

ASSESSMENT OF ETHIOPIA'S IMAGE AS A TOURIST DESTINATION AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR MARKETING STRATEGY



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Marketing Management
as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of a
Master's Degree in Marketing Management**

Submitted by: Seid Yesuf

Advisor: Teklay Tesfay (Assistant Professor)

**May 2014
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

SCHOOL OF COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING MANAGEMENT
GRADUATE PROGRAM

**Assessment of Ethiopia's Image As a Tourist Destination
and Its Implication For Marketing Strategy**

By: Seid Yesuf

Approval of Board of Examiners

Advisor

Signature

Internal Examiner

Signature

External Examiner

Signature

DECLARATION

I declare that “**Assessment of Ethiopia’s Image as a Tourist Destination and Its Implication For Marketing Strategy**” is my own work, which has not been presented before for any degree or examination in any other university or college, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Declared by:

Name: Seid Yesuf

Signature:

Date:

Confirmed by:

Advisor: Teklay Tesfay (Assistant Professor)

Signature:

Date:

STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that Ato Seid Yesuf Endris has carried out his post-graduate thesis work on the topic entitled “**Assessment of Ethiopia’s Image as a Tourist Destination and its implication for Marketing Strategy**”. This work is original in nature and suitable for submission for the award of Master’s Degree in Marketing Management (MA).

.....

Advisor: Teklay Tesfay (Assistant Professor)

Date:

ABSTRACT

The image of tourist destinations is important, because it influences both the decisions of tourists make about what destination to visit and the level of satisfaction tourists have, based on the actual experience at the destination. At the international level, destinations often compete on nothing more than the image held in the minds of potential travelers. Therefore, marketers of tourist destinations spend money, time and effort to create the right favorable image to guide prospective travelers in their decision to visit or re-visit their destinations. The goal of this research was to investigate the image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from the perspective of top five tourist generating countries (USA, UK, German, Italy and France tourists) and its implication for marketing strategy. Two surveys were constructed and administered. The first survey (unstructured) measured the holistic image of Ethiopia. The results from this survey were coded with a qualitative methodology. The second survey (structured) measured the attribute image of Ethiopia in relation to important tourist destination attributes. The results from the second survey were put into a statistical program by using SPSS 16.0. Based on the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of interviews and survey this research reveals the fact that the overall image of Ethiopia as perceived by the selected foreign tourists is positive. However this study also reflected the fact that Ethiopia's image as a travel destination is a fusion of both positive and negative perceptions. As is evident from the results Ethiopia's image seemed to vary across its various tourism destination attributes. This indicated that different perceptions of evaluation of image with respect to different attributes, will affect the overall image. Results from the unstructured survey indicate that travelers have the strongest holistic image of Ethiopia as a scenic nature destination. Results from the structured survey indicate that the image tourist in general have of Ethiopia as a tourist destination is a country that is a safe place to visit, offers opportunity for adventure, is friendly and hospitable and possesses scenic and natural beauty. Results also indicate that people have a strong and clear image of Ethiopia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to the following people for their valuable contribution and support to the successful completion of this study.

I sincerely thank my supervisor Mr Teklay Tesfay, without whose invaluable advice and constant support, this study would have never been completed. I would also like to thank Mr Yezihalem Sisay for providing his valuable assistance.

Thanks also to Mr Taye, Mr Jemal, Mr Tewodros, Mr Mohammed, Mr Gelila and Mrs Senait for providing valuable information.

A special thanks to Mrs Hayat Shimels for being always kind and unconditionally supportive throughout my studies.

I am truly indebted to my family who has given me unconditional support and constant encouragement.

KEY WORDS

Tourism

Destination

Destination Attributes

Destination Image Formation

International Tourists

Satisfaction level

Destination Image

Destination Image Measurement

Destination Marketing

Tourists Attractions

ABBREVIATIONS

UNWTO- United Nations World Tourism Organizations

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

USA- United States of America

UK- United Kingdom

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	
DECLARATION.....	I
CERTIFICATION STATEMENT	II
ABSTRACT.....	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	IV
KEY WORDS.....	V
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	VI
LIST OF TABLES.....	VII
LIST OF FIGURES.....	IX
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Back ground of the study	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Research Questions	4
Objective of the study	4
General Objectives	4
Specific objectives	4
Scope and Limitation of the study	4
Significance of the study	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES	
Destination Image	6
Importance of studying tourist destination images	7
Destination Image Formation	8
Destination Image Measurement.....	11
Destination Drivers/Attributes	14
The image of countries	15
Destination as products	16
Marketing of tourism destination	18
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
Research Design... ..	20
Data Sources and Data Collection Instruments	20
Primary Data Collection	21
Tourist questionnaire survey	21
Key informant interview	21
Secondary Data Collection	21
Sampling Technique	22
Methods of data Analysis	23
Validity and Reliability of Research Findings	23

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction	25
General Characteristics of Sample Population	25
General Profile of Respondents	26
Distribution of Marital and Employment Status of the Sample Respondents	27
Distribution of respondents with country of origin	28
Analyses of Respondents travel information, travel experience and expectations	28
Respondents frequency of visit to Ethiopia	28
Respondents Length of stay	29
Respondents source of information about Ethiopia	29
Respondents purpose of travel	30
Respondents level of expectations	31
Respondents willingness to return to Ethiopia	31
Respondents willingness to recommend Ethiopia	32
Analysis of Image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from selected destination attributes	33
The image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from open ended questions	36
The image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from Key informant interview	37

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion	38
5.2 Recommendation	41
5.3 Implication of the study	43
5.4 Limitation and suggestion for future studies	44

REFERENCES	46
------------------	----

APPENDIX 1: Tourist survey questionnaires	49
APPENDIX 2: Interview questionnaires	51

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Methods used in destination image research	13
Table 4.1 Sex, Age and Level of Education Distribution of the Sample Respondents	26
Table 4.2 Marital and Employment status of the Sample Respondents	27
Table 4.3 Nationalities of Respondents	28
Table 4.4 Frequency of travel of respondents	28
Table 4.5 Length of stay of respondents	29
Table 4.6 Respondents level of expectations with their trip to Ethiopia	31
Table 4.7 Respondents intention to return	31
Table 4.8 Willingness to recommend Ethiopia to families and friends	32
Table 4.9 The attributes and the responses in percentages	33
Table 4.10 The mean scores of the perceived image of Ethiopia as a tourism destination	35

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1 Stage theories of destination image	10
Figure 4.1 Respondents source of information about Ethiopia	30
Figure 4.2 Respondents purpose of trip to Ethiopia	30

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global industries, creating significant employment and economic development, particularly in many developing countries. Over the last few decades, tourism has become one of the main sectors of the global economy, not only because of its contribution to the Gross Domestic

(GDP) of different countries, but also because of the employment it generates. Since 2009, however, the results of tourism have been severely affected by the economic and financial crisis and it is now essential to analyze the key elements of tourist consumer behavior. In this context, the image that a destination transmits to the market becomes one of the elements which influence tourists the most when choosing a tourist destination (UN World Tourism Organization, 2005).

The tourism industry is based on people having to leave their hometowns to become a customer. In order to be successful, the destinations have to attract customers from other places, regions, countries, and even from other continents, to visit their community (Prebensen, 2007). Recently, tourism has been seen as the driving force for regional development. It is possible to increase destination's tourist receipts, income, employment and government revenues by having a successful tourism industry. How to attract the tourists to visit and revisit the destination is crucial for the success of destination tourism development (Chen and Tsai, 2007). The increasing competitive nature of the tourism industry and changes in tourists' expectations and habits, require tourist destinations to develop an effective marketing plan and strategy (Baloglu and Mangalolu, 2001; Beerli and Martin, 2004). Destinations mainly compete based on their perceived images relative to competitors in the marketplace.

The tourists' perceived images affect the individual's subjective perception, consequent behavior and destination choice, so recognizing the perceived image of a destination is crucially important to become successful (Prebensen, 2007; Gallarza et al. 2002; Hunt, 1975; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). This importance has led to a growing body of research on the tourism destination image. Tourism researchers stated that image is a crucial component among individuals in the process of

selecting a destination (Prebensen, 2007). The purpose of this study was to identify the images of Ethiopia as a tourist destination and its implication for marketing strategy.

The importance of the tourism destination image is universally acknowledged, since it affects the individual's subjective perception and consequent behavior and destination choice. This importance has led to a growing body of research on the tourism destination image. The essential characteristic of the research line is its multidimensionality. Destination image has been a considerable research during the last decades in marketing. Investigation has been commonly based on either effective destination positioning or on the destination selection process. In particular, destination image has had a significant impact on people's selection of the places to visit. Destination image has therefore become important both for practitioners engaged in positioning destination images and for academics trying to gain a deeper understanding of the destination image construct. How to attract the tourists to revisit and/or recommend the destination to others is crucial for the success of destination tourism development (Hunt, 1975).

Though tourism image is critical to the success of any destinations, a lot of qualitative and quantitative studies were made to explore the similarities and differences between the image perceptions of people in many countries. But, few image studies to date have focused specifically on destination's image.

Ethiopia has great, and largely unexploited, tourism potential. Its tourist attractions are many and varied. In terms of cultural tourism, Ethiopia features the richest archeological heritage of any country in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is the home of Lucy, the world's oldest hominid skeleton, has a claim to being the land of the legendary Queen of Sheba and the even more legendary Ark of the Covenant, but also is the beneficiary of the rich heritage of the Axumite Kingdom, the medieval castles of Gondar, the rock hewn churches of Lalibela (the 8th wonder of the world); and the birthplace of coffee with its rich traditions. In fact, Ethiopia has the most World Heritage sites of any country in Africa (10). Ethiopia's natural attractions are equally varied: the source of the Blue Nile; the Rift Valley with its volcanoes, lakes and exotic wildlife; and a topography that ranges from rugged mountains to lowland savannas for the adventure tourist. Despite its huge tourism potential, the number of tourist arrivals to Ethiopia is less compared to the neighboring countries like Kenya and Tanzania. The major reasons include limited marketing and promotion

efforts, inadequate infrastructure, and thereby negative perceptions of tourists (World Bank, 2006).

The tourism industry in Ethiopia has been growing sharply in the past few years. Among its visitors, UK, USA, German, Italy, and France tourists are one of the most important and attractive markets as a top five tourist Generating Country to Ethiopia (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2013). In this study, those tourists' perception of Ethiopia as a tourist destination was assessed.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia's travel and tourism market has enormous potential. Ethiopia has so much to offer visitors; historical and cultural heritages, Historic Route, ancient towns, Christian festivals and relics, palaces, rock hewn churches, mountains, endemic animals, different species of birds and the like. However, despite its huge potential, the travel and tourism market has yet to develop to a point where it can make a significant contribution to Ethiopia's economic development.

A major constraint to the development of travel and tourism is the continuing negative image of Ethiopia in the global community; inadequate tourism marketing strategy present major challenges to development.

Moreover, many tourism literatures reveal that different country's destination image analysis is undertaken through research. However, there are few researches undertaken on Ethiopia's image as a tourist destination (Teshale, 2010). The research focused on exploring demand of Swedish tourists towards Ethiopian tourist destinations. None of them was conducted with the purpose of studying the image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination and its implication for marketing strategy.

Therefore, the study assessed Ethiopia's image as a tourist destination from the perspective of top tourist generating countries of UK, USA, Germany, Italy and France tourists who have been to Ethiopia and visited different tourist attractions of the country.

1.3 Research Questions

In carrying out the study, therefore, an attempt was made to address and seek to answer the following basic questions:

1. What was the image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from the perspective of the top five tourist generating countries of UK, USA, Germany, Italy and France tourists to Ethiopia?
2. How was the performance of Ethiopia as a tourist destination in relation to tourism destination attributes?
3. What were the marketing challenges related to Ethiopia's image as a tourist destination that impede the development of the tourism industry?

