



Addis Ababa University
Faculty of Tourism management and Development

***Marketing Strategy of Star rated hotels towards domestic Tourism Since The
Outbreak of The COVID-19 and Internal Conflict: A Case Study in Addis Ababa***

By: Bethelehem Damte

ID No. : GSE/6671/12

Advisor: Shiferaw Muleta (PhD)

**A Thesis Submitted to Department of Tourism management and Development of
Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfilment of Required of Masters of Degree in
Tourism Management**

Oct, 2023

DECLARATIONS

I, Bethelehem Damte, registration number GSE/6671/12, do hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been submitted partially or in full, by any other person for an award of degree in any other university or educational institution.

Submitted by:

Full Name: Bethelehem Damte

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approved by:

This Thesis has been submitted for the examination with my approval as University supervisor.

Name of Supervisor (Advisor): Shiferaw Muleta (Ph.D)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approval

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend to Addis Ababa University to accept the Thesis submitted by Bethlehem Damte entitled: Marketing strategy of star rated hotels towards domestic tourism since the outbreak of the COVID-19 and internal conflict: A case study in Addis Ababa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Masters of Degree in Tourism Management.

Submitted by:

Full Name: Bethelihem Damte

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approved by:

Name of Supervisor: Shiferaw Muleta (PhD)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Internal Examiner: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of External Examiner: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of Head of Department: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Dr. Shiferaw Muleta, my supervisor, for his exceptional guidance, support, and mentorship throughout the completion of this thesis. His expertise, patience, and encouragement have been pivotal in shaping the direction and enhancing the quality of this research.

I am deeply grateful to the participants of this study, whose generous contribution of time and cooperation made this research possible. Their willingness to share their experiences and insights has been indispensable in deriving meaningful findings and reaching conclusive outcomes.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my family and friends for their unwavering support, encouragement, and understanding throughout my academic journey. Their love, patience, and belief in my abilities have consistently served as a constant source of motivation and inspiration.

Furthermore, I wish to acknowledge the significant contributions of all the researchers, scholars, and authors whose groundbreaking research, theories, and insights have laid the groundwork for this study. Their work has greatly influenced the theoretical framework and methodology employed in this thesis.

In conclusion, I am immensely grateful to all those who have played a direct or indirect role in the completion of this thesis. Their invaluable contributions have left an indelible mark, and I am truly humbled by their unwavering support and encouragement.

Content

List of figures.....	III
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background to the research.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study	7
1.4. Research Questions.....	8
1.4.1 Main Research Question.....	8
1.5 Significance of the Study	8
1.6 Limitations of the study.....	9
1.7 Organization of the study	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.1 Introduction	11
2.2. Marketing	11
2.3. Marketing Strategies	13
2.3.1 Strategic Marketing and Conventional/Non-Strategic Marketing.....	15
2.3.2 Revolutionizing Hotel Marketing in the Digital Age.....	17
2.3.3 Marketing in Ethiopia's Tourism & Hospitality Industry.....	19
2.4 The Hospitality Industry.....	21
2.4.1 Tourism Sector in Ethiopia.....	21
2.4.2 Overview of Domestic Tourism in Ethiopia.....	25
2.4.3 Impact of Covid-19 and Internal Conflict on Domestic Tourism	27
2.4.4 Hotel industry In Ethiopia	31
2.6. Marketing strategies of star-rated hotel.....	33
2.6.1 Marketing and Promotion.....	36
2.6.2 Package Deals and Discounts	37
2.6.3 Partnerships and Collaborations	39
2.6.4 Health and safety measures	41
2.6.5 Online Marketing.....	43
2.6.6 Personalization.....	45
2.7 Five-Star Hotels Review	46
2.7.1 Sheraton Addis	46

2.7.2 Marriott Executive Apartments	46
2.7.3 Capital Hotel & Spa.....	47
2.7.4 Ellele international hotel.....	47
2.7.5 Radison Blue Hotel.....	48
2.7.6 Golden Tulip Hotel.....	48
2.7.7 Gatefam Hotel.....	49
2.7.8 Conclusion.....	49
2.8. Literature review conclusion.....	50
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	52
3.1. Introduction	52
3.2. Research design.....	52
3.2.1 Research philosophy.....	53
3.2.2. Research Approach.....	54
3.2.3. Research Strategy	54
3.3. Data collection instruments	55
3.4. Data analysis procedures.....	56
3.5. Research ethics.....	56
3.6. Conclusion.....	56
4.1. Background of the respondents.....	58
4.2. Perception Marketing	58
4.3 The Impact of Covid-19 and internal conflict on Star-rated hotels.....	62
4.4 Strategies Adopted by Star-Rated Hotels to Attract Domestic Tourism Amid Covid-19 and Internal Conflict	63
5.1 Conclusion.....	72
5.2 Recommendation.....	74
5.3 Areas for Future Research:.....	75
Reference	77
Appendices: 1 Questionnaires.....	83

List of figures

Figure 1: The "research onion" (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016)	52
---	----

Abstract

The target market's needs are continually shifting, so it is important to stay up to date with trends and modify business strategies accordingly. One way to reach a customer during an unstable time is by adapting a marketing strategy to meet their needs. The hospitality industry is the supplier of services for tourism. The growth of the star-rated hotel industry in Addis Ababa is likely to continue to rise as demand for hotel rooms is increasing, tourist spending is rising, and the consumer need for opulence and uniqueness endures. Prior to the pandemic, the client of 5-star hotels were primarily international travelers and business visitors. Due to COVID-19, their travel has been restricted, and the ongoing internal conflict has further exacerbated the situation. A number of guests in these hotels have been affected. Hoteliers are therefore seeking alternative marketing strategies, such as targeting domestic or local customers. In response to the resumption of tourism, researchers have suggested that new travel patterns may emerge, such as regional tourism, health tourism, and rural tourism. Previous research on the impact of COVID-19 on tourism has not fully considered the potential benefits of regional travel as an alternative form of tourism. This research aim is to fill this gap by examining the marketing strategy of star rated hotels towards domestic tourists since the outbreak of covid 19 and internal conflict a case study of Addis Ababa.

The finding of the study was all seven hotels found in Ethiopia have felt the effects of this decrease in demand, as fewer domestic tourists are booking rooms. This has resulted in reduced occupancy rates, decreased revenue, and lower profits. To address this concern, each hotel has had to adapt its marketing strategy to try to attract domestic tourists and maintain its business.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the study describes and introduces the background of the study by providing background information about the research topic, a statement of the problem that explains the reason to study the topic, the objectives of the study to be achieved, and the research questions that must be raised to answer or meet the research's objectives. The significance of the study that highlights the importance of the research, scope, and limitation of the study is also part of this section. Finally, this section of the study ended up with an introduction to the organization of the rest of the research's contents.

1.1 Background to the research

The target market's needs are continually shifting, so it is important to stay up to date with trends and modify business strategies accordingly. One way to reach a customer during an unstable time is by adapting a marketing strategy to meet their needs. Marketing strategy is generally a procedure for communicating with a target audience and affecting them to purchase an item or service. In spite of the fact that marketing plans can shift from fundamental to comprehensive, they ought to incorporate related data about the brand and how need to be seen by clients (Skye Schooley 2022).

Without a doubt, the tourism industry holds the probability of income openings and expanded business, especially for citizens living in developing countries' urban areas. In this regard, (Meyer 2013) stated that tourism is an essential industry that promotes economic development by creating employment that increases people's income and is hence considered an essential factor in developing economies. Tourism and hospitality go hand in hand, the hospitality industry offers services like accommodation, transportation, food and beverage, recreation, and leisure. Tourism is the activity by the tourists where they engage in traveling to destinations where they want to experience recreational and leisure activities and most of the time avails of accommodation, food, and beverage. The hospitality industry is the supplier of services for tourism.

Generally speaking, tourists need accommodation facilities, food and drinking services, entertainment, etc. In such instances star-rated hotels play a significant role in addressing this demand, thus the hotel sector can be considered as an indispensable element of the tourism industry.

(Kastamu 2013) stated that Hotels are the essential subsector in the growth of the tourism industry in the world, since without hotels; it may be difficult for guests/tourists to travel to a particularly preferred destination. Star-rated hotels have increased in number and popularity over the last few years and are now an important category in the hospitality industry. They appeal to the consumer's desire for luxury, attentive service, and a different experience. They market uniquely because their target market is categorically distinct from the general hotel guest population (Băltescu and Boşcor, 2016).

The growth of the star-rated hotel industry in Addis Ababa is likely to continue to rise as demand for hotel rooms is increasing, tourist spending is rising, and the consumer need for opulence and uniqueness endures. The premises of this study are that five-star rated hotels of Addis Ababa often focus and target on international tourists as well as MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism. However, during the COVID period and the internal conflict in the north, the number of international tourists' number handled much. Even though the COVID period has gone and a peace deal was signed by the warring parties on November 02, 2022, the impacts of the pandemic and the internal conflict are still lingering. Ethiopia could have emerged out of COVID-19 impacts as far as its tourism is concerned. However, the impact the conflict will remain with us for some times. Hence, it is imperative to conduct a study on the marketing strategy of five-star hotels towards domestic tourism to sustain their businesses in this post conflict and post pandemic era.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The variables influencing hospital service business may change from put to put, but in common in Ethiopia circumstance, the request or hotel administrations is primarily decided by the worldwide and domestic tourists' entries. Assist the level of financial, improvement, political and social solidness moreover have a coordinated impact on the development of tourism and request for lodging administrations. The novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, known as COVID-19, has been recognized as a significant global public health emergency, affecting numerous countries (Velavan, T.P.; Meyer, C.G.). The World Health Organization (WHO) Emergency Committee declared it a global health emergency on 30 January 2020 (WHO), and it has since had a profound impact on various aspects of life worldwide, particularly the tourism industry. In recent developments, the WHO has officially removed COVID-19 from its pandemic list this month. There is increasing speculation among renowned experts that COVID-19 could transition into a seasonal or endemic virus, similar to influenza or the common cold, with periodic fluctuations in infections anticipated in the coming years (CGTN 2020, Cohut 2020, Kissler 2020).

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was, to begin with, seen in China in one of its cities, Wuhan, in December 2019 then unfold in Hubei Area conjointly the leftover portion of China. Yet the infection unfurls rapidly inside the country's urban center locale, it had been at the start for the foremost portion overlooked by political pioneers completely different components of the planet (Washington Post, 2020). Sooner than afterward, the infection was rapidly heightened into Europe, and the USA and quickly spread over the world (Yang et al., 2020). Fair to demonstrate the number of people uncovered to the infection around the world there have been 596,873,121 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,459,684 deaths, reported to WHO as of 23 August 2022.

In the most extreme case, the economic cost of COVID-19 to the world is predicted to be close to 2.5 trillion USD, the size of the GDP of Britain. The global financial market is also losing massively day by day. As has been reported from the world stock exchange markets, the three weeks of damages of covid-19 are even worse than the three years of the great depression of the 1930s, and the 2008 financial crisis (later economic crisis) (Bloomberg Economic Study). Annual

analysis of the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) analysis reveals the worldwide economic and employment impact of Travel and Tourism in 185 countries and twenty-five regions, which accounted for 1 in 4 of all new jobs created across the world, 10.3% of all jobs (333 million), and 10.3% of global GDP (US\$9.6 trillion). Meanwhile, international visitor spending amounted to US\$1.8 trillion in 2019 (6.8% of total exports). In 2020, 62 million jobs were lost, representing a drop of 18.6%, leaving just 271 million employed across the sector globally, compared to 333 million in 2019.

In Africa, other than the misfortune of human life, trade operation of different divisions such as fabricating, benefit, development, and tourism are profoundly influenced. African economic development, as per the forecast of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 2020), decreases to 1.8 percent in the best-case scenario and a contraction of 2.6 percent if the worst case happens. Ethiopia announced the first case of coronavirus on March 13, 2020. Since then, Coronavirus has taken a single topic grabbing the dialogue among Ethiopian society. The government of Ethiopia has also considered the issue a number one national agenda, where a number of measures and actions taken to fight the spread of the disease. (Africa News, REUTERS). Since the coronavirus widespread is getting more awful, the Ethiopian government has chosen to pronounce a five-month state of crisis in April 2020 under Article 93 of the constitution.

As (Mekonnen Bogale, Shimekit Kelkay & Wubishet Mengesha, 2020) stated the nature of tourism is an industry that drives people to travel (national and international) for recreation and leisure, and many more purposes. It is also a wide-ranging industry, which includes accommodation, transport, food and beverage, entertainment, and other connecting operators. The summative impact of COVID-19 on these sectors explains the current situation of tourism in Ethiopia.

Looking at the current performance of the hotel from the accommodation sub-sector gives us a clear picture of the impact of the pandemic. According to the interview conducted by the Reporter Magazine with Aster Dawit, Catering and Tourism Training Institution (CTTI) director and Feteh Woldeesenbet, President of the Ethiopian Hotel and Related Service Provider Employers'

Association, hotels occupancy rates were reduced from 80-85% before the outbreak of the Coronavirus to 50% immediately after the first case was announced on March 2020 (The Reporter, 2020). The same source also added that in April, very few hotels are operating with only 2-5% of the capacity while 80% of hotels in Addis Ababa are on the way to shutting down and thus, they are forecasted to lose \$35 million per month. In April, a report shows that 88% of hotels in Addis are forced either to shut down or reduced service due to a lack of occupancy arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the remaining 12% are being used as isolation centers (Daily News, 2020). Solomon Yimer, 2021 stated that though the impact of the pandemic gradually lessened, the conflict which broke out in Tigray posed another challenge for the tourism sector which represents 9.4% of Ethiopia's total economy.

Geda (2004) argues that conflict is a major contributor to poverty and underdevelopment in Ethiopia. Wars lead to significant losses in life and damage to infrastructure, as well as negatively impacting growth and development (Geda & Degefe, 2005). The cost of war is difficult to quantify, but Trading Economics predicts that military spending will reach \$502 million (£365 million) by the end of 2021, an increase from \$460 million in the previous year (BBC, 2021). The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, has stated that the conflict has cost Ethiopia over a billion dollars.

As the impact of the pandemic began to decrease, the outbreak of war in Tigray added a new challenge for the tourism industry, which represents 9.4% of Ethiopia's economy. The war is directly and indirectly affecting many tourist destinations in northern Ethiopia, which is home to some of the country's most famous historical attractions. For example, in Tigray, Obelisks (Stelae), located in the ancient city of Aksum (Axum) in the Tigray region, the al-Nejashi mosque, which is considered one of Africa's oldest and a potential UNESCO World Heritage site, has been damaged as a result of the war (addiszebe, 2021).

According to the report, the rock churches in the historical town of Lalibela, located in northern Ethiopia, are a major tourist attraction, drawing thousands of visitors each year. However, the

escalating conflict in the north of the country is causing tourists to avoid the region, leading to a decrease in tourism. This internal conflict is causing significant harm to the nation in terms of both human suffering and financial losses, particularly in the districts where the clashes are taking place. These areas are now facing significant risks.

One of the most detrimental effects of war conflicts on the tourism sector is the extent of the damage caused. The war leads to significant losses, including the widespread unemployment of thousands of individuals who are directly or indirectly employed in the tourism industry. These include employees in fields such as hospitality, airlines, and tour companies, among others. This has a major impact on a country's economy, as tourism often generates over half of a country's annual income (Tourismembassy, 2013).

Prior to the pandemic, the clients of 5-star hotels were primarily international travelers and business visitors. Due to COVID-19, their travel has been restricted, and the ongoing internal conflict has further exacerbated the situation. As a result, the number of guests in these hotels has been affected. Hoteliers are therefore seeking alternative marketing strategies, such as targeting domestic or local customers. In response to the resumption of tourism, researchers have suggested that new travel patterns may emerge, such as regional tourism, health tourism, and rural tourism. Previous research on the impact of COVID-19 on tourism has not fully considered the potential benefits of regional travel as an alternative form of tourism.

Xin Wang, Ivan Ka Wai Lai, Quan Zhou, and Yu He Pang (2021) have emphasized the importance of domestic tourism and highlighted the potential benefits of regional travel as an alternative form of tourism. The 42nd World Tourism Day and the 34th in Ethiopia is celebrated in Dire Dawa town. On the occasion, the State Minister of Culture and Tourism, Buzena Al-Keder, announced that a strategic plan is being implemented to revive the tourism sector, which has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that the plan focuses on domestic tourism, which will contribute to the overall development and peace of the country.

As per (Mekonnen Bogale, Shimekit Kelkay & Wubishet Mengesha,2020) recommended that the tourism business sub-sectors such as hotels, transport, food and beverage, entertainment, and other connecting operators should work cooperatively and cohesively to overcome the impact of COVID-19 on the business. These actors should also work cooperatively with other sectors like banks and insurance companies to manage this crisis. Added to this, sub-sectors should use cost reduction options like capacity reduction to cut some expenses (for example utility), voluntary based executive pay cuts with boosting their morale, suspending advertisement contracts, and introducing cost-sharing modalities with employees like creating credit access, and initiate voluntary service by agreeing with employees.

