good reputation in the business, this challenges made most of the Star rated hotels very suspicions about social media practice and applications and forced them to limit their involvement in social media platforms.

The General Manger of the four star rated hotels in Addis Ababa explained about the hotel's fear regarding the deliberate bad comments on the social media site during the interview, his reply presented below;

“We are thinking to discontinue our presence Social media sites due to the pressure we have been in so far from the customers on our profile page. There is no ways to prove is he really the customer of our business or fake account”.

(Interview Date &Time: April 9 /2018 09:00hrs at Addis Ababa)

The last major challenge not to fully adopt and utilized the social media platforms was weak support involved from top management and owners of the hotels mentioned by the respondents. According to the respondents, the top managements were uncertain about the benefits of adaption and practice of social media as marketing tools. One of the key informants from Ethiopia tourism organization (ETO) interview respond presented below:

“Most of Ethiopian Tourism business companies including star rated hotels use only limited Social media site mainly Face book , not many hotel Manger and/or Owner fully support the adaptation and practice social medias platform as other common marketing and communication tools”

Interview Date &Time: April 13 /2018 14:00hrs at ETO Office, Addis Ababa

Even though the newly emerged innovative internet technology such as social media marketing has brought new opportunity for developing countries and enable to market their product and service in low cost and also to interact with their customers, the above

main challenges were form the main hindrance not to fully utilize the online marketing and communication opportunity.

It is also observed that ineffective integration with the key stakeholders in the tourism sector for marketing, lack of skill training and awareness creation on social media platform applications in tourism sector were contributing cause to the challenges.

4.8 Impacts of Social Media Use in Star Rated Hotels in Addis Ababa

Star rated hotels representatives in Addis Ababa has proved that the practice of Social media Sites by their hotels has brought multiple opportunities, such as to market the hotel's products and service to potential and actual customers simply using the Social medias, to share the hotel's new information to customers, to facilitate two way communication with the customers and to receive and handle customer' feedback and comments about the hotel's product and services.

Unlike the significant opportunity brought by social media for any business in general including for the travel and tourism industry, it has also brought a potential impacts for the business brand and reputations. According to Christine, (2012) express the Social media like a "double aged sword" which can cut both ways, that is, it can build and destroy brand reputation at the same time also.

The key informant and the hotel marketing managers were asked if there were any a possible negative effect while practicing social media for the marketing by star rated hotel in Addis Ababa. The possible negative impact respond by the key informants summarized presented below:

- Intentionally uploading damaging content by to social media sites by dissatisfied employees of the hotels,
- Fake negative comment posted at the hotel social media site by the anonymous person pretend as customer to purposely damage the image.
- Repeated threat from the unidentified source to hack the social media sites.
- Upload damaging content erroneously by Star rated employee.

The key informant from Addis Ababa Hotel Owner Association (AAHOA) explained about how the Social media negatively impacted the Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa and also commented how to minimize this negative impacts, their replay were presented below:

“Now a day anyone who has the phone and internet can have a media by itself to positively and negatively influence on the social media, the hotel employee has to have well trained on the application of social media and very careful on n the care on the content published .

Interview date &time: April 16 /2018 08:00 at Addis Ababa

Consequently, the respondent of hotel marketing managers during the interview agree that the social media platforms are very new and important innovation for business communication, that may influence both positively and negatively, hence the hotel managers has to be very cautious on how to wisely use the social media and constantly train their employee who are in charge social media communication of the hotels on social media.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter deals with the conclusion and recommendations made from the findings of the study based on the set of objectives. The main objective of the study was to explore how social media platforms adapted and practice by star rated hotels in Addis Ababa and also to identify the main challenges encountered by the star rated hotels in the adaption and practices of the social media platforms. In addition to that the study observed the negative effects on adaption and practice of social Medias by the star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

5.1 Conclusion

The collective analysis from the above discussion shown that the online presence of star rated hotel in Addis Ababa is very high, though significant numbers of star rate hotels have an online presence theirs practice in social media sites was reveal at the infant and immature stage.

The study also indentified that, among various type social media sites, Star rated hotel in Addis Ababa predominantly adopted facebook and trip advisor as the main social media platforms. The main purpose of practicing social medias as the study shows that mainly for marketing and promotion and in addition to that the study attempts to assess the type of content published on the social media sites of Star rated hotel in Addis Ababa and it was found out that the star rated hotels regularly published images and text Content about the product and service.