1.4 Objective of the study

1.4.1 General Objectives

The general objective of the study was to assess Ethiopia's image as a tourist destination from the perspective of foreign tourists from USA, UK, Germany, Italy and France.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objective of the study consisted:

1. To assess the perceptions, expectations and actual travel experience of visitors that come from UK, USA, German, Italy and France.
2. To assess Ethiopia's performance in relation to tourist destination attributes.
3. To assess the marketing challenges related to the country's image and point out how the challenges will be resolved.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the study

Destination images influence a tourist's travel decision-making, cognition and behavior at a destination as well as satisfaction levels and recollection of the experience. Image will influence a tourist's decision of choosing a destination or a trip, the subsequent evaluation of that trip and his/her future decisions.

Thus the study assessed the image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from the perspectives of UK, USA, German, Italy and France tourists travelling to Ethiopia based on selected attributes. It also assessed travel profile of these tourists to identify characteristics, purpose of visit, length of stay, intention to return, willingness to recommend, expectation and satisfaction. The study respondents were those foreign tourists who visited Ethiopia for leisure or business purpose from February to April through the selected top 20 tour operators by Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the year 2012/2013 G.C.

The data gathering instruments were employed by survey questionnaires and key informant interview. Concerning with interviews it was expected to have a limitation of bias and subjectivity. In addition to this there was document analysis including articles, books, unpublished document and Journals.

There was also a limitation of the study to come across with important documents, previous works related with tourist destination image assessment particularly on assessment of Ethiopia's image as a tourist destination. The study focused on assessment of Ethiopia's image as a tourist destination and its implication for marketing strategy from the perspective of foreign tourists and the result had an important recommendation to develop the tourism industry of the country.

1.6 Significance of the study

The significance of this study was to examine the image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination and thereby the marketing implications to attract other foreign tourists to visit Ethiopia as an internationally competitive tourist destination.

Thus it will also significantly contribute to a greater understanding of perception and travel information for tourism intermediaries including hotels, tour operators, tour guides and other tourist facility providers. Moreover, conducting the study contributed in providing relevant information for tourism policy decision makers, students in tourism, researchers and marketing and promotion companies.

What is more, it would serve as a facilitator for further researchers. Finally, the author hoped that the approach of this thesis would add further applied to study the images of Ethiopia as a tourism destination in other target markets of foreign tourists.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

2.1 Destination Image

Destination image is defined as a compilation of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that people have of a place, and this compilation is based on an information process derived from a variety of information sources over time, resulting in an internally accepted mental construct (Crompton 1985).

Recent studies on image (Baloglu and Mc Cleary, 1999, Gartner, 1993; Walmsley and Young, 1998) tend to define it as a concept formed by the consumer's reasoned and emotional interpretation as a result of two closely interrelated components called perceptive/cognitive evaluations and affective appraisals (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Perceptive/ cognitive evaluations refer to the individual's own knowledge and beliefs about the object (an evaluation of the perceived attributes of the object) whereas affective appraisals are related to an individual's feelings towards the object. From a cognitive point of view, tourist destination image is assessed on a set of attributes that correspond to the resources or attractions that a tourist destination has at its disposal (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Stabler, 1995). In the tourism context, those attractions are the elements of a destination that attract tourists, such as scenery to be seen, activities to take part in, and experiences to remember (Beerli and Martin, 2004).

The combination of these two factors produces an overall or compound image relating to the positive, or negative, evaluation of the product or brand (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Echtner and Richie (1991) argue that many studies on destination image only focus on the attributions, and neglect the important factor of attitudes that significantly shape the holistic image perceived by tourists. Gartner (1993) also shows that most image studies dealing with tourism have employed attribute lists to measure the cognitive component of destination image (Prebensen, 2007). In this study, cognitive component (people's perceptions) and an affective component (people's favor or disfavor) of destination image was taken into account.

Destination image is a valuable concept in understanding the destination selection process of tourists and destination positioning strategy (Goodrich, 1978). Because of the intangible nature of tourism, individuals purchase tourism products based on destination images developed from previous experience or available information. The creation of a distinctive and unique destination

in the tourism industry plays a vital role in positioning the destination in the consumer's mind and holds the key to destination differentiation (Watkins et al. 2006). So, tourist destination images are important because they influence both the decision-making behavior of potential tourists and the levels of satisfaction regarding the tourist experience (Jenkins, 1999). An accurate assessment of destination image is a prerequisite to designing an effective marketing strategy and helps the destination marketer to offer what its visitors are expecting and create more realistic expectations if necessary. Destination images are a major factor forming the link between an individual's motivations and destination selection process (Watkins et al. 2006).

According to Sönmez and Sırakaya (2002), if a destination is interested in developing a sustainable tourism industry in a period of increasing competition, then it needs a clear understanding of tourists' images to develop a successful positioning strategy in the competitive marketplace. The tourist marketer's goal is to match the promoted image and the perceived image in the consumer's mind to avoid a distorted destination image. Indeed, a lack of knowledge of a destination's appeal from the perspective of potential tourist markets hinders the development of a destination's image (Watkins et al. 2006).

A destination's image has been recognized as a complex and important concept in the destination-selection process. In the last three decades tourism researchers as well as industry practitioners and destination marketers have been very interested in measuring a destination's image. In addition, the proper methodology for measuring a destination's image has been the subject of many travel and tourism studies. A destination's image may be analyzed from different perspectives, and composed of a variety of individual perceptions relating to various product/service attributes (Kozak, 2001).

2.2 importance of studying tourist destination image

Tourist destination images are important because they influence both the decision making behavior of potential tourists (Crompton, 1979) and the levels of satisfaction regarding the tourist experience (Chon, 1992). As Mayo (1975) states in his article, the image of a destination area is a critical factor in a tourist's destination choice process. However, whether an image is a true representation of what any given region has to offer the tourist is less important than the mere existence of the image in the mind of the person.

Marketers are interested in the concept of tourist destination image mainly because it relates to decision-making and sales of tourist products and services. According to MacInnis and Price (1987), imagery pervades the whole consumption experience. Before purchase, vicarious consumption may take place through imagery. During consumption, imagery can add value and increase satisfaction. After consumption, imagery can have a reconstructive role in which a person relives the experience via memories and vacation souvenirs. Marketers can also use imagery to increase remembered satisfaction and to encourage repeat purchases of holidays.

Different countries track the images held by potential visitors in the international marketplace. Such tracking studies and market segmentation analyses are used in the design of their promotional campaigns. However, image assessment alone will not guarantee success in new markets because other variables (e.g. access, prices and distance) may be more important in the tourist's overall decision-making process (Ahmed, 1991).

Understanding the image of a destination is essentially important for a destination wishing to influence travelers' decision-making and choice. Researchers and marketers tend to be in consensus about the importance of image for a destination's viability and success in tourism (Gartner, 2007). The perception of destination image relates to decision making and sales of tourist products and services (Jenkins, 1999). Understanding the differing images that visitors and non-visitors have of a destination is invaluable, enabling the salient attributes of the naïve image and the re-evaluated image to be incorporated into tourism marketing planning (Gartner,2007). Batchelor (1999) considers destination image "a key element of the situational analysis, which destination marketing agencies need to undertake," and that it "relates to the market's image or perception of the destination". Gertner & Kotler (2004) hold that since a destination's image is identifiable and changes over time, the marketer must be able to track and influence the image held by different target groups.

2.3 Destination Image Formation

Each person's image of a particular place is unique, comprising their own memories, associations and imaginations of a particular place (Jenkins, 1996). Stabler (1988) divides the factors influencing the formation of a consumers' destination image into demand and supply factors. The demand factors roughly correspond with Gunn's organic image formation, whereas the supply

factors correspond to induced image formation. Various researchers have investigated the factors influencing image formation.

Firstly, regarding the process of forming a destination image, Gunn (1972) holds that destination image is formed in three phases:

Phase 1 - Organic image: The image is based primarily on information assimilated from non-touristic and non-commercial sources, such as the general media (news reports, magazines, books, and movies), education (school courses) and the opinions of family/ friends.

Phase 2 – Induced image: More commercial sources of information, such as travel brochures, travel agents and travel guidebooks, are used. As a result of accessing these additional sources of information, the organic image (Phase 1) may be altered.

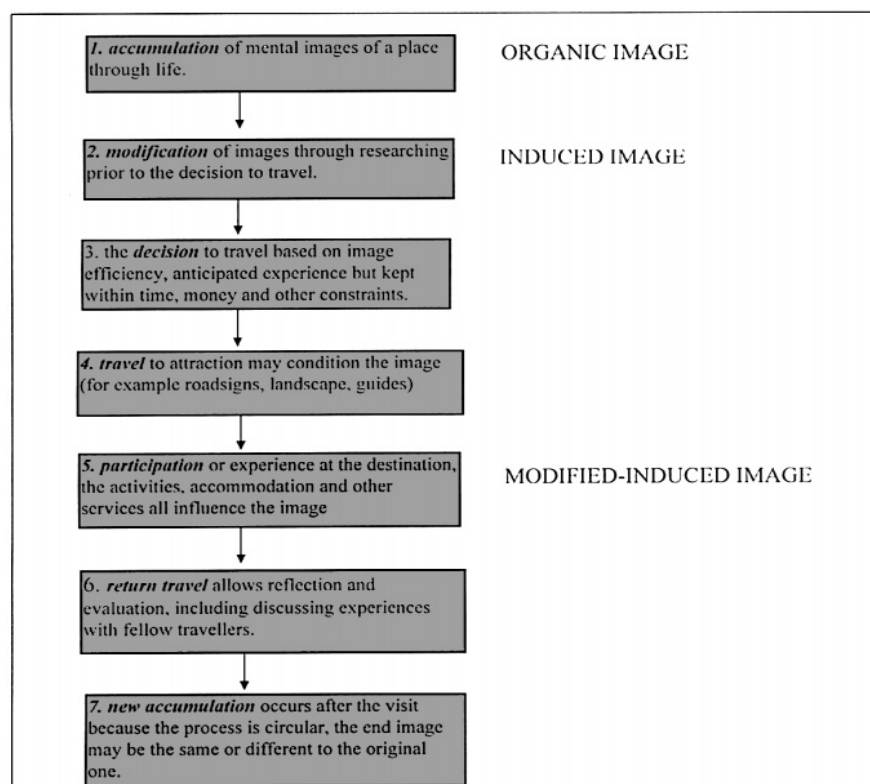
Phase 3 – Modified image: Actual experience modifies the destination image formed by the previous phases. Much research indicates that as a result of visiting the destination, images tend to be more realistic, complex, and differentiated (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003).

Secondly, referring to the concept of destination image, Echtner & Ritchie (2003) present a comprehensive survey of the definitions provided in the major destination image studies, and introduces the most common definitions of destination image. These include: perceptions held by potential visitors about an area; organized representations of a destination in a cognitive system; the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has of a destination; perceptions or impressions of a place; how a country is perceived relative to others; impressions that a person holds about a place in which they do not reside; perceptions of vacation attributes; a complex combination of various products and associated attributes; perceptions of potential tourist destinations; and the total impression an entity makes. Furthermore, Echtner and Ritchie (2003) provide a comprehensive definition as follows: [Tourism] destination image is defined as not only the perceptions of individual destination attributes but also the holistic impression made by the destination. Destination images consist of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects. Furthermore, destination images can be arranged on a continuum ranging from traits which can be commonly used to compare all destinations to those which are unique to very few destinations.