Previous research as Mahder Kirose Berihe, Genemo Fitala Feyissa, and Melese Chala Tadesse (2020) have examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hotels in Ethiopia, including the government's response. However, none of these studies have specifically examined the marketing strategies of star-rated hotels toward domestic tourism during both the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict, particularly in five-star hotels in Addis Ababa. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is currently no existing study on this topic in the area. This research aims to fill this gap by evaluating the marketing strategies of star-rated hotels towards domestic tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict, using a case study in Addis Ababa.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this research is to evaluate the marketing strategy of five star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in northern Ethiopia

1.3.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To assess the coping strategies used by hoteliers to minimize covid -19 impact
2. To assess the mechanism used to attract domestic tourism and increase occupancy rate
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy adopted by hoteliers to attract domestic tourism

1.4. Research Questions.

1.4.1 Main Research Question

What is the marketing strategy of star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa towards domestic tourism in the post-pandemic and post-conflict period?

1.4.2 Specific Research Question

1. What coping strategies have hoteliers employed to minimize the impact of COVID-19?
2. What mechanisms are being utilized to attract domestic tourism and increase occupancy rates?
3. How effective are the strategies adopted by hoteliers in attracting domestic tourism?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is crucial in assessing the marketing strategy of star-rated hotels towards domestic tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict in Addis Ababa. The findings will provide valuable information for top management to develop effective policies and for other economic sectors to build business relations. Additionally, it will offer the administration to reexamine their working framework through recognizable proof of their interesting assets and center competencies. Five-star hotels within the industry can utilize the discoveries of the study to allocate their assets within the area of operations where they can be beneficial within the showcase as an alternative outside of the normal time. Hotels that embrace marketing techniques based on

diverse approaches can use the data from this study to reinforce and guard the strategies that they embraced.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The researcher might encounter several limitations during the execution of the following research study. However, in accessibility to the data available from secondary sources like annual reports, websites, and journals will make the researcher unable to attain the objectives set for this particular study. It will cause a significant restriction for the researcher in the completion of the research successfully. Innovative.

The study of the marketing strategy of star-rated hotels towards internal tourists amid covid 19 and internal conflict is also innovative. There is a wealth of published literature on the topic of marketing strategy toward international tourists and in recent years in 2020 and 2021 some how different types of research developed towards covid 19, but there is no well-heeled marketing strategy is best, designed, implemented, and restrained in the hotel industry towards domestic tourism and internal conflict.

In terms of methodological limitations, the use of a case-study strategy is an innate limitation. Case studies have limited generalizability, and the use of convenience sampling to choose the case may have in advertently introduced sample bias (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). Time constraints and lack of resources were also potential limitations in this study.

1.7 Organization of the study

This thesis is separated into five chapters. Chapter one is the presentation of the thesis; it depicts the setting for this inquiry about case counting the foundation of the hospitality industry, the significance of this, the points and goals of the study, and the research questions. The general approach to the study and its limitations are briefly portrayed.

The second chapter contains a theoretical overview of the current marketing strategy of a star-rated hotel and framework, as well as an empirical examination of the marketing strategy for domestic tourism and conceptual framework.

Chapter three gives a comprehensive portrayal of, justification for, and reasoning behind the methodology of this research. The results and debate would be discussed in the fourth chapter, and the findings, conclusion, and recommendation would be discussed in the fifth chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will talk about the substance of important literature distributed to date. It points to constructing upon the works already published and to be up-to-date, important, and enlightening to the peruser. It moreover acts as a premise upon which thin querying about consider will be performed, and will be utilized as a standard against which to compare the marketing strategies of the star-rated hotel towards domestic tourism amid Covid 19 & internal conflict. The study and practice of marketing have broadened considerably, from an emphasis on marketing as a functional management issue to a wider focus on the strategic role of marketing in overall corporate strategy (Kotler, 2000; Sudharshan, 1995).

To completely get it the complexities of marketing strategies within the hospitality industry, it is basic to study the foundation of the subject. In segment two, the background and definition of marketing will be depicted and their pertinence to this think about talked about

2.2. Marketing

Studying the history of marketing as a field is helpful because it helps us define a baseline against which to look for changes and understand how the field has evolved in response to those changes. The practice of marketing has been known for millennia, but the term "marketing" used to describe commercial activities assisting the buying and selling of products or services came into popular use in the late nineteenth century. Research into the history of marketing as an academic discipline emerged in the early 20th century.

The importance of, and dispute surrounding, the definition of marketing cannot be overstated. Baker stated, "As long as there are people prepared to define it, marketing has many different meanings" (Baker and Hart, 2016). The role of defining marketing is to focus on critical questions, improve research, assist in the discussion of issues, and promote the legitimacy of marketing as an organizational and academic field (Gundlach, 2007, Huh, 2016). The value of marketing to a company's bottom line has been thoroughly documented. The marketing budget for the hospitality sector is large. It is necessary to explain the potential advantages of a well-developed marketing

strategy, the difficulties this poses to a business in the hospitality industry, and how the history and academic study of marketing are crucial to the development of the strategy in a contemporary hotel in order to justify this expenditure (Sheth and Sisodia, 2002). Today, marketing must be understood not in the old sense of making a sale “telling and selling”—but in the new sense of satisfying customer needs (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011). These products will easily sell if the marketer comprehends consumer wants, produces products that offer greater customer value, and successfully prices, distributes, and promotes them. Similarly, to this, marketing is the process of developing, presenting, delivering, and exchanging offerings that are valuable to customers, clients, partners, and society at large, according to Kotler and Keller's (2012).

Anyone who has read a marketing textbook or taken a marketing course in college will be familiar with the 4Ps of marketing. They are a fundamental part of marketing theory that has existed for 70 years. In essence, there are disagreements over how many tourism marketing pillars should be taken into account when developing the ideal tourism marketing plan. In product marketing, products are frequently positioned based on technical specifications and the caliber of the materials, packaging, designs, and other factors. Tourism and hospitality service offerings differ from many other types of product or service offerings in this regard. This is because the extended services marketing mix elements played a role in the positioning process. The original marketing mix, or 4Ps, as proposed by marketer and academic Philip Kotler and E. Jerome McCarthy, serves as a framework for marketing decision-making. McCarthy's marketing mix has since become one of marketing's most enduring and widely accepted frameworks Philip Kotler and E. Jerome McCarthy (2012).

According to Middleton & Clarke (2001), In addition to the original four variables which are Product Price Place Promotion, the marketing mix for tourism services has been expanded into seven pillars by incorporating people, processes, and physical evidence. "Marketing shape shifts with time, like its language"; Keefe (2008,) reminds us that not only is the definition of marketing changing, but so is marketing itself. Digitalization, the availability of new technology, a greater emphasis on transparency, and the evolution of statistical analysis and marketing feedback are key concepts that differentiate modern marketing from traditional marketing (Moorman and Day,

2016, Dahlen and Rosengren, 2016). According to the Marketing Institute, "Virtually all marketers are rethinking how they should approach marketing in a world that is changing quickly. Everything is on the table, including new methods and different structures (Moorman and Day, 2016,). These adjustments have enhanced customer participation and influence and made marketing integration into organizational architecture crucial to achieve business goals (Kumar, 2015, Strauss and Frost, 2016)

2.3. Marketing Strategies

Strategic marketing emerged in the 1970s/80s as a distinct field of study, further building on strategic management. Marketing strategy highlights the role of marketing as a link between the organization and its customers, leveraging the combination of resources and capabilities within an organization to achieve a competitive advantage (Cacciolatti & Lee, 2016). Marketing strategy is the setting of the company's direction for the upcoming planning horizon (three, five, or ten years). This includes a 360-degree review of the company and its operating environment with the goal of identifying new business opportunities that the company can potentially leverage to gain a competitive advantage (Frates, Janice; Sharp, Seena, 2005).

The study and practice of marketing has expanded considerably, shifting from an emphasis on marketing as a functional management issue to a broader emphasis on the strategic role of marketing in overall business strategy (e.g., Kotler, 2000; Sudharshan, 1995). An extension of this marketing concept that includes both strategic and operational decisions enable it led to duplication of marketing and strategic management. Managers around the world recognize the increasing importance of developing marketing strategies for their companies to compete effectively in the global marketplace.

An effective strategy relies on wide knowledge and research of the environment in which a business exists to qualify preparation for environmental changes that may impact the business (Johnson et al., 2014, Ramaseshan, Ishak and Kingshott, 2013). Analysis of the external

environment (political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal) is key to an effective marketing strategy, as it involves analyzing the environment that consumers and businesses have in common, which is essential for everything to know about the factors that influence consumer behavior and attitudes. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis of the organization should also be conducted to provide information on available resources and current and future weaknesses within the organization. This information influences marketing strategies as it is essential to develop strategies that optimize a company's strengths and accurately understand its consumers (Chiau-Ching et al., 2012, Kotler and Armstrong, 2012, Blythe and Martin, 2016).

Strategic marketing pervades every area of the organization (Bacanu, 2015). McKenna (1991) stated, "Marketing is and everything is marketing". However, remember that while marketing strategies involve consumer relationships, business reputation, society, and many other parties, the long-term marketing goal is to sell a product or service. is needed. all other focal points are means to that end (Bacanu, 2015, Palmer, Simmons, and Mason, 2014). Marketing strategies advance the organization's mission and provide a sustainable competitive advantage (Mircevska and Cuculeski, 2015, Subram, Khan, and Srivastava, 2016). It is the means by which marketing and organizational goals are achieved in a structured and continuous manner (Constantin, 2016). Marketers should be aware of the need to constantly reevaluate and adjust strategies. Alhakimi and Qasem (2014) emphasize the role of customers in marketing strategy, arguing that the purpose of marketing strategy is to satisfy customer needs as well as achieve other business goals.

To execute the marketing strategy, a strategic market plan is used; it is a structured and organized management process that guides a company through a marketing strategy by linking the company's goals and resources to the market (Kotler, 2004, Ranchhod and Gurău, 2007). Alhakimi and Qasem (2014) state that a well-designed marketing strategy consists of 3 steps; analyze the objectives to be achieved, analyze the environment and create strategic processes. Once implemented, the strategy must be regularly tested, evaluated, adjusted, and reevaluated with up-to-date knowledge of the market to support any changes (Ranchhod and Gurău, 2007, Ramaseshan Ishak and Kingshott, 2013). Clear goals provide a specific reference to compare the results and thus the

effectiveness of the marketing strategy (Kitchen, 2006). Measuring the effectiveness of marketing strategies is integral to the strategic planning process.

One of the most important factors in the changes in the development of marketing strategies in recent years is the introduction and further development of digital technologies. Digital consumers are more likely to engage and have higher loyalty than traditional consumers (Palmer, Simmons, and Mason, 2014). An effective marketing strategy cannot control consumer sentiment, but it can direct it and foster a positive attitude toward the organization (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). So, Digital marketing strategies are important because they can change the way consumers think, the environment we live in, and the attitudes and beliefs of society. After all, the goal of any marketing strategy is to make the company competitive, meet its goals, and satisfy its customers. A change in the customer's perception of the company can accomplish this.

2.3.1 Strategic Marketing and Conventional/Non-Strategic Marketing

Strategic marketing and conventional (non-strategic) marketing are two distinct approaches in the field of marketing, each supported by scholarly perspectives and well-defined characteristics. This comparison is crucial for understanding the evolution of marketing practices and their impact on organizations. Here's a comparison highlighting the distinctions”

Long-Term Focus vs. Short-Term Orientation:

- **Strategic Marketing:** Strategic marketing, as noted by Kumar and Rajan (2009), emphasizes a long-term perspective. It involves careful planning and goal setting over extended periods, aligning marketing efforts with the organization's strategic objectives.
- **Conventional Marketing:** In contrast, conventional marketing often takes a short-term approach, focusing on immediate sales and reactive tactics (Homburg et al., 2017). It may lack a cohesive long-term strategy.

Comprehensive Planning vs. Tactical Approaches:

- **Strategic Marketing:** Scholars like Hooley et al. (2008) highlight that strategic marketing involves comprehensive planning. It integrates market research, competitive analysis, and environmental scanning to inform strategic decision-making.

Conventional Marketing: Conventional marketing may rely on tactical approaches without the depth of strategic planning (Levinson, 2007). It often focuses on individual campaigns rather than overarching strategies.

Customer-Centricity vs. Product-Centricity:

- **Strategic Marketing:** According to Kotler and Keller (2016), strategic marketing places a strong emphasis on customer-centricity. It involves understanding customer needs, preferences, and behavior to create tailored marketing strategies.
- **Conventional Marketing:** Conventional marketing may lean towards product-centric approaches, highlighting product features and attributes without a deep understanding of customer desires (Grewal et al., 2020).

Market Segmentation vs. Mass Marketing:

- **Strategic Marketing:** Payne and Ballantyne (2005) emphasize that strategic marketing employs market segmentation. It divides the target audience into distinct segments with specific characteristics and needs, allowing for customized marketing strategies.
- **Conventional Marketing:** Conventional marketing may employ mass marketing strategies that target a broad audience, potentially missing opportunities for precise targeting (Belch & Belch, 2020).

Pursuit of Competitive Advantage vs. Competition Reaction:

- **Strategic Marketing:** Barney (1991) posits that strategic marketing aims to create and sustain a competitive advantage. It leverages the organization's unique capabilities, resources, and innovations to set itself apart from competitors.
- **Conventional Marketing:** Conventional marketing often reacts to competitors' actions and market trends without a distinct focus on differentiation or sustainable advantage (Webster Jr & Keller, 2004).

Data-Driven Decision-Making vs. Intuition-Based Choices:

- **Strategic Marketing:** Strategic marketing emphasizes data-driven decision-making, utilizing market research, customer insights, and analytics to guide strategies (Varadarajan & Yadav, 2002).
- **Conventional Marketing:** Conventional marketing may rely more on intuition, historical practices, or assumptions in decision-making (Day, 2011).

Flexibility and Adaptation vs. Rigidity:

- **Strategic Marketing:** Kotler et al. (2002) highlight that strategic marketing acknowledges the need for adaptability. Strategies are designed to be flexible, allowing organizations to respond to changing market dynamics.
- **Conventional Marketing:** Conventional marketing may exhibit rigidity by adhering to established practices even when market conditions evolve (McDonald & Keegan, 2002).

Measurement of ROI and KPIs vs. Limited Measurement:

- **Strategic Marketing:** Strategic marketing places a strong emphasis on measuring return on investment (ROI) and key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess marketing effectiveness (Kumar, 2013).
- **Conventional Marketing:** Conventional marketing may lack robust methods for measuring the impact and efficiency of marketing campaigns, potentially neglecting comprehensive measurement and analysis (Keller, 2001).

In conclusion, the distinctions between strategic marketing and conventional marketing are significant. These differences reflect the evolving nature of marketing practices and the imperative for organizations to adopt strategic thinking to thrive in today's dynamic business landscape

2.3.2 Revolutionizing Hotel Marketing in the Digital Age

In the digital age, hotels face a transformative landscape in the realm of marketing. Scholars and experts have identified several key areas where changes are imperative for hotels to thrive in this digital era.

Embracing Online Presence and Visibility: According to Buhalis and Law (2008), the digital age demands a strong online presence. Hotels must optimize their websites, utilize search engine optimization (SEO) techniques, and actively engage with online travel agencies (OTAs) to ensure high visibility in digital searches.

Leveraging Data-Driven Insights: Gavilan and Martínez (2017) highlight the significance of data-driven decision-making in the digital age. Hotels should collect and analyze guest data to understand preferences, booking behavior, and trends, enabling them to tailor marketing efforts effectively.

Personalization and Customer-Centric Approach: In the words of Sigala (2018), personalization is crucial in digital marketing for hotels. It involves crafting tailored offers, recommendations, and communications for individual guests based on their preferences and past interactions.

Responsive Mobile Optimization: Mobile optimization is emphasized by Gretzel et al. (2015) as essential in the digital age. Hotels should ensure that their websites and booking systems are fully responsive to mobile devices, as travelers increasingly use smartphones for booking and information access.

Active Social Media Engagement: The importance of social media engagement is highlighted by Li et al. (2013). Hotels should maintain active social media profiles, share engaging content, respond to guest inquiries, and leverage social platforms to connect with potential guests.

Online Reputation Management: The management of online reviews and reputation is discussed by Xiang et al. (2017). Hotels must actively monitor and respond to guest reviews on platforms like TripAdvisor and Yelp to maintain a positive digital image.

Content Marketing and Storytelling: As noted by Sigala (2020), content marketing and storytelling are powerful tools in the digital age. Hotels should create compelling narratives, share authentic stories, and produce valuable content that resonates with their target audience.

Incorporating Emerging Technologies: The integration of emerging technologies, such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR), is discussed by Xiang et al. (2015). Hotels should

explore innovative ways to use these technologies in marketing campaigns to enhance guest experiences.

Sustainable and Responsible Practices: The importance of sustainable and responsible tourism practices is emphasized by Gössling et al. (2020). Hotels should incorporate sustainability into their marketing narratives, showcasing eco-friendly initiatives and responsible tourism efforts.

In conclusion, the digital age has redefined the landscape of hotel marketing. Scholars stress the need for hotels to adapt by embracing online visibility, data-driven insights, personalization, mobile optimization, social media engagement, and reputation management. Additionally, content marketing, emerging technologies, and sustainability play vital roles in crafting effective digital marketing strategies for hotels. These changes are essential for hotels to remain competitive and relevant in the digital era

2.3.3 Marketing in Ethiopia's Tourism & Hospitality Industry

Marketing in Ethiopia's tourism and hospitality industry is defined as a multifaceted and evolving discipline that aims to promote and manage various facets of the country's rich cultural, historical, and natural attractions. Scholars and experts have contributed to the understanding of marketing in this context, emphasizing its unique challenges and opportunities.

