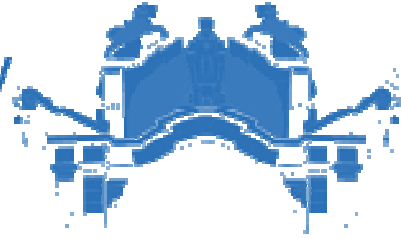




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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
MBA PROGRAM

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN IMPROVING TOURISM
BRAND AWARENESS: IN CASE OF MEMBERS OF ETHIOPIAN TOUR
OPERATORS ASSOCIATION (ETOA)

By
Shega Adane Aweke

January 2021
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The role of digital marketing in improving tourism brand awareness: In case of members of Ethiopian Tour Operators Association (ETOA)

By

Shega Adane Aweke

A thesis proposal submitted to Addis Ababa University, College of Business and Economics in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master's Program in MBA Management

Advisor: Meskerem Mitiku (PHD)

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia


January 2021

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Approved by Board of Examiners

Meskerem Mitiku (PHD) 26/03/21 

Advisor

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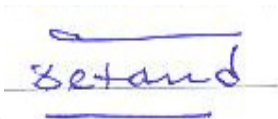
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I, undersigned, declare that this research is my original work. By the same token, all sources of materials used for the research had been appropriately acknowledged.

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Letter of Certification

This is to certify that Shega Adane Aweke has done a study on the topic –*The role of digital marketing in improving tourism brand awareness: In case of members of Ethiopian Tour Operators Association (ETOA)*. This study is of his original work, and all the sources of materials used for the research had been properly recognized.

Advisors Name: Meskerem Mitiku (PHD)

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Date: 26/03/2021

Place: Addis Ababa University; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Acronyms

B2B - Business-to-Business

B2C - Business-to-Consumer

EDI - Electronic Data Interchange

ETO - Ethiopian Tourism Organization

ETOA - Ethiopian Tour Operators Association

FDRE - Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

ICT - Information Communication Technology

MMS - Multimedia Messaging Service

PESO - Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned

SEM - Search Engine Marketing

SEO - Search Engine Optimization

SMS - Short Message Service

TTCI - Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index

UNECA - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization

US - United States

WTTC - World Travel & Tourism Council

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to examine the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness. The study applied explanatory research design for seeing the casual relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. The research approach implemented was a quantitative approach using various descriptive, correlation, and regression analyses. With a population of 183 out of which 126 sample sizes were selected. A primary source of data, questionnaire, was used to collect the information. The findings indicated that there were positive significant relationships between all the independent variables (Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Marketing, and Email Marketing) and the dependent variable, tourism brand awareness. The study found out that almost 70% of the variability of the dependent variable, tourism brand awareness, can be explained by the included independent variables: Social Media Marketing, Email Marketing, and SEO marketing). This explains other variables (factors) which were not included in this specific study could affect the variation of the dependent variable by only 30%. This research has also found out that the elements of digital marketing could statistically (as well as significantly) predict brand awareness with significance value of 0.000, which is quite lower than 5% (0.05). Compared with other variables, social media marketing has been found with the strongest relationship with the dependent variable at a value of 80%. Despite the fact that the companies have a moderate implementation of digital marketing components, it is recommended to give reasonable emphasis for all components for a more positive cumulated outcome in improving their brand awareness digitally.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing, Social Media Marketing, SEO Marketing, Email Marketing, and Brand Awareness.*

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

These days, 80% of the people book their holiday via the internet. Nine out of ten research their holiday online before travelling, while eight out of ten use comparison sites to check currency and four out of ten buy foreign money online (Travel Weekly, 2012, para. 1).

According to Bloomberg (2018), the millennial represent the largest generation to date, making up 31.5% of the world's population at 7.7 billion. They spent \$200 billion on travel in 2018. About 33% of them plan a spending budget of \$5000+ on their vacations. 66% of this group book their trip using a smartphone. 74% of them use their smartphones to research. The internet has been inevitably playing a great role in promoting products of numerous types.

Worldwide, many countries have succeeded in using the internet to develop their tourism industries. Malaysia and Australia, for example, have been very successful in enticing many travelers through the internet (Mohsin, 2005). On the contrary, countries such as Iran have not been able to increase their number of cosmopolitan visitors, largely due to a lack of internet development (Salavati and Hashim, 2015).

Internet marketing in the tourism industry can help to connect with clients, show them the visual appeal of a destination, and possibly get more exposure than the visitors would with traditional print advertising. One can see the difference between the both natural and paid search in promoting destination (Melissa, 2016).

“The tourism industry in Ethiopia could be legitimately described as one that is still in its infancy. Its current low level of development is often attributed to changes in governance systems and development policies, weak promotion, lack of trained manpower, finance, and knowledge and management capacity.” (Kidane, 2015)

Digajara (2009) explored the trends, challenges, and opportunities in the Ethiopian tourism information system. He found out that only a few information is found on the websites even though the customers are requesting for more services. He deduced that this may be attributed to the businesses’ lack of knowledge in being able to fully utilizing the internet; the websites do not seem to be designed taking into consideration the customers’ needs, otherwise such big differences would not have been observed.

Daniel (2013) did an assessment of Tourism Product Development in the Case of Mekelle City. His major findings show that Mekele has a huge potential for tourism, however, the product development activity is very weak. The attractions are not data based, not mapped, and packaged. Even the two popular attractions, Atse Yohannes IV Museum and Addi Haki Martyr's statue, are poorly developed. Furthermore, he found out that most of the attractions in the city are not easily accessible. Products and services don’t meet the expectations of the tourists. The tourism service providers have no adequate knowledge about the industry.

Furthermore, Feven and Mekonnen (2018) studied the integration of ICT and tourism. The objective of their research was investigating the integration of ICT in the tourism sector for improved promotion of the Ethiopian tourist attractions so as to enhance the sector's contribution to the country's GDP. They found out that social influence, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, cost effectiveness, competitive advantage and facilitating conditions are significant predictors of organizations perceived behavioral intention to use ICT in the tourism sector for promoting Ethiopian tourist attractions.

The study of Zeleke (2019) revealed that the historical buildings, cuisines, landscapes, Mount Entoto, various monuments, and nightlife are also tourism products and resources of city tourism of Addis Ababa. Even though the city of Addis Ababa tourism potentials has diversified values, some of them have not yet been developed and utilized due to various impeding factors such as lack of awareness about the tourism potentials, pollution, sanitation, lack of professionally trained man power, lack of city tourism facilities, and absence of economic maintenance of city tourism. In his recommendation, he mentioned that it is needed to develop and encourage the potential in collaboration of the city tourism development between Addis Ababa City Government and FDRE Ministry of Culture & Tourism offices with various stakeholders (i.e. tour operators, travel agents, event organizers, entertainment organizers, local people, and private sectors). He regarded the city government as the responsible for developing and exploiting tourism potentials of the study area.

Therefore, this study has particularly examined the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness in the case of members of Ethiopian Tour Operators Association found in Addis Ababa. It has seen how social media marketing, SEO marketing, and email marketing are playing a role in creating brand awareness towards consumers. So as to fill the gaps, the following section discussed in depth about the research questions formulated.

1.2. Research Context

Lonely Planet (2008) defines Ethiopia as a beautiful country endowed with unsurpassed history, fabulous wildlife, and some of Africa's most soulful peoples. Ethiopia is an ancient country whose unique cultural heritage, rich history and remarkable biodiversity are reflected in a tally of nine UNESCO World Heritage Sites - more than any other country in Africa (Tourism Ethiopia, 2015, para.1). The number of foreign tourists visiting Ethiopia in the year 2016-2017 was reported to be 871,000. In 2018, the Ethiopian Travel and Tourism economy grew by 48.6%. This is the largest in the world according to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) whose annual review calculates the financial and social impact of tourism (E-VISA Ethiopia, 2019, para. 2). The Sustainable Tourism Master Plan prepared by UNECA (2015) found out that lack of clear control and coordination of tourism training in Ethiopia which has resulted in the lack of suitable skills and knowledge amongst the graduates being churned out by the training institutions in the country. Furthermore, employers have raised a concern over the quality of such graduates, and they now prefer older professionals slowly upgraded with lower credentials as these do not need retraining.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The internet can be maximumly exploited in the tourism industry for different types of marketing or promotional activities. Kotler (2010) defined online marketing as an effort to promote products and services for building relationships with customers over the internet. He added that online marketing is the fastest growing form of direct marketing with customers. Nowadays, technological advancements have generated a digital age. Extensive use of the internet is having a substantial impact on both the marketers and the customers. Tourism industry can achieve many advantages if the internet is used wisely (Hisham and Qian, 2015).

Ethiopia's global and regional ranking has been consistently improving over the years rising from position 123 in 2009, to 122 in 2011 and 120 in 2013. This, though still below other countries in the Sub-Saharan region offering similar tourism products, is a remarkable achievement compared to South Africa, Kenya, Rwanda and Tanzania, each of which has not been consistent in competitiveness over the period under consideration (FDRE Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2015).

Overall, out of the 140 economies ranked by the TCI in 2013, the country performs relatively well in a number of areas including in the travel and tourism sector price competitiveness (position 22). This is attributable to the country ranking as second globally in purchasing power parity (a measure of the extent to which goods and services in the country are more or less expensive than elsewhere) and relatively low fuel prices (position 29). The country's second best performance is in its natural resources (position 33 globally) marked by the presence of its natural World Heritage Site (rank 45), and the presence, in the country, of known threatened species (26). However, compared to other Sub-Saharan African countries within this regional set, this performance is only better than Rwanda's position 69, with Tanzania being at position 4 globally (ibid).