In the initial development stage of constructing a theoretical framework, Gunn's (1972) seven-stage theory is useful (see Figure 1). The theory involves a constant building and modification of images, which are conceived as being made up of organic or naive non tourist information about

the destination (e.g. from television documentaries, books, school lessons and stories of friends' experiences), induced or promoted information (e.g. travel brochures, publicity and advertisements) and modified induced images, which are the result of personal experience of the destination. Stage theory implies that the images held by potential visitors, non-visitors and returned visitors will differ (Gunn, 1972). There is support for this theory in the results of several studies showing that images held by returned visitors tend to be more realistic, complex and differentiated (Pearce, 1982, 1988; Chon, 1990, 1992). In contrast, Phelps (1986,) found that images of a destination may fade or revert over time, especially if intervening visits to other similar factors influencing image formation. For example, Hunt (1975) and Scott et al. (1978) showed that destination image formation is determined partly by distance from the destination, because people are more likely to have visited the destinations near their homes and to have been exposed to information about them through the media and from friends and relatives. They concluded that people are likely to have stronger and more realistic images of a destination if it is near their home.

Figure 2.1: Stage-theories of destination image



Source: Gunn, 1972

2.4 Destination Image Measurement

An accurate assessment of image is a key to designing an effective marketing and positioning strategy (Baloglu and Mangalolu, 2001). Baloglu and McCleary's model (1999) suggests that destination image comprises cognitive/perceived components, and affective components. Measurements of cognitive components mainly concentrate on destination attribute perception measurement. Perceptions represent tourist's knowledge about destination's attributes. Affective components involve the individual's evaluation about object or environment and generally reflect a person's positive or negative, like or dislike, active or deactivate attitudes about a certain object or destination (Russell and Pratt, 1980). Affective and cognitive images are distinct but also hierarchically related (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999). These two components complete the function of a destination image (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999).

There are number of scales proposed to measure destination image in the literature (Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1977, 1978; Crompton, 1979; Phelps, 1986; Gartner and Hunt, 1987).

Many of these scales are the result of exploratory qualitative studies that identified the important attributes and determinants of the tourist destination image perceived by individuals. These qualitative studies, based on unstructured interviews and focus group, have focused both on the general public and professionals from the tourism sector. Additionally, a review of a promotional material from the tourist destination being studied was, on many occasions, carried out before identifying the relevant attributes (Beerli and Martin, 2004).

The failure of most studies to address the holistic components of destination image is related to the methods used by researchers (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991). There has been concentrate on the attribute component of destination image. The use of structured methods, such as Likert and semantic differential scales, requires an individual to rate a set of pre-determined attributes subjectively, or to characterize stimuli using standardized rating scales. Average ratings, multidimensional scaling or factor analysis are used to reduce the semantic scores to a smaller number of independent underlying perceptual dimensions. Unless care is taken compiling the list of attributes, some or all of these attributes might be totally unimportant to the individual, or important attributes may be missing. The advantages and disadvantages of structured and unstructured methods are compared in Table 2.1.

The dominance of structured techniques in image research, especially those relying on word-based scales, has also led to a concentration on verbal over visual techniques in research. Pearce and Black (1996) note that tourism researchers have 'yet to incorporate the visual domain into the methodological armory of their own research practices' and that, as academics, 'our own familiarity with texts and words predisposes us to use these forms of presentation in our studies; a practice that may well be out of step with the experiences of an increasing number of visitors whose world is increasingly dominated by visual images'. Researchers need to begin to think creatively about using maps and photographs to aid visitor recall and generate richer data (Pearce and Black, 1996).

Lew (1994) asserts that most studies of tourist attractions and the attractiveness of places to tourists can be classified into one or other of three general perspectives: ideographic listing, organization, and tourist cognition of attractions. Each of these perspectives raises a distinct set of questions concerning the nature of the attractions, as expressed through the typologies used in their evaluation. At the same time, all three perspectives make comparisons based on the historical, locational, and various valuational aspects of attractions. More specifically, Echtner & Ritchie (1991 & 1993) recommend a framework to measure destination image comprehensively. In this framework, components that must be captured include attribute-based images, holistic impressions, and functional, psychological, unique and common characteristics. They hold that a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies is necessary to measure destination image. A series of open-ended questions and scale items need to be developed to successfully capture all of the components of destination image.

In more detail, Jenkins (1999) reviews different techniques for measurement of tourism destination image after Echtner & Ritchie (1991), compares the advantages and disadvantages of structured and unstructured methods as in Table 2.1, and highlights the dominance of a structured, word-based approach. He argues that to achieve valid image research, a preliminary phase of qualitative research is important in order to distil the constructs relevant to the population being studied. The frequently used techniques of construct elicitation include free-elicitation, interactive interviewing, focus group interviewing, and photo elicitation.

Table 2.1 Methods used in destination image research: structured versus unstructured

Structured

Various common image attributes are specified and incorporated into a standardized instrument and the respondent rates each destination on each of the attributes, resulting in an 'image profile'

Unstructured

The respondent is allowed to share his or her impressions of the destination. Data are gathered from a number of respondents. Sorting and categorization techniques are then used to determine the 'image dimensions'

Structured - Techniques: Usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales

Unstructured – Techniques: Focus groups, open-ended survey questions, content analysis, repertory grid.

Structured- Advantages

- Easy to administer
- Simple to code
- Results easy to analyse using sophisticated statistical techniques
- Facilitates comparisons between Destinations

Unstructured- Advantages

- Reduces interviewer bias
- Reduces likelihood of missing important image dimensions or components
- Conducive to measuring the holistic components of destination image

Structured -Disadvantages

- Does not incorporate holistic aspects of
- Attribute focused - that is, it forces the image in terms of the attributes specified
- The completeness of structured methods can be variable -it is possible to miss dimensions.

Unstructured- Disadvantages

- Level of detail provided by respondents is image highly variable
- Statistical analyses of the results are respondent to think about the product limited
- Comparative analyses are not facilitated.

Source: Echtner and Ritchie, 1991

1.5 Destination Drivers/Attributes

Destination drivers are those attributes of the destination that can be associated with the destination and that correspond with the values and actual needs of prospective tourists and have the likelihood of evoking an image that will stimulate tourist's interest to visit such a destination. The commonly attractive attributes identified in table 2 received much attention in tourism literature. Many studies examined the attractiveness of attributes associated with certain destinations, including studies by Richards (2004), Hu & Ritchie (1993) and Klenosky (2002). However, as most tourism studies are dominated by the developed countries, namely, countries in Europe, America and Canada, it is difficult empirical studies in the context of Ethiopia. In order to provide a reference for follow-up study of this paper, the broader review of destination attributes under the international context is necessary to find frequently used destination attributes in previous studies.

Common attributes used by researchers to measure destination image

- ✓ Scenery/natural attractions
- ✓ Hospitality/friendliness/receptiveness
- ✓ Climate
- ✓ Costs/price levels
- ✓ Nightlife/entertainment
- ✓ Sports facilities/activities
- ✓ Shopping facilities
- ✓ Personal safety
- ✓ Different cuisine/food/drink
- ✓ Restful/relaxing
- ✓ Historic sites/museums
- ✓ Accommodation facilities
- ✓ Different customs/culture
- ✓ Tourist sites/activities
- ✓ Local infrastructure/transportation
- ✓ National parks/wilderness areas
- ✓ Architecture/buildings
- ✓ Beaches

- ✓ Crowdedness
- ✓ Cleanliness
- ✓ Opportunity for adventure
- ✓ Facilities for information/tours
- ✓ Opportunity to increase knowledge
- ✓ Quality of service
- ✓ Fairs/exhibitions/festivals
- ✓ Political stability
- ✓ Fame/reputation/fashion

Source: Echtner and Ritchie (1991)

Most of the frequently used attributes have been identified as commonly attractive attributes in the above list. However, this does not mean these attributes are important to every destination. Not all destinations share the same important attributes. Some destinations may have some special attributes specifically associated with themselves. Thus, the frequently used attributes identified above must be analyzed with regards to suitability for Ethiopia. Moreover, an effort should be made to identify whether there is/are other attribute(s) out of the above list, which could be important to Ethiopia.

2.7 The image of countries

Every place has an image. People have an image of countries that can be brought forth by simply saying their names. A country's image can be formed from many sources (Kotler and Gertner, 2002) among other things it results from a country's geography, history, proclamations, art and music and famous citizens. The entertainment industry and the media play a large part when it comes to shaping people's perceptions of countries, especially those viewed negatively (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). People routinely use these perceptions to make sense of the world around them by associating them with, for example, objects, events, experiences, products and persons (Kotler and Gertner, 2002). The image of a country is likely to influence people's decisions related to purchasing products, investing in, changing residence and travelling to that country (Kotler and Gertner, 2002).

2.8 Destinations as products

The tourist destination comprises a number of elements which in combination attract visitors to stay for a holiday (Lumsdon, 1997).

Crouch and Ritchie (1999) divide destinations' core resources and attractors into six categories, physiography (overall nature of the landscape, the climate and visual appeal of the destination), culture and history, market ties, activities, special events and tourism superstructure. Lumsdon (1997) divides destinations into four core elements, which are prime attractors, built environment, supporting supply services and atmosphere. Let's look at Lumsdon's (1997) categorization in more detail.

Prime attractors are the main attractors which appeal to the visitor and which differentiate one destination from another. Prime attractors can be natural or manmade. Examples of main attractors are the Acropolis in Athens, the pyramids in Egypt, the Niagara Falls in the USA and the Taj Mahal in India.

Built environment comprises the physical layout of a destination and includes waterfronts, promenades, historic quarters and commercial zones. Major elements of infrastructure such as road and rail networks, open spaces and communal facilities are also part of this category. Examples of built environments are the Boston Waterfront, the London Docklands, the Venetian Canals and the Roman Quarter in Paris.

Supporting supply services are essential at all destinations. They are facilitating services such as accommodation, communications, transport, restaurants, entertainment and amenities.

The sociocultural dimensions of atmosphere and ambiance make up the cultural attributes of a destination. These attributes are the bridges between past and present, the mood ranging from sleepy to vibrant and the degree of friendliness and cohesion between the host community and visitors. Architectural style, natural setting, how local building materials are used, cultural diversity, social values and public environments are also part of these cultural attributes and have been referred to as the sense of place. Examples of the sociocultural dimension are the chaotic traffic of Delhi in India, the salsa music of La Habana, Cuba and the friendliness of the Greek islands (Lumsdon, 1997). The socio-cultural elements must be authentic. It can have a negative effect on the tourists' experience with the destination if they see them as being staged. It's evident that new sophisticated consumers seek authentic and unique experiences (Lumsdon, 1997).

The three elements that have the most influence on a destination and are the substance of the core offering are the natural resources, the climate and the culture (Lumsdon, 1997). The cultural element seems to be growing in significance for many tourists, who feel too many destinations resemble one another. Thus, if a destination can provide visitors with a unique setting to experience lifestyle outside of their everyday routine, it has a clear competitive advantage (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999).