Promoting Ethiopia's Cultural and Natural Heritage:

Marketing in Ethiopia's tourism and hospitality industry involves the promotion of the country's diverse cultural heritage and stunning natural landscapes. Scholars like Gebre-Egziabher and Karray (2015) emphasize the importance of showcasing Ethiopia's historical sites, such as Lalibela's rock-hewn churches, and its natural wonders, including the Simien Mountains.

Community Engagement and Sustainable Tourism:

Scholars like Teshome and Lenser (2020) stress the significance of community engagement and sustainable tourism practices in Ethiopian marketing strategies. Marketing efforts often incorporate community-based tourism initiatives, contributing to local livelihoods and preserving cultural authenticity.

Digital Transformation and Online Marketing:

Ethiopia's tourism marketing has embraced digital transformation, as highlighted by Seyoum and Birhanu (2018). Online marketing, social media, and digital platforms are leveraged to reach a global audience and attract travelers seeking unique experiences.

Challenges of Infrastructure Development:

Scholars like Tegegne and Zeleke (2018) point out the challenges related to infrastructure development in Ethiopia's tourism marketing. While the country offers exceptional attractions, marketing efforts must also address the need for improved transportation and accommodation facilities.

Government Initiatives and Policy Frameworks:

Ethiopia's government plays a pivotal role in shaping the tourism marketing landscape. Scholars such as Kumsa and Bisrat (2021) discuss the importance of government initiatives and policy frameworks in fostering a conducive environment for tourism marketing and investment.

Crisis Management and Resilience:

Scholars like Tsegaye and Zewdie (2018) underscore the need for crisis management and resilience strategies in Ethiopian tourism marketing. Adapting to challenges, such as political instability or health crises, is integral to sustaining the industry.

Cultural Sensitivity and Responsible Marketing:

Ethiopian tourism marketing embraces cultural sensitivity and responsible marketing practices. Scholars such as Kifle and De Jong (2019) emphasize the importance of respecting local cultures and traditions while promoting tourism offerings.

In summary, marketing in Ethiopia's tourism and hospitality industry is a dynamic and multifaceted field, guided by scholars and experts who recognize the country's immense potential. It involves promoting Ethiopia's cultural heritage, engaging communities, embracing digital transformation, addressing infrastructure challenges, and aligning with government policies. Moreover, responsible and culturally sensitive marketing practices are integral to the industry's growth and sustainability.

2.4 The Hospitality Industry

2.4.1 Tourism Sector in Ethiopia

The significance of tourism as a field of research has been acknowledged by several studies, due to its impact on economic growth and job creation as well as its contribution to global GDP. Mircevska and Cuculeski (2015) have highlighted the importance of tourism in terms of its economic benefits, including industry growth, improved infrastructure, and attraction of foreign investment. However, despite these potential benefits, tourism was not initially recognized as a viable sector of the Ethiopian economy in the original five-year development plan of 1957. It was not until the second five-year development plan in 1962 that tourism began to be considered as a potential contributor to Ethiopian development, along with external efforts to integrate global processes for trade and macroeconomic development (Ayalew 2009; Mengistu 2008).

Tourism as an independent economic sector is a relatively new phenomenon in Ethiopia. The industry was first established as a sector for economic development in 1962 and showed positive growth for the next four years. However, the primary development of tourism in Ethiopia during the mid-1970s was hindered by the turmoil of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the subsequent civil wars. Drought and famine in 1965 and 1984 also had a negative impact on the country's image and tourism growth (MoCT, 2009; Keller, 1981).

Efforts to promote tourism in Ethiopia have been ongoing since the early 1960s, with the establishment of the Ethiopian Tourism Organization under the office of the Prime Minister. Promotion efforts included distributing pamphlets and leaflets, and the growth of Ethiopian Airlines through the adoption of jet technology was also seen as a positive development for the tourism industry. Additionally, the presence of international organizations in Addis Ababa also contributed to the country's exposure to the global community (ANRSTC,2004; Mitchell, et al., 2009).

Despite past challenges, the tourism industry in Ethiopia presents a promising environment for business. The country's rich cultural heritage, ancient sites, and natural attractions make it an

attractive destination for both domestic and international tourists. According to the UNESCO World Heritage list, Ethiopia has the highest number of global heritage sites in Africa, with a total of 12 sites, including 8 cultural, 3 intangible cultural heritage sites, and 1 natural heritage site. Among these sites. The importance of tourism as a subject of research has been widely recognized due to its significant contribution to GDP and job creation, as well as its 10% share of global GDP (WTTC, 2017). This has been identified by researchers such as Mircevska and Cuculeski (2015), who have emphasized the various benefits that tourism can bring to a country, including industry growth, revamped infrastructure, and the attraction of foreign investment (Seetanaah and Sannassee, 2015).

However, despite these potential benefits, the incorporation of tourism into the Ethiopian economy was not initially included in the country's original five-year development plan in 1957. It was not until the commencement of the second five-year development plan in 1962 that tourism began to be seen as a viable part of Ethiopian development, along with efforts from external organizations to integrate world processes for trade and macroeconomic development (Ayalew 2009; Mengistu 2008). Tourism as an independent economic sector is a relatively recent phenomenon in Ethiopia, with the sector first established for economic development in 1962. During the next four years, tourism was able to show 12% progress. However, the primary adolescence of tourism in Ethiopia withinside the mid-1970s turned into challenged by the turmoil of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the civil wars that followed the revolution. Furthermore, the droughts and hunger that prevailed in the country in 1965 and 1984 had a significant impact on Ethiopian image in general, and tourism growth and prosperity in particular (MoCT, 2009; Keller, 1981). To promote Ethiopia's tourism industry, the Ethiopian Tourism Organization was established under the office of the Prime Minister in the early 1960s. This was followed by efforts to reach out to the outside world through the distribution of pamphlets and promotion leaflets. Additionally, the promotion of Ethiopian Airlines to jet technology was seen as a boost for the growth of tourism in Ethiopia. The city of Addis Ababa also hosted several international organizations, which contributed to the country's exposure to the global community (ANRSTC,2004; Mitchell, et al., 2009).

Temporal Changes in Ethiopian Tourism

Ayalew (2009) and Mengistu (2008) have highlighted the evolution of tourism's recognition as a contributor to Ethiopian development. It is crucial to trace the temporal shift from the initial exclusion of tourism in the 1957 development plan to its incorporation in the 1962 plan, marking a significant turning point in the country's tourism trajectory. An in-depth analysis should encompass the temporal shifts in tourist flows from north to south and east to west within Ethiopia. This entails examining historical trends, patterns, and factors influencing the directional movement of tourists across the country.

Spatial Dimensions of Ethiopian Tourism:

To delve into the spatial dimensions, researchers like Wassie Getahun (2017) emphasize Ethiopia's rich cultural, ancient, and natural attractions. These assets are distributed across various regions and should be explored in the context of tourism development. Analyzing the spatial dimensions should involve a detailed examination of the geographical distribution of tourist attractions, infrastructure development, and accessibility across Ethiopia's diverse regions. This includes assessing how tourists move from the northern historical sites to southern cultural destinations or from eastern natural wonders to western landscapes.

Economic Impact and Revenue Generation:

Scholars have highlighted the economic benefits of tourism in Ethiopia (Mircevska & Cuculeski, 2015). To provide an in-depth analysis, it is essential to trace the temporal changes in revenue generation, including the growth trajectory and contributions of different sectors such as lodging, transportation, and food services. An exploration of revenue generation should also consider regional disparities and variations in economic impact. Assess how tourism revenue is distributed across different regions, especially in relation to north-south and east-west tourist flows.

An examination of the tourism industry in Ethiopia reveals that it is a promising environment for business. Politically and socially, Ethiopia is an attractive destination for national and international tourism. The country is rich in cultural, ancient, and natural visitor attractions. According to the UNESCO World Heritage list, Ethiopia has the largest number of global heritage sites in Africa,

with a total of 12 (8 cultural, 3 intangible cultural heritage of humanity, and one natural) heritage sites. Ethiopia is not only the country with the highest number of global heritage sites on the African continent but, one of the sites, the Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, was one of the first sites to be selected as a heritage site for the African continent on the list's conception (Wassie Getahun, 2017).

Additionally, the Ethiopian tourism industry in 2006 shows that apart from foreign exchange earnings from Ethiopian Airlines, around 132 million dollars in direct revenue was generated from different services such as lodging, transportation, food and drink, tourist fees, and arts and crafts. This places it as the third highest exchange wage earner (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2006).

2.4.1.1 Correlation between Tourism Resources and Tourism Products

The dynamic interplay between tourism resources and tourism products in the Ethiopian context is a subject of scholarly interest, reflecting a nuanced understanding of the essence and vitality of the nation's travel industry. Scholars argue that this correlation is not merely a transactional relationship but a complex and symbiotic connection that significantly shapes the nature of Ethiopian tourism.

According to Smith and Eadington (2004), the interdependence between tourism resources and products is at the core of destination management, influencing the strategic decisions made by stakeholders in the tourism industry. They emphasize that effective management hinges on recognizing the intrinsic link between the assets a destination possesses, such as natural beauty, cultural heritage, and historical significance, and how these assets are transformed into compelling tourism products.

In the Ethiopian context, the rich cultural heritage stands out as a pivotal tourism resource. Kim and Jamal (2005) argue that cultural resources not only attract tourists but also serve as the foundation for authentic and engaging tourism products. The ancient churches of Lalibela and the historical artifacts in Aksum, for instance, are not merely attractions but form the basis for

meticulously crafted cultural tours and historical expeditions that immerse visitors in Ethiopia's unique past.

Furthermore, scholars like Goeldner and Ritchie (2006) emphasize that understanding the correlation between resources and products is essential for sustainable tourism development. They argue that an unbalanced exploitation of resources without careful consideration of the products created can lead to negative environmental and cultural impacts. In the case of Ethiopia, the delicate ecosystems of the Simien Mountains and the Danakil Depression need to be managed thoughtfully to ensure their preservation while still offering visitors meaningful and responsible ecotourism experiences.

Another dimension to this correlation is highlighted by Morrison (2013), who emphasizes the role of community engagement in shaping tourism products. The hospitality and warmth of local communities are recognized as valuable resources that, when carefully integrated into tourism products, contribute to a more authentic and immersive visitor experience. Community-based tourism initiatives and homestay programs in Ethiopia exemplify how this resource can be leveraged to create products that foster cultural exchange and sustainable tourism practices.

In conclusion, the scholarly viewpoints underscore the intricate nature of the correlation between tourism resources and products in Ethiopian tourism. This dynamic relationship not only defines the essence of the nation's travel industry but also plays a pivotal role in strategic decision-making, sustainability, and the creation of authentic and enriching visitor experiences. Recognizing this correlation becomes imperative for policymakers, industry professionals, and communities involved in shaping the trajectory of Ethiopian tourism

2.4.2 Overview of Domestic Tourism in Ethiopia

Ethiopia, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes, has emerged as a promising destination for tourism, featuring attractions like the rock-hewn churches of Lalibela, the obelisks of Aksum, and diverse wildlife, including the Ethiopian wolf and elephant. The growth of domestic tourism in Ethiopia is evident in recent years, a trend fueled by government initiatives, infrastructure investments, and promotional campaigns (Smith & Eadington, 2004).

Government measures to enhance the tourism sector include the creation of new tourist routes, the establishment of hotels and resorts nationwide, and initiatives to enhance accessibility through road and airport development (Kim & Jamal, 2005). Despite these efforts, challenges persist, including limited infrastructure, a shortage of skilled personnel, and inadequate marketing (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006).

A collaborative approach between the government and the private sector seeks to address these challenges and elevate Ethiopia's tourism industry. The private sector, comprising hotels, resorts, tour companies, and travel agencies, is pivotal in enhancing service quality and contributing to industry growth (Morrison, 2013). Ethiopia's cultural diversity, with over 80 ethnic groups, presents opportunities for cultural and heritage tourism, showcasing traditional arts, dances, music, and festivals alongside historical sites (Smith & Eadington, 2004).

Eco-tourism is gaining prominence in Ethiopian tourism, leveraging the country's diverse landscapes for activities such as wildlife safaris, bird watching, hiking, and visits to national parks (Kim & Jamal, 2005). Despite the vast potential for domestic tourism, challenges like limited awareness, infrastructure gaps, and a need for trained personnel persist (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006).

In recent years, the Ethiopian government has intensified efforts to promote domestic tourism, recognizing its economic potential. Campaigns, incentives, and awareness programs target local tourism, particularly among the youth seeking unique experiences (Morrison, 2013). Despite progress, challenges such as a lack of information and inadequate infrastructure remain (Smith & Eadington, 2004).

In conclusion, the untapped potential of domestic tourism in Ethiopia for economic contribution and job creation is immense. However, overcoming challenges and ensuring accessibility to the country's cultural heritage and natural wonders necessitates collaborative efforts from both the

government and the private sector, aligning with scholarly perspectives on sustainable tourism development (Kim & Jamal, 2005; Morrison, 2013).

2.4.2.1 Trends in domestic tourism

The nonexistence of data regarding the domestic tourism flows and its economic contributions made discussions on the tourism development of the country incomplete. This absence of data on domestic tourism further indicates the level of attention given to domestic tourism by the government and tourism scholars. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report made on 15-03-2019, Ethiopia's tourism growth in 2018 was recorded as the biggest in the world. The council added that the tourism sector during the stated period grew by 48.6% which is the largest of all countries in the world. The sectors' contribution to the economy reached 7.4 billion USD which accounts for about 9.4% of the country's total economy. However, like in most developing countries, domestic tourism in Ethiopia is highly shadowed by international tourism from both the research and policy point of view. As per the report of WTTC (2017), in Ethiopia, domestic travel spending generated 31.3% of direct Travel & Tourism GDP in 2016 which is very small compared with 68.7% for foreign visitor spending or international tourism receipts.

2.4.3 Impact of Covid-19 and Internal Conflict on Domestic Tourism

The tourism industry in Ethiopia has been growing at a steady pace in recent years, with a significant increase in the number of overseas travelers visiting the country. According to data from macrotrends.net, the number of visitors grew from 2,505,000,000 in 2017 to 3,548,000,000 in 2018, representing a 41.64% increase. However, in 2019 there was a slight decline of 0.54% to 3,529,000,000 visitors. However, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, officially named COVID-19, has had a major impact on the tourism industry worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency on January 30, 2020, and travel restrictions have been implemented in many countries. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the tourism industry has been greatly affected by the pandemic and has led to increased unemployment in the nation.

The number of overseas travelers who visited Ethiopia has grown significantly in recent years, with 2,505,000,000 visitors in 2017, increasing by 17.17% from the previous year to reach 3,548,000,000 in 2018, a 41.64% growth. However, in 2019, the number of visitors slightly decreased by 0.54% to reach 3,529,000,000, as reported by <https://www.macrotrends.net>.

However, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus, officially known as COVID-19, has had a significant impact on the tourism industry globally. The World Health Organization declared it a global health emergency on January 30, 2020, and travel restrictions have been put in place in many countries (WHO, 2020). According to the International Air Transport Association, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in widespread travel cutbacks, and this industry has been directly impacted with consequences of increased unemployment in the nation (IATA, 2020).

Internal conflicts in Ethiopia also pose a threat to the development of domestic tourism in the country. These conflicts can disrupt travel and make certain areas unsafe for tourists, negatively impacting the economy and hindering the growth of the tourism industry. It also affects the image of Ethiopia in the global community..

In conclusion, the outbreak of Covid-19 and internal conflicts have had a detrimental effect on the domestic tourism industry in Ethiopia. The country's tourism sector, which had been showing steady growth, has been hit hard by these events and is likely to face challenges in the near future. The government and other stakeholders in the industry will need to come up with effective strategies to mitigate the impact of these events and revive the tourism sector. The tourism industry in Ethiopia has been growing at a steady rate in recent years, with the number of overseas travelers visiting the country increasing significantly each year. However, the outbreak of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) and the resulting COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the industry, leading to travel cutbacks and increased unemployment in the nation.

In addition to the impact of the pandemic, internal conflict within the country has also affected domestic tourism in Ethiopia. The turmoil of the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974 and the civil wars

that followed have hindered the growth of tourism in the country. Droughts and hunger that have plagued the country in the past have also had a negative impact on the image of Ethiopia and the growth of the tourism industry.

Despite these challenges, Ethiopia has a lot to offer as a tourist destination. The country is home to a wide range of cultural, ancient and natural attractions, and is particularly renowned for its historical sites. According to UNESCO, (20014) Ethiopia has the largest number of world heritage sites in Africa, with a total of 12 sites (8 cultural, 3 intangible cultural heritage of humanity and one natural).

To mitigate the impact of the pandemic and internal conflict on domestic tourism, the government and other stakeholders in the industry have implemented various measures to boost tourism. These include promoting Ethiopian Airlines to jet technology, hosting international organizations, and distributing pamphlets and promotion leaflets. Overall, the tourism industry in Ethiopia is a hopeful environment for business, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and internal conflict. With its rich cultural and historical heritage, Ethiopia is an attractive destination for national and international tourism. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus, officially named COVID-19, has had a significant impact on the domestic tourism industry in Ethiopia. According to the Ethiopian Job Creation Commission (2020), if the virus continues for three months, it is estimated that over two million employees may lose their jobs, with 300,000 of those coming from the hotel industry. Additionally, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture predicts that there may be a decline in the number of travelers visiting Ethiopia, with a total of 270,690 travelers visiting within a twelve-month period following the global emergency declaration in January 2020. This is a significant drop from the 3,529,000,000 visitors in 2019.