From the above finding and discussion it was learnt that, the practice of social media platform by star rated hotels in Addis Ababa was considerable and encouraging despite various challenges encountered, even though social media platform was found out as an important promotion and marketing tools for star rated hotel in Addis Ababa, the practice of social media for marketing, promotion and communication was at infant and immature stage.

Hence further research should focus on how to enhance the practice of social medias in order to pay the major role in determining the success of hotel industry in Addis Ababa.

5.2 Recommendations

Considering the findings of the study, the following recommendations forwarded to improve social media application by the star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

Star rated hotels in Addis Ababa should embrace social media as marketing and communications tools and develop an effective strategy to e improve the current infant practice the social media.

The study result shows that almost all star rated hotels in Addis Ababa adapted social media platforms significantly, but it is observed that star rated hotels are not doing enough to effectively use and practice social media's platform for marketing the hotels' brand and products. Social media are not only about connecting people and exchange of opinions, but it can play a vital role in marketing and customer interactions.

All hotels in Addis Ababa has to develop the strategy that should include how to adopt social media platforms, first decide which customers segment and in which regional area they want to communicate and engaged and prepare the written purpose of engage in with the targeted customers and what social media platform the targeted customer segment uses and then the star rate hotel in Addis Ababa should develop a detail strategy to attract customers to that selected social media by creation of a profile page with content that catches the attention of customers with essential information about the hotels.

After attracting the attention of the customers, hotels marketers need to develop a strategy to engage the customers in social media sites to generate an interest and encourage participations on the hotel's social media site by attentively answering the customer inquiry and handling the customer complaint immediately and actively work to retain the customers in their social media sites, to learn about customers and lastly related back to the customers by updating about the new contents and to learn about the customers and to relate back to the customers.

Hotels has to allocate necessary resource and budget to effective practice the new and innovative Social media platforms.

Owners and Managers of the star rated hotel and other tourism related business are advised to commit more resources to e-marketing activities within hotels. Since social media is becoming an alternative and more cost effective medium, there should be enough commitment to tap into its opportunities.

Refreshment training on the practice social media platform and digital marketing techniques has to be arranged to marketing and management employee of the hotels.

The study reveals that lack of skilled and trained experts specialized in the application of Social media platform and social media marketing was the main challenges to effectively utilize the social media platforms by star rated hotels, hence in order to alleviate the above challenges stakeholders, associations and academic institution in area of tourism has to take the lead to organize skill trainings in Social media application for marketing and awareness development in digital marketing in general, public and private tourism organization such as the Ethiopian Tourism organization (ETO), Addis Ababa hotels owner association, tourism higher institutions ,can take the lead to improve the skill and practical knowhow on the applications of social media platforms.

In addition to that, organize various trainings on the basic applications and know-how on social media platforms to the hotel managements and marketing employees, it is also important to develop and device social media crises management strategy to handle the negative and damaging contents on social media and develop an effective social media security strategy from threats of hackers.

Develop and advances the current internet infrastructure development of the country.

To adequately utilize the new and innovative opportunities information and communication technologies, appropriate infrastructure and technology has to be in place. This infrastructure may include high-speed telecommunications, i.e. broadband Internet services and connectivity without barrier and interruptions.

Hence the policy makers and the planner for development has to take in to consideration internet infrastructure as the vital for development and internet has changes the ways many organization do their businesses.

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ANNEX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAR RATED HOTEL IN ADDIS ABABA

**College of Development Studies, Center for Environment and Development
Tourism Development and Management Program,
Addis Ababa University
Addis Ababa**

Dear Madam/Sir,

My name is **Seifu Desalegn**, I am a Master student in Tourism Development and Management Program at Addis Ababa University.

For the fulfillment of the master program, I am conducting a study to explore current practices of social media marketing by star rated hotel in Addis Ababa.

Social Media is a relatively new and innovative media; is playing an increasing role in the hospitality and tourism industry's marketing, however there is little research that explores the adoption and practices of social media in the hotel industry in Addis Ababa. This study will attempt to fill the gap and will encourage social media application for tourism industry.