Most destinations can be classified into several categories based on their main attractions. Urban destinations attract business and leisure travelers. They have good tourist facilities like conference and exhibition halls, shops, restaurants, entertainment and transportation and accommodation infrastructure. Seaside destinations traditionally serve tourists on holiday by offering sea, sun and sand. Alpine destinations attract leisure travelers for winter sports such as skiing. They also attract tourists who appreciate natural attractions in all seasons. Lakes and scenic landscapes make alpine resorts increasingly popular for conference and incentive tourism. Rural destinations are developing rapidly. They take advantage of travelers desire to go back to nature and experience authentic agricultural processes. Authentic (often third world) destinations are often off the beaten track. There travelers enjoy authentic experiences in a setting that has limited tourism development. Some destinations are branded unique/exotic/exclusive as they are regarded to offer a unique and precious experience and are promoted as a once in a lifetime experience (Lumsdon, 1997). A destination can be regarded as a combination of all products, services and experiences provided at the destination. These can be accommodation, entertainment (theatres, galleries, clubs, concerts, cinemas and casinos), events (world fairs, carnivals, major sports events and festivals), restaurants and catering, visitor attractions (nature reserves and country parks, museums and theme parks), retailing, transportation services and public goods (landscape, scenery, sea, lakes, sociocultural surroundings, atmosphere) (Lumsdon, 1997). All these are branded together under the name of the destination (Lumsdon, 1997). Many of the elements that make up a destination are external factors that marketers are not in a position to control or change (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999). Because destinations are controlled by parties in both the public and private sector, changing what a destination has to offer is a complicated task (Lumsdon, 1997).

The discussion above shows that destination product characteristics are complex and multidimensional (Gartner, 1989). What adds to this complexity is the intangibility of the product and the fact that the consumers have to move to where the product is consumed (Lumsdon, 1997).

2.9 Marketing of Tourism Destination

Marketing is all about finding out customers' needs and wants. By knowing customers' needs and wants, it is easier for the marketer to plan how to fill these needs and wants.

According to Holloway (2004) "Marketing is all about anticipating demand, recognizing it, stimulating it and finally satisfying it." Marketing is a way of making a profit from the products and services. That means that marketing also involves both pricing and promoting the products and services (Holloway, 2004).

In a marketing concept destination images are built on unique attributes which the destination can claim. The more these unique attributes help to distinguish the destination from similar destinations the greater the attraction of the destination to tourists will be.

It is important for marketers to evaluate their destination's image, so that they can determine how it can be enhanced. Destinations with stronger positive images are chosen (Holloway, 2004). What is important to remember is that the images of a destination are developed of people's personal characteristics like their motivation and past experience.

Destinations are seen much more as intangible services than actual products, in that sense the images that tourists have about a destination affect their travel destination decisions. According to Laws (1995): "Successful destination marketing entails projecting a clear image to chosen target markets, and offering clients satisfying product experiences which meet their expectations." If the images that tourists have do not match with the marketing strategies, the marketing strategies should be thought over.

Destination marketing is successful when both tourists and marketers' image of the destination matches together. These images should always be positive and attractive in the minds of the tourists. Thus destination marketers have to know how tourists see the destination, especially what are the most attractive qualities of the destination before they start promoting it. According to Laws (1995): "For a destination to be successful in the eyes of potential tourists it is important to know the key things that attract tourists to a destination." (Laws, 1995)

Tourism image is based on "picture", which is identified with the destinations appealing factor or factors. In marketing context images are built around the unique attributes that the destination has to offer. When a destination can distinguish itself from other similar destinations, the greater the attractions of the destination are to the tourists. In most cases destination image should be inducted by the tourist office to separate the destination from the similar ones in a way that it

becomes more attractive than its similar competitors. For example it is not enough for a seaside resort to offer good hotels and beaches, it should have something extra. (Holloway, 2002)

For a destination to become successful it should differentiate itself from other similar destinations. There is a need for marketers to research images held by potential tourists about the destination, since if the images are not realistic marketers should plan a strategy to move the images closer to reality. The first step is to figure out the desired image, which has to be feasible in relation to present resources and reality. Then the image held by potential tourists should be assessed to get accurate and current results.

The gaps between the desired image and images held by potential tourists should be identified. Images are not changed rapidly, since people have difficulties changing their pre-existing perceptions. “In marketing it is important to realize that consumer acts or reacts on basis of their perceptions, not on the basis of objective reality.” (MacDonagh, 2002) .Actual experience of the destination is been shown as most effective image modifier. There are marketing means to correct negative images into positive. One way of changing tourists’ image perception of a destination to both appealing and truthful is by using branding as a technique. (Lumsdom, 1997) Reasons for branding a destination are on one hand to help build a desirable image that can attract tourists and on the other hand to differentiate one’s destinations from competitors. Branding helps to attract tourists, who spend more and to manage image. The key in branding a tourism destination is to develop an emotional link to tourists and to define the unique identity of the destination (Lumsdom, 1997).

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative approach was implemented jointly. Such kind of strategy enabled to get more comprehensive information in the field.

As stated by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) destination image is best measured using a combination of both structured and unstructured techniques and thus the aim of this study is to employ both techniques. The unstructured scale was used to find the holistic image of Ethiopia. The structured measurement scale was used to find the image of Ethiopia according to attributes.

The research design for this study adopted a similar approach to the system of measurement developed by Echtner and Ritchie (1993); that was, a set of scales to measure the attribute-based components of that image (quantitative). In addition, it used a number of open-ended questions to measure the holistic components of Ethiopia's tourism destination image (qualitative).

Echtner and Ritchie's study (1993) contained a list of 35 possible attributes; however, Jenkins (1999) reviewed 28 studies and found that 48 attributes were employed. In this study, certain attributes were developed to measure the images of Ethiopia held by foreign tourists. The choice of these attributes were based on the review of Echtner and Ritchie's Model (1991, 1993) and Jenkins (1999); and pilot test of preliminary questionnaire and content analysis of some websites and brochures of tour operators. It is argued that respondents can find it difficult to respond to a large number of attributes and may be uninterested by the whole questionnaire, which makes the response rate low. Therefore, attributes were selected that were found sufficient to measure the perceptions of foreign tourists about Ethiopia as a tourist destination.

3.2 Data source and instruments of data collection

Primary and secondary data was employed and both qualitative (key informant interview) and quantitative (visitor survey questionnaires) were used.

3.3. Primary Data Collection

Concerning the primary data the following techniques was used.

3.3.1 Tourist Questionnaires Survey

In the questionnaires survey, both open and closed ended questions were used to gather data from the representative 97 samples of foreign tourists, who have been visiting Ethiopia from February to April, 2014. In the survey, background information, length of stay, purpose of travel, source of travel information, perceptions, expectations, importance of destination attributes, and respondents' perception towards Ethiopia's image as tourist destination.

To identify the performance of Ethiopia in relation to the attributes, the respondents were asked to express their reactions to the statements about the attributes by choosing Likert scale numbers, from one (1), "strongly disagree" to five (5), "strongly agree".

Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to respondents through the selected top 20 tour operators.

3.3.2 Key Informant interview

Open ended questions were used to get information from selected samples of tourism experts from Ministry of Culture and Tourism, tour operators and travel agents, tour guides, and marketing experts. The participants consisted of 10 individuals that the researcher purposefully selected believing to get adequate information. Moreover the key informants were selected based on their rich experience of the tourism industry. This key informant interview included general assessment of foreign tourists' image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination, and marketing efforts to improve the image of the country.

3.4. Secondary Data Collection

Secondary sources both published and unpublished were used to make the thesis realistic i.e. books, annual reports, annual plans, and others; the data were collected from tourism organizations, tourist information center, websites, tour operators and travel agents.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study applied purposive sampling technique. According to Ministry of Culture and Tourism annual report in the year 2012/2013 G.C, there were 360 legally registered tour operators that were based in Addis Ababa. Among these, MOCT listed top 20 tour operators based on sales volume and number of tourist arrivals for the year 2012/2013 G.C. Thus the researcher selected the listed top 20 tour operators by using purposive sampling technique to contact sampling respondents.

Since accurate size of the population cannot be easily ascertained, a probability sampling procedure could not be used. Instead, a purposive sampling method was employed to select the sample by targeting respondents that meet the following inclusion criteria:

- (1) Foreign tourists who visited Ethiopia for leisure or business
- (2) Who stayed for at least one day but less than one year
- (3) Who were above the age of 18
- (4) Who visited Ethiopia from UK, USA, Germany, France and Italy through the selected top 20 tour operators in the months of February to April

Based on the data that can be available from February 1 to April 30, 2014 G.C, there were 1471 foreign tourists who full filled the sampling criteria that had been visited the country through those selected top 20 tour operators (Ministry of culture and tourism,2014).

The number of respondents representative sample size was 97 using the following sample size determination formula adapted from Israel (1992).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where; N = the total population

n = the required sample size

e = the precision level which is = ($\pm 10\%$)

Where Confidence Level is 95% at $P = \pm 5$ (maximum variability).

The sample size was strategically important since these tour operators brought tourists from the top five tourist generating countries and they had adequate number of tourists to visit Ethiopia in the period the research was going to be conducted.

Thus the researcher targeted to contact a considerable number of participants to distribute the survey questionnaires. Considering this, the sample size was determined by using the above formula as of 97 tourist sample survey was conducted.

3.6 Methods of data analysis

After data gathering all information was be coded and entered into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0 for analysis. The results of analysis were interpreted and discussed using descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, and standard deviation). The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The qualitative data was analyzed by triangulation methods for the data gathered through open ended tourist survey questionnaires and key informant interview questions. Moreover, supported secondary sources were used for analysis of the qualitative data.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Findings

Basic requirement for a good research is that it gives reliable answers to research questions.

The research should be conducted truthfully, objectively and in a way that does not cause harm for the respondents (Heikkilä, 1998).

Most research studies, either qualitative or quantitative, strive to attain validity and reliability.

‘Validity concerns the soundness, legitimacy and relevance of a research theory and its investigation Reliability refers to repeatability or consistency of a finding...’ (Mikkelsenx, 1995).

Validity refers to how much it has measured what it was supposed to measure (Heikkilä, 1998).

Validity means that the data collected through the questionnaires will be accurate and it will ensure that the researcher will be able to draw the correct conclusions. In rough, validity means the lack of systematic error. Research should measure exactly what it is supposed to measure. To avoid searching for the wrong things, the researcher should set specific goals for the research. Validity is difficult to research afterwards, so it has to be checked in advance by carefully planned and well considered data collection (Heikkilä, 1998).

Reliability means research results’ accuracy. The research results cannot be random. Repeatability to get similar results is a one requirement for a reliable research. The researcher has to be sharp and critical throughout the whole research process. There should not be any mistakes in collecting, entering, processing or interpreting the results. Most important for the

researcher is to interpret the results right and use analyzing methods that he or she masters well (Heikkilä, 1998).

Research has to be as well as valid and reliable also objective. The researcher cannot allow his or her political or ethical beliefs to affect the research process (Heikkilä, 1998).

The use of multiple methods or different sources of information allowed the study to address the research questions and cross-check information exhaustively. Moreover, efforts were made to ensure that both validity and reliability of the empirical data can be taken into consideration.

The researcher tested the questionnaire to make sure that the questions were relevant and would give enough information to answer the research questions. The researcher interpreted the results objectively and reliably.

Triangulation was the approach to be taken to ensure that both validity and reliability of the research findings was ascertained. Through triangulation different sources of information were adopted. The content of the questionnaire were written in English that most tourists know the language and in order to prevent misunderstanding from respondents' side; it means that respondents clearly understood the content and meaning of each question. Besides, the researcher was knowledgeable enough of English language and could help respondents if they had some problems understanding the questions.

Overall, respondents had enough time to answer the questionnaire. Respondents had time to read the questions carefully. Every questionnaire was complete, so it meant that every question was answered. In addition, respondents were expected to answer the questions honestly, because the researcher informed them in advance that there was no right or wrong answers and the questionnaire was anonymous. There were 97 foreign tourists participated in the survey. The number of respondent was very small, comparing to the total number of tourists visiting Ethiopia. Therefore, it might lead to some less accurate data and the result could not be generalized as a perception of the majority of foreign tourists. Surely, it was impossible to get the opinions of all the tourists from abroad, who visited Ethiopia. There was also a possibility that the results might be different, in case there were more participants.