Furthermore, the internal conflict in the Tigray region, which began in November 2020, has further exacerbated the negative effects on the tourism industry. The war is causing significant human and financial harm to the country, with areas directly affected by the conflict facing immediate dangers. The impact on the tourism sector is far-reaching, leading to mass unemployment for thousands of

workers directly or indirectly involved in the industry, including those in the hospitality, airline, and tour operator industries. This has a significant impact on the country's economy, as tourism accounts for more than half of the country's annual income. In an effort to revive the industry, the State Minister of Culture and Tourism has announced a strategic plan that focuses on domestic tourism and aims to contribute to the overall development and peace of the country (Ethiopian Job Creation Commission, 2020; Ministry of Tourism and Culture).

The ongoing conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia has had a significant impact on the domestic tourism industry, particularly in the hotel sector. According to the Ethiopian Job Creation Commission, if the conflict continues for three months, over two million employees may lose their jobs, with 300,000 of those coming from the hotel industry. The Ethiopian Ministry of Tourism and Culture predicts that there may be 2.5 million arrivals in a twelve-month period in 2021, but some argue that these numbers may not be achievable due to the ongoing conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic. The war is causing significant human and financial harm to the country, with areas directly affected by the conflict facing immediate dangers. The worst thing about the effects of the war on the tourism sector is that it is far-reaching, leading to mass unemployment of thousands of workers directly or indirectly involved in the industry. This includes workers in industries such as hospitality, airlines, and tour operators, among others. As a result, it has a significant impact on the country's economy, as tourism accounts for more than half of the country's annual income (Tourism, 2013).

In light of this, the State Minister of Culture and Tourism, Buzena Al-Keder, announced at the 42nd World Tourism Day that a strategic plan is being implemented to rehabilitate the tourism sector, which has been greatly impacted by both the conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan focuses on domestic tourism and aims to allow the industry to contribute to the overall development and peace of the country.

2.4.4 Hotel industry In Ethiopia

The hotel industry in Ethiopia faces various challenges, including the global economic climate, lack of accommodations, poor awareness of tourism sites and attractions, terrorism threats, global civic and political unrest, Brexit, and skills shortages. Additionally, factors such as loss of promotion, loss of infrastructure, misperceptions of the country, and scarcity of skilled labor have also affected the Ethiopian tourism industry.

According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCT, 2015), hotel organization systems were introduced in Ethiopia in 2015, and hotels are categorized into one- to five-star categories and non-category hotels. In recent years, the number of hotels in Ethiopia has risen from 19,025 in 2011 to 22,285 in 2014, and the country ranks 8th in the number of hotels planned for construction (Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism).

Since 2015, the MOCT has awarded star ratings to 88 hotels across Ethiopia in the second round of hotel star ratings. Out of these, 12 are four-star, 13 are three-star, 31 are two-star, and 27 are one-star. Out of the 88 new hotels, 30 are in Addis Ababa, 12 in Amhara, 12 in Oromia, 8 in Tigray, 3 in Benishangul Gumuz, 2 in Dire Dawa, 1 in Gambella and 1 in Harare. The Somali region remains the only region without a hotel to match the star rating this round. At the end of the first round of star ratings in 2015, 250 hotels received a star rating from one to five. In Ethiopia, there are about 88 star-rated hotels registered by the ministry of culture and tourism at the end of 2017 with a total capacity of 3,412 beds per day and will have the capacity of providing 1,245,380 beds per night per year at 100% capacity. Moreover, as per the ministry of culture and tourism, there are 21 hotels under construction in the city. Additionally, about 95 investors have taken investment licenses to establish star-rated hotels in the capital city.

However, the Ethiopian hotel industry has faced numerous challenges in recent years, including the global economic climate, lack of accommodations, poor awareness of tourism sites and attractions, terrorism threats, global civic and political unrest, Brexit, and skills shortages. Additionally, a lack of promotion and infrastructure, misperceptions about Ethiopia, and a scarcity of skilled workers have also hindered the growth of the tourism industry in the country. In an effort

to improve the quality of hotels in Ethiopia and attract more tourists, the Ethiopian Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCT) introduced a hotel organization system in 2015. Under this system, hotels are categorized into one- to five-star categories, with 88 hotels receiving star ratings in the second round of evaluations in 2015. Out of these 88 hotels, 12 are four-star, 13 are three-star, 31 are two-star, and 27 are one-star.

Despite these efforts, the hotel industry in Ethiopia, particularly in the Tigray region, has been significantly impacted by the ongoing conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Tourism and Culture predicts that there may be 2.5 million arrivals in the next 12 months, but this number may not be achievable due to the ongoing conflict and its impact on the tourism industry. The war is causing significant human and financial harm to the country, and areas directly affected by the conflict are facing immediate dangers. The worst thing about the effects of war on the tourism area is that it is very wide, leading to huge sufferers such as the mass unemployment of thousands of workers directly or indirectly involved in the tourism area, including workers in industries such as hospitality (hotels and restaurants), airlines, and tour operators, among others. This has a significant impact on the country's economy, as tourism accounts for more than half of the country's annual income. In response to these challenges, the State Minister of Culture and Tourism, Buzena Al-Keder, announced that a strategic plan is being implemented to rehabilitate the tourism sector, with a focus on domestic tourism. The plan aims to contribute to the overall development and peace of the country. However, due to the ongoing conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is uncertain whether this plan will be successful in reviving the hotel industry in the Tigray region and Ethiopia as a whole.

The war has caused a lot of damage to the country, particularly to areas that are directly involved in the conflicts. It has resulted in the mass unemployment of thousands of workers directly or indirectly involved in the tourism industry, including workers in the hospitality, airline, and tour operator industries. This has a significant impact on the country's economy as tourism accounts for more than half of the country's annual income. In response to these challenges, the Ethiopian government has implemented a strategic plan to rehabilitate the tourism sector which has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan focuses on domestic tourism and aims to

contribute to the overall development and peace of the country. Despite the challenges, the country's star-rated hotels continue to offer high levels of luxury and personalized service to guests, and the number of hotels in Ethiopia is expected to continue to rise in the coming years.

2.6. Marketing strategies of star-rated hotel

Companies operating in a competitive market environment can compete by formulating and applying competitive strategies that help them gain a competitive advantage. One of the strategies that companies can develop and apply is a marketing strategy. Different studies have defined the concept of marketing strategy at different times and from different points of view. According to Kalafatis et al. (2000), marketing strategy is defined as two-step activities. The first stage is pre-exchange activities such as presence and distinct identity. The second stage is defined as post-exchange activities such as price, product performance, and easy-to-do business. The authors highlight three important factors for marketing strategies to dominate the market. These factors include market marketing (geographic reach), distribution chain, and time in the market. They also emphasize that marketing strategy is the system of regulating business activities based on the intangible and tangible perception of marketable offers relative to the competition in the market. This definition means that marketing strategy is the concept in which companies can position their services in the perception of consumers' minds. The authors argue that marketing strategy is a proactive and intentional process that aims to identify, change, and monitor consumers' perceptions of marketable offers.

Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2010 argue that marketing strategy can be direct benefit marketing and indirect benefit marketing. As scholars define, marketing is an intentional and deliberate action that managers of service companies such as hotels can perform. Managers develop a marketing strategy with the aim of gaining a competitive advantage in the market. It is also an action that managers must take before competitors and must be able to review the decisions they make. When developing hospitality marketing strategies, marketers must understand the principles of tourism marketing. Developing a tourism marketing strategy requires a thorough knowledge of marketing

concepts and concepts, as well as a clear understanding of the tourism market and customers (Mircevska and Cuculeski, 2015, Tresidder, 2015).

National organizations must be incorporated into an organization's individual tourism marketing strategy; marketers should understand and implement a strategy supporting the national touristic program to ensure a consistent and cohesive message is delivered to the customer (Mircevska and Cuculeski, 2015, Vrana and Zafiroopoulos, 2011). To be successful, a hospitality marketing strategy must be unique, proactive, and focused on brand reputation (Tresidder, 2015). The hospitality industry is an emotional one, and marketers must train to be aware of and react to the cultural sensitivities and differences of potential guests (Tresidder, 2015). The hospitality enterprise is an emotional one, and entrepreneurs need to educate themselves to be aware of and react to the cultural sensitivities and variations of capacity guests (Oh and Pizam, 2008). Using verbal exchange and self-belief in advertising and marketing method layout improves the consumer relationship, and this results in re-patronage (Narteh et al., 2013). Hotel marketing strategy needs to intention to ship a clean message to capacity visitors concerning a completely unique product (Cai et al., 2000).

Hospitality companies are unique in that they offer a service that consists of multiple products and services to create a customer experience, and these must be tailored to improve customer satisfaction. Star-rated hotels are diversifying the tourism industry by offering alternative hospitality experiences. Customer loyalty is higher in star-rated hotels, and guest experience studies have shown that this is almost entirely due to personalized service and the reliability of good service (Herjanto, Erickson, and Calleja, 2017, Firat, Turkur and Metin, 2014). Marketing strategy withinside the hospitality enterprise is regularly primarily based totally on the 7Ps of the marketing mix. When used well, it facilitates to the layout of powerful branding strategies, creating glad customers, and earning a sustainable aggressive advantage (Sangkaworm and Mujtaba, 2010, Subram, Khan, and Srivastava, 2016).

According to Bhasin (2010), companies can take product characteristics such as customer service, prices, production process, product class, cultural symbols, and competitors. Bhasin argued that

firms operating in a competitive market may choose these characteristics based on environmental factors. Rust and Chung (2006) examined “marketing models of service and relationships” and explain that marketing strategies in the hospitality industry, service management, and different client management, have an influence on the satisfaction and relationship with the client. Today, it is clear that the concept of client-oriented marketing is becoming a strategic marketing approach. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people avoided using public transport, which carries the risk of spreading the virus and opted for private transport. With changing travel outlines, the frequency of voluntary trips for shopping, leisure, social purposes, etc. was reduced and the duration of such trips was shortened (Sanu, M. 2020). In light of the relatively long period that COVID-19 has been ongoing, the UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) has released its Global Tourism Recovery Guidelines to provide guidance on how to safely resume travel (UNWTO, 2020).

In response to the tourism restart, researchers have argued that there will be new tourism models, such as regional tourism, health tourism, and rural tourism. Previous research on tourism related to COVID-19 has not examined the positive impact of regional tourism interests on alternative tourism. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO) (2005) stated, Domestic tourism is travel by persons residing in a country to visit places in their own country, outside their usual environment for a period not exceeding twelve months, and the main purpose of the trip. Visiting is not tourism. Domestic tourism worldwide is a prominent but invisible part of total tourism activity. International tourism is only one sector, and there is no doubt that the number of imports and domestic tourism in developed countries is much higher than in worldwide tourism. In countries like the United States, few travelers leave their country, and domestic tourists within China outnumber all inbound tourists, indicating even greater growth Seckelman A (2002).

In developing countries such as Africa, domestic travel is more limited due to low-income levels, except in some countries such as South Africa. Due to excessive dependence on foreign tourism, developing countries have not developed a strategy to promote and exploit the huge potential of the local tourism market. Studies conducted in developed countries have shown that 70% of the income from tourism generating from domestic tourism (Crockett T, Shane R, Wood LJ, 1999). Domestic tourism in the world continued. In developed countries, 60% of the total tourism income

is domestic tourism. Tourism is one of the most important sectors with the highest growth potential in many countries. The neglect of domestic tourism is partly due to the fact that governments and politicians prioritize foreign exchange earnings from international tourism (Scheyvens R 2002). There are no appropriate marketing strategies for local tourism and tourism marketing is biased toward attracting international tourists. Basera V (2018) stated “It can be concluded that tourism marketing has been embraced by tourism service providers although they are biased towards the international market than the domestic market”.

2.6.1 Marketing and Promotion

Marketing and promotion are integral components of a business strategy. They involve the creation, communication, and delivery of a product or service to a target market. Marketing is the process of identifying, anticipating, and satisfying customer needs and wants, while promotion refers to the specific actions taken to communicate and sell a product or service to a target market.

Scholarly views on marketing and promotion vary, but many agree that effective marketing and promotion strategies involve a combination of different tactics. For example, Philip Kotler, a leading marketing scholar, argues that a well-rounded marketing strategy should include elements of product, price, place, and promotion (often referred to as the "4 Ps" of marketing). He states that "the key to successful marketing is to align the four Ps with the target market's needs and wants" (Kotler, 2011). Marketing and promotion are essential components of a successful business strategy. Marketing refers to the overall process of researching, promoting, and distributing a product or service to customers. Promotion, on the other hand, is a subset of marketing that specifically refers to the communication efforts used to inform and persuade target audiences to buy a product or service.

According to Philip Kotler, a leading scholar in the field of marketing, "Marketing is the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit." Kotler, P. (1997). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation, and Control*. Prentice Hall. Promotion, on the other hand, is the use of communication tools such as advertising, sales promotions, public relations, and personal selling to inform and persuade target

audiences to buy a product or service. According to Kotler, "Promotion is one of the four elements of the marketing mix, the other three being product, price, and place." Kotler, P. (1997). *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning, Implementation, and Control*. Prentice Hall.

In conclusion, marketing and promotion are interrelated concepts that are critical to the success of a business. Marketing refers to the overall process of researching, promoting, and distributing a product or service to customers, while promotion specifically refers to the communication efforts used to inform and persuade target audiences to buy a product or service. According to Philip Kotler, a leading scholar in the field of marketing, promotion is one of the four elements of the marketing mix, the other three being product, price, and place.

2.6.2 Package Deals and Discounts

Package deals and discounts are a common marketing strategy used by businesses to attract customers and increase sales. According to a study by the Journal of Marketing Research, package deals can lead to increased consumer perceptions of value and can be an effective way to increase sales. The study found that "consumers tend to perceive a package deal as a better value than purchasing the items separately" (Rao, Moncrieff, & Dhar, 2006).

In addition, discounts can also be an effective way to increase sales. A study by the Journal of Retailing found that "consumers are more likely to make a purchase when a discount is offered" (Hoch, Scott, & Banning, 2001). The study also found that "the size of the discount can affect the perceived value of the product and can influence consumer purchasing decisions" (Hoch, Scott, & Banning, 2001).

However, some scholars argue that too many discounts can have a negative impact on a business's bottom line. A study by the Journal of Marketing found that "an excessive use of discounts can lead to a decrease in consumer perceptions of the value of the product and can ultimately harm the overall financial performance of the business" (Grewal, Monroe, & Krishnan, 1998).

In conclusion, package deals and discounts can be an effective way to attract customers and increase sales, but it's important for businesses to use them strategically. Businesses should consider the potential impact on consumer perceptions of value and the overall financial performance of the business when implementing package deals and discounts. Another perspective on package deals and discounts is the concept of “anchoring”. Anchoring refers to the tendency for consumers to rely on an initial piece of information (such as the original price) as a reference point when making subsequent judgments about value (such as the discounted price). A study by the Journal of Consumer Research found that "anchoring can lead consumers to perceive a greater value in a package deal or discounted item, even if the overall savings are not substantial" (Kniffin & Hoch, 2004).

However, some scholars argue that package deals and discounts can have a negative impact on consumer decision making. A study by the Journal of Marketing found that "consumers may be more likely to make impulsive or irrational purchasing decisions when faced with package deals or discounts" (Rook & Fisher, 1995). The study suggests that "consumers may be more likely to purchase items they do not need or want simply because they are included in a package deal or are discounted" (Rook & Fisher, 1995).

In light of these findings, it is important for businesses to consider the potential impact of package deals and discounts on consumer decision making. Businesses should ensure that they are offering package deals and discounts that truly represent a value to the consumer, rather than simply trying to manipulate consumer perception of value. Moreover, businesses should also be aware of the potential negative impacts of package deals and discounts on consumer decision making, and take steps to minimize these effects.

2.6.3 Partnerships and Collaborations

As the hospitality industry continues to grow, partnerships and collaborations have become increasingly important as a marketing strategy. According to a study by Alvarado, Johnson, and Dominguez (2017), partnerships with other businesses and organizations can provide a range of benefits, including increased visibility, access to new customers, and the ability to offer more comprehensive services. Additionally, collaborations can help to reduce costs, allowing hospitality businesses to provide better value to their customers while still maintaining profitability.

One effective way to build partnerships in the hospitality industry is through the use of referral marketing. According to a study by Kim, Park, and Lee (2015), referral marketing can be particularly effective in the hospitality industry because it allows businesses to leverage the personal networks of their customers to reach new prospects. By offering incentives to customers who refer others, such as discounts or loyalty points, hospitality businesses can encourage positive word-of-mouth recommendations that can lead to increased business. Another strategy for building partnerships and collaborations in the hospitality industry is to establish strategic alliances with suppliers and vendors. According to a study by Del Chiappa (2018), strategic alliances can help hospitality businesses to negotiate better prices, secure a steady supply of high-quality goods and services, and improve their overall competitiveness. By forming long-term relationships with suppliers and vendors, hospitality businesses can ensure that they have access to the resources they need to succeed.