This questionnaire should be filled by the hotel's marketing manager or Sales manager or the person in charge of social media communication of the hotel. It will take a few minutes of your time but I believe your views and ultimately the result of the study will improve the social media application in hospitality and tourism industry.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

With Best Regards

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STAR RATED HOTEL IN ADDIS ABABA

General Information Part –I

1. Educational Level: High School Certificate Diploma Degree
second Degree Others _____
2. What is your position at the hotel? _____
3. How long you have worked in this hotel? _____
4. How many years of hotel experience you have? _____
5. Do you have personal social media account ? _____

Part II

1. What is the hotel star rating by ministry of culture and tourism? *(Kindly tick the appropriate answer)*
One Star Two star Three Star Four Stars Five Star
2. How long years the hotel is in business?
1- 5 5-10 15-20 20 -30 Above 30
3. How many rooms the hotel has? _____

Part – III

(Kindly tick the appropriate answer)

1. Does the hotel use internet for marketing as the part of its overall the hotel marketing strategies? Yes No

If no why? _____

2. Does the hotel use social Media platform for marketing/ promotion of the hotel?

Yes No

If No, why? _____

3. If yes, for the above question number 2, which of the following social media platform is your hotel currently use?

(Please circle the social Media the hotels currently uses)

- a) Facebook
- b) Twitter
- c) Linked in
- d) Tumbler
- e) Flipboard
- f) Google +
- g) Skype
- h) Instagram
- i) Pinterest
- j) Youtube
- k) Word press
- l) Trip advisors
- m) Trust you

Please add if any other social media platform your hotel currently using.

4. Please rate the top five Social media Platform the hotel currently using.

1. _____ 4. _____
2. _____ 5. _____
3. _____

5. For what purpose mainly the hotel use Social media platform?

You may choose multiple answers

- For marketing and promotion of Product and Service
 To share information about the hotel
 Improve customer relations
 To facilitate communication

If other Please specify _____

6. What type of Content mostly the hotel share/use in Social media Platform?

- Image Video
 Text Links

If other Please specify _____

7. Does your hotel use any of the social Media platforms to directly contact /communicate Customer?

YES

NO

7.1 If yes, what type of communication you have with your customers on social Media platforms

- For customer feedback, For customer inquiries For reservation
 For direct message For others communication

8. Does your hotel have the responsible personnel assigned for Social Media communication?

YES

NO

If no why? _____

9. How many approximate hours in a week the hotel personnel spend on social media communication?

1- 4 Hours

8- 12 Hours

4- 8 Hours

12-16 Hours

Please specify other _____

10. Does your hotel has the budget for social Media platform Communication?

YES

NO

11. Does the hotel show it website links and other address in the hotel's social media sites?

YES

NO

12. Does the hotel initiate a forum /discussion content to customer over social media platform?

YES

NO

13. Does the hotel organize one the following over its social media platform for its follower or customers? Such as Discount, complementary service, Lottery or raffle

YES

NO

14. Does the hotel provide hyperlinks on its social medias page to related hotels sites ?

YES

NO

15. Does your hotel perform a study on customer's preference and future need using the social media plat form?

YES

NO

16. How do you rate the present practice and use of social media platform by your hotel?

Excellent Good Average Fair Poor

Part – III

1. What challenge does your hotel facing while using Social media Platform?

2. Have you ever encounter a negative comment(s) on social Medias about your hotel?

YES

NO

3. If yes for the above Question No .02, What measure and precaution the hotel undertake to handle the negative social media comment?

4. How would you advise other hotels and tourism organization that wish to use social media to enhance their brand equity?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

ANNEX II

INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANTS

For the purpose of this study experts or representatives of Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopian Tourism Organization, Addis Ababa Hotel Association and from Catering Tourism Training Institute will be interviewed for at least for one hour session.

1. Briefly explain the significance of your organization /business in relation to the hotel industry?
2. How important is internet marketing within the tourism industry of Ethiopia?
3. . How significant is social media marketing for the hotel marketing strategy in Addis Ababa?
4. Which social media platforms are most effective within the hotel industry in Addis Ababa?
5. What challenge do you think the hotels in Addis Ababa are currently facing while using Social media Platform?
6. What are the best practices hoteliers should embark on to successfully embrace their brand's meaning through social networking sites?
7. What should be the public tourism organization role to encourage hotel's adaption and practices of social media marketing in Addis Ababa
8. Any other point/s you want to add ?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