Over the time the result of research might slightly change, because as it was already mentioned in the introduction, foreign tourists from different countries visited Ethiopia very often. Therefore, they may have already well-established and formed image of Ethiopia. Challenges encountered in the study were unavoidable.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has introduced the research method of this study in detail, with special focus on the hypotheses research design and methodology. A questionnaire survey is conducted to collect primary data.

This chapter focuses on analysis of the data and discussing the research findings of the study. In this chapter, the result from the surveys was presented. First, the results from the structured survey was laid out. Then the results from the unstructured survey will be presented. Statistical analysis was done by using the SPSS version 16.0.

4.2 General Characteristics of the Sample Population

The findings from the qualitative and quantitative data sets have been analyzed, integrated and are presented in this chapter as of the 97 sample tourists collected from the selected top 5 tourist generating countries.

Individual's personal factors play an important role in the formation of destination image. From the perspective of consumer behavior, personal factors involve the sociodemographic characteristics of individuals involving, gender, age, level of education and others. For the purpose of this research, it would be useful to assert the samples demographic profile involving age and gender which might influence the results obtained in this study.

4.2.1. General Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1 Sex, Age and Level of Education Distribution of the Sample Respondents

Answer			TOTAL	
Gender	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Male	35	37.1	35	36.1
Female	61	62.9	61	62.9
Total	97	100	97	100
Age	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
18-30	68	70.1	68	70.1
31-40	7	7.2	7	7.2
41-60	5	5.2	5	5.2
Above 60	17	17.5	17	17.5
Total	97	100	97	100
Education Status	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Student	12	12.4	12	12.4
Diploma	5	5.2	5	5.2
Degree	16	16.5	9	11.2
Masters	59	60.8	59	60.8
PHD	4	4.1	4	4.1
Other	1	1.0	1	1.0
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: Own Survey, May 2014

The sample populations were 97 which were from the selected top five tourist generating countries that visit Ethiopia through selected best 20 Tour operators. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that the gender of the respondents was not evenly distributed with 37.1% being male and 62.9% female. The general profile was collected on the area of sex, age, education levels, marital status, purpose of travel and source of information. The purpose of the general profile of the respondents was to know about the participants responding to the questionnaire.

The characteristics of the sample survey respondents are listed by count, percent, mean and standard deviation.

Table 4.1 presented the characteristics of the survey respondent on the area of sex, age, and marital status. The age structures of sample respondents that is, their maximum and minimum ages are 60 and 18 years respectively.

The large number of the respondents (70.1%) belongs to the age category ranging between 18 to 30 years. The sample respondents between 31 to 40 years old are 7.2 % and only 5% belonged to the 41 to 60 years age group. The remaining 17.5 % were those aged above 60 years. The mean age of the total sample respondent is 39 years.

Most of the respondents were well educated. Based on the survey result, in terms of educational background of the sample respondents the Master’s degree percent is high. It accounts 60.8 % (59). The remaining sample respondents are 12.4 % students, 16.5 % degree holders, 60.8% masters holders, 4.1% PHD holders, and 1% others respectively.

4.2.2 Distribution of Marital and Employment Status of the Sample Respondents

Table 4.2 Marital and Employment status of the Sample Respondents

Answers	Marital Status		TOTAL	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Married	19	19.6	19	19.6
Single	69	71.1	69	71.1
Divorced	9	9.3	9	9.3
Separated	-	-	-	-
Total	97	100	97	100
Employment status				
Student	64	66.0	64	66.0
Employed	26	26.8	26	26.8
Unemployed	-	-	-	-
Retired	7	7.2	7	7.2
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: Own survey, May 2014

The marital status of the total respondents’ survey shows that 71.1% (69) are single and 19.6% (19) are married. The remaining 9.3% are divorced. Moreover, the employment status of respondents consisted, 66% students, 26.8% employed and 7.2% retired respectively.

4.2.3 Distribution of respondents with country of origin

Table 4.3 Nationalities of Respondents

Answers	Country of Origin		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
USA	21	21.6	21	21.6
UK	27	27.8	27	27.8
Germany	9	9.3	9	9.3
Italy	31	32.0	31	32.0
France	9	9.3	9	9.3
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: Own survey, May 2014

With regard to the geographical distribution of respondents, primary data were based on the nationality of the top five tourist generating countries to Ethiopia that visited the country through selected top 20 tour operators. However, as respondents were widely distributed in those countries, the data had to be transferred into different tour companies. Out of the sample size, respondents from Italy (32.0%) were the dominating tourists, it followed by the United Kingdom tourists (27.8%), United States of America (21.6%), Germany (9.3%) and France (9.3%).

4.3 Analysis of Respondents travel information, travel experience and expectation

4.3.1 Respondents frequency of visit to Ethiopia

Table 4.4 Frequency of travel of respondents

Answers			Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
For the first time	83	85.6	83	85.6
1 times	7	7.2	7	7.2
2 Times	6	6.2	9	9.3
3 Times	-	-	-	-
4 Times	-	-	-	-
5 Times or more	1			
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: Own survey, May 2014

The information shown above in Table 4.4 indicates that while seven tourists (7.2 %) have travelled to Ethiopia one time prior to this trip, for the majority of tourists (85.6%) it is their first trip to Ethiopia.

The remaining (6.2%) indicated that they had visited Ethiopia twice before. Thus, the result showed better promotional and marketing program is vital to attract those potential tourists.

4.3.2 Respondents' Length of stay

Table 4.5 Length of stay of respondents

Answers	Length of stay		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
7 days or less	4	4.1	4	4.1
8-14 days	33	34.0	33	34.0
15-21 days	60	61.9	60	6.9
22-30 days	-	-	-	-
1-2 months	-	-	-	-
2 months or more	-	-	-	-
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: Own survey, May 2014

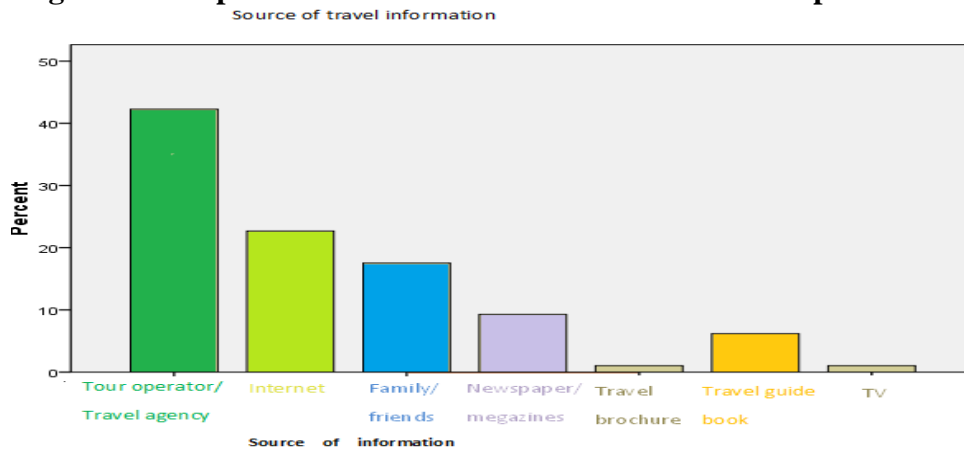
Majority of the respondents (61.9%) 60 visited the country for 15 to 21 days, 34% (33) respondents visited Ethiopia for 8 to 14 days. The remaining 4.1 % (4) tourists visited for 7 days or less. But the number of tourists who are interested to stay for more than 22 to 30 days, 1-2 months, 2 months or more is insignificant.

When the participants were asked to answer what kinds of Ethiopian tourism supply inspired them, they jointly replied that they simply visit Ethiopia for culture and history tours. However, after their trip to the country, they were fascinated by the culture and history of different tribes, nature of the wonderful Semien Mountain (Chilada Babun, Walia Ibex, Birds and plants), Labella Rock hewn churches, the presence of Lucy and friendly people. Generally speaking, they said that they have been there because of history and culture but not for safari, adventure, luxury and beach.

4.3.3 Respondents' source of information about Ethiopia

Understanding how customers acquire information is important for marketing management decisions. This is especially true for services, travel and tourism products. The questionnaire included a question about source of information about Ethiopia and respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer. Therefore, the decision makers, planners, and marketers in Ethiopia should focus on the above mentioned types of marketing tools while targeting the potential tourists.

Figure 4.1 Respondents source of information about Ethiopia



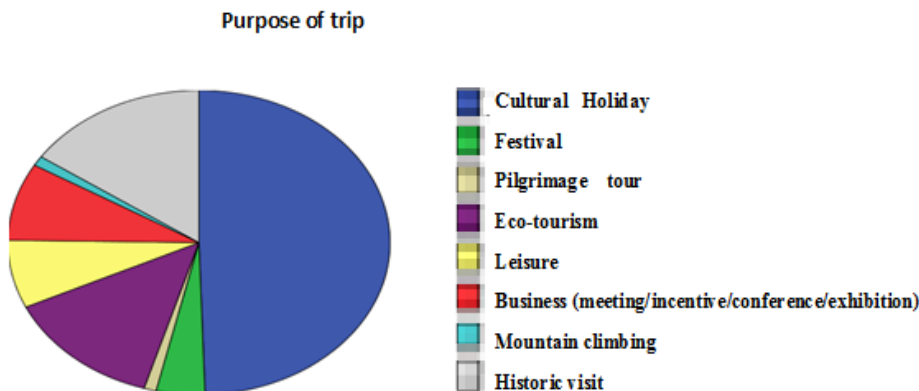
Source: own survey, May 2014

The multiple choice questions required the respondents to mention the sources, from which they get information about Ethiopia. The results in the above diagram showed that Tour operators/Travel Agents are the main media mentioned, followed by internet, family or friends newspapers or magazine, travel guide books, travel brochure and Television.

4.3.4 Respondents' Purpose of travel

With reference to the purpose of visits, respondents in this study predominantly visited for cultural holiday (49.5%). Leisure tourists accounted for 13.4% respondents. The study indicated that some of the visitors were not pure tourists. Their purpose to visit Ethiopia was not only for travel, but also for other purposes such as business, conference, or visit friends/relatives.

Figure 4.2 Respondents purpose of trip to Ethiopia



Source: Own survey, May 2014

4.3.5 Respondents level of expectations

One question asked participants about their satisfaction with the trip to Ethiopia up to the time of evaluation. The results can be seen in Table 4.6

As the table shows, few tourists found their trip to Ethiopia to be less enjoyable than expected. Thus the majority of respondents (49.5%) were satisfied with their trip to Ethiopia.

Table 4.6 Respondents level of expectations with their trip to Ethiopia

Answers	Level of expectation		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Completely	48	49.5	48	49.5
For the greater part	42	43.3	42	43.3
Partly	7	7.2	7	7.2
Not really	-	-	-	-
Absolutely not	-	-	-	-
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: Own survey, May 2014

4.3.6 Respondents willingness to return to Ethiopia

Table 4.7 Respondents intention to return

Answers	Intention to return		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	8	8.2	8	8.2
Disagree	4	4.1	4	4.1
Neither agree nor disagree	45	46.4	45	46.4
Agree	26	26.8	-	-
Strongly agree	14	14.4	-	-
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: Own survey, May 2014

The research has requested the whole tourists whether they are planning to visit Ethiopia or not in the next 1-5 years. From this question, forty five tourists (46.4%) replied that they are neutral to return to visit Ethiopia, but twenty six (26.8%) tourists agreed that they will visit Ethiopia in the next 1-5 years. Moreover, eight tourists (8.2%) and four (4.1%) tourists strongly disagreed and disagreed to return for visit to Ethiopia respectively. The remaining 14 tourists (14.4%) strongly agreed to return in the next 1-5 years.