It is important to note that though the visitor numbers are steadily growing, these are, nonetheless, relatively low compared to other regional destinations and given the country's recognized potential. Findings from the industry's stakeholders indicated a number of key weaknesses facing marketing of the country as a tourist destination (ibid).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council's annual review of the economic impact and social importance of the sector (2019), Ethiopia's Travel and Tourism economy grew by 48.6% in 2018 – the largest of any country in the world. In 2018, Travel & Tourism contributed BIRR202 billion US\$7.4 billion to the country's economy, an increase of Birr 59 billion (US\$2.2bn) in 2017. The sector now represents 9.4% of Ethiopia's total economy. The report also reveals the growing percentage of the number of tourists comparing Ethiopia (40.4%) with other African countries like Kenya (24.4%), Zambia (11.4%), Nigeria (11.5%), Zimbabwe (7.3%), and Tanzania (7%).

The rapidly increasing competitiveness in the global tourism market uplifts tourism operators to finance more in promotion, resources, knowledge, and quality in order to attain a satisfactory business growth. It is, therefore, significantly important to adapt to the latest technological trends and have the knowledge required to effectively respond to the challenges of global competition. It is agreeable that the internet technology is providing efficient operations in almost all economic sectors, including the tourism sector. Even though there is a facility of internet infrastructure in Ethiopia, it is important to consider the inevitable role of the internet while creating tourism brand awareness.

As it is stated in the background section of this proposal, a few researches were done on how to develop the tourism economy in Ethiopia. Most of the studies assessed the potential of various cities for tourism. The researchers found out that the cities have huge opportunities for attracting visitors encouraging governments and stakeholders to work in order to develop the sector and increase the awareness the local people have about the attractions. Daniel (2013) tried to point out about product development; however, his study barely covered the role of the internet in presenting the existence of the places in front of the visitors. Feven and Mekonnen (2018) also tried to study the trends of the information system with regard to Ethiopian tourism development in general. However, there is still a gap that none of them examined the roles of digital marketing tools such as social media marketing, email marketing, and SEO marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness.

1.4. Research Questions

The main purpose of conducting this thesis research was to get answers for the following questions.

- ✓ To what extent does social media marketing play a role in Ethiopian brand awareness building?
- ✓ How does Email marketing play a role in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness?
- ✓ What role does SEO marketing play in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness?

1.5. Objective of the Study

This study has also had some objectives categories into one main and three subcategories.

1.5.1. Main objective

The main objective of this research was to examine the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

Concurrently, this study has had specific aims beyond the main objective. Below are among these certain goals.

- ✓ To see how social media marketing plays a role in Ethiopian Tourism brand building.
- ✓ To analyze the role of Email marketing in Ethiopian tourism brand awareness.
- ✓ To understand what role SEO marketing plays in improving Ethiopian brand awareness.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study would be significant for forthcoming researchers, tour operators, and tourism digital marketing professionals in various ways. As the study was well conducted, for instance, the findings of this study would serve as a reference for succeeding academic researchers. The study would also contribute to the developing knowledge in an internet-based tourism business marketing using its best standard for a more successful outcome. This research would initiate tour operators to review their digital marketing tools and frequently check the analytics whether they are performing well or not.

1.7. Scope of the Study

The research was delimited to members of Ethiopian Tour Operators Association found in Addis Ababa and their experience with digital marketing for improving their brand awareness. On the other hand, this study didn't not include tour operators found in the regions, the other tourism and related businesses professionals like hotel owners, ticketing, local destination experts, and regional tourism officials due time and budget constraints. This study was conducted between Jan 2020 and Jan 2021.

1.8. Operational definition of terms and concepts

- **Digital market** includes a raft of internet marketing techniques, such as search engine optimization (SEO), search engine marketing (SEM) and link building. It also extends to non-Internet channels that provide digital media, such as short messaging service (SMS), multimedia messaging service (MMS), callback and on-hold mobile ringtones, e-books, optical disks and games (Techopedia).
- The **Internet** is a global wide area network that connects computer systems across the world (Christensson, 2015).
- **Tourism** refers to the activities (i.e. sightseeings, trekkings, village tours, cultural & historical tours, etc.) of visitors (UNWTO, IRTS 2008, 2.9).
- **Social media** is a technology where ideas, thoughts, and information are shared for digital networks and communities (Obar & Wildman, 2015).
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** can be defined as a practice of working on the quality and the quantity of a website for increased search engines results (MOZ, 2017).

- **Email** is the way of sending and receiving messages through an email address all over the world (Techterms, 2014)
- **Tour operator** is one who controls, books and devises the whole trip. They create a package holiday by combining all elements such as hotel, airport transfers, activities, restaurants, tours and such like (Protected Trust Services, 2018).
- **Visitor** is a traveller taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited (UNWTO, IRTS 2008, 2.9).
- **E-commerce-** E-commerce (electronic commerce) is the purchasing and sale over an electronic network, mainly the internet, of goods and services or the transfer of funds or data. There are either business-to-business (B2B), business-to-consumer (B2C), consumer-to-consumer or consumer-to-business transactions. E-commerce and e-business terms are also interchangeably used (Margaret, 2016).

1.9. Organization of the Study

This study is formed in order of six chapters with some prefatory sections. In the prefatory sections, acknowledgments, abstract, tables of content, and acronyms are included. Background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope, and limitations of the study are included in chapter one of the paper. The second chapter comprises a collection of relevant literature. Chapter three discusses research methodology and design. Research results and discussions are in chapter four. The last chapter is of summaries of findings, conclusion, and

recommendation of the study. The last pieces of the paper are a reference, instruments the research going to use to collect data, and appendixes.

CHAPTER 2

Related Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter of the study presents review of existing literature on the broader aspects of tourism and on specific roles of the Internet on the development of tour operation and general effectiveness of Internet usage. The theoretical literature review mainly covers nature of tourism, tour operation, overview of the internet and its roles, internet marketing, E-Commerce, tour product developments, objectives and benefits of the Internet marketing, PESO Marketing Theory, SEO Marketing, Email Marketing, Social Media Marketing, concept of product and service promotion.

2.2. Theoretical Literature Review

2.2.1. Definition of tourism

Because of the broad nature of the topic, various words have been given to the term tourism by different scholars and institutions. UNWTO (2019) defines the term tourism as a social, cultural, and economic occurrence which involves the movement of people to countries or places outside their habitual environment for personal or business purposes. These people are known as visitors, which may be either tourists or excursionists; residents or non-residents; and, tourism has to do with their activities, some of which involve tourism spending.

Dr Hayley (2020) regards tourism as the generic term used to encompass both demand and supply that has been adopted in a variety of forms. According to her definition, tourism essentially refers to the activities undertaken by visitors, also known as the visitor economy. The tourism industry includes all activity that takes place within the visitor economy which includes activities which have a direct relation with the tourist, such as staying in a hotel, serving a meal, or visiting a tourist attraction. It also includes those activities which have an indirect relation with the visitors, such as the transport company which delivers the food to the restaurant in which the tourist eats or the laundry firm that has a business agreement with the hotel for washing the bed sheets.

2.2.1.1 Tour Products

UNWTO defines Tourism Product as a mixture of tangible and intangible features, such as nature, culture, man-made resources, attractions, facilities, services, and activities around a specific center of interest which resembles the center of the destination marketing mix, and creates an overall visitor experience which includes emotional aspects for the potential customers; it is quoted and traded through distribution channels.

A tourism product can be defined as the tally of the physical and psychological satisfaction the tourists enjoy during their travels (Tourism Notes, 2018).

2.2.2. Concept of Brand Awareness

2.2.2.1. Definition of brand awareness

As defined by Keller et al. (2011), brand awareness is a personal meaning of a brand stored in the memory of the consumer, that is, all descriptive and evaluative information related to the cognitive picture of a brand. It concerns the likelihood that a brand will come to mind and the ease with which it does so.

Rossiter and Percy's definition (as cited by Macdonald & Sharp, 2003) describes brand awareness is essential in the communication process to take place as it comes before all other steps. No other communication effects can occur without the presence of brand awareness. In order for the consumer to buy a brand, they must first be made aware of it.

2.2.2.2. Building brand awareness through Digital Marketing

Foroudi et al. (2014) explain that social marketers focus on generating awareness between the public about attitudes, associations, and beliefs towards a specific firm or brand.

At the end of the day, customers are more powerful and busy; therefore, companies should be accessible and shall be found on every social media communication way at any time. Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, and Forums are the common media where companies shall be found for the clients. Digital marketing can thus be said to help firms increase brand equity through networking, conversation, and community building. (Krishnaprabha & Tarunika, 2020).

2.2.3. Nature of the Internet

To simply put it technically, the internet is a global network of interconnected networks. Numbers of corporate, government, organization,

and private networks are included in this network. These networks have servers (i.e. hard drives and software) which hold files, such as web pages and videos that can be accessed by all networked computers. All computers, phones, or other networked devices can send and receive data in the form of e-mail or other digital files over the internet. From sender to receiver, these data move over phone lines, cables, and satellites.

For today's global business environment, the Internet revolution has created a planetary scale framework designed to provide producers an opening to consumers around the globe and a permanent interactive conversation with them. This opening to consumers has important implications for any business person who considers the Internet as a tool to promote their interests crossing borders (Dinu, 2005).

2.2.4. The Scope of the Internet

When he tried to show the broad scope of the internet, William (2013) sets that Internet researchers draw from a wide range of theoretical and empirical perspectives to search the ways in which people have molded the Internet and its growing formation of social implications in a broad variety of conditions. Studies range across the following three distinct but closely interrelated objects of study—the main focus of what the research goals to explain.

1. **Technology**-this comprises its design and development.
2. **Use**-it deals with patterns of use and non-use across various kinds of users and producers in different settings.