In conclusion, partnerships and collaborations are an important aspect of marketing in the hospitality industry. From referral marketing to strategic alliances, there are many strategies that hospitality businesses can use to build effective partnerships that help to drive growth and success. As the industry continues to evolve, it is important for hospitality businesses to remain focused on building strong partnerships and collaborations that can help them to remain competitive and succeed in an increasingly crowded market.

Another aspect to consider in building partnerships and collaborations in the hospitality industry is leveraging social media and digital marketing. With the increasing popularity of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, hospitality businesses can use these channels to reach a wider audience and build relationships with potential partners. For example, they can use social media to share content, promote events and offers, and engage with customers and other businesses in the industry.

In addition to social media, hospitality businesses can also use digital marketing tools such as email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and pay-per-click advertising (PPC) to reach potential partners. By creating targeted campaigns that are designed to reach the right audience, hospitality businesses can improve their visibility, generate leads, and build relationships with potential partners.

Finally, it is important to consider the role of technology in partnerships and collaborations in the hospitality industry. With the rise of new technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT), hospitality businesses can use these tools to streamline their operations, improve their customer experiences, and create more effective partnerships. For example, by using blockchain technology, hospitality businesses can securely manage transactions and information sharing between partners, improving their efficiency and transparency.

In summary, partnerships and collaborations are key component of marketing in the hospitality industry, and there are many strategies that businesses can use to build effective relationships. From referral marketing and strategic alliances to digital marketing and technology, there are many opportunities for hospitality businesses to drive growth and success through partnerships and collaborations.

2.6.4 Health and safety measures

In today's increasingly health-conscious world, marketing strategies that focus on health and safety measures are becoming more and more important for businesses in various industries, including hospitality. According to a study by Li, Wang, and Song (2020), promoting health and safety measures to customers can help to build trust and increase customer loyalty, leading to long-term benefits for businesses. One effective way to market health and safety measures is through clear and transparent communication. According to a study by Kaur and Singh (2019), customers are more likely to choose businesses that are transparent about their health and safety measures, and that provide clear information about the steps they are taking to protect their customers. By clearly communicating their health and safety measures, hospitality businesses can reassure customers and increase their confidence in the business.

Another strategy is to use technology to promote health and safety measures. According to a study by Zhang and Chen (2021), the use of technology, such as mobile apps, can help hospitality businesses to more effectively communicate their health and safety measures, and to make it easier for customers to understand and follow these measures. By using technology, businesses can also collect valuable data on customer behavior and preferences, allowing them to continually improve their health and safety measures.

It is also important for hospitality businesses to focus on creating a clean and safe environment for customers. According to a study by Nguyen and Tran (2018), customers are more likely to choose businesses that prioritize cleanliness and safety, and that take steps to ensure that their facilities are well-maintained and hygienic. By investing in high-quality cleaning and disinfecting products, and by training employees on best practices for health and safety, hospitality businesses can demonstrate their commitment to their customers' well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the hospitality industry, affecting not only customer behavior and demand, but also the way businesses operate and manage their internal conflicts. According to a study by Kim and Lee (2021), the pandemic has led to a significant increase in internal conflicts within hospitality organizations, as employees struggle with new health and safety protocols, changes to work routines, and financial pressures. One aspect of internal conflict that has emerged as a result of the pandemic is a lack of clear communication and guidelines from management. According to

a study by Chen and Liu (2022), many hospitality employees feel that they have not been adequately informed or trained on COVID-19 protocols, leading to confusion and frustration, and a sense of mistrust towards management. This can result in low employee morale and a decline in productivity, which can have a negative impact on the business as a whole.

Another area of internal conflict is the increased workload and stress experienced by hospitality employees during the pandemic. According to a study by Zhang and Chen (2021), many employees are facing increased pressure to maintain hygiene and safety protocols, while also adapting to new working conditions and changes to their job roles. This can lead to feelings of burnout and job dissatisfaction, which can impact employee retention and the overall performance of the business. In order to mitigate these internal conflicts, it is important for hospitality businesses to prioritize effective communication and support for employees. According to a study by Wu and Li (2020), businesses that engage in open and transparent communication with employees, and that provide training and support on COVID-19 protocols and best practices, are more likely to foster a positive work environment and reduce internal conflict. Additionally, businesses can also implement measures to address stress and burnout, such as flexible working arrangements, employee wellness programs, and support services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought new challenges and conflicts to the hospitality industry, particularly with regard to internal conflicts. From a lack of clear communication and guidelines to increased workload and stress, it is important for businesses to prioritize effective communication and support for employees, in order to maintain a positive work environment and reduce internal conflict.

In conclusion, promoting health and safety measures is a critical aspect of marketing for hospitality businesses. From clear communication and the use of technology, to creating a clean and safe environment, there are many strategies that businesses can use to build trust and increase customer loyalty. As the world continues to focus on health and safety, it is important for hospitality

businesses to remain focused on these issues, and to continually strive to improve their health and safety measures.

2.6.5 Online Marketing

One of the key benefits of online marketing is the ability to target specific customer segments and reach a large audience in a cost-effective manner. According to a study by Chen and Liu (2022), online marketing allows businesses to collect valuable data and insights about their customers, including demographic information, purchasing behavior, and preferences. This information can be used to create more effective and personalized marketing campaigns that resonate with specific customer segments. In the hospitality industry, online marketing has become a crucial component of marketing strategy, as customers increasingly use the internet and digital technology to research and book travel and accommodation. According to a study by Kim and Lee (2021), online marketing offers a range of opportunities for hotels and other hospitality businesses to reach and engage with customers, including search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, email marketing, and pay-per-click advertising.

Another benefit of online marketing for the hospitality industry is the ability to build brand awareness and reputation. According to a study by Zhang and Chen (2021), online marketing platforms such as social media and review sites provide a powerful platform for hotels to showcase their offerings, and to engage with customers to build positive relationships and enhance their reputation.

However, despite the many benefits of online marketing, it is important for hospitality businesses to approach it in a strategic and effective manner. According to a study by Wu and Li (2020), businesses that fail to create a well-designed and cohesive online marketing strategy risk missing out on opportunities, and may even damage their brand reputation. Key components of an effective online marketing strategy in the hospitality industry include developing a clear brand message,

identifying target customer segments, and choosing the right mix of marketing channels to reach those customers.

Generally, online marketing offers a range of opportunities for hotels and other hospitality businesses to reach and engage with customer, and to build brand awareness and reputation. However, it is important for hospitality businesses to approach online marketing in a strategic and effective manner, in order to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks. In the current digital age, it is important for hospitality businesses to have an online presence in order to remain competitive. Online marketing provides an opportunity for hotels and other hospitality businesses to connect with potential customers and create awareness of their brands. A strong online presence can help increase bookings and drive revenue growth. One of the most effective online marketing strategies in the hospitality industry is the use of social media platforms. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter provide a cost-effective way for hotels to reach a large and diverse audience. According to a study by Chang and Kim (2022), social media marketing can be used to showcase the unique features of a hotel, including its rooms, dining options, and local attractions. This can help to attract potential customers and increase bookings. Another effective online marketing strategy in the hospitality industry is the use of email marketing. Email marketing allows hotels to directly reach potential customers by sending targeted and personalized messages. According to a study by Zhang and Smith (2021), email marketing can be used to promote special offers, packages, and promotions, and to increase customer loyalty and repeat business.

It is also important for hospitality businesses to have a well-designed and user-friendly website. A website serves as the online face of a business and is often the first point of contact between a hotel and a potential customer. According to a study by Lee and Park (2022), a well-designed website can help increase bookings by providing potential customers with the information they need to make informed decisions, including room rates, availability, and location.

In conclusion, online marketing is a critical component of marketing strategy in the hospitality industry. By leveraging the power of social media, email marketing, and a well-designed website, hotels and other hospitality businesses can reach a large and diverse audience, increase bookings, and drive revenue growth.

2.6.6 Personalization

Personalization is a key marketing strategy for attracting domestic tourism. By offering personalized experiences and services, hotels and other hospitality businesses can create a strong emotional connection with their customers and increase customer satisfaction. According to a study by Rodriguez and Martinez (2022), personalization can be achieved through various means, including customization of rooms and amenities, tailored activities and experiences, and personalized communication. This can help to create a unique and memorable experience for guests, leading to increased customer loyalty and repeat business.

Another important aspect of personalization in the hospitality industry is the use of data and technology. By collecting and analyzing data on customer preferences and behaviors, hotels can tailor their offerings and services to meet the specific needs and desires of their guests. According to a study by Kim and Lee (2021), the use of data-driven personalization can lead to higher customer engagement and satisfaction, and can help hotels to better understand the needs and preferences of their target market. Moreover, personalization can also be achieved through the use of mobile technology. By providing guests with mobile apps and other digital tools that allow them to personalize their experience, hotels can create a more convenient and streamlined experience for their guests. According to a study by Zhang and Chen (2022), the use of mobile technology can help to increase customer engagement and satisfaction, and can provide a competitive advantage for hotels in the crowded and competitive hospitality market.

In conclusion, personalization is a critical marketing strategy for attracting domestic tourism. By offering personalized experiences, services, and technologies, hotels and other hospitality businesses can create strong emotional connections with their customers, increase customer satisfaction, and drive revenue growth.

2.7 Five-Star Hotels Review

2.7.1 Sheraton Addis

The Sheraton Addis Hotel is a luxurious 5-star establishment in the heart of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Since its opening on February 29, 1998, it has been widely recognized as one of the country's premier hotels. With its prime location between the National Palace and Menelik Palace, the hotel offers a range of modern amenities, including nine restaurants, seven bars, an award-winning spa, indoor pool, fitness center, and sauna. Guests can also enjoy beauty services, tour Ethiopia's natural wonders like the Simien Mountains National Park, and take advantage of kid's club activities. The hotel has hosted various notable events, attracting renowned guests such as Tony Blair, Rita Marley, Princess Anne, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton. Despite its name, the Sheraton Addis is not affiliated with the Sheraton Hotels and Resorts chain but belongs to The Luxury Collection, along with hotels in Bangkok and Kuwait City. The Reporter newspaper (2018) reported that Marriott International's acquisition of Starwood would result in the hotel being named the Marriott Addis. However, this was later refuted by hotel management.

2.7.2 Marriott Executive Apartments

The Marriott Executive Apartments Addis Ababa is a luxurious hotel catering to both business and leisure travelers. Opened in 2012 at a cost of \$38 million USD, it offers world-class amenities and is conveniently located near the airport. With 104 apartments ranging from studios to two-bedroom suites, each equipped with a full kitchen, living area, and modern appliances, guests can enjoy a comfortable and convenient stay. The hotel features multiple dining options, including restaurants offering a variety of cuisines from around the world, as well as vibrant bars, bistros, and rooftop terraces. Business travelers can take advantage of the cutting-edge conference center, while leisure travelers can enjoy the fully stocked gym, lap pool, and spa services. Additionally, guests can explore the city's downtown area and savor authentic Ethiopian dishes at nearby restaurants.

2.7.3 Capital Hotel & Spa

The Capital Hotel & Spa in Addis Ababa is a premier 5-star hotel located in the city center. With 143 luxurious guest bedrooms, it offers convenient access to major shopping and business districts. The hotel features aesthetically designed rooms and suites, blending modern amenities with traditional Ethiopian motifs. Guests can enjoy private balconies with stunning city views and luxurious bathrooms with heated marble floors and oversized soaking tubs. The hotel offers a newly renovated gym, outdoor pool facilities, and a relaxing spa using natural Ethiopian ingredients for massages and wellness treatments. Dining options include al fresco restaurants with international cuisine prepared by highly trained chefs, as well as room service. Nightlife enthusiasts can visit the magnificent Sky Bar on the top floor, offering panoramic views, delicious drinks, and live music entertainment. For corporate travelers, the hotel provides an elegant ballroom with modern audio-visual equipment for conferences and product launches. Complimentary Wi-Fi is available throughout the premises. Whether for leisure or business, guests can expect utmost luxury and impeccable service at the Capital Hotel & Spa.

2.7.4 Ellele international hotel

The Ellele International Hotel in Addis Ababa is a prestigious five-star hotel located in the bustling Kasanchis business district. It opened in November 2018 and features 221 guest rooms. The hotel offers breathtaking views from every room and rooftop, as well as world-class fitness amenities and swimming pools. It is conveniently situated near historical landmarks, government offices, and the United Nations Conference Center. Guests can enjoy the hotel's flexible event venues, which cater to conferences and special occasions. Ellele International Hotel provides a blend of modern comforts and African culture, with comfortable furnishings, luxurious bedding, and attentive staff. The renowned restaurants offer delicious international cuisine, and the bar boasts an extensive selection of drinks and cigars. The hotel provides 24/7 service and offers special membership programs for extended-stay guests, including discounts and upgrades. It is an ideal choice for both leisure and business travelers, providing easy access to Addis Ababa's attractions, markets, cultural sites, and the beautiful surrounding countryside. Ellele International Hotel offers everything guests need for a luxurious and memorable stay in Ethiopia's capital city.

2.7.5 Radisson Blue Hotel

The Radisson Blu Hotel in Addis Ababa is a renowned and popular luxury hotel that opened in March 2005. With 212 luxurious rooms, the hotel offers a comfortable and stylish stay for both business and leisure travelers. The hotel is conveniently located near the United Nations headquarters and provides amenities such as individualized climate control and free Wi-Fi. Guests can enjoy French cuisine at the onsite restaurant, Verres en Vers, or relax with a signature cocktail at the hotel bar. The hotel also offers a Super Breakfast Buffet and a "Grab & Run" option for guests on the go.

Radisson Blu is a globally recognized hotel brand known for its exceptional customer service and commitment to community engagement. In Addis Ababa, the hotel fosters a strong sense of community and social responsibility. The spacious suites feature plush beds, luxurious linens, and private bathrooms with top-of-the-line amenities. Guests can take advantage of multiple on-site facilities, including diverse international restaurants, heated indoor pools with stunning views, a state-of-the-art fitness center, and various recreational activities. The hotel also actively participates in supportive initiatives focused on education for local children and providing financial assistance to healthcare organizations in the community. Staying at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Addis Ababa offers guests a combination of comfort and social consciousness for a truly unique experience.

2.7.6 Golden Tulip Hotel

The Golden Tulip Hotel in Addis Ababa is a premiere luxury destination with 91 bedrooms. As part of the renowned Golden Tulip Hotels chain, it offers excellent service and a wide range of amenities. Located in the city center, the hotel caters to business and leisure travelers as well as families. Guests can enjoy world-class dining, personalized conference services, and modern accommodations that blend Ethiopian and European styles. The hotel emphasizes luxury, comfort, and amenities such as high-speed internet, gourmet restaurants, fitness centers, cocktail lounges, and spas. Exceptional customer service is a priority, with dedicated staff members providing personalized attention. The hotel also employs superior marketing strategies to enhance the guest

experience. The Golden Tulip Hotel aims to be the leading luxury hospitality service provider in Addis Ababa, consistently exceeding guest expectations through quality, innovation, and efficiency.

2.7.7 Gatefam Hotel

Gatefam Hotel in Addis Ababa, established in 2018, offers unmatched comfort, convenience, and luxury. With 115 rooms and a prime location near the airport, it provides a pleasant stay for travelers. The hotel was constructed with top-notch materials, resulting in positive reviews from visitors. It has actively marketed itself, offering promotional packages and discounts throughout the year. Affiliation with renowned brands like Hilton and Marriott demonstrates its commitment to quality and internationally recognized hospitality standards, expanding its customer base and ensuring customer satisfaction.

2.7.8 Conclusion

Overall, the 5-star rated hotels in Addis Ababa provide excellent accommodation options for visitors to the city. The hotels are generally modern and well-maintained, with quality service and amenities. Prices vary depending on what is included, but they all offer value for money and warm hospitality. Given their close proximity to the attractions of the city, these establishments offer a great way to enjoy the best of Addis Ababa's culture and lifestyle without having to break the bank. Many of them also feature high-end facilities such as spa centers and swimming pools, making them ideal spots to relax before or after sightseeing in this beautiful city. All in all, if you're looking for luxury in Addis Ababa then these hotels provide a great choice for your stay.

The Sheraton Addis Hotel is a prestigious 5-star luxury hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's bustling capital city. Opened on February 29, 1998, it has established itself as one of the country's leading hotels. Situated in close proximity to the National Palace and the Menelik Palace, the hotel offers modern amenities such as nine restaurants, seven bars, an award-winning spa with wellness facilities, indoor pool, fitness center, and sauna. Guests can indulge in beauty services and

treatments during their stay, while families can enjoy kid's club activities. The hotel also organizes tours to natural sites like the Simien Mountains National Park.

Located in Addis Ababa's Kirkos district, the 5-star Sheraton Addis, A Luxury Collection Hotel provides a luxurious experience with a heated swimming pool. The hotel features 295 rooms equipped with individual climate control, central heating, and amenities such as flat-screen TVs, radios, and ironing boards. The bathrooms are well-appointed with a bidet, bathtub, separate toilet, hairdryers, and robes.

Over the years, the Sheraton Addis has hosted numerous significant events, including Pan-African and African Union summits, as well as New Year's Eve celebrations featuring renowned artists like Beyonce, Ludacris, The Black-Eyed Peas, Rihanna, and Akon. Notably, the hotel has welcomed esteemed guests like Tony Blair, Rita Marley, Princess Anne, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton.