4.3.7 Respondents willingness to recommend Ethiopia

The result shows that about 38.1% of participants would recommend Ethiopia as a tourist destination to families and friends.

Table 4.8 Willingness to recommend Ethiopia to families and friends

Answers	Likely to return		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	6.2	6	6.2
Disagree	-	-	-	-
Neither agree nor disagree	-	-	-	-
Agree	54	38.1	54	38.1
Strongly agree	37	38.1	37	38.1
Total	97	100	97	100

Source: own survey, May 2014

Results also indicated that most tourists are satisfied with Ethiopia as a tourist destination, since their trip to Ethiopia matches or exceed their expectations. This refers to the trip as a whole (overall satisfaction) but not individual products or services (attribute satisfaction).

However, overall satisfaction can have an influence on attribute satisfaction as previously mentioned. It is positive that 49.5% of the participants perceive the trip completely meets their expectations and only 7.2% report the trip partly met their expectations.

The results also indicate that tourists in general can be loyal to Ethiopia as a tourist destination as seen by the fact that majority of them would see themselves buying the product (the destination Ethiopia) within the next five years. The majority of them can also see themselves recommending the product to friends and relatives. So tourists who are likely to return to Ethiopia are also willing to recommend to friends and family as a tourist destination or vice versa.

4.3 Analysis of Image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from selected destination attributes

A list of 20 attributes in combination with six open questions, were used to measure the image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination. A 5 point scale was used to describe the closest feeling of the responders to each attribute: 1 represented the closest answer to the negative aspect and 5 the closest aspect to the positive aspect. The responses (in percentages) are presented in table 4.9.

Table 4.9 The attributes and the responses in percentages

Attributes	%				
	1	2	3	4	5
Ethiopia is rich in unique culture and history	6.2	6.2	-	27.8	59.8
Prices/costs of services is fair(good value for money)	6.2	1.0	30.9	21.6	40.2
You can have many new experiences in Ethiopia	-	6.2	5.2	42.3	46.4
Ethiopian people are friendly and hospitable	6.2	6.2	8.2	35.1	37.1
Ethiopia has many beautiful scenery/natural attractions	-	-	6.2	30.9	62.9
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Ethiopia	-	10.3	36.1	17.5	36.1
Ethiopia offers special events and activities (e.g., events and activities unusually held, celebrations, festivals)	6.2	19.6	17.5	40.2	16.5
There are many good facilities for shopping in Ethiopia	6.2	35.1	40.2	17.5	1.0
You are safe while travelling in Ethiopia	-	12.4	14.4	64.9	8.2
There are many world heritage sites in Ethiopia	-	6.2	4.1	52.6	37.1
Service quality is good in Ethiopia	12.4	17.5	38.1	25.8	6.2
Local Infrastructure/transportation is good in Ethiopia	6.2	45.4	29.9	18.6	-
It is clean/hygienic in Ethiopia	6.2	60.8	15.5	17.5	-
There is good cuisine/food/drink in Ethiopia	4.1	7.2	19.6	49.5	19.6
Nightlife/entertainment is fascinating in Ethiopia	7.2	6.2	37.1	37.1	12.4
You have easy access of tourist information about Ethiopia	21.6	12.4	12.4	35.1	18.6
There is good quality accommodation facilities in Ethiopia	6.2	30.9	19.6	29.9	13.4
Ethiopia is politically stable	1.0	-	11.3	75.3	12.4
Ethiopia has pleasant weather and climate	1.0	-	6.2	41.2	51.5
Ethiopia offers different adventurous activities	1.0	6.2	8.2	40.2	44.3

Source: Own survey, May 2014

As can be extracted from the above table majority of the tourists view Ethiopia as the ideal place for adventurous activity(44.3 %), with a very pleasant weather and climate (51.5%), unique culture and history(59.8%) , safe while travelling(64.9%) and political stability(75.3%).

According to the respondents, Ethiopia has been perceived as a place with many world heritage sites (52.6%), local people are friendly and hospitable (37.1%).

Moreover, most tourists perceive Ethiopia as a tourist destination with fair prices/costs of services (good value for money) (40.2%), many new experiences (46.4), good cuisine/food/drink (49.5), many special events (40.2%) and fascinating night life or entertainment (37.1%).

On the contrary, majority of the respondents disagree that Ethiopia is clean or hygienic (60.8%), has adequate local infrastructure or transportation (45.4), has many special events, and has good quality accommodation facilities (30.9%).

The respondents' preference to neutral value in the attributes indicates that they neither agree nor disagree Ethiopia has quality of service and good facilities for shopping as perceived by the 38.1 and 40.2 per cent of the respondents respectively.

In addition, in order to analyze the destination image scale, the means and standard deviations of all items were calculated, and are presented in Table 4.10 Note that the closer the mean value to 5, the more positive the image about the specific attribute.

The analysis of the perceived image of Ethiopia as a tourism destination by foreign tourists from USA, UK, Germany, Italy and France using the SPSS software presents that 4 images from the above mentioned list occurred below (3) in terms of mean, which represents "Disagree".

Ethiopia's Images with the lowest mean score were many good facilities for shopping (Mean Rank 2.72), service quality (Mean Rank 2.9), local infrastructure/transportation (Mean Rank 2.6) and clean/hygienic (Mean rank 2.4).

The results indicate that the respondents have some negative or weak elements of Ethiopia's destination Image. Therefore, tourism marketers in Ethiopia should carefully work to improve the negative elements of Ethiopia's image. Also this suggests that there are many marketing opportunities to strengthen the motivation of potential foreign tourists.

Generally, the results from the above mentioned analysis provided marketers with a fuller picture about negative and positive elements of Ethiopia's Destination Image of the potential tourists, which would be useful in developing a marketing strategy to this market segment.

Table 4.10 The mean scores of the perceived image of Ethiopia as a tourism destination

Destination Attributes	Mean
Ethiopia is rich in unique culture and history	4.2887
Prices/costs of services is fair(good value for money)	3.8866
You can have many new experiences in Ethiopia	4.2887
Ethiopian people are friendly and hospitable	4.6598
Ethiopia has many beautiful scenery/natural attractions	4.5670
There is a relaxing atmosphere in Ethiopia	3.7938
Ethiopia offers special events and activities (e.g., events and activities unusually held, celebrations, festivals)	3.4124
There are many good facilities for shopping in Ethiopia	2.7216
You are safe while travelling in Ethiopia	3.6907
There are many world heritage sites in Ethiopia	4.2062
Service quality is good in Ethiopia	2.9588
Local Infrastructure/transportation is good in Ethiopia	2.6082
It is clean/hygienic in Ethiopia	2.4433
There is good cuisine/food/drink in Ethiopia	3.7320
Nightlife/entertainment is fascinating in Ethiopia	3.4124
You have easy access of tourist information about Ethiopia	3.1649
There is good quality accommodation facilities in Ethiopia	3.1340
Ethiopia is politically stable	3.9794
Ethiopia has pleasant weather and climate	4.3608
Ethiopia offers different adventurous activities	4.2062

Source: own survey, May 2014

Results from the structured survey indicate that the image tourists in general have of Ethiopia as a tourist destination is of a country that:

- has unique culture and history
- Offers many new experiences
- is a safe place to visit
- has many world heritage sites
- offers opportunity for adventure
- is friendly and hospitable
- possesses scenic and natural beauty
- has pleasant weather and climate

The results indicate that Ethiopia attracts travelers mainly because of its beautiful scenery, unique history and culture, pleasant weather and climate and its friendly people. Therefore, destination marketers in Ethiopia should emphasize these positive attributes in performing tourism marketing and promotion strategy to attract more tourists from the top five tourist generating countries and other potential foreign tourists from different countries.

4.4 The image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from open ended questions

Results from the open ended questions indicate that travelers have the strongest holistic image of Ethiopia as a scenic landscape and beautiful nature, multi ethnic country, relaxing atmosphere, safe for travel, and conducive weather and climate. They also have an image of a destination with a lot of cultural and historical places and that the country possesses interesting tribes. Furthermore, the country is believed to have friendly and welcoming people, calm, relaxed and secure and it offers people freedom and the chance of being alone. Results further indicate that Ethiopia has something unique to offer and Danakil depression, Semien mountains, Rock hewn churches of Lalibela, Gondar Castels, Lake Tana, Harar, Lower Omo valley tribes, Bale mountains, Axum, were mentioned in this respect, along with fascinating traditional dance and wonderful food.

The results from the first question on image were coded and three functional holistic image groups emerged. The biggest category was named *nature and scenery* (wild nature, scenery, waterfalls, mountains, wildlife, water, birds). The second category was named *activities* (night life, trekking, adventure, horse riding, and boat trip). The third group was named *culture and people* (fascinating tribes, interesting history, and unique culture, friendly, welcoming, hospitable, unique, and quiet).

The results from question number two were coded and a number of atmosphere/mood image for Ethiopia emerged. The number in the brackets shows how often the adjective was mentioned by the participants: Friendly (65), welcoming (50), relaxed (54), security/peace (48), surprising (25), interesting history (44),

The image results from the third question were also coded and a number of unique places emerged, along with other places that cannot be considered unique to Ethiopia. The number in the brackets shows how often the place was mentioned by the participants. First the places that are unique for Ethiopia: Lalibela rock hewn churches (45), lower Omo valley tribes(60), Danakil depression(39) , Semein mountains(45), Bale mountains(30), and Lake Tana monasteries(32). Next are places that are mentioned by respondents that are important part of Ethiopia as a destination: Gondar Castles (25), Axum stele (24), Harar (22), Addis Ababa (15), traditional villages (10), and national museum (12).

For question that reads as ‘what image do tourists have before they visit Ethiopia’, most of the respondents have negative image. The respondents replied that they perceived Ethiopia as poor, dry, people living with hard life, and unsafe. On the other hand, as respondents asked their

experience after they visit Ethiopia, most of the respondents got positive images including friendly and welcoming people, developing, safe and stable for travel, rich culture and history, abundant natural resources and scenic landscapes.

Therefore, when destination marketers want to communicate, they should incorporate in their marketing message including Ethiopia's unique identity of "natural beauty and scenery", "friendly and welcoming people", "safe place to travel" and "fascinating culture"

4.4 The image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination from Key informant interview

Majority of the respondents said that tourists had bad image of Ethiopia before their trip. The tourists thought that Ethiopia is drought; the people have nothing to eat; always support donation; and has not various attractions to attract tourists. However, after their trip, they got things ironically. They even say that they will tell their enjoyable trip. The tourists also appreciate Ethiopia with green, rich history, mosaic culture, and abundant nature. The respondents also replied cost of service is good; tourists can travel from one place to another with safe and secure manner. On the other side, quality of service poor in tourist facilities and the local transportation is not adequate. Moreover, the respondents also pointed that Ethiopia is now politically stable; has good weather and climate; and has different special events and festivals that can motivate tourists throughout the world. With related to accommodation facilities, the key informants said that hotels, lodges, resorts, and others other booming in different tourist destinations.

According to the key informant interview, tourists face different problems during their stay. Accordingly though tourists appreciate Ethiopian tourism with the above specified merits, they have pointed out some problems which tourists encountered during their visit.

The problems mainly focused on the lack of standard road facilities where tourists cannot access the regional tourist sites easily. Three respondents have commented that the road is not enjoyable rather it creates discomfort. Apart from this, two respondents provide their comments on the accessibility of tourist supplies while tourists are in a journey and five key informants commented on the behavior of the children following tour cars from the back taking in to account that accidents can occur easily. In spite of these problems almost five persons (more than 50%) of the key informants ranked Ethiopia as a good tourist destination in relation to tourism destination attributes.