3. **Policy**-it refers to the law and policy in areas as privacy and freedom of expression that form the design or use of the Internet, as well as emerging organizations and processes of Internet governance.

2.2.5. Definitions and Concept of Digital Marketing

Ward (1999) defines Internet Marketing (also known as eMarketing, or Digital Marketing) is an inclusive key word for marketing products and services on the internet, and like many inclusive terms, it means different things to different people.

As Combe (2006) puts it, Electronic business (e-business) can be defined as the use of the internet to create networks and enhance business processes, electronic commerce, organizational communication, and collaboration within a company and with its customers, suppliers, and stakeholders. It deals with the trading, marketing, and servicing of products and services via computer networks.

Shahriari et al. (2015) describe electronic commerce as marketing goods or services using computer networks like the Internet. E-commerce depends on technologies such as mobile commerce, electronic funds transfer, supply chain management, internet marketing, online transaction processing, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), inventory management systems, and automated data collection systems.

Electronic commerce (e-commerce) can be considered as the buying and selling of goods and/or services over the Internet. The scientist points out that, in addition to buying and selling, a large number of people use the Internet as a source of information to compare prices or see the latest

products offered before deciding to make a purchase online or from a regular store in person (Khan, 2016).

E-commerce is a business in which information technologies are used to enhance sales, do business efficiently, and build a base for new products and services. Following the activities, companies communicate with many other subjects, which may include both private or corporate clients, and business partners, and suppliers (Išoraitė & Miniotienė (2018).

Digital Marketing is defined as the practical and comprehensive use of internet, digital media platforms, and marketing tools to reach the greatest success in business in various channels of marketing (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

2.2.6. Role of Digital Marketing in Promoting Tourism Products and Services

When Strauss and Frost (2014) explain the impact of the Internet on businesses, they point out that the digital working environment boosts business processes and activities across the entire organization. Employees across various teams work together in cross-functional squads worldwide using computer networks to share and apply knowledge for better efficiency and profitability. Financial experts communicate shareholder information and other important files online. Human resources personnel exercise the internet for e-recruiting and staff training. In order to apply a firm's knowledge in building and maintaining a competitive edge, strategists at top corporate levels leverage computer networks. Thanks to the digital tools, company executives can easily access data from their desktops, and show results of the firm's strategies at the click of a mouse.

2.2.7. PESO Marketing Theory

Developed by Gini Dietrich (2014), PESO Model identifies the four media types — Paid, Earned, Shared, and Owned — and merges them together. Basing Dietrich's PESO model, LeadBoxer (2016) explained these four media types identified by the theory in detail as below.

Paid Media

Covering print and TV advertising, social media ads, promoted posts and paid publishing, paid media covers any content that is paid for. It infers that you are paying in order to drive traffic to your content. Typically, a brand utilizes paid media when it plans to promote content. Social Media like Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn are the most common platforms where a paid media campaign is launched. These platforms make boosting your content to a targeted audience strangely easy.

Earned Media

Traditionally, this mode of communication is known as public relations. In this way, a content distributed through a third party for gaining acceptable publicity, reputation, and visibility. One can have perfect opportunities to share content in the right way and in the right form through developing good relationships with bloggers, the media, investors, and influencers. A great SEO strategy is important for improving earned media results. An interesting and informative brand content results developed SEO results.

Brand content doesn't only mean creating a blog; it also involves producing press releases, making videos, creating infographics, preparing ebooks, and more. Bad content harnesses the valuable power of earned media.

Shared Media

Shared media is explained by posts (with engagements) on social media, user-generated contents, reviews, networking, and corporate social responsibility. It is a two-way communication channel that provides some form of benefit to both the company and the audience.

Owned Media

Owned media refers to any content your organisation already owns. Digitally, it means your website, social media assets, blogs, and podcasts.

These media are decisive as they profile many of the components of paid, earned, and shared media. The more owned media that your company has, the more opportunities your brand is reached by the digital audience across the world.

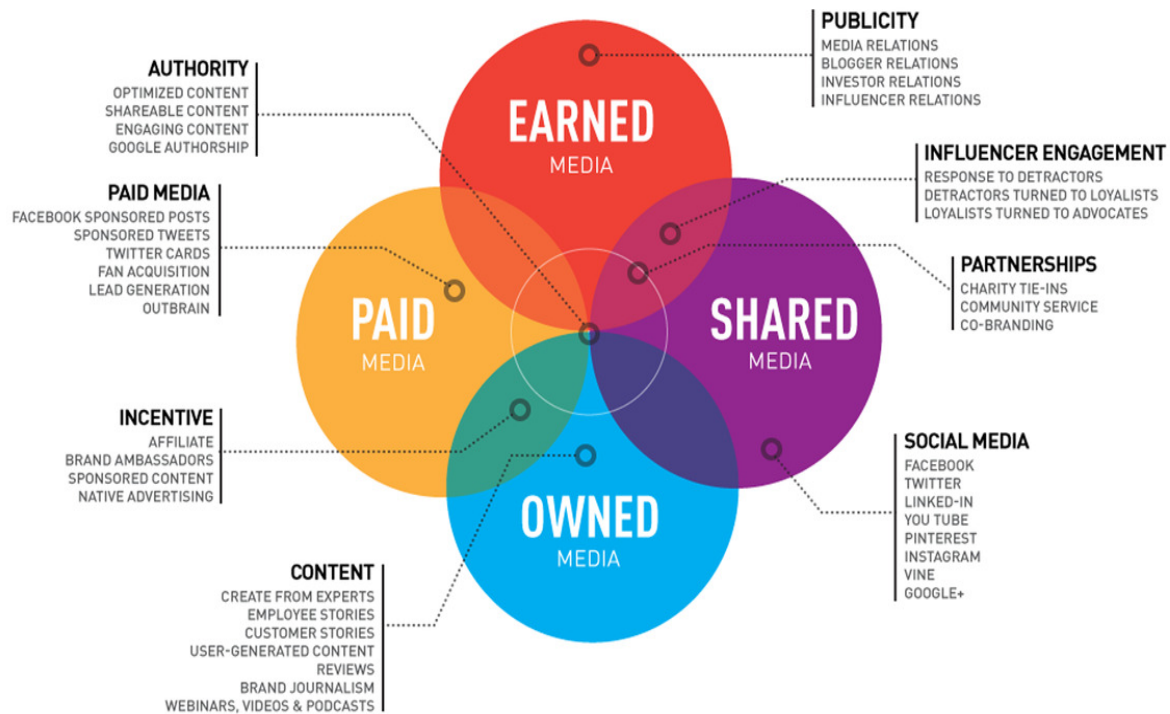


Figure 2.2.7.1 PESO Marketing Model

Source: Gini Dietrich

2.2.8. Methods of Digital Marketing in Tourism

2.2.8.1. Social Media Marketing

The term social media is used to describe web-based platforms that allow users to perform the following main activities.

1. Consuming and publishing content,
2. Engaging in dialogues with other users, and/or

3. Interacting with brands and companies– in real time or sequentially, without any need of being in the same physical location (Kaplan & Haenlein 2010).

Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi (2012) infer Social Media Marketing (SMM) as primarily internet-based, but has similarities with non-internet-based, marketing methods like word-of mouth marketing. They further explain that SMM is the way of promoting a website, brand, or business by interacting with or attracting the interest of current or prospective customers through the channels of social media. For them, Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube are the most popular social media that are widely used by companies and celebrities in promoting themselves and their brands. With the daily number of users increasing every day on Facebook and other social networking sites, it is bound to bring in more customers for the business by implementing more (and efficient) social media marketing tools. Social media mainly involves a business communication link between a company and its consumers through various platforms of communication. This communication can be response, interaction, or overall customer experience, which can take place in both online and offline.

Communications on social media help companies engage with their customers. This engagement can be used to define customer-to-company communication regarding a product, service, or brand. Effectiveness of social media is proved through the Customer Engagement it provides to the companies and their respective social site pages as one of the main purposes of the companies for being in the social sites is to engage the customers with their brand (Barger et al., 2016).

2.2.8.1.1 Components of Effective Social Media Campaigns

The well-known social media marketer, Ganguly (2015) advises to clearly define goals before preparing any marketing campaign. A decision made on what to achieve makes social media campaigns easier to measure and analyze the results. On the same note, he also adds one's social media campaigns may have various goals which should be personalized for the needs of your business. Below, he suggests the most common goals for effective social media campaigns.

Brand Awareness Increment

If your company is relatively new (or new to social media), or if you need to differentiate your company in the same space from others, some portion of your campaign should aim to increase brand awareness if your business or social media is new. Your campaign will have little impact if prospects and clients are unable to recognize your brand.

A great way to increase your brand awareness and online influence is to incorporate a sharing aspect to your campaign. To measure the social impact of your brand, benchmark key metrics (i.e. total number of likes or followers, total brand retweets, brand mentions of influencers, and social media driven site entries or app downloads.

Drive More Website Traffic

Every business wants more visits to its website. The more your website receives visitors, the more opportunities they have to share your social media site or content and follow your accounts on their favorite social media. In order to drive more traffic, you need to direct users to your site's landing page where they can proceed to the next step. For benchmarking significant

metrics for instance total web visits, social media-driven visits, on-site time and overall social user engagement, you may use analytics platforms.

Drive Visitor Loyalty

If one of your goals is visitor loyalty, consider a social media campaign that requires users to visit your website multiple times to enter or find data. Benchmark metrics like pages per session, average session duration, and the percentage of new sessions on your site to measure visitor loyalty.