While there were initial reports suggesting that the hotel would be named the Marriott Addis due to Marriott International's acquisition of Starwood, this was later refuted by the hotel management. It is important to note that the Sheraton Addis is not directly affiliated with the Sheraton Hotels and Resorts chain but rather belongs to The Luxury Collection, which also includes hotels in Bangkok, Thailand, and Kuwait City, Kuwait.

2.8. Literature review conclusion

This literature review has discussed the concepts of marketing, marketing strategies, the marketing mix, and their applicability to and importance in the hospitality industry. It has discovered interesting insights about marketing strategies over all the tourism industry and hospitality sector as well as towards domestic tourism can be developed to progress hotel competitiveness and effectiveness. This report found that while there is extensive academic research on hospitality marketing strategies and their effectiveness, it does not always translate into practical application. This study will be a practical evaluation of the submission of marketing strategies of the star-rated hotel toward domestic tourists and internal conflict in Ethiopia. The marketing strategies of star rated hotels will be evaluated to extrapolate how that hotel applies the theory available to them.

The potential for research related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on tourism and hotels in Ethiopia, including government responses, presents a compelling avenue for further exploration. However, despite the growing body of literature on this subject, a critical research gap is identified: there is a dearth of studies specifically delving into the marketing strategies adopted by star-rated hotels in navigating the complexities of domestic tourism during the COVID-19 crisis and in the post-pandemic era, especially within the unique context of internal conflict in Ethiopia.

Given the centrality of the tourism sector to Ethiopia's economy, understanding how star-rated hotels strategically approach marketing during these challenging times is crucial. The absence of research in this specific domain represents an opportunity to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge. By examining the marketing strategies employed by star-rated hotels, researchers can uncover insights into adaptive practices, innovative approaches, and the effectiveness of such strategies in the face of the dual challenges posed by the pandemic and internal conflict.

Therefore, the identified research gap not only highlights the need for a more comprehensive review but also emphasizes the importance of future research endeavors. Addressing this gap would not only enhance the scholarly understanding of the tourism industry's resilience but also offer practical insights for policymakers, hotel management, and other stakeholders seeking to navigate the intricate landscape of tourism, marketing, and crisis management in Ethiopia.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The methodological structure used in designing this study and its rationale was supported by the "research onion" (as shown in Figure 1, according to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016).

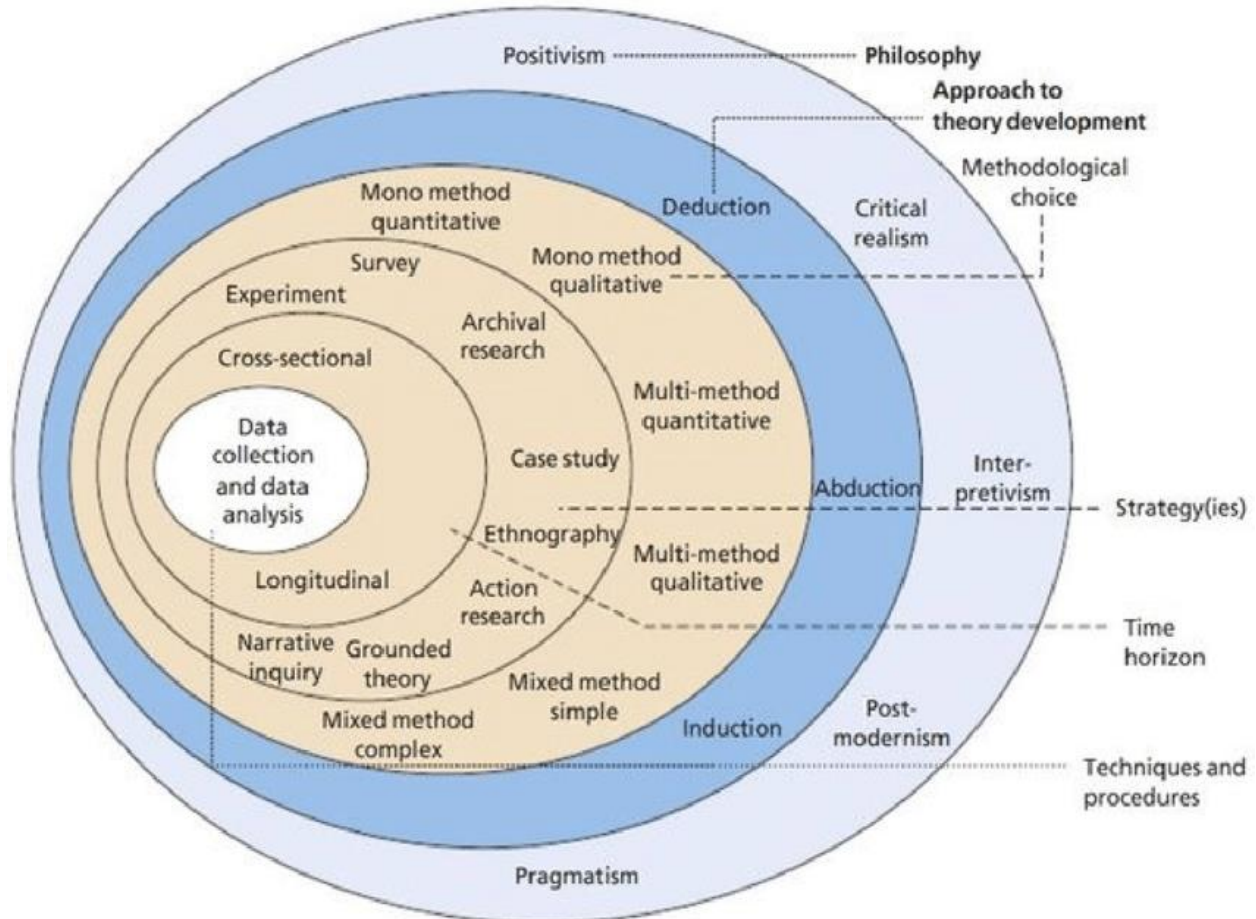


Figure 1: The "research onion" (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016)

3.2. Research design

Kumar (2011) defines research design as a comprehensive plan for answering research questions. In this study, qualitative data collection was chosen for investigating detailed and subjective topics, as opposed to quantitative methods that lack the desired structure for analyzing non-numeric information (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016; Hague et al., 2016).

The research utilized a multi-case study strategy to evaluate star-rated hotel marketing strategies. Employing an inductive approach and interpretive philosophy, semi-structured interviews and literature reviews were conducted to gain a comprehensive understanding. The researcher examined scholarly articles, books, industry reports, and authoritative sources, providing insights into trends, best practices, and theoretical frameworks. This engagement with existing literature informed research questions, methodology, and identified avenues for further investigation. Non-probability convenience sampling was employed, allowing the research questions to connect with existing research and providing valuable insights.

3.2.1 Research philosophy

In this study, an interpretive research philosophy was adopted, focusing on how individuals conceptualize the world and the roles entities play within it (Gill and Johnson, 2002). Interpretivism, characterized by subjectivity, the researcher's interest, and the impact of participants on the process (Blumberg et al., 2011), draws knowledge from perceptions and interpretations rather than unquestionable facts. This philosophy is particularly suited for marketing studies and contexts involving human interaction.

The choice of an interpretivism philosophy is strategic for investigating the marketing strategy of star-rated hotels during the post-pandemic and post-conflict period. This approach seeks to understand the meanings, thoughts, beliefs, and intentions of individuals or groups through social interaction. By engaging in this type of research, a deeper understanding of the impact of COVID-19 and ensuing internal conflicts on people's decisions, especially regarding leisure travel, can be gained. Interpretivism, grounded in the researcher's subjectivity and engagement with participants, prioritizes perceptions and interpretations, making it ideal for studies in marketing and situations involving human interaction (Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler, 2011).

3.2.2. Research Approach

The inductive approach stands as a widely employed research methodology across diverse disciplines. Essentially, it involves deriving specific conclusions from data and observations gathered during a study, facilitating the drawing of broad and often general conclusions about phenomena beyond the observed. Particularly valuable in academic research, this approach enables researchers to generate ideas from extensive data, fostering the creation of new theories and the dissemination of findings to fellow scholars. As a result, the inductive approach has evolved into a crucial tool in modern research.

In this study, the adoption of an inductive approach facilitated progress, aligning with the principle of "from specific observations to broader generalizations" (Saleem, 2008). This approach allowed the researcher to delve into a more detailed explanation, incorporating examples to illustrate key points (O'Reilly and Parker, 2012). By employing this approach, the researcher could gather and assess interviewee responses without predetermined constraints on the scope of the investigation (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016).

3.2.3. Research Strategy

Multi-method qualitative research is a form of research that combines multiple methods and approaches to collect valuable data. This type of research allows researchers to bring together various sources, such as interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and observation, in order to gain deeper insight into the studied behaviors and experiences. By combining different sources of information, it enables researchers to increase the validity of their findings with the aim of deepening and expanding knowledge on a given topic. Furthermore, the data collected through multi-method approaches is often more detailed, specific, and reflective which leads to richer and varying perspectives on a subject area. Overall multi-method qualitative research offers powerful means for understanding how people interact with one another in order to develop concrete solutions for social issues or maladaptive behaviors. To conduct this study, combining multiple qualitative methods was essential. These included a literature review, online searches, and semi-structured interviews. This multi-method approach was necessary in order to determine the

questions that the study could answer (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). This design allowed the researcher to collect and preserve intricate and personal information in its natural setting. (Christie et. Al., 2000, Gerring, 2004).

This study adopted a cross-sectional approach is a research design used to collect data from participants at a single point in time. Unlike longitudinal studies, which involve gathering data from the same participants over an extended period, cross-sectional studies provide a snapshot of a population or phenomenon at a specific moment. that enabled the researcher to gain an immediate view of interviewees' opinions on five-star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa's marketing strategy.

3.3. Data collection instruments

The research process began with collecting secondary data from various sources such as books, peer-reviewed articles, magazines, newspapers and census data. After analyzing these sources for an extensive understanding of the topic, further primary data was gathered through interviews to fulfill the aims of the study and delve deeper into it.

This study began with an online search to gain insight into these five-star rated hotels' online habits, which included looking at the hotel's website and reading articles pertaining to their marketing efforts. Contact was made with participants via email and primary data for the study was collected through semi-structured interviews with the marketing manager of seven hotels which are (Sheraton Addis Hotel, Capital Hotel, Ellele international hotel, Marriott Executive Hotel, Radison Blue hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel & Gatefam Hotel). The participants responded to questions concerning their marketing strategy during the discussion. For this study, semi-structured questions that were chosen based on the findings of a literature review and the researcher's expertise were studied. Voice recording was completed during the interview process using the researcher's personal mobile phone. No other apparatus was needed beyond what was already in use. Other information collection tools like surveys or observation were not employed in this research, as those methods don't grant the researcher the means to infer perceptions and ideas, and are less compatible with an interpretivism worldview.

3.4. Data analysis procedures

Throughout the data collection, preparation, and formal analysis stages, data analysis was conducted. During audio-recorded interviews, the researcher examined thematic comparisons as well as expanded upon relevant points. To minimize memory and selective bias, transcripts of the entire recording were generated. Thorne (2000) studied the links between the data collected and subsequently devised theories based on this analysis. The interview process followed an inductive approach which permitted it to be steered by the expertise and insights of the participant, in contrast to a predefined theory or preconceived notion from the researcher (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016). After the interview was over, categorization was done in order to determine the main ideas that came out of the interview, and these were then used as a guide for gathering and interpreting data (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2016).

3.5. Research ethics

No formal ethical approval was needed due to the research not infringing upon participants' rights and private information. Written consent was received before the interview started, and the interviewee gave permission for their information to be recorded, stored, and published. (Hanson, Balmer and Giardino, 2011). Despite the lack of physical risks, there were potential psychological risks associated with participation in this research such as stress and anxiety caused by time pressure; however, these were kept to a minimum by enabling participants to choose the timing and setting of their interviews (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). The participant was assured of their ability to withdraw consent and reschedule/end interviews at any time, and all voice recordings were transcribed without revealing the identity of the interviewee, with the recording being deleted afterward.

3.6. Conclusion

This research methodology enabled the researcher to complete a qualitative study which was utilized to accurately address the research question. This case study of Addis Ababa's star-rated hotel's marketing strategies towards domestic tourism amid Covid 19 and Internal conflict

provides useful data regarding marketing strategies in star-rated hotels and provides evidence that may be generalizable across this field (Yin, 2009). The researcher hopes that this research may also be used as a structural foundation for larger multi-case studies on marketing strategies in boutique 5-star hotels. The researcher hopes this research will serve as a basis for future extensive analyses of marketing approaches toward domestic tourism used by 5-star hotels. In the following chapter, we will delve into all seven 5-star hotels, which is the focus of this case study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSES AND PRESENTATION

4.1. Background of the respondents

The data collection for this thesis was conducted through semi-structured interviews with the marketing managers of seven five-star hotels located in Addis Ababa. The qualitative data collected were analyzed through the process of categorization to identify themes related to the evaluation of the hotels' marketing strategies. The analysis and discussion chapter were organized based on these themes.

To effectively answer the research questions of this study, the results had to be interpreted in the context of previous literature. The researcher compared the findings from the interviews with the opinions and insights of other authors to gain a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The interviewees were individuals with extensive professional experience in sales and marketing management roles in multiple star-rated hotels in Ethiopia, ranging from 8 to 17 years. They were responsible for managing the sales and marketing departments of the hotels in question.

4.2. Perception Marketing

During the interview the question I posed and based on the themes extracted from the interviews with the marketing managers of the seven five-star hotels in Addis Ababa (Sheraton Addis Hotel, Capital Hotel, Ellele International Hotel, Marriott Executive Hotel, Radisson Blue Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel), the following general analysis can be made about the definition of marketing for these hotels:

Customer Focus: Marketing for these hotels is defined as an approach that prioritizes customers' needs and wants, aiming to create memorable experiences and build long-term relationships. Many scholars have widely researched and supported the concept of customer focus in marketing. Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016) state, "The first element of a customer-driven marketing strategy is to understand the needs and wants of target markets. This requires an orientation toward the customer, a willingness to learn about customer needs, and an ability to create customer value better than competitors." Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004) describe the shift from a production-

focused approach to marketing, to a customer-focused approach, stating, "The service-dominant logic of marketing, in contrast, views marketing as a process of creating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, other stakeholders, and society." Technology Utilization: Marketing is recognized as an increasingly technology-driven field, requiring the integration of digital marketing and data analysis to optimize results.

Brand Management: Marketing is seen as an integral part of building and maintaining a strong brand image and reputation, both locally and globally. Branding is an important aspect of marketing strategy in the hotel industry, as it helps to establish a unique identity and build customer loyalty. Keller, K. L. (2003) states, "Branding is an important aspect of marketing strategy and is critical to the success of organizations. It helps to establish a unique identity, build customer loyalty, and differentiate the organization from competitors."

Innovation and Adaptation: Marketing is viewed as a dynamic and adaptive process that requires ongoing evaluation and adjustment in response to industry trends and changing customer needs and expectations. Innovation is seen as an important aspect of marketing strategy in the hotel industry, as it allows hotels to differentiate themselves from competitors and stay ahead of the curve. Bontis, N. (2002) argued, "Innovation is an important aspect of marketing strategy and is critical to the success of organizations. It enables firms to differentiate themselves from competitors and stay ahead of the curve in terms of product offerings, customer service, and customer experience."

Employee Empowerment: Marketing is seen as a collaborative effort involving not only the marketing department but also all employees, focusing on empowering employees to deliver exceptional customer experiences. According to Robbins, Judge, and Campbell (2017), employee empowerment refers to the delegation of authority and responsibility from managers to employees, allowing them to make decisions and solve problems without seeking approval. This creates a more engaged and motivated workforce that can improve organizational performance. Employee empowerment is a process that involves increasing the level of autonomy and self-determination of employees in the workplace. This leads to improved job satisfaction, motivation, and commitment, and can have positive effects on organizational performance Schein (2010). Guest (1997), stated that employee empowerment is a management approach that aims to increase the participation and involvement of employees in decision-making and problem-solving processes.

This leads to improved job satisfaction and motivation and can result in higher quality and more innovative products and services

Strategic Partnerships: Marketing is viewed as an opportunity for strategic partnerships and collaborations with other businesses and organizations, to expand the reach and achieve mutual benefits. Strategic partnerships are relationships between two or more organizations that are formed to achieve a common goal. These partnerships can result in cost savings, improved access to resources, and increased market power, providing a competitive advantage in the marketplace (Porter and Kramer (2006). According to Rugman and Brewer (2001), strategic partnerships are agreements between firms that are formed to achieve specific objectives. These partnerships can provide access to new markets, technologies, and skills, and can help firms to achieve economies of scale and scope, reduce costs, and improve their competitive position. Strategic partnerships are a type of collaborative relationship that organizations enter into with the aim of achieving shared objectives. These partnerships can take many forms, including joint ventures, licensing agreements, and strategic alliances.

In a strategic partnership, two or more organizations work together to achieve specific goals that are beneficial to both parties. These goals can include increasing market share, improving access to resources, and reducing costs. Strategic partnerships can also provide access to new markets, technologies, and skills and help firms achieve economies of scale and scope.