Therefore, the result shows that Ethiopia has good destination attributes that can attract many tourists. On the other hand, appropriate measure should be done to improve the bad image.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

This research looked into the insights of destination image, which is a popular topic in tourism research due to its high ended importance in understanding the destination selection process. The literature acknowledged the dimensional approach of destination image encompassing its measurement around the tourist and the destination which were the main focus points of this research as well. It revealed the fact that destination image has different dimensions which work in conjunction with each other to form an overall image. A destination can realize its full tourism potential only once it has a favorable image and thus the destination managers are on a constant move towards creating a positive image of these sub-tourism dimensions through various marketing strategies.

The literature review on the concept of destination image in general and also with particular reference to Ethiopia helped in analyzing the image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination perceived by the top tourist generating countries to Ethiopia which had not been emphasized by the existing literature.

Ethiopia as a tourist destination has a huge potential for tourism, with tourism industry emerging as an important sector of its economy. It offers a unique tourism product which gives it a competitive edge over other countries. Due to this importance, the stakeholders of Ethiopia are striving towards tapping the key tourism generating countries of the most important and creating a positive image by undertaking effective destination positioning and marketing.

Based on the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of interviews and survey this research reveals that the overall image of Ethiopia as perceived by the selected foreign tourists is positive. However, this study also reflected that Ethiopia's image as a travel destination is a fusion of both positive and negative perceptions. As is evident from the results Ethiopia's image seemed to vary across its various tourism destination attributes. This indicated that different perceptions of evaluation of image with respect to different attributes, will affect the overall image.

To identify the perceived image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination by top five tourist generating countries, the survey questionnaire contains of a list of 20 different elements of Ethiopia Destination Image, such as unique history and culture, many new experiences, cost of services,

beautiful scenery and natural attractions, good facilities for shopping, pleasant weather and climate, adventure activities, safe for travel, political stability, local infrastructure or transportation, good quality of service, clean/hygiene, friendly and hospitable people, many world heritage sites, relaxing atmosphere, special events and activities, service quality, night life/entertainment, quality accommodation facilities and access of tourist information. The survey respondents had been asked to rank their perceived image on a 5-point Likert scale, starting with strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The analysis of the perceived image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination was conducted by using the SPSS software.

Ethiopia has been proved to have a very strong destination image that satisfies its visitors.

The study showed that Ethiopia as a tourist destination revealed to obtain unique images that should be focused by destination marketers.

Hence, Ethiopia is perceived to have very pleasant weather, beautiful scenery and natural attractions, welcoming and friendly people and relaxing atmosphere.

The retention and moreover the development of the current image is a valuable strategy taking into consideration that the market of these top tourist generating countries travelers is big, and the potential travelers are many.

However, Ethiopia needs to design better marketing and promotional strategies to utilize the positive image and attract many tourists like the other African tourist destinations which are attracting more tourists than Ethiopia.

Ethiopia needs to promote its competitive advantages such as many world heritage sites, friendly and welcoming people, safe for travel, and unique culture and history.

Appropriate actions should be taken to promote the country in international market as a competitive package holiday destination.

The selection of tourism destination, as stressed in the literature, is influenced by the image that the destination has in the mind of a tourist. Consequently, the images held by individuals in the marketplace are crucial to a destination's marketing success. Tasci, Gartner and Cavusgil (2007) mention that nowadays, the results of tourism image research are used by marketers to conduct intelligent destination marketing, which means that important decisions regarding planning, development, positioning, and promotion depend on these results.

For the present study, the purpose of this study was to analyze the image that respondents hold about a tourism destination, in this case Ethiopia. The results show that the image of Ethiopia, which is held by the respondents, majority of the respondents do not consider Ethiopia to be safe;

and it is seen to have people living with hard life. Majority of the respondents believe that Ethiopia is poor, with less safe while travelling. However, when it comes to the tourists' image after they visit the country, they had many positive images including welcoming and friendly people, developing, pleasant weather and climate, offers many new experiences and adventurous activities. Majority of the respondents hold the image that Ethiopia is a country of very hospitable people and interesting traditions. The majority of the respondents also have the image that Ethiopia is a country of relaxing atmosphere, with good food and drink, many world heritage sites, beautiful scenery and natural attractions.

On the other hand, Ethiopia is also believed to have poor quality of service, inadequate local infrastructure/transportation, poor access to tourist information, less clean or hygienic, and limited shopping facilities.

The perceived "Positive" images of Ethiopia as a tourist destination are: Ethiopia is the country of unique culture and history, Ethiopia is the country of pleasant weather and climate, Ethiopia offers beautiful scenery, natural attractions and new experiences, Ethiopia is a country with safe and politically stable and Ethiopia is a country of hospital and friendly people. Thus, the concerned body including the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, tour operators and other stakeholders should incorporate these positive images in their promotional messages to position and market the country.

Most tourists perceive Ethiopia has poor quality of service, inadequate local infrastructure/transportation, limited shopping facilities, and limited access of tourist information. Therefore, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism together with tour operators, Ethiopian Airlines, Oversees Ethiopian embassies and other stakeholders should provide adequate tourist information about the country.

Tourism marketers in Ethiopia should carefully work to improve the negative elements of Ethiopia image. On the other hand, the positive images are good marketing opportunities to strengthen the motivation of potential foreign tourists. The results of this study provided marketers with a better picture about negative and positive elements of Ethiopia as a tourist destination. Thus, the concerned body should emphasize in developing a marketing strategy to this market segment.

Above all, Majority of the respondents identified Labella, Gondar, Axum, Harar, Lower omo valley, and Danakil depression as distinct attractions of Ethiopia. Furthermore, the country has abundant tourism resources that should be promoted by Ministry of Culture and Tourism,

Regional tourism bureaus, Tour operators and other stakeholders in the international market through different promotional tools including participating in trade fairs/exhibitions, preparing standardized brochures, releasing the countries resources in global Medias (like BBC, CNN, National Geography and other international travel media) , producing standard websites, and promoting by using celebrities and famous Ethiopians including famous runners(Haile G/Selassie, Tirunesh Dibaba, Kenenisa Bekele and others). Thus, the county's unexploited tourism products will be promoted so that tourists will have better image of the country with diversified attractions.

Finally, a tourist's image of a country will be a function of the various sources of information, which will form his/her personal frame of reference (Kim, Morrison, 2010). In this study the results show that Tour operators and travel agents, friends and family, newspaper, internet and travel guide books are the main sources, from which the respondents form their image about Ethiopia as a tourism destination. However, in order to make a decision about any destination to visit, the respondents will rely mainly on the opinion of friends, family, and conducting a search in the Internet.

In sum, the findings of the present study can be likened to what is stated elsewhere in the literature. Thus, according to Kotler, (1993), an image of a country will be the sum of all those emotional and aesthetic qualities such as experience, beliefs, ideas, recollections, and impressions that a person has of a country.

5.2 Recommendations

The image of Ethiopia as a tourist destination should be examined at three levels. It should be investigated at pre-travel level, during visit level and post visit level. To do this and see the difference in image, it is important to use the same attributes. First, Ethiopia's target markets have to be defined. Different nations like Germany, England, Italy, France, and the United States and other tourists and age groups within or across nations can be segments that are chosen as the target markets. Different lifestyle segments, like adventure seekers or nature lovers, could also be chosen as target market.

Moreover, the preferred attributes have to be found. These attributes can be different depending on the target market being studied.

Image is not measured once and for all. Image changes, so image studies have to be repeated over a long period of time.

For the during visit level, further research could concentrate even more on subgroups of tourist, such as samples of Germans or Americans only, or concentrate on a specific age group like young travelers, for example. It could also be interesting to examine the difference in image based on tourists' traveling style. For example, tourists for trekking tour have a different image of Ethiopia compared to that of people who are here on a package tour of leisure. The image of during visit tourist should also be investigated for different seasons. May be tourists who visit Ethiopia during peak season (December to January where most colorful events are held) have a different image of Ethiopia than the image Low season tourists have.

The perceived "negative" images of Ethiopia as a tourism destination shows deficiencies of marketing strategy of Ethiopia towards the potential tourism market. Thus, tourism stakeholders should work jointly to create positive images through integrated marketing and promotional strategies.

Moreover, Ministry of Culture and Tourism should open tourist information office especially in these top five tourist generating countries to attract many tourists towards the country.

Identification of foreign tourists' images, preferences, and expectations can assist in the more effective positioning and marketing of Ethiopia destination. Given the growing size and importance of the international tourist travel market, further analysis of this market segment should be focused by tourism stakeholders to attract and satisfy the demanding tourist.

Ministry of culture and Tourism should undertake market research activities of key tourism generating countries for Ethiopia specially the top five tourist generating countries, for the purpose of acquiring accurate and true information on Ethiopia's important destination attributes and products so as to further make necessary developments in accordance with the responses and also to develop appropriate marketing strategies to target these markets for future.

The Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism should offer appropriate assistance to the overseas offices primarily responsible for promotion of Ethiopian tourism abroad in adopting more aggressive marketing so as to wipe out the unawareness of Ethiopian tourism prevalent among the international tourists.

Tour operators should make use of technological tools of internet for advertising to attain a wider and greater impact. Moreover, they should undertake synergized marketing and promotional campaigns in association with government body and tourism intermediaries.

Ministry of Culture and Tourism together with tour operators should invite travel agents, tour operators and media representatives who are the key tourist transmitters from key tourist generating countries like the UK, USA, Italy, German and France to visit the varied tourist attractions in Ethiopia which would in turn help in arousing curiosity towards Ethiopia.

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism should adopt service quality standards and practices in tourism facilities and sites. And develop tourism infrastructure especially local transportation.

As a conclusion, a clear understanding of potential travelers' image toward Ethiopia as a tourist destination is crucial for developing successful marketing strategies in promoting and positioning Ethiopia as a tourism destination. In particular, this study gives a hand to the decision makers to take the right decisions to help Ethiopia to compete with success over other destinations to attract this segment of potential tourists; and also helps to suggest the correct actions and tools to maintain and renovate and reinvent a positive image about Ethiopia, or to reconstruct a weak or negative one.

5.3 Implication of the study

Attracting tourists into a tourism destination is important, but the ability to convey information in order to form a positive image in the mind of the public, can be a very difficult task.

Research has demonstrated that image is a valuable concept in understanding the destination selection process of tourists. Leisen (2001) mentions that a positive image is more likely that the traveler will be rewarded with a good life experience. The student researcher says that the image influences a traveler's expectation of a destination.

As illustrated in the analysis part of the research, the perception or image of the respondents have both positive and negative images. In this way, Tasci, Gartner, Cavusgil,(2007) say that it is

important to take decisions regarding planning, development, positioning, and promotion in order to change the image. However, the decision must be based on knowledge and understanding of opportunities that the country has. As can be noticed, Tour operators, friends and family, newspaper, travel guide books and Internet are the main sources, from which the respondents form their image about the tourism destination.

By investigating the image that the respondents hold about Ethiopia, this research revealed interesting data about their image of the country. It is important to highlight that the respondents in the present study have very strong and weak image after they visit the country. The information that they use to construct an image about Ethiopia, as a tourism destination, is gathered through tour operators, gathering information from families and friends, reading newspapers and travel guide books, navigating in the Internet. McCartney, Butler and Bennett (2008), mention that Guun's "dimorphic theory" of image suggested that the image of a destination can be formed through either an actual visit (organic) or by externally received (induced) information from sources such as broadcast and print media and word of mouth. Equally important is to emphasize it that the results of this study may help stakeholders such as government tourism organizations, state tourism organizations, and private firms engaged in tourism activities to carefully consider the country image when marketing the destinations strategically to tourists (existing and potential ones).