Improve Conversion Rates

This goal deals with the number of visitors who click on the provided link in your social media post to subscribe to your newsletter, download a content, or register for an online seminar against the total visitors of the same page. If you have a high conversion rate, it infers that your content is compelling to your targeted audience. It's a sign, from a social media point of view, that your post was relevant to the offer.

2.2.8.2. Email Marketing

Even though the term 'email marketing' has been defined by several scholars and marketers in the past, this study found the following definition ideal in the perspective of the general objective of the research. In its article, Mailchimp (n.d) defines Email marketing as the use of email within marketing efforts to promote a business's products and services, as well as incentivize customer loyalty. It is a form of marketing that can make the customers who are on the company's email list aware of new products, seasonal sales, and other services the company has to offer. Email marketing can also be considered as a softer sell to inform an audience on the value of a brand or keep them captured between purchases.

When Stone (1996) points out about reaching an audience, he puts that the simplest way to reach a target audience is to allow existing and new potential customers to register on a website and request their permission whether they do or not want to receive emails with additional information and/or ads. When these users register on the website, they should be required to enter their email address. Then this registration process will allow the marketer to gather a list of email addresses from each potential customer who expressed an interest in receiving additional information and/or ads.

2.2.8.2.1. Components of Effective Email Marketing

Goliger (2013) suggests that email marketing should be one of their favorite tools as marketers. She adds: "not only is sending emails a great way to communicate with your audience and keep your list warm, but email marketing can also be used as a channel for generating leads."

Whenever you create email marketing for compelling new or existing customers to pay attention to your information or deal, the same marketer suggests optimizing the following critical components in every single email marketing campaign.

Subject Line

This component is the introduction that identifies the intent of the email. It should not be common, misleading, and deceptive. It needs to make them brief, insightful, and to the point. For the reader, it should set the expectation and explain the substance of the main inbox. Relevantly, the subject line of the email should address the concerns of the readers. Strong subject lines are known for their actionable language, like "get your free",

“join us,” “download,” and so more. An optimized subject line will help you capture the attention of your audience and persuade them to read more by opening your email.

Personalization

This deals with building trust with readers. The readers would trust that the emails they received are from an actual person. The name from which you’re sending your emails is the other component recipients will see before opening the email, and factor into their decision of whether or not to open it is the name from which the emails are sent. In addition to the name of the sender, email marketer shall also address the recipients by their name.

Body Copy

Email marketers need to make their emails precise and compelling. To increase the probability that your readers will click through to take advantage of your offer, it's important to get your language, tone, and layout right. First of all, you need to make sure that the copy of your body clearly communicates what is your offer plus why it is valuable. You want to use brief, compelling language when writing good copies.

Image

Your emails should, like any other marketing asset, be visually compelling. In some cases, a plain text email may work, but more often than not, a well-designed email is needed to ensure that the attention of people is kept once they open up and inspire them to continue engaging. Images can also help to transfer information about offers. The images shall be relevant. A non-descriptive stock photograph will not explain what your email is about, or

what you're offering the reader, as easy as it is to pick out. Having the image to match your offer is much more efficient.

Call-to-Action

Commonly referred to as the ABC of email marketing, Call-to-Action deals with the point preparing the email. You would like to have your readers click through and convert. The most important component of your emails is arguably your call-to-action, because getting your readers click on it and take action is the endmost goal of your email. You want to ensure your call-to-action is prominent and visually distinctive, whether it's a button or a link. This should be your email's clear focal point, so make it stand out and catch the eye of the viewer. Keeping your calls-to-action "above the fold" is also good practice, so they're visible without the reader having to scroll down.

2.2.8.3. SEO Marketing

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to a website through organic search engine results. According to Sen's (2005) study, buyers using search engines to look for information tend to trust and follow links mentioned in the editorial section of the search results page. However, he found out that most online sellers do not put their money into search engine optimization to get higher search engine result rankings for their business listings, but they instead prefer paid placements. For doing so, they reason out that SEO is more expensive than paid placements, produces results that do not justify its cost, and does not consistently lead to high search-results rankings. For the researcher, this implies that sellers would invest in SEO if it was less expensive and rankings were more consistent. However, even if SEO and paid placement have the same cost, and SEO always produced high rankings, paid placement would

still be the search engine marketing (SEM) strategy of choice for most on-line sellers.

2.2.8.3.1. Components of Effective SEO Marketing

Demers (2015) says that you can get your site to the top of Google's organic search rankings, raking in relevant visitors and sales with one strategy. Sadly, due to its volatile nature and intimidating degree of complexity, SEO scares a lot of people away. If you split SEO into its main components, however, it looks a lot less frightening—and it's definitely worth learning for many. By illustrating his assumption and to include a successful long-term search strategy, he has broken down SEO into the three primary components that must be present.

On-site Optimization

This component is all about your website's content, structure, and layout. It simply refers to the practice of web pages optimization in order to improve search engine rankings and earn organic traffic of the website. To get an understanding of what it's about (and how authoritative it is), Google and other search engines crawl your site, so the data it finds on your website can have a big impact on how it ranks pages for relevant search queries on your site. According to Demeres (2015) and others, the title tag (per page), the Meta description (per page), site navigation, internal linking, the URL (per page), relevant, unique content (per page), site speed and performance, and site security are the most important things to take into consideration in on-site optimization.

Ongoing Quality Content

Ongoing content is the largest component of on-site strategy. It is the content that you carry on to produce for your brand's life. Usually relegated to a blog or news feed, this provides your brand with a range of functions—not just an SEO benefit. Your content demonstrates your knowledge, helps users trust you, and gives you a conversion platform by including calls to action at the end of your pieces. For your social media or email marketing campaigns, it can also serve as fuel.

Similarly, for SEO, content serves a range of roles. First, and perhaps most significantly, it maximizes the number of pages that can be indexed by Google on your website. There is more content for Google to index on your website for every new blog post you publish. And another possible search listing that leads individuals to your domain—as long as the quality of your content is high enough. It also seems good for Google to have a regular flow of content, giving you a boost in the search rankings. Finally, if your articles are linked to and shared frequently, they will be displayed higher in the search engine rankings—but in my final point, I will touch on that.

Off-site Authority Building

Off-site authority building is about building relationships and presences on external sites and platforms. Inbound links from such external sources are the biggest tools Google uses to evaluate this "authoritativeness". The more inbound links from high-authority sources you have pointing to your website, the better your perceived authority, and the higher your website will rank in search engines. But any links considered spammy, irrelevant, or unnatural could earn you a penalty rather than a boost. Guest posting, syndication of social media, and influencer marketing are all strategies that you can use to

get your content in front of more people and expand your authoritative reach.

2.3. Empirical Literature Review

Afrina et al (2015) conducted an empirical study titled "Effectiveness of Digital Marketing in the Challenging Age". The study was conducted in Bangladesh at Northern University for the International Journal of Management Science and Business Administration. The research implemented systematic and theoretical methodology in order to evaluate suitability of one specific method to apply to a field of study by collecting data from primary and secondary sources. Their primary data was collected using a structured interview. They have also collected secondary data from published financial statements of firms included in the population, articles, and newspapers. For the purpose of their study, 150 companies that are already using digital marketing systems to sell their products to customers have been randomly selected. After their research, they discovered that digital marketing has become an important part of the strategy of many businesses. Even small firms can be benefited from cheaper and efficient ways to promote their products and services. Digital marketing has no boundaries. For the promotion of the company itself and its products and services, companies can use social media, SEO, videos, content, e-mail and much more. Digital marketing can be more successful if it considers user requirements to be a top priority. In order to identify the best path for driving digital marketing performance, companies should create innovative customer experiences and specific media strategies.

Another study done on "Raising Brand Awareness through the Internet Marketing Tools" by Margarita (2015) acquired the opinions of various authors on raising brand awareness. This study performed a scientific literature analysis for revealing theoretical aspects of raising brand awareness, internet marketing concept, and internet marketing tools. The researcher analysed the effect of website, internet advertising, social networks, and the search engine optimization on the increment of brand awareness. According to the finding of the study, awareness of brands could be raised through internet marketing tools that notify, remind, and persuade customers about their brands, products, or services. The customer may encounter the brand in different ways, such as reviewing videos, playing games, spending time on the site, or communicating with other customers, viewing advertisements.

Further study conducted on "Influence of Digital Marketing on Brand Building" by S. Yuvaraj and R. Indumathi (2018) found out that digital marketing has emerged as a specialism with its origins rooted in direct marketing over the last decade. The rise in the number and use of personal devices means that brand marketers have many more ways of directly and indirectly communicating with their target customers. As they studied the effects of digital marketing on the branding of a specific product, the outline of various digital marketing tools such as email marketing, SEO marketing, mobile marketing, blogging, and affiliate marketing and its impact among customers on brand building were shown. The study identified that digital channels are used as part of a multi-channel brand communication or engagement program to communicate the position of a brand where digital marketing can be regarded as digital branding or communication. This

research helps to determine the relationship between digital marketing and the construction of brands.

Recently, Krishnaprabha and Tarunika (2020) did a study titled "An Analysis on building Brand Awareness through Digital Marketing Initiatives". They collected the data through random questionnaires and have been distributed to the consumers. The study had its secondary data from articles, web sources, and journals. The type of the study was exploratory as it helped the study to understand a subject of study in an introductory approach. Once they have analyzed the data using various statistical tools and techniques, their final results indicated that Digital marketing activities are influential in building brand awareness. And, the result showed that brand quality, brand awareness and brand loyalty are influenced by digital marketing activities.