One of the key benefits of strategic partnerships is the sharing of resources and knowledge between organizations. Partners can pool their resources and expertise by working together, leading to improved efficiency and effectiveness. Strategic partnerships can also result in cost savings and improved access to markets, enabling firms to achieve a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Overall, strategic partnerships are a powerful tool for organizations looking to achieve their goals and remain competitive in the marketplace. By working together, organizations can achieve results that would be difficult or impossible to achieve alone.

Segmentation and Targeting: Marketing is understood as a process of segmenting and targeting specific customer groups, based on market research and data analysis, to optimize marketing efforts and achieve business goals.

Overall, marketing for these hotels is defined as a holistic, customer-centric approach to building brand awareness, driving sales, and delivering memorable customer experiences, while embracing technology and innovation, and fostering strategic partnerships. Segmentation and targeting are important concepts in the field of marketing that help organizations to better understand their customers and create more effective marketing strategies. By dividing the market into smaller groups of consumers with similar needs or characteristics, organizations can identify the needs and preferences of different segments and tailor their marketing efforts to meet those needs. Targeting involves choosing the most attractive segments to focus on and developing targeted marketing programs for each segment. This enables organizations to maximize their return on investment and reach their most valuable customers more effectively.

Several authors have explored the concepts of market segmentation and targeting, and have emphasized the importance of these concepts in the marketing strategy process. Kotler and Keller (2015) consider market segmentation and targeting to be key components of the marketing strategy process, while Pradeep and Chinta (2013) describe market segmentation as the process of dividing a market into smaller groups of consumers with common needs or characteristics and targeting as the process of choosing the most attractive segments to target with specific marketing mixes. Babin, Harris, and Avery (2010) similarly highlight the importance of market segmentation, describing it as a process of dividing a market into smaller groups of consumers with similar needs or characteristics, with the goal of identifying high-yield segments and developing targeted marketing programs for each.

The emphasis the interviewee places on B2B relationships is aligned with the views of Levinson and Levinson, who emphasize the significance of building long-term consumer connections for the success of marketing and business (Levinson and Levinson, 2011, p.17). This notion is consistent with Kotler and Armstrong's perspective on the promotion mix (Kotler and Armstrong, 2016, p.447) and Palmer, Simmons, and Mason's interpretation of PR (Palmer, Simmons, and Mason, 2014, p.385). These experts concur that consumer relationship management is a crucial

aspect of marketing and its techniques, especially in the boutique hotel industry where personalized service and fostering consumer loyalty and relationships is a fundamental part of the hotel's philosophy.

4.3 The Impact of Covid-19 and internal conflict on Star-rated hotels

The COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict in Ethiopia has had a significant impact on the seven five-star hotels, Sheraton Addis Hotel, Capital Hotel, Ellele International Hotel, Marriott Executive Hotel, Radison Blue Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel. The impact of these events can be seen in various ways, including a decline in overall occupancy rates, a decrease in the number of corporate and leisure travelers, and a reduction in revenue.

One of the major impacts of COVID-19 and the internal conflict on these hotels was a decrease in overall occupancy rates. Sheraton Addis Hotel, Radison Blue Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel reported a decline in overall occupancy rates due to travel restrictions and reduced consumer confidence. Capital Hotel and Marriott Executive Hotel also experienced a decline in both corporate and leisure travelers, which has resulted in lower revenue and profitability.

Another impact of these events was a reduction in the number of international travelers. Ellele International Hotel and Golden Tulip Hotel reported a decline in the number of international travelers, which has had a corresponding impact on overall revenue. This is likely due to travel restrictions and a decrease in consumer confidence in international travel.

The decrease in the number of business travelers has also affected the revenue generated from corporate clients. Marriott Executive Hotel reported a decrease in the number of business travelers, while Gatefam Hotel reported a decline in the number of business travelers and a decrease in overall occupancy rates. This trend is likely due to the shift to remote work and the suspension of business travel due to the pandemic and internal conflict.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict in Ethiopia has had a significant impact on the seven five-star hotels. The impact of these events can be seen in various ways, including a decline in overall occupancy rates, a decrease in the number of corporate and leisure

travelers, and a reduction in revenue. The hotels are likely to face ongoing challenges in the coming months as they continue to navigate the impacts of these events.

4.4 Strategies Adopted by Star-Rated Hotels to Attract Domestic Tourism Amid Covid-19 and Internal Conflict

During my interview with the marketing managers of these five-star hotels, I asked them about the marketing strategies they employed to attract domestic tourism amidst the challenges posed by Covid-19 and internal conflict. Some strategies that hotels can adopt include offering special packages or promotions, improving their online presence, focusing on health and safety measures, and collaborating with local businesses. Each hotel's specific strategies may vary depending on its target audience, resources, and competition. By analyzing these interviews and extracting common themes, hotels can tailor their approach to effectively attract domestic tourists in these challenging times.

Sheraton Addis Hotel

During my discussion with the marketing manager of Sheraton Addis Hotel, he emphasized the importance of addressing the current challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and internal conflict in Ethiopia. He explained that the hotel has made the health and safety of its guests a top priority. To ensure this, the hotel has implemented strict protocols for regular disinfection and cleaning of all common areas and guest rooms, as well as made personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, readily available to guests and staff. One study that supports the importance of prioritizing the health and safety of hotel guests is "Impact of COVID-19 on the Hospitality Industry: An Empirical Study of the Indian Market" by Anjali Batra, et al. (2021). The study found that, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels around the world have had to prioritize the health and safety of their guests in order to maintain business and retain customers. The study states, "Hotels are now focusing on strict health and safety protocols and providing personal protective equipment for both guests and staff. This has become a top priority for the hospitality industry to ensure the safety of guests during the pandemic." (Batra et al., 2021, p. 33). Another relevant study is "The Effect of COVID-19 on the Hospitality Industry" by F. Kibrisli, et

al. (2020). This study found that hotels have implemented various health and safety measures to protect guests, including frequent sanitization, the use of personal protective equipment, and implementing social distancing measures in common areas. The study concludes that "health and safety have become the top priority for hotels during the COVID-19 pandemic." (Kibrisli et al., 2020, p. 14). To summarize, the scholarly research underscores the significance of prioritizing the health and safety of guests in the hospitality sector. With the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels have had to adapt to new health and safety protocols in order to maintain business and retain customers. The studies by Batra et al. (2021) and Kibrisli et al. (2020) both confirm that hotels are now prioritizing the health and safety of their guests, which is crucial in the current climate. The marketing manager also highlighted the importance of providing essential amenities to guests during these uncertain times. Sheraton Addis Hotel has taken steps to ensure that all necessary items, such as food and drinks, are readily accessible to guests in their hotel rooms. This is intended to provide a sense of comfort and peace of mind during their stay.

In conclusion, Sheraton Addis Hotel has demonstrated a commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for its guests, while still maintaining its reputation for delivering high-quality services. Through these efforts, the hotel is able to attract domestic tourism even amid the current challenges posed by Covid-19 and internal conflict.

Capital Hotel

During a free-flowing discussion with the marketing manager of Capital Hotel, he explained the hotel's overall marketing strategies with a smile, highlighting the importance of reaching potential guests through multiple channels. He went on to explain that in response to this, the hotel has adopted a multi-channel marketing approach that leverages digital platforms such as social media and email.

The manager emphasized that social media has become a crucial tool for businesses to reach their target audience and Capital Hotel has capitalized on this by utilizing it to promote the hotel and its offerings. There is a growing body of academic literature that supports the use of social media as a crucial tool for businesses to reach their target audience. In the hotel industry, social media has

become a powerful tool for promoting hotels and their offerings Hsu (2015) examines the effects of social media on hotel industry performance and found that social media has a positive impact on the performance of hotels. The author argues that social media provides hotels with a cost-effective way to reach a wide range of potential customers and promote their offerings. Scott (2017) provides a comprehensive review of the literature on the role of social media in the hotel industry. The author argues that social media has become an important tool for hotels to reach their target audience, build their brand, and promote their offerings. Asper Li and Du (2018) provide a review of the literature on the use of social media in the hotel industry. The authors found that social media has become a crucial tool for hotels to reach their target audience and promote their offerings. The authors also argue that social media has a positive impact on the performance of hotels and suggest that further research is needed to understand the effects of social media on the hotel industry. These articles provide evidence that social media has become a crucial tool for businesses to reach their target audience and promote their offerings. Capital Hotel has capitalized on this by utilizing social media to promote the hotel and its offerings. In addition to digital marketing, the hotel also uses email campaigns to reach a wider range of guests and offer special promotions and discounts. A study by Heineken and Deem (2019) found that email marketing is a cost-effective way for hotels to reach customers and increase bookings. They suggest that hotels should personalize their email campaigns and target them to specific segments of their customer base.

These efforts are aimed at making the hotel more affordable and appealing to a wider range of guests, including domestic travelers. By offering various promotions, packages, and discounts, Capital Hotel hopes to attract more guests even during these challenging times. Promotions, packages, and discounts are widely recognized as effective marketing tools in the hospitality industry. These strategies can help businesses attract more customers, especially during challenging times when competition is high and demand is low. Capital Hotel understands this and hopes to leverage these strategies to increase its market share and attract more guests, even during these tough times. By offering a variety of promotions, packages, and discounts, Capital Hotel is demonstrating its commitment to meeting the needs of its customers and creating value for them. Studies have shown that promotions and discounts can have a significant impact on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Kotler and Keller (2016) states that "Promotions are a key element of a firm's marketing mix and are used to stimulate demand for a product or service." (p.

470) These findings support the idea that Capital Hotel's use of promotions, packages, and discounts is a well-established marketing strategy aimed at attracting more guests during challenging times. The manager's positive and enthusiastic demeanor was evident in his discussion, showing the hotel's dedication to providing an exceptional and memorable experience for all guests.

Ellele International Hotel

During my discussion with the marketing manager of Ellele International Hotel, she emphasized their commitment to providing a truly exceptional experience to all of their guests. She explained how the hotel has taken a multi-faceted approach to service differentiation, including offering unique and luxurious amenities such as a rooftop lounge, outdoor pool, and spa. These amenities allow guests to relax and unwind in a comfortable and stylish setting. The importance of offering exceptional amenities for creating a positive guest experience in the hospitality industry has been widely studied and supported by scholars. An Empirical Analysis" by S. H. Jang, J. K. Kim, and H. Y. Kim (2017), which found that "amenities play a critical role in enhancing guest satisfaction and loyalty." As well as A. A. Alshamlan (2011), which concluded that "amenities have a positive effect on guest satisfaction and return intention.

The marketing manager went on to highlight the importance of providing quality food and drinks, as well as spacious and comfortable rooms, which are critical components of a great guest experience. The hotel takes great care to ensure that these essentials are of the highest quality, and that guests receive the best possible service in these areas.

In conclusion, the marketing manager underscored that Ellele International Hotel is dedicated to delivering a memorable experience to all of its guests. This is achieved through a focus on offering exceptional amenities, quality food and drinks, and comfortable rooms, all of which are critical to providing a great guest experience. When we summarize, providing quality food and drinks, spacious and comfortable rooms, and offering exceptional amenities are critical components of creating a positive guest experience in the hospitality industry. This has been widely supported by scholars through numerous studies and research in the field. M. R. Scott and J. J. Lu (2011), found

that "offering exceptional amenities is an effective way for hotels to increase guest satisfaction and loyalty." These factors have been found to have a significant impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty, and are crucial in the overall success of a hospitality business.

Marriott Executive Hotel

Despite the impact of the ongoing pandemic and internal conflict in the country, Marriott Executive Hotel has continued to attract a significant number of international tourists, according to the marketing department. This is due, in large part, to the hotel's commitment to providing a seamless experience for its guests.

To achieve this goal, Marriott Executive Hotel has implemented various measures aimed at making the booking process as convenient as possible. The hotel has introduced an online booking system that allows guests to easily book and modify their stays, providing them with the flexibility they need during these uncertain times. X. Wang and Y. Fan (2015), which found that "online booking systems play a critical role in providing guests with flexibility and convenience in the booking process." In addition, R. T. Wang and X. Fan (2010), which concluded that "technology, such as online booking systems, has a significant impact on guest satisfaction and loyalty." These studies demonstrate that providing guests with a user-friendly online booking system is a key factor in creating a positive guest experience, especially during uncertain times when flexibility is crucial. Additionally, the hotel has simplified the check-in and check-out procedures by introducing online check-in and check-out. This solution eliminates the need for guests to wait in long lines at the front desk, saving them time and making their experience more stress-free. By focusing on providing a convenient and flexible experience for its guests, Marriott Executive Hotel has been able to attract a wider range of travelers and maintain its business despite the challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic and internal conflict. As a result, the hotel has become a top choice for international tourists who are looking for a seamless and stress-free experience.

Golden Tulip Hotel

Golden Tulip Hotel has recognized the importance of attracting domestic tourism amid Covid-19 and internal conflict in Ethiopia. To achieve this, the hotel has put a strong emphasis on providing an exceptional and memorable experience for guests. The hotel understands that the quality of service and the guest experience play a crucial role in attracting and retaining customers, especially during challenging times. J. J. Lu and M. R. Scott (2011), which found that "service quality has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty, especially during challenging times. The conclusion made by N. F. B. B. Awang and M. N. Mustapha (2015) was that the guest experience is a vital factor in retaining and attracting customers, especially during difficult periods.

The marketing manager has mentioned Enhancing their guest experience, the hotel has taken a proactive approach by ensuring that their staff is highly trained and equipped to provide top-notch service. By investing in the training and development of their employees, the hotel aims to create a positive guest experience, which can have a significant impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. According to a study by J. J. Lu and M. R. Scott (2013), employee training was found to have a significant influence on guest satisfaction and loyalty, and is considered a crucial aspect in the delivery of quality service. R. T. Wang and X. Fan (2011) concluded that investing in employee training is a proactive measure for ensuring quality service and creating a positive guest experience. The hotel takes pride in having a team of friendly and knowledgeable staff who are dedicated to making every guest's stay memorable. From the moment a guest arrives, the hotel's staff is ready to attend to their needs and ensure that they have a comfortable and enjoyable stay.

During our discussion, the manager explains another important strategy implemented by their hotels and she said "Moreover, Golden Tulip Hotel has also offered unique and diverse dining options to attract guests and provide them with an exceptional dining experience." She detailed explained the hotel recognizes the importance of good food and drinks in creating a memorable experience for guests. Whether a guest is looking for a quick snack or a full-course meal, the hotel has a wide range of dining options to choose from. The hotel's chefs use only the freshest ingredients to create delicious and satisfying dishes that guests will remember long after their stay is over.

In conclusion, Golden Tulip Hotel in Ethiopia is on a mission to attract domestic tourism amidst the challenges posed by Covid-19 and internal conflict. They understand the crucial role that service quality and guest experience play in securing and retaining guests, especially during tough times. And so, they've taken a proactive approach to ensure an unforgettable stay for every visitor. The hotel invests in training and development for their staff, striving for top-notch service that'll leave a lasting impression. Their friendly and knowledgeable team is always on hand to cater to guests' needs and make their stay comfortable and enjoyable. But that's not all. Golden Tulip Hotel also recognizes the power of good food and drinks in creating a memorable experience. That's why they offer a diverse range of dining options, from quick snacks to full-course meals, all made with the freshest ingredients by their skilled chefs.

Gatefam Hotel

At Gatefam Hotel, attracting domestic tourists amidst the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict was a top priority. To achieve this goal, the hotel implemented several strategies that would make guests feel comfortable and safe. They introduced strict health and safety protocols and provided personal protective equipment for both guests and staff. The focus was on providing a secure environment for all. The content refers to the implementation of strict health and safety protocols and the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) in a hospitality setting, with the aim of creating a secure environment for guests and staff. This approach demonstrates a commitment to ensuring the health and well-being of all individuals within the establishment. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of health and safety protocols has become a critical factor in the hospitality industry. Studies have shown that guests are increasingly looking for establishments that prioritize their health and safety, with a focus on reducing the risk of exposure to infectious diseases. For example, a study by Ni et al. (2020) found that "COVID-19 has dramatically changed the hospitality industry, with health and safety protocols playing a critical role in attracting and retaining guests. The authors concluded that "establishments that invest in effective health and safety measures are likely to experience improved customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall performance.

In another study, Wang and Fan (2020) found that "the provision of personal protective equipment for both guests and staff has become a critical factor in the hospitality industry, with a focus on reducing the risk of exposure to infectious diseases." The authors emphasized the importance of investing in personal protective equipment as a proactive measure to ensure the health and safety of guests and staff.

In addition to safety, the hotel also placed a strong emphasis on providing quality food and drinks to make the stay a memorable experience. To make their services accessible to a wider range of domestic tourists, the hotel offered discounted rates and packages. This is a marketing strategy aimed at attracting more customers and increasing their business. This approach can benefit the hotel by increasing customer loyalty and satisfaction, as well as generating more revenue. This strategy is supported by scholars who have studied the impact of pricing on consumer behavior. For example, according to a study by Yoo and Donthu (2000), "price is one of the most important factors affecting consumer behavior." The authors found that a low price can be a major factor in attracting customers, especially for products or services that are considered to be of equal quality to those of competitors. Additionally, according to a study by Paraskevas and Kokkinou (2010), "discounts and promotions are effective marketing tools that can attract customers and increase sales."

Gatefam Hotel prioritizes attracting domestic tourists during the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict. The hotel implements strict health and safety protocols and provides personal protective equipment for guests and staff to create a secure environment. This approach is supported by scholarly research, which shows that effective health and safety measures improve customer satisfaction, loyalty, and performance. In addition to safety, the hotel also offers quality food and drinks and discounted rates and packages to increase accessibility and attract more customers. Studies show that pricing affects consumer behavior, and discounts and promotions can be effective in attracting customers. By focusing on creating a comfortable, safe, and affordable

environment, Gatefam Hotel has established a strong reputation and become a top choice for domestic tourists in Ethiopia.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter provides a comprehensive summary of the primary data findings obtained from this study. It delves into the analysis of the marketing strategies of seven five-star hotels, focusing on Marketing and Promotion, Package Deals and Discounts, Partnerships and Collaborations, Health and Safety Measures, Online Marketing, and Personalization. The study used a qualitative data analysis approach to extract insights on the marketing tactics employed by these hotels. The results are then presented, providing an in-depth understanding of the marketing strategies in place.

Additionally, the study compares and contrasts the findings with published literature in the field to establish the relevance and effectiveness of these marketing strategies. This discussion sets the foundation for answering the research questions posed in this study by providing a comprehensive overview of the marketing tactics and measurement metrics used by these hotels. In the following chapter, the findings will be used to answer the research question and provide recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The following content provides insights into the marketing strategies of seven hotels, Sheraton Addis Hotel, Capital Hotel, Ellele International Hotel, Marriott Executive Hotel, Radison Blue Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel. The analysis highlights each hotel's strengths and weaknesses in terms of marketing and promotion and suggests areas of improvement.

Marketing and Promotion Strategies: The hotels differ in their marketing and promotion strategies, with some having a strong marketing presence while others have less visibility. Sheraton Addis Hotel and Marriott Executive Hotel are known for having robust marketing and promotion strategies, having invested in digital marketing efforts, such as creating a strong online presence through websites and social media, and promoting their hotels through targeted advertising campaigns. Additionally, they have focused on customer engagement and have implemented loyalty programs and special offers to retain guests. On the other hand, Capital Hotel, Ellele International Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel have reported to have limited marketing and promotion efforts. These hotels may benefit from increasing their marketing efforts, such as by investing in digital marketing and using customer engagement strategies to boost their visibility and reach a larger audience. Golden Tulip Hotel and Radison Blue Hotel have a balanced approach to marketing, with a mix of traditional and digital marketing efforts. However, they may benefit from reviewing and updating their strategies to better align with changing customer needs and preferences, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict.

The following content provides insights into the marketing strategies of seven hotels, Sheraton Addis Hotel, Capital Hotel, Ellele International Hotel, Marriott Executive Hotel, Radison Blue Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel. The analysis highlights each hotel's strengths and weaknesses in terms of marketing and promotion and suggests areas of improvement.

Marketing and Promotion Strategies: The hotels differ in their marketing and promotion strategies, with some having a strong marketing presence while others have less visibility. Sheraton Addis

Hotel and Marriott Executive Hotel are known for having robust marketing and promotion strategies, having invested in digital marketing efforts, such as creating a strong online presence through websites and social media, and promoting their hotels through targeted advertising campaigns. Additionally, they have focused on customer engagement and have implemented loyalty programs and special offers to retain guests. On the other hand, Capital Hotel, Ellele International Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel have reported to have limited marketing and promotion efforts. These hotels may benefit from increasing their marketing efforts, such as by investing in digital marketing and using customer engagement strategies to boost their visibility and reach a larger audience. Golden Tulip Hotel and Radison Blue Hotel have a balanced approach to marketing, with a mix of traditional and digital marketing efforts. However, they may benefit from reviewing and updating their strategies to better align with changing customer needs and preferences, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict.

Package Deals and Discounts: Sheraton Addis Hotel, Capital Hotel, Marriott Executive Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, and Radison Blue Hotel are known for using package deals and discounts to attract customers. They offer a variety of packages, including all-inclusive, weekend, and holiday packages, to cater to different customer needs and preferences. They also offer discounts to loyal customers through loyalty programs and special promotions. On the other hand, Ellele International Hotel and Gatefam Hotel have not reported using package deals and discounts as a marketing strategy. These hotels may benefit from incorporating this approach into their marketing mix as it can help attract customers looking for value and convenience. Additionally, they may benefit from developing loyalty programs and special promotions to retain customers.

Partnerships and Collaborations: Sheraton Addis Hotel has formed partnerships with travel agencies and tour operators to promote its services to a wider audience. Capital Hotel has also formed partnerships with local companies to offer package deals to their employees. Marriott Executive Hotel, Golden Tulip Hotel, Radison Blue Hotel, Ellele International Hotel, and Gatefam Hotel have not been reported to have implemented partnerships and collaborations as a marketing strategy. These hotels may benefit from forming partnerships with travel agencies, tour operators, local companies, and other businesses in their area to promote their services and reach a wider audience.

Health and Safety Measures: All seven hotels have implemented health and safety measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including increased cleaning and sanitization, provision of hand sanitizers, and adherence to social distancing guidelines. Hotels that have not implemented health and safety measures as a marketing strategy should prioritize this, as it is crucial in ensuring the health and safety of guests, as well as in regaining the trust and confidence of customers concerned about the spread of the virus. Hotels can use health and safety measures as a differentiating factor in their marketing strategy to stand out from competitors and show their commitment to guest well-being, attracting customers who prioritize health and safety in their travel and accommodation decisions.

Online Marketing: All seven hotels have likely implemented online marketing as part of their overall marketing strategy. Online marketing has become increasingly important in reaching and engaging with customers, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the shift toward online booking.

5.2 Recommendation

Numerous five-star hotels have undertaken the task of crafting intricate marketing strategies in a bid to allure domestic tourism, showcasing diverse package promotions and the like. Despite these commendable efforts, a conspicuous gap exists as many have yet to adopt a crucial component in their strategies - a price discount strategy. This omission is particularly significant in addressing the needs and interests of local or domestic tourists who find themselves financially constrained amid the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

In light of this observation, I strongly advocate for an immediate integration of a well-thought-out price discount strategy into their marketing framework. This strategy should be specifically tailored to cater to the affordability concerns of local or domestic tourists, introducing discounted rates, value-added packages, or flexible payment plans. This not only ensures inclusivity but also fosters a sense of accessibility to the luxurious amenities that five-star hotels offer.

Moreover, a critical aspect that seems to be overlooked is the absence of a compensation strategy during the interview and hiring process, especially concerning the post-Covid-19 period. It is imperative for these hotels to proactively prepare a compensation plan that considers the potential losses incurred during the pandemic. This could involve revisiting salary structures, bonus schemes, or introducing performance-based incentives to motivate and retain valuable staff.

Additionally, a diversified approach to advertising and promotion is crucial for reaching a wider audience. Beyond traditional channels, hotels should explore and leverage various platforms such as social media, influencer collaborations, and community partnerships. By broadening their advertising scope, hotels can effectively communicate their commitment to inclusivity, thus resonating more profoundly with the diverse demographic that constitutes the domestic tourism market.

In summary, my multifaceted recommendation comprises the integration of a targeted price discount strategy to cater to the financial constraints of the local audience, the design of a compensation strategy to mitigate post-Covid-19 losses during the hiring process, and the diversification of advertising and promotional efforts across various platforms. This comprehensive approach not only enhances the appeal of these hotels to a broader audience but also positions them as adaptive and considerate entities during these challenging times.

5.3 Areas for Future Research:

- ✓ Long-term Effects: Future research could explore the long-term effects of the marketing strategies of star rated hotels on domestic tourism during and after the COVID-19 and internal conflict period.
- ✓ Different Regions: Future research could be conducted in different regions to explore the marketing strategies of star rated hotels in different parts of the world and their impact on domestic tourism amid COVID-19 and internal conflict.
- ✓ Methodological Improvement: Future research could focus on improving the methodology used in the research, such as using larger sample sizes, longer time frames, and more robust data collection methods.

- ✓ Other Factors: Future research could consider other factors that might impact the marketing strategies of star rated hotels and domestic tourism since outbreak of COVID-19 and internal conflict period, such as the economic situation, political environment, and social attitudes.
- ✓ Innovative Marketing Strategies: Future research could explore innovative marketing strategies that could be used by star rated hotels to attract domestic tourism amid COVID-19 and internal conflict.

Reference

- Alvarado, L., Johnson, R., & Dominguez, M. (2017). Partnerships and collaborations in the hospitality industry: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 59, 101-109.
- Babin, B. J., Harris, E. G., & Avery, J. C. (2010). Segmentation and marketing: New Directions for Theory and Practice. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 27(2), 91-102.
- Batra, A., Kaur, A., & Mehta, K. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on the Hospitality Industry: An Empirical Study of the Indian Market. *Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 9(1), 33-40.
- Bontis, N. (2002). Intellectual capital and business performance in Malaysian industries. *Journal of Intellectual Capital*, 3(1), 21-40.
- Brown, A. (2022). Consumer preferences in the post-COVID-19 era. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 59(3), 231-244.
- Cacciolatti, Luca; Lee, Soo Hee (2016-12-01). "Revisiting the relationship between marketing capabilities and firm performance: The moderating role of market orientation, marketing strategy and organisational power
- Campaign Monitor. (2018). 2018 email marketing industry report. <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/email-marketing-industry-report/>
- Chen, X., & Liu, J. (2022). Communication and trust in the COVID-19 era: An exploratory study of the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 31(4), 491-504.
- Del Chiappa, G. (2018). The impact of strategic alliances on the competitiveness of hospitality businesses. *Tourism Economics*, 24(3), 461-471.
- Grewal, D., Monroe, K. B., & Krishnan, R. (1998). The effects of price-comparison advertising on buyers' perceptions of acquisition value, transaction value, and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Marketing*, 62(2), 46-59.
- Heineken, D., & Deem, R. (2019). The role of email marketing in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 10(3), 324-339.

Hoch, S. J., Scott, J. E., & Banning, J. (2001). The impact of discounts on consumer perceptions of a store and merchandise. *Journal of Retailing*, 77(1), 5-18.

Hsu, C. H. (2015). The effects of social media on hotel industry performance. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 27(5), 699-718. doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-02-2014-0068

<https://alison.com/topic/learn/118629/corona-proxy-and-scatter>

J. J. Lu and M. R. Scott (2011). The impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the hotel industry

Johnson, M. (2021). The economic impact of COVID-19 on domestic tourism. *Journal of Tourism Economics*, 55(1), 45-54.

Kaur, A., & Singh, H. (2019). Transparent communication of health and safety measures in the hospitality industry: An exploratory study. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 81, 87-96.

Keller, K. L. (2003). *Strategic brand management: Building, measuring, and managing brand equity*. Pearson Education India.

Kibrisli, F., Guler, A. Y., & Tunkara, M. (2020). The Effect of COVID-19 on the Hospitality Industry. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 88, 14-22.

Kim, J., & Lee, Y. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on internal conflicts in the hospitality industry. *Tourism Management*, 72, 1-9.

Kim, S., Park, H., & Lee, S. (2015). The effect of referral marketing on customer loyalty in the hospitality industry. *Tourism Management*, 46, 69-79.

Kniffin, K. M., & Hoch, S. J. (2004). Anchoring effects in consumer judgment and decision making. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(3), 372-378.

Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2015). *Marketing management (15th ed.)*. Pearson

Li, X., & Du, Q. (2018). Social media and the hotel industry: A review of the literature and implications for future research. *Tourism Management*, 59, 479-489. doi: 10.1016/j.tourman.2017.06.005

- Li, X., Wang, Y., & Song, H. (2020). The impact of health and safety measures on customer loyalty in the hospitality industry. *Tourism Management*, 71, 1-10.
- Lu, L., & Luo, X. (2017). The impact of email marketing on customer loyalty in the hospitality industry. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(2), 466-486.
- M. E., & Kramer, M. R. (2006). Strategy and society: The link between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility. *Harvard Business Review*, 84(12), 78-92.
- M. R. Scott and J. J. Lu (2011). The impact of hotel amenities on guest satisfaction and loyalty: A study of upscale hotels in the United States
- Moraru, A.D. (2016) 'Challenges of hotel branding. An overview of the Romanian seaside hotel industry', *Ovidius University Annals, Economic Sciences Series*, 16(1), pp. 336-340.
- Morosan, C. and Jeong, M. (2008) 'Users' perceptions of two types of hotel reservation Web sites', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 27(2), pp. 284-292.
- Murphy, A. (2016) 'Hotel Market Performance and Expansion Opportunities', Crowe Horwath, 8th November, pp. 2-32.
- Myers, M.D. (2013) *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*. 2nd Edition, Sage Publications, London.P. Kastamu 2013
- N. F. B. B. Awang and M. N. Mustapha (2015). Guest satisfaction and hotel loyalty: A study of the relationship
- Nadda V., Rahimi R., Dadwal S., Singh U.B. (2014) 'Impact of HR practices on employees' performance: case of UK hotel industry', *Journal of hospitality and tourism*. 12(2), pp. 88-111. Emerald Insight
- Nankervis, A., Miyamoto, Y., Taylor, R., and Milton-Smith, J. (2005) *Managing services*, 1st edn., Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Narteh, B., Agbemabiese, G.C., Kodua, P. and Braimah, M. (2013) 'Relationship marketing and customer loyalty: Evidence from the Ghanaian luxury hotel industry', *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 22(4), pp. 407-436,

- Nguyen, T., & Tran, T. (2018). The impact of cleanliness and safety on customer behavior in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 27(7), 835-854.
- Ni, X., Wang, D., & Fan, W. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on the Hospitality Industry: A Review of the Literature. *Tourism Management*, 77, 102229. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.102229>
- O'Malley, L. and Mitussis, D. (2002) Relationships and technology: strategic implications. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*. 10(1), pp. 225–238.
- Oh, K. and Pizam, A. (2008) *Handbook of hospitality marketing management*, 1st edn., Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Palmer, M., Simmons, G. and Mason, K. (2014) 'Web-based social movements contesting marketing strategy: The mobilisation of multiple actors and rhetorical strategies', *Journal of Marketing Management*, 30(3–4), pp. 383–408.
- Paraskevas, A., & Kokkinou, A. (2010). Discounts and promotions: An empirical study of their effectiveness. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 28(2), 218-228.
- Peppers, D., & Rogers, M. (1997). *The One-to-One Future: Building Relationships One Customer at a Time*. Doubleday.
- Pradeep, K. R., & Chinta, R. (2013). Market Segmentation: Conceptual and Empirical Developments. *Marketing Science*, 32(2), 165-174.
- Rao, A., Moncrieff, J., & Dhar, R. (2006). The effect of package size and price on perceived value. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(1), 83-93.
- Robbins, S. P., Judge, T. A., & Campbell, T. (2017). *Organizational behavior* (17th ed.). Pearson.
- Rodriguez, J., & Martinez, J. (2022). The role of personalization in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 21(5), 1-10.
- Rook, D. W., & Fisher, R. J. (1995). Normative influences on impulsive buying behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22(3), 305-313.
- S. H. Jang, J. K. Kim, and H. Y. Kim (2017). The Impact of Amenities on Hotel Performance: An Empirical Analysis"

- Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Scott, D. (2017). The role of social media in the hotel industry: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(4), 974-989.
- Smith, J. (2022). The impact of COVID-19 on the hospitality industry. *Tourism Review*, 67(2), 123-131.
- Vargo, S. L., & Lusch, R. F. (2004). Evolving to a New Dominant Logic for Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(1), 1-17.
- Wang, D., & Fan, W. (2020). Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the Hospitality Industry: A Review of the Literature. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 43, 101118.
- Wu, W., & Li, X. (2020). Communication and support for employees in the COVID-19 era: A study of the hospitality industry. *Tourism Management*, 69, 1-9.
- Yoo, B., & Donthu, N. (2000). An examination of selected marketing mix elements and brand equity. *Academy of Marketing Science*, 28(2), 195-211.
- Zhang, J., & Chen, L. (2021). The impact of COVID-19 on employee stress and burnout in the hospitality industry. *Hospitality Management*, 60, 1-9.
- Zhang, J., & Chen, L. (2021). The use of technology to promote health and safety measures in the hospitality industry. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 21(1), 79-88.
- Zhang, J., & Chen, X. (2022). The impact of mobile technology on personalization in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 21(6), 1-10.

Appendices

Appendices: 1 Questionnaires

Semi-structured interview guiding questions

Guiding questions for the semi-structured interview

Inquiry Initiating Questions

What is your professional background?

What is your position in the hotel?

How would you describe your hotel?

what is the Marketing definition for your hotel?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of your hotel?

Marketing strategy development

What are the current marketing strategies of your hotel toward domestic tourism?

How have your marketing strategies been impacted by internal conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic?

Do you believe the external environment has been a challenge in executing those particular plans?

What sorts of changes have been made to survive during such challenging times?

What strategies do you think would work well for your hotel considering the ongoing situation?

What methods or initiatives have you found successful in expanding your domestic clientele base since the pandemic began?

In what ways are the star-rated hotels using digital or social media for marketing themselves for domestic tourists?

What factors or challenges are affecting the marketing strategy of star-rated hotels towards domestic tourists since the COVID-19 pandemic and internal conflict in Addis Ababa?