ANNEX III

List of Star-Rated Hotels In Addis Ababa

No	NAME OF HOTEL	STAR	No. Of Rooms	No. Of Beds	TEL NO	E-Mail
1	Sheraton Addis Hotel	5	294	323	011 5171717	reservationsaddisethiopia@luxurycollection.com
2	Capital hotel	5	114	114	011 6 67 2100 0930100714 0911639122 0116672100	sales@capitalhotelandspa.com www.capitalhotelandspa.com
3	Ellele international hotel	5	155	163	0911202904 0922728318 0115587777	info@elillyhotel.com / info@elillyhotel.com
4	Marriott Executive Hotel	5	108	128	011 518 4600	reservation@marriothotel.com
5	Radison Blue hotel	5	204	235	0115544412/13 0115157600	info.addisababa@radissonblu.com
6	Golden Tulip Hotel	5			0116183333	gm@goldentulipaddisababa.com www.goldentulipaddisababa.com
7	Gatefam Hotel	5	115	115	0116673175 0935402055	www.getfam hotel
8	Debredamo hotel	4	102	102	0115509828 0116612630	reservation@debredamohotel.com
9	Dreamliner Hotel	4	96	110	011 467 4000-7	marketingmanager@dreamlinerhotel.com
10	Friendship hotel	4	104	104	0116670201 0116670202	marketing@friendshiphotel.com.et
11	Harmony Hotel	4	150	176	0116183100 0116612389	info@harmonyhotelethiopia.com
12	Intercontinental Hotel	4	151	190	011 550 5066 0115180444 0115540090	reservation@intercontinentaladdis.com
13	Jupiter int. Hotel (kazanchis)	4	102	112	0115527333	info@jupiterinternationalhotel.com
14	Jupiter Int. Hotel (Bole)	4	40	52	0116616969	info@jupiterinternationalhotel.com
15	Momona Hotel	4	60	80	0116672201/07	reservation@momonahotel.com
16	Nazra hotel	4	24	27	0114674465	If0@nazra hotel.com

					0114666676	
17	Nexus hotel	4	66	66	0111112345 01116670067	Info@nexusaddis.com Info nexus hotel.com
18	Saro maria hotel	4	87	87	0113728000/1 01116672167	info@saromariahotel.com/reservation@saromariahotel.com stay@saromari hotel.com
19	Sarem International Hotel	4	43	62	011262087/091 1518807	reservation@saremhotel.com
20	Washington hotel	4	70	85	0911855738 0116392183 0116392239	info@washingtonaddis.com/reservations@washingtonaddis.com
21	Tegen Guest Accommodation Hotel	4	32	64	011 618 2870 0116182871	info@tegenhotel.com info(at)tegen hotel.com
22	Addis Regency Hotel	3	33	41	0913141583 0111550000 0911615600	info@addisregency.com
23	Addis View Hotel	3	18	23	0111249766	addisview@ethionet.et
24	Addissinia Hotel	3	60	60	0911511569 0116623634	info@addissiniahotel.com reservation@addissiniahotel.com
25	Caravan hotel	3	37	37	0911522744 0116612297	caravanhotel@caravanaddis.com wwwcarvan addis.com
26	Aphrodite hotel	3	52	52	0912502256 0115522228	marketing@aphroditeaddis.com/info@aphroditeaddis.com
27	Ararat Hotel	3	94	116	011 6461166	info@ararathotelethiopia.com
28	Beer Garden Inn	3	32	36	0116182595 0116182591	info@beergardeninn.com
29	Beshale Hotel	3	64	80	0116478181/88	Info@beshalehotel.com
30	Ambassador Hotel	3	52	60	0116188284 0118296364	reservation@ambassadorhotelethiopia.com / info@ambassadorhotelethiopia.com
31	Crown Hotel	3	71	110	011 4391444 0114391430/31/ 44/45/46	Info@crownhoteladdis.com/ booking@crownhoteladdis.com
32	Cyan city hotel	3	40	45	0911207900 0911517901 0116622121	info@cyancityhoteladdis.com
33	Embilta Hotel	3	39	49	0112758787/56/ 57 0922444612 0911219421	info@embilta-hotel.com / embiltahotel@yahoo.com