5.4 Limitation and suggestion for future studies

An important limitation of the present study is the sample used, namely, only from top five tourist generating countries (USA, UK, Germany, Italy and France) tourists who visited the country through selected top 20 tour operators. The focus on these tourists was a stark delimitation, although it helped to explore some of the factors that do compose the underlying information of a potential tourist's image of Ethiopia a tourist destination. Potential tourists that may likely conceive of the idea to visit a tourism destination such as Ethiopia can, in reality, come from all parts of the world. Hence, future research should aim at a broader population and/or sample size, which will go beyond borders, for tourists to a tourism destination can come from anywhere in the world.

Another limitation, which needs be mentioned here, is about the mere identification of the image held by potential tourists and also the identification of the sources, from which respondents' image building of a tourism destination is based. Essentially, the present study highlights the factors, upon which the respondents have expressed their image of Ethiopia, also indicating the major sources, from which their information for the image building was collected. But, whether or not the respondents will, in reality, base their decision to visit Ethiopia, based on the variables that have depicted their image of the country in the present study, needs to be investigated further. This further study is important because the image, which a tourist may have about a tourism destination, can derive from a number of factors and their interrelationships to produce a 'bundle of benefits', which the tourists may be looking for (Ching-Fu and DungChun, 2007; Beerli and Marti) 2004).

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, Z. (1991). The influence of the components of a State's tourist image on product positioning strategy, *Tourism Management*
- Baloglu, S. and Mangalolu, M. (2001). Tourism Destination Images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as Perceived by US-Based Tour Operators and Travel Agents, *Tourism Management*
- Baloglu, S., and Mcclery, K. (1999). A Model of Destination Image Formation, *Annals of Tourism Research*
- Batchelor, R. (1999). "Strategic marketing of tourism destinations." in the international marketing of travel and tourism: A strategic approach, ed. F., Vellas,
- Berli, A. and Martin J.D. (2004). Factors Influencing Destination Image, *Annals of Tourism Research*
- Burns, A.C. and Bush, R.F. (2006). *Marketing research* (5. Edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Ching-Fu Chen and Dung Chun Tsai (2007). How destination image and evaluative factors affect Behavioral intentions?, *Tourism Management*
- Chon, K. S. (1990), The role of destination image in tourism: a review and discussion, *The Tourist Review*
- Coltman MM (1989). *Tourism Marketing*, New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
- Cooper, C., Fletcher, J., Gilbert, D. & Wanhill, S. (1993). *Tourism Principles & practice*. UK: Pitman Publishing.
- Crompton (1985). An investigation of the relative efficacy of four alternative approaches to importance-performance analysis. *Academy of marketing science*.
- Echtner CM, Ritchie JRB (1991). The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image. *J. Tour. Stud.*
- Echtner CM, Ritchie JRB (1993). The Measurement of Destination Image: An Empirical Assessment. *J. Travel Res.*
- Esu, B. B. & Mbaze-Arrey, V. (2009). Branding of Cultural Festival as Destination Attraction: A Case Study of Calabar Carnival *International Journal of Business Research*
- Fakaye, P.C. & Crompton, J.L. (1991). Image differences between prospective, first-time and repeat visitors to the lower Rio Grande valley, *Journal of Travel Research*
- Font, X. (1997). Managing the tourist destination's image. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*

- Gallarza MG, Gil I, Calderón H (2002). Destination Image. Towards a Conceptual Framework. Ann. Tour. Res.
- Gertner, D. and P. Kotler (2004). "How can a place correct a negative image?" Place Branding, Goodrich, J. (1978). The Relationship between Preferences for and Perceptions of Vacation Destinations: Application of a Choice Model, Journal of Travel Research
- Gunn, C. (1972). Vacationscape Austin. Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas
- Holloway, J. Christopher (1998). The Business of Tourism. 4th ed. Addison Wesley. Singapore
- Holloway, J. Christopher (2004). Marketing for Tourism. England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hunt, J. D. (1975). Image as a factor in tourism development, Journal of Travel Research
- Jenkins O. H. (1999). Understanding and Measuring Tourist Destination Images, the International Journal of Tourism Research
- Kim, D-Y, Lehto, Y.X, and Morrison, M.A. (2007). Gender differences in online travel information search: Implications for marketing communications on the Internet. Tourism Management
- Kotler, Philip, John Bowen and James Makens (2004). Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism
- Kozak M. (2001). Comparative Assessment of Touri Leisen, B. Image segmentation: the case of a tourism destination. Journal of Services marketing, Satisfaction with Destinations across two Nationalities, Tourism Management.
- Laws, Eric (1995). Tourist Destination Management; Issues, Analysis and Policies. London: Routledge
- Leisen, B. (2002) Image segmentation: the case of a tourism destination. Journal of Services marketing.
- Lumsdon, Les (1997). Tourism Marketing. London: International Thomson Publishing Inc.
- Mayo E. J. and Jarvis L. (1981) The Psychology of Leisure Travel: Effective Marketing and Selling of Travel Services CBI Publishing: Boston.
- McCartney, G. Butler, R. Bennett, M (2008). A Strategic Use of the Communication Mix in the Destination Image-Formation Process. Journal of Travel Research
- MacDonagh (2002). Behavioral science for marketing and business students. Dublin: Gill & Macmillan Ltd
- Morgan NJ, Pritchard A (1998). Tourism Promotion and Power: Creating Images, Creating Identities. Chichester: Wiley.

- Pearce PL (1982). *The Social Psychology of Tourist Behavior*, Pergamon Press, Oxford. edition; Pearson Education, Inc., New Jersey, USA, 2003
- Prebensen, Nina K. (2007). *Exploring Tourists' Images of a Distant Destination*, Research Paper, Tourism Management
- Phelps, A. (1986), *Holiday destination image - the problem of assessment*, Tourism Management
- Stabler, M. J. (1995). *The Image of Destination Regions: Theoretical and Empirical Aspects*, Tourism Management
- Um S. and Crompton J. (1990). *Attitude Determinants in Tourism Destination Choice*, *Annals of Tourism Research*
- Sonmez S. and Sirkaya E. (2002) *A Distorted Destination Image? The Case of Turkey*”, *Journal of Travel Research*
- Tasci, A., Gartner W and. Cavusgil, T (2007). *Conceptualization and operationalization of destination image*. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*
- The Federal Ministry of culture and tourism (2013), *The International Visitors' Exist Survey*
- Tourism Development Policy (2009). *Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Tourism Policy*, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, August 2009, Addis Ababa.
- Yilmaz Y, Yilmaz Y, Đcigen ET, Ekin Y, Utku BD (2009) *Destination Image: A Comparative Study on Pre and Post Trip Image Variations*. *J. Hosp. Mark. Manage.*
- Walmsley, D., and Young, M. (1998). *Evaluative Images and Tourism: The Use of Personal Constructs to Describe the Structure of Destination Images*, *Journal of Travel Research*
- Watkins S., A. Hassanien, C. Dale (2006) *Exploring the Image of the Black Country as a Tourist Destination*, *Place Branding*
- World Bank, (2006). *“Ethiopia: Towards a Strategy for Pro-Poor Tourism Development”*, the World Bank Private Sector Development Country Department for Ethiopia.
- World Tourism Organization, (2005). *Another record year for world tourism*. World Tourism Organization, Madrid: Spain.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: Tourist survey questionnaire

You are kindly requested to put '√' mark in the box provided below for your answer.

1. What is your Gender?

Male Female

2. What is your age group?

Below 18 18-30 31-40 41-60 Above 60

3. Marital status

Married Single Divorced Separated

4. What is your current employment status?

Student Employed Unemployed Retired

5. What is your country of origin?

6. What is your level of education?

Student Certificate Diploma
Degree Masters PHD Other.....

7. How many times have you visited Ethiopia before now?

None 1 time 2 times 3 times 4 times 5 times or more

8. How long did you stay in Ethiopia?

7 days or less 8 - 14 days 15 - 21 days
22 - 30 days 1 to 2 months 2 months or more

9. How did you get information about Ethiopia? (*More than one answer allowed*)

Tour operator/ Travel agency Internet Family/friends
Newspapers/magazines Travel brochures Travel guide books
Radio TV Trade fairs/Exhibition

Other:.....

10. What was the aim of your visit to Ethiopia? (*More than one answer allowed*)

Cultural holiday Festival Spiritual holiday (pilgrimage tour)
Eco-tourism Leisure Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)
Business (meeting/incentive/conference/exhibition)
Mountain climbing Historic visit

Other:.....

11. What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Ethiopia as a tourist destination?

.....
.....

12. How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Ethiopia?

.....
.....

13. Please list any distinctive or unique tourist attractions that you can think of Ethiopia?

.....
.....

14. What image did you have of Ethiopia prior to your first visit? (as Dubai is a shopping destination)

.....
.....

15. What image do you have of Ethiopia now?

.....
.....

16. Did your trip to Ethiopia meet your expectations?

Completely For the greater part Partly
Not really absolutely not

17. If answered “not really” or “absolutely not” please state why:

.....
.....

18. I’m likely to return to Ethiopia as a tourist in the next 1-5 years

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Agree Strongly agree

19. I’m willing to recommend Ethiopia to families and friends as a tourist destination

Strongly disagree Disagree Neither agree nor disagree
Agree Strongly agree

20. Please evaluate Ethiopia's Image as a tourist destination based on your travel experience.

The following statements relate to your perceptions on some aspects of Ethiopia as a tourist destination. For each statement, please show the extent to which you believe that Ethiopia has the feature described by the statement. Indicating or Circling a "1" means that you strongly disagree, "2" disagree, "3" neutral, "4" agree, and "5" strongly agree.

No	Questionnaire items	Measurement scales				
		Strongly disagree(1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral(3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
1	Ethiopia is rich in unique culture and history	1	2	3	4	5
2	Prices/costs of services is fair(good value for money)	1	2	3	4	5
3	You can have many new experiences in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
4	Ethiopian people are friendly and hospitable	1	2	3	4	5
5	Ethiopia has many beautiful scenery/natural attractions	1	2	3	4	5
6	There is a relaxing atmosphere in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
7	Ethiopia offers special events and activities (e.g., events and activities unusually held, celebrations, festivals)	1	2	3	4	5
8	There are many good facilities for shopping in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
9	You are safe while travelling in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
10	There are many world heritage sites in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
11	Service quality is good in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
12	Local Infrastructure/transportation is good in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
13	It is clean/hygienic in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
14	There is good cuisine/food/drink in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
15	Nightlife/entertainment is fascinating in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
16	You have easy access of tourist information about Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
17	There is good quality accommodation facilities in Ethiopia	1	2	3	4	5
18	Ethiopia is politically stable	1	2	3	4	5
19	Ethiopia has pleasant weather and climate	1	2	3	4	5
20	Ethiopia offers different adventurous activities	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 2: Interview Questionnaire

1. What image do tourists have before they travel to Ethiopia?
2. What image do tourists have after they visit Ethiopia?
3. How you describe the performance of Ethiopia as a tourist destination in relation to tourism destination attributes?(unique culture and history, cost of services(value for money, new experiences, local people friendliness and hospitability towards tourists , scenery/natural attractions, relaxing atmosphere, special events and activities, facilities for shopping, personal safety during travel, Service quality, Infrastructure/transportation, cleanliness/hygiene, cuisine/food/drink, Nightlife/entertainment, access of tourist information, quality accommodation facilities, politically stable, weather and climate, adventurous activities, etc.)
4. How do you describe the tourists travel experience in Ethiopia in terms of the above tourism destination attributes?
5. What are the marketing challenges related to Ethiopia's Image as a tourist destination that impede the development of the tourism industry?