In Ethiopia, Yemane (2015) conducted a research for his partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Tourism Development and Management titled "E-marketing for Tourism Business Development in Ethiopia: Its Practice, Challenges and Implications on Performance of Tour Operating Firms." The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between E-marketing and development of tourism business making the practice, challenges, and implications of e-marketing for the performance of tour operating companies the focal point of his specific study. He employed a quantitative research approach. The study followed exploratory factor analyses in order to validate the items used to measure E-marketing along with a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha. This study found out that E-marketing significantly affects the business of tour operating firms. The tour operators' awareness towards the availability of social media has been found very strong, and usage of ICT infrastructure is

also found out very promising. However, this study has not explored whether social media marketing is significantly affecting the business activities in increasing their brand awareness or not.

For her partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Masters in Marketing Management in Addis Ababa University-Ethiopia, Roman (2018) analyzed the practice of digital marketing in promoting Ethiopian tourism in case of Ethiopian Tourism Organization. By employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches, she obtained the data through an interview, questionnaire, and observation. The result of the study showed that most visitors who came to Ethiopia used search engines as their primary source of tourist information. The results further revealed that ETO partially used the two digital marketing frameworks: attract and retain. On the other hand, the organization failed to use the three digital marketing frameworks: participate, learn, and relate back. The digital marketing elements currently used by ETO are social media accounts (i.e. YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter) websites, search engine optimization, mobile apps, and digital content. This study seemed to sufficiently analyze the practice of using digital marketing in general; however, it merely discussed the social media marketing tools.

Therefore, it failed to examine other types of digital marketing tools like email marketing and SEO marketing.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The below conceptual framework has been developed based on the theoretical and empirical reviews. In this study, the independent variables are SEO Marketing, Email Marketing, and Social Media Marketing whereas

the dependent variable- tourism products and services promotion. The figure shows the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. This research will be intended to investigate the effect of SEO Marketing, Email Marketing, and Social Media Marketing on tourism products and services promotion stated in the research question and reviewed in the literature.

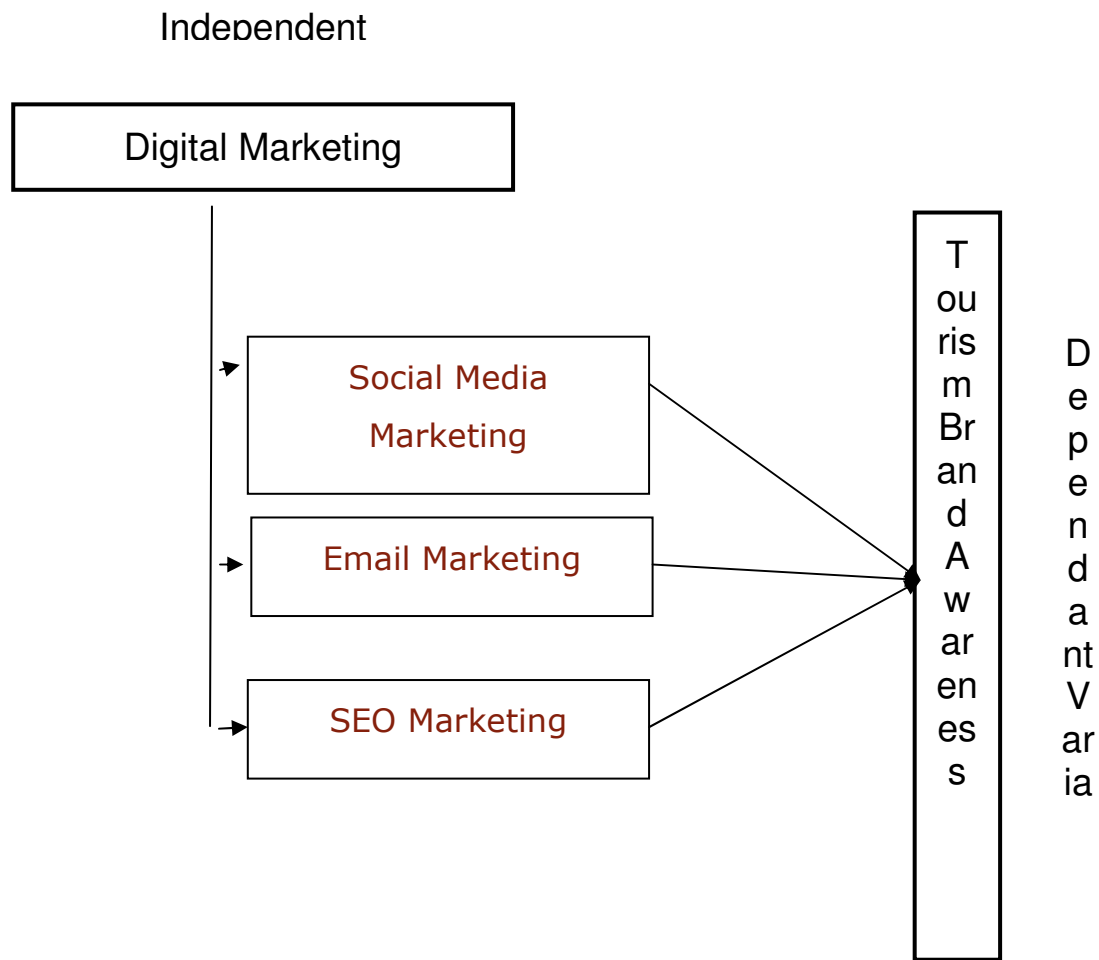


Figure 2.4.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Adopted from Equinet Academy's Digital Marketing Strategy Framework (2017)

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology and Design

During this study, the researcher has tried to examine the role of digital marketing in Ethiopian tourism brand awareness. To do this, this section of the study consists of subsections which portray the process this research plans to implement. From the research approach it employs to the data interpretation pieces, this part of the research can be entitled as the heart of the work.

3.1. Research Design

Studies that establish causal relationships between two or more variables may be regarded as explanatory studies. Such studies emphasize on studying a situation or a problem for explaining the relationships between variables. (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007) This study, therefore, implemented explanatory research design, and it tried to study the role and relationship of the independent variables (digital marketing with its sub variables: Social Media Marketing, Email Marketing, and SEO Marketing) and the dependent variable (tourism brand awareness). With regard to the nature of data, the research employed quantitative data collected through questionnaires.

3.2. Research Approach

This study employed a quantitative research approach. Quantitative researches quantify relationships between various variables by using specific methodologies and techniques. In quantitative research, where two variables are involved, for instance, the aim of researchers is to study the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable in the given population (Hopkins, 2000).

3.3. Source of Data

For this study, the researcher used primary means as a source of data. 'Primary data' is the data that would not otherwise exist if it were not for the research process and is collected through either questionnaires or interviews (O'Leary, 2014). This data was collected by a formal survey which was carried out by a questionnaire to be filled by managing directors and tour operators. Surveying is the process by which the researcher collects data through a questionnaire (O'Leary, 2014). According to Cohen & others (2013), a questionnaire is the instrument for collecting the primary data (Cohen et al, 2013).

3.4. Sampling Procedure and Size

According to Miaoulis, George, and Michener (1976), three criteria will usually need to be specified to determine the appropriate sample size; the level of precision, the level of confidence or risk, and the degree of variability in the attributes being measured in addition to the purpose of the study and population size.

There are several statistical formulas available for determining sample size. For categorical data, the sample size is calculated using the following formula developed by Taro Yamane (1967), a mathematical statistician who developed a statistical formula for calculating sample size in relation to the population under study. This formula is a good way of determining a sample size when the researcher knows only one thing, i.e the population size.

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

Where

n= the required sample size

N= the total Population Size

e= the acceptable sampling Error (Margin of Error (MoE))

Therefore, **126** would be the total sample size with 95% desired level of confidence and 5 %(0.05) MoE as it was calculated below.

$$n = \frac{183}{1 + 183(0.05)^2}$$

n=**126**

The total population of the study is 183 members of Ethiopian tour operators currently in business in Addis Ababa as per the date obtained from the office of Ethiopian Tour Operators Association. Therefore, for allowing a 5% difference (i.e. margin of error) between the mean number of the sample and the mean number of the population and being 95% confident (i.e. confidence level) that the actual mean falls within the margin of error, the study had a sample size of 126.

This study executed a purposive/judgmental sampling method of non-probability technique as the researcher can select the samples deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained from other choices (Maxwell, 1996). It is where the researcher includes cases or participants in the sample because he/she believes that they warrant inclusion. While the larger the sample, the lesser the likelihood that findings will be biased does hold, diminishing returns can quickly set in when samples get over a specific size which need to be balanced against the researcher's resources (Gill et al., 2010).

3.5. Procedure of Data Collection

This study prepared a questionnaire with close ended questions in three parts; the first part asked general information of the respondents while the second part included questions asking their general awareness towards digital marketing, and the third parts dealt with questions depicting the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

Before practicing the data collection instruments, the researcher consulted English language experts so as to recheck the clarity of the questionnaires and its grammatical standards. The questions in the questionnaire were adopted from works of recognized and trusted theorists and digital marketing scholars. These works were Dietrich's (2014) PESO Model, LeadBoxer (2016), Ganguly (2015), and Goliger (2013).

Once the clarity of the questionnaire was checked, the researcher followed the following procedures to conduct the survey.

- I. Identifying participants as mentioned in the above section;
- II. Then the questionnaires were dropped to the participants at their physical addresses;
- III. Respondents were advised to fill the questionnaires at their convenient time and place in the following 5 days;
- IV. Questionnaires were collected from the respondents;
- V. Cross checking if all respondents have (not) completed the survey.

Once these procedures are completed, a likert scaling method (i.e. 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree) was implemented for measuring both the independent and the dependent variables. 14 and 5 questions were formulated for measuring the independent and the dependent variables respectively.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

Since the study was conducted based on a quantitative survey, paying particular attention to the relationships between the identified variables, the researcher used descriptive and regression analyses as the main data analysis techniques. In order to do the statistical analysis, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software Version 26 was used with statistical description in terms of frequency, mean, standard deviation, and correlation statistics. Finally, findings of summary, conclusion, and recommendation were formulated based on findings from the research. The following simple formula was formulated for doing multiple regression analysis while measuring the role of digital marketing on tourism brand awareness.

$$BA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{SMM}) + \beta_2 (\text{EM}) + \beta_3 (\text{SEO}) + \epsilon_i$$

Where

BA is Brand Awareness

β_0 is Constant beta

SMM is coefficient of Social Media Marketing

EM is coefficient of Email Marketing

SEO is coefficient of Search Engine Optimization Marketing

ϵ_i is Error term

3.7. Validity and Reliability Tests

Finally, validation of the items was carried out using KMO and Bartlett's Test. By using Cronbach's Alpha, the reliability of the items under each predictor was checked. Finally, by analyzing the consequences of the data, detailed findings for this analysis were provided in tables, figures and conclusions.

3.7.1. Validity

The study's validity was tested to ensure the accuracy of this research design, material, and constructs. Peer discussions were also other ways of testing the appropriateness of questions on each variable, in addition to professional expertise in the field of digital marketing in tourism. Furthermore, the pilot test performed before the actual collection of data helped to gain constructive comments. The result of the pilot testing was middling at a value of 76%. As it can be seen on table 3.7.1, the results of tests of KMO and Bartlett for the actual sample were 0.766 and 0.000 respectively; therefore, the test implies that the validity of the sampling is appropriate and acceptable.

Table 3.7.1 Result of KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.766
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	293.272
	df	6
	Sig.	.000

Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

3.7.2. Reliability Test

For each variable, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was determined to evaluate the internal accuracy of variables, and the result is shown on table 3.7.2. Before going to the actual data collection, a reliability test was run including 27 participants and the 4 items, and the total result was 8.167 using a Cronbach Alpha (CA). While Social Media Marketing, Email Marketing, SEO Marketing, and Brand Awareness have CA values 0.768, 0.832, 0.889, and 0.778 respectively. Thus, the Cronbach Alpha of each variable is above 70% and reliable. This confirms us that the reliability with a CA value of 0.814 of the questionnaire responses is correct and allowable. Whereas table 3.7.2 shows the reliability test of the actual sample.

Table 3.7.2 Result of Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Value of Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Social Media Marketing	.764	4
Email Marketing	.830	6
SEO Marketing	.885	4
Brand Awareness	.778	5

Avg.	.814	19
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Source: SPSS Descriptive analysis result based on questionnaire survey, 2020

3.8. Ethical Considerations

The permission for this research was obtained from all respondents after each of them had been given the requisite clarification about the intent of the study. Respondents were treated with respect, and they were briefed of the purpose of the questionnaire, and they were asserted that the information they provided will be kept anonymous and confidential. They were also told both verbally and in writing that all information collected by the questionnaire will be used solely for academic purposes, and it will be treated with the highest order of confidentiality and will not in any way and at any time impact their lives.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis, Results, and Discussion

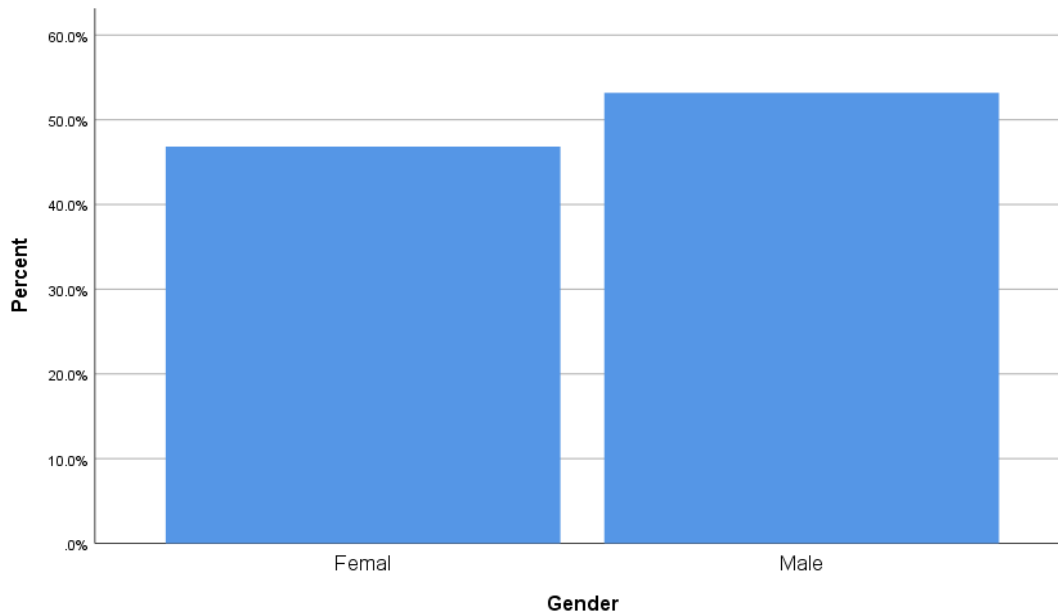
The general objective of this particular study was assessing the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness. The analysis and the conclusions shown in this section are based on information obtained from primary sources. In order to collect data, questionnaires were distributed to 126 respondents, and all the questionnaires were successfully filled and collected. In order to explain the results, descriptive and regression statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demographic and general information while the regression analysis was used to analyse correlation and regression. To show the finding and the interpretation, graphs and tables are used.

4.1. Background information of the respondents

This section depicts the highest educational gender, age, highest educational background, and work experience information of the respondents.

4.1.1. Gender

Figure 4.1.1 Respondents Information-Gender

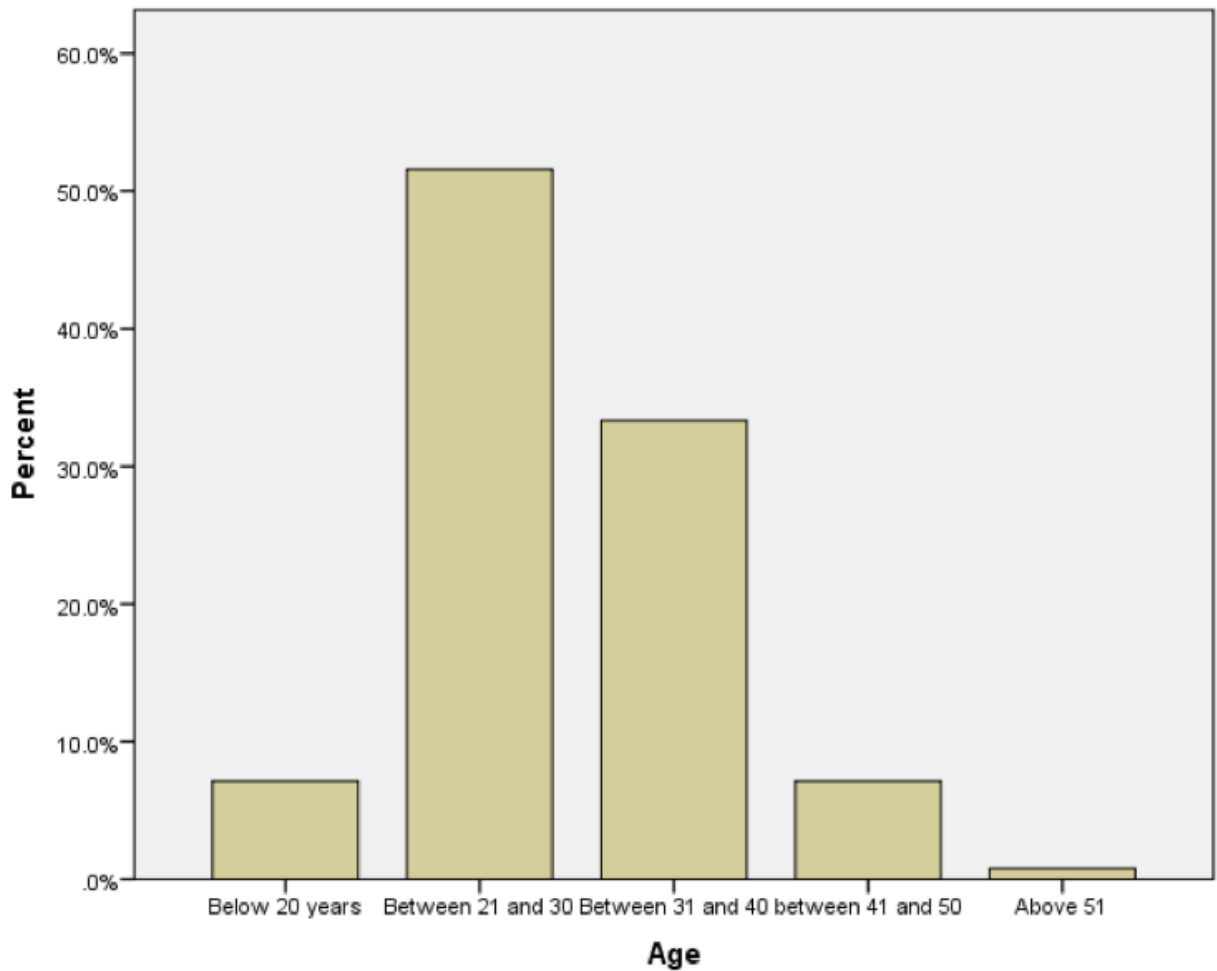


Source: SPSS (v.26) Descriptive Analysis Result, 2020

As we can see from Figure 4.1.1, 53% of the participants of the survey were male and while a competitive number (47%) of female participants were also part of the survey. This implies that the industry's 'gender balance' is fairly non-partisan.

4.1.2. Age

Figure 4.1.2 Respondents Information-Age

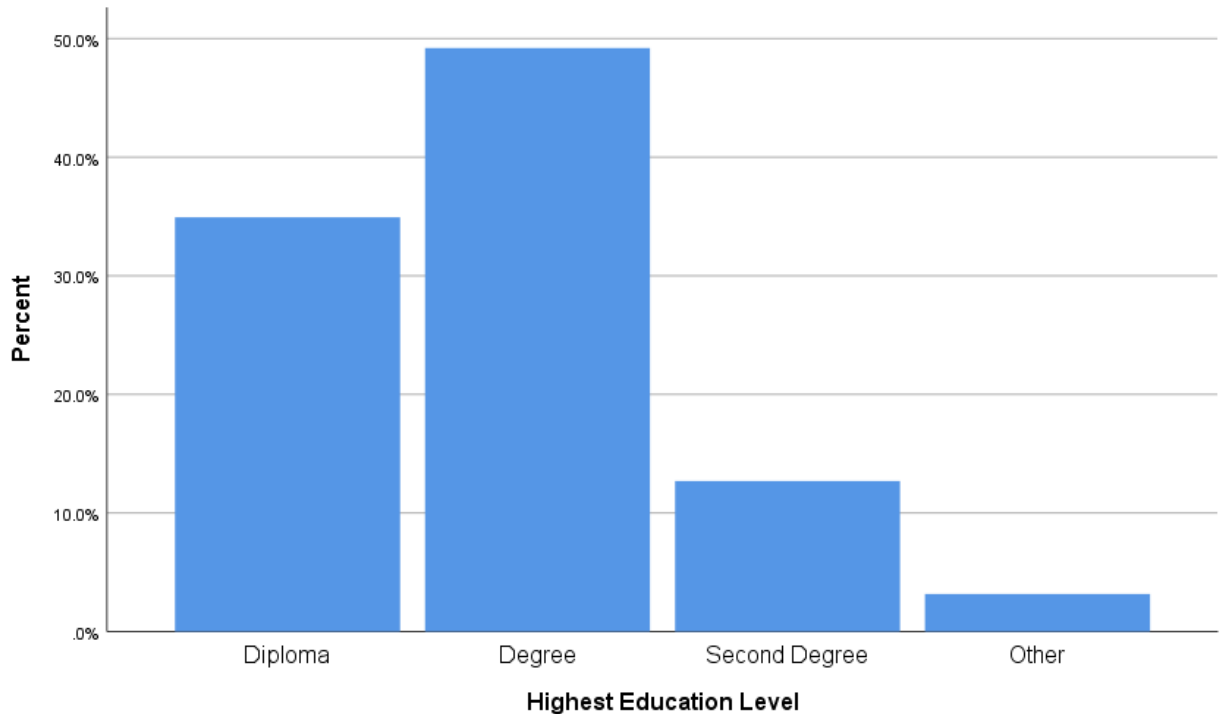


Source: SPSS (v.26) Descriptive Analysis Result, 2020

Figure 4.1.2 shows that the highest age group is between 21 and 30 years (51%) followed by 32% of age between 31 and 40 and 8% of both below 20 and between 41 and 50 age groups. There was only 1% of the total participants in the above 51 years age group. From the results, it can be understood that the tour operation business is executed by young professionals.

4.1.3. Highest Educational Background

Figure 4.1.3 Respondents Information-Highest Educational Background



Source: SPSS (v.26) Descriptive Analysis Result, 2020

According to the result in Figure 4.1.3, the highest educational level of the participants is degree (49%). Diploma holders are in second with 35% followed by second degree holders (12%) and other educational levels(4%). In the survey, it was found that there is no certificate holder in the survey.

4.1.4. Work Experience

Figure 4.1.4 Respondents Information-Work Experience



Source: SPSS (v.26) Descriptive Analysis Result, 2020

As we can see from the above figure, 49% of the participants have 6-10 years of work experience while 35% of the total sample size have less than 5 years of work experience. 10% of the participants have 11 to 20 years of work experience. Those who have between 21 and 25 years of work experience weigh nearly 4% of the size. Only 2% of the participants have above 26 years of work experience.

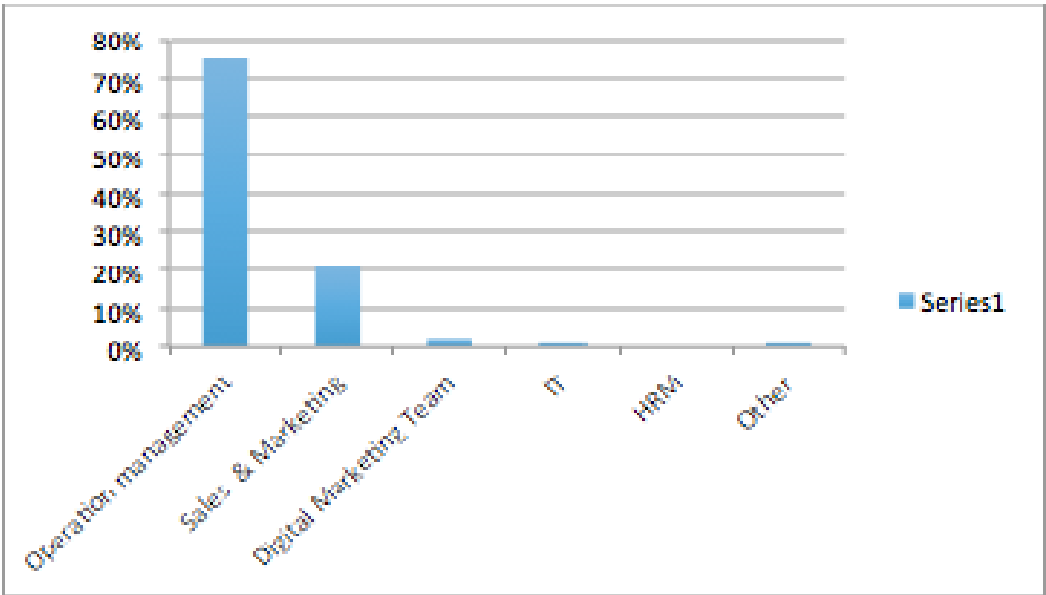
4.2. Descriptive Analysis of Respondents' general awareness towards digital marketing tools

This section provides information regarding the general awareness of the respondents towards digital marketing tools.

Accessibility of Digital Marketing Tools	Frequency	Percentage
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4.2.1. Teams performing the digital marketing activities

Figure 4.2.1 Digital marketing activities performers (teams)



Source: Microsoft Excel Result based on a Questionnaire Survey, 2020

As per the result in figure 4.2.1, 75% of the respondents said that their operation management teams perform the digital marketing activities in their organization while 20% of them implied that the sales and marketing teams do the same activities. Only 3% of the participants said that there is a dedicated digital marketing team performing the digital marketing tasks. IT and other teams weigh only 1%.

4.2.2. Accessibility of Digital Marketing Tools

Figure 4.2.2 Respondents accessibility of Digital Marketing Tools

	YES	NO	YES	NO
Availability of business website	126	0	100%	0%
Search Engine Optimization Practice	124	2	98%	2%
Availability on Social Media Platforms	126	0	100%	0%
Access to Email Address	126	0	100%	0%

Source: Microsoft Excel Result based on a Questionnaire Survey, 2020

Figure 4.2.2 depicts responses of the respondents regarding their access to digital marketing tools. From the table, it can be understood that all of them have available business websites, social media accounts, and access to email addresses. Only 2% are not practicing search engine optimization marketing tools. Therefore, it might be deduced that almost all of the respondents have the awareness and access to the major marketing tools.

4.3. Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Hereafter, the section provides the data analysis in regards to the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness. The questions were answered by a psychometric response(Likert) scale in which respondents gave their level of agreement to each statement ticking in the appropriate place where Strongly disagree(1), Disagree(2),

Neither agree nor disagree(3), Agree(4), and Strongly agree(5) options were provided.

4.3.1. Tourism brand awareness in relation to social media marketing

For the very first Likert Scale questions regarding their practice of social media marketing in relation to brand awareness, the response of the respondents laid under 'moderate' level. Based on this, it can be deduced that there is a reasonable level of practicing social media marketing so as to improve Ethiopian brand awareness. With a highest value of mean (3.8571), the participants agreed that social media marketing helps them to differentiate their brands from others who are doing the same business.

According to the study conducted by Afrina et al (2015), social media marketing has been found to be the efficient way to promote a company's products and services in differentiating their business from others.

Table 4.3.1 Descriptive Analysis of Tourism brand awareness in relation to social media marketing

Descriptive Statistics of Social Media Marketing					
Variable Questions	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social media marketing helps me to differentiate my brand from others on the same business.	126	3.00	5.00	3.8571	.64143

I include a link in my social media campaigns in order to drive more traffic to my website.	126	2.00	5.00	3.6429	.81451
I have a high conversion rate because my social media posts are compelling.	126	2.00	5.00	2.9286	.96481
My social media contents require users to visit my website multiple times to enter or find information.	126	1.00	5.00	3.1429	1.19140
Valid N (Listwise)	126			3.3928	0.9030

Source: SPSS Result based a questionnaire with 5 point Likert Scale, 2020

4.3.2. Tourism brand awareness in relation to Email marketing

Following the descriptive result stated in table 4.3.2, most of the respondents agreed (with 4.0833 and 0.9383 values of mean and standard deviation respectively) that they are implementing the major effective components of email marketing for improving their brand awareness. Therefore, the study examined that Email marketing is playing a significant role in improving Ethiopian brand awareness. Margarita (2015) found out that awareness of brands could be raised through internet marketing tools that notify, remind, and persuade customers about their brands, products, or services.

Table 4.3.2 Descriptive Analysis of tourism brand awareness in relation to Email marketing

Descriptive Statistics of Email Marketing					
Variable Questions	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
I use email marketing to generate leads instead of only communicating with my audience.	126	2.00	5.00	3.7143	1.22544
The "Subject Lines" of my emails identify the intent of the main inbox.	126	3.00	5.00	4.4286	.73134
I send emails to my audience using my actual name.	126	4.00	5.00	4.7857	.41196
The body of my emails clearly communicates what is my offer and why it is valuable.	126	1.00	5.00	4.2143	1.01672
I include relevant images in my emails.	126	3.00	5.00	4.0714	.70630
My emails include a "Call-to-Action" toggle.	126	1.00	5.00	3.2857	1.53809
Valid N (listwise)	126			4.0833	0.9383

Source: SPSS Result based a questionnaire with 5 point Likert Scale, 2020

4.3.3. Tourism brand awareness in relation to SEO marketing

Again, the participants of the study agreed (with an average mean value of 3.4821) that they are optimizing their website for improving the ranking of their brand by building relationships with external sites and creating quality contents. For boosting their brands in the search rankings, the respondents have the highest practice of producing quality content with a mean value of 3.9286. Overall, it can be obtained that Ethiopian tourism brand awareness is influenced positively by SEO marketing.

The study of S. Yuvaraj and R. Indumathi (2018) identified that digital channels are used as part of a multi-channel brand communication or engagement program to communicate the position of a brand where digital marketing can be regarded as digital branding or communication.

Table 4.3.2 Descriptive Analysis of tourism brand awareness in relation to SEO marketing

Descriptive Statistics of SEO Marketing					
Variable Questions	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
I optimize my website in order to improve search engine rankings.	126	1.00	5.00	3.2857	1.03427

SEO helps me earn organic traffic to my website.	126	2.00	5.00	3.3571	.81451
I carry on producing quality content for boosting my brand in the search rankings.	126	2.00	5.00	3.9286	.88705
Building relationships and presences on external sites and platforms affects my search engine rankings.	126	2.00	5.00	3.3571	.89857
Valid N (listwise)	126			3.4821	0.9086

Source: SPSS Result based a questionnaire with 5 point Likert Scale, 2020

4.3.4. Measuring tourism brand awareness

Regarding the questions formulated for understanding the practice of the dependent variable, Ethiopian tourism brand awareness, the overall Likert Scale response descriptive results is shown in the below table 4.3.4. As per the overall result, the respondents agreed on the brand awareness measurement items. Hence, it can be concluded that their brands are available across relevant social media with a moderate level of engagement

with the digital communities; most of them are also receiving their business through their websites having a fair email open-rates.

Table 4.3.4 Descriptive Analysis of measuring tourism brand awareness

Descriptive Statistics of tourism brand awareness					
Variable Questions	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
My brand is available on all relevant social media platforms.	126	1.00	5.00	3.5714	1.18273
I engage my brand with other brands and communities on social media.	126	1.00	5.00	3.2143	1.21067
I receive most of my business through my website.	126	1.00	5.00	4.1429	1.25037
My keywords rank better than my competitors' branded keywords on search engines.	126	1.00	5.00	2.9286	1.03675
I have a high email open-rate.	126	1.00	5.00	3.2143	1.21067
Valid N (listwise)	126			3.4143	1.1782

Source: SPSS Result based a questionnaire with 5 point Likert Scale, 2020

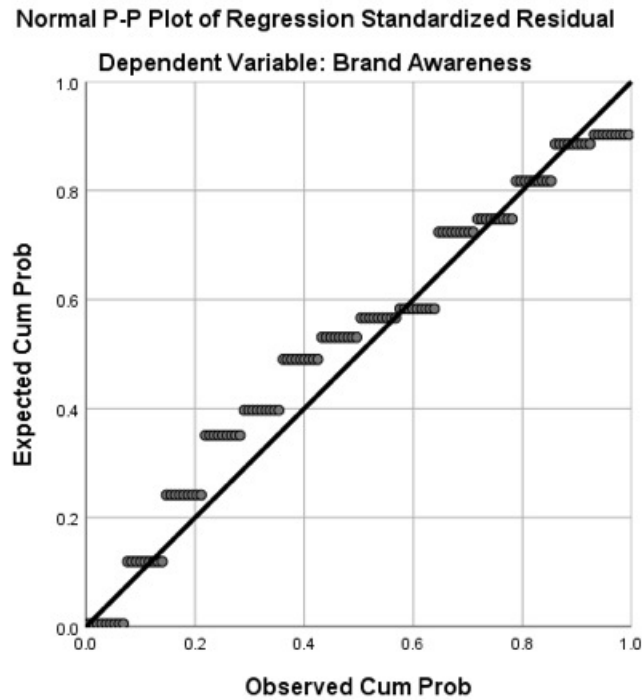
4.4. Linear Regression Assumptions

4.4.1 Linearity Test

Linearity Test is run for the purpose of determining whether the relationship between the dependent and the independent variables is linear or not. This can be represented by a straight line on the graph.

As it is shown in figure 4.4.1, the relationship between the dependent variable, brand awareness, and the independent variables is linear. This can be verified by looking at the P-P plot that has made a reasonable straight line.

Figure 4.4.1 Result of Linearity Test



Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.4.2 Multicollinearity Test

With less than VIF value of less than 10, it can be understood that there is no problem in multicollinearity.

Table 4.4.1 Variation Inflation Factor (VIF)

	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF

1	Social Media Marketing	.347	2.881
	Email Marketing	.499	2.004
	SEO Marketing	.594	1.684

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.4.1.1. Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variable

This study implemented correlation analysis in order to measure the strength of relationship between the variables. Those variables which have higher percentages of correlation have stronger relationships with each other. On the other hand, a weaker relationship between variables implies lower correlation. The below table shows the correlation between the independent variable (i.e. Social Media marketing, Email Marketing, and SEO Marketing) and the dependent variable, brand awareness as well as the relationship between the independent variables each other.

Table 4.4.1.1 Correlation between Dependent and Independent Variable

Correlations					
		Social Media Marketing	Email Marketing	SEO Marketing	Brand Awareness
Social Media Marketing	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				

	N	126			
Email Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.700**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	126	126		
SEO Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.627**	.357**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	126	126	126	
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.804**	.721**	.510**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	126	126	126	126

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

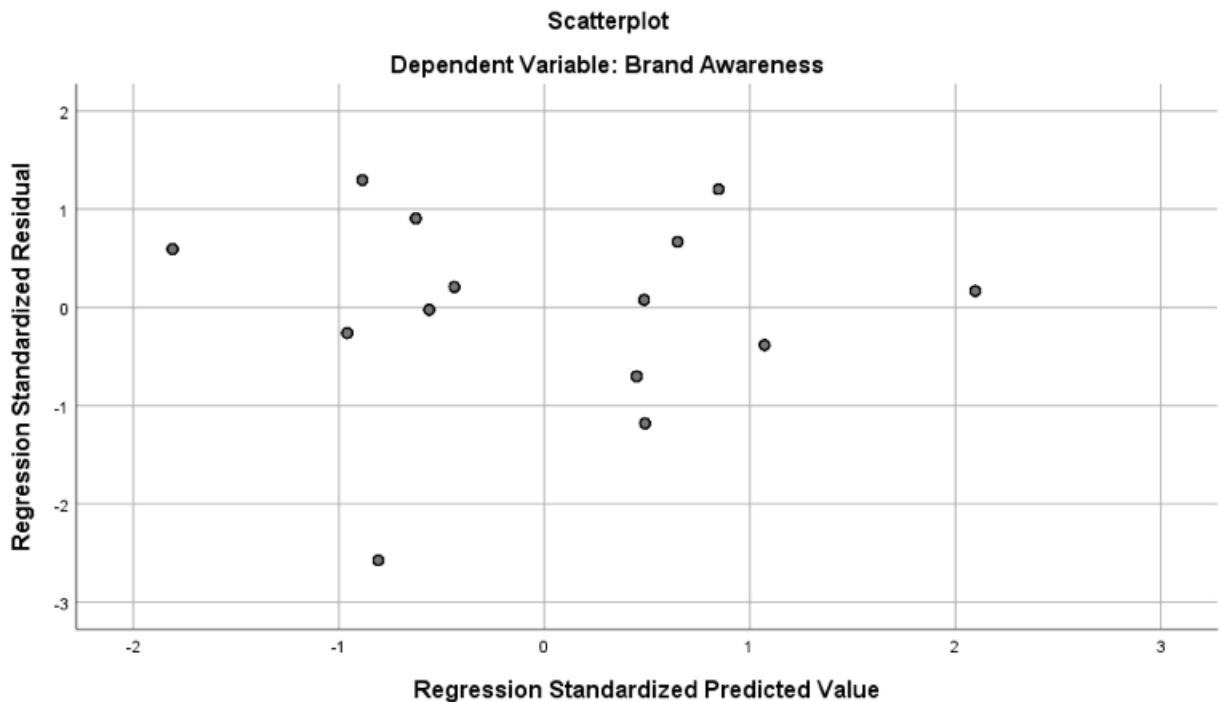
Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.4.3. Heteroscedasticity Test

This test significantly deals with how constant the variance in the formulated model is. In a linear regression model, this test checks if the error terms are normally distributed. Heteroscedasticity test detects whether the variance of

the errors from a regression is dependent on the values of the independent variables. As it can be seen in figure 4.4.3, there is no problem of heteroscedasticity as the points in the figure are distributed evenly.

Figure 4.4.2 Result of Heteroscedasticity