34	Global Hotel	3	50	70	011 4663906 011 4664766	globalhotel@ethionet.et global_hoteladdisababa@gmail.com
35	Hilton Addis Ababa	3	400	705	011 5170000 011 5518400	reservation.addisababa@hilton.com
36	Kaleb Hotel	3	64	84	011 6622 200	reservation@kalebhotel.com
37	King's Hotel	3	34	54	011 3711300 0911699499	kingshotelethiopia.com
38	Monarch hotel	3	80	80	0116672480/22 0116672472 0118637107	Info@monarchaddis.com
39	Panorama Hotel	3	65	85	0116616070 0911836692	panoramahotel@ethionet.et
40	Sidra hotel	3	26	31	011661 7777 0116618888	info@sidrahotel.com
41	Relience hotel	3	31	38	0116672024 0116672002 0116672069	info@reliancehotelapartment.com
42	Seyonat hotel	3	40	50	0911237070 0116626372 0116629746/44	reservation@hotelsiyonat.com
43	Solo Te hotel	3	35	45	0116670021	info@solotehotel.com
44	The residence hotel	3	18	21	0115571025 0911503125	info@theresidenceaddis.com
45	Wassamar Hotel	3	66	71	011 6610055/59 0118950489	info@wassamarhotel.com
46	Umma Hotel	3	33	45	0113719445 0911214399 0113728440	request@ummahotels.com
47	Top Ten hotel	3	48	56	0116464449 0116460266	gmanager@toptenethiopia.com
48	Southern Addis Hotel	3	38	38	011 661 0505 011 661 0515	reservation@southernaddishotel.com
49	Zola international hotel	3	24	32	011 673 33 33 0911243966	Hotelzola@yahoo.com Zola_hotel.net
50	Adotina Hotel	2	32	32	0114674101 0114673939 0913146431	reservation@adottinahotel.com www.adottinahotel.com
51	Astara Hotel	2	45	51	011 6461166 0114160153 0911056912 0114160182 0114670152	Astarabusiness.plc@yahoo.com astaraapl@yahoo.com www.haimihotel.com

52	Axum Hotel	2	60	72	011 6613916 0915736296	axum.d@ethionet.et / axum.n@ethionet.et
53	Churchill Hotel	2	53	53	011156 8648 011 111 1212	contactus@churchillhoteladdis.com
54	Damu Hotel	2	20	20	0115509828	damuhotel@ethionet.et
55	Desalegne Hotel No.2	2	28	25	011 6624524 0116183030	rooms@desalegnhotel.com/ confrence@desalegnhotel.com
56	Destiny Addis Hotel	2	33	40	0911202904 0115521795	info@destinyaddis.com
57	Edna Addis Hotel	2	33	37	0910646962 0115507003 0115507727	reservation@ednaaddis.com
58	Empire Addis inter. hotel	2	39	39	0116614523 0116614525/25 0116614524	info@empireaddis.com www.empireaddis.com
59	Lobelia Hotel	2	31	35	251116673850/ 51/52/53 0911692054 0116673854	@hotell0beliaaddis.com
60	Ghion Hotel	2	190	298	011 5513222 0115510240	info@ghionhotel.com
61	Grand Yordanos Hotel	2	128	128	0115512470 0115515711 0911028036 0115572180	marketing@grandyordanoshotel.com . et
62	Haimi Apartment hotel	2	28	28	0116161888 0116181834 0116181837	info@haimihotel.com www.haimihotel.com
63	Homage hotel	2	20	25	0115516341/09 30033910	info@homagehotel.com /reservation@homagehotel.com
64	Louvera Hotel	2	12	16	011 618 7755	info@louvregrandhotel.com
65	KZ Hotel	2	32	42	011 661 1206 011 662 1607	kzhotel08@yahoo.com
66	Kenenisa Hotel	2	51	51	0911888468	stay@kenenisahotel.com
67	Pacific Hotel	2	45	55	011 645 6371	reservation@pacifichotelet.com
68	Queen of Sheba	2	32	56	011 6615400 011 6180000	Queensheba hotel@ethionet.et
69	Ras Amba Hotel	2	25	25	011 1228080	rahot@ethionet.et / rasambahotel@hotmail.com

70	Trinity Hotel	2	21	27	0911620224	info@trinityaddis.com
71	Soramba Hotel	2	87	87	011 1565 633	Sorambahotel@ethionet.et www.sorambahotel.com
72	AG palace hotel	1	19	19	0911405885	agpalacehotel@gmail.com Booking@agpalacehotel.com
73	Ethiopia Hotel	1	110	151	011 5517400 011 5510134	ethhotel@ethionet.et www.ethiopiahotel.et.com
74	Fil wuha hotel enterprise	1	57	57	0115519100 0913923535	
75	M.N Int. Hotel	1	91	124	0116620831 0116333435	info@mninternationalhotel.com
76	Paramount Hotel	1	27	27	0911686970 0114390417 0118401404	etparahotel@ethionet.et
77	Semien Hotel	1	60	65	011 1550067 0911368219 0111551410	info@semienhotel.com www.semienhotel.com
78	Three days hotel	1	30	34	011 6612583/82 0911205213	info@3daysINT hotel.com www.3daysinternationalhotel.com
79	TDS Hotel	1	25	29	0116635831/16 0912926355 0116610057	tdstravel@ethionet.et / tdstravell@yahoo.com BerBin14@yahoo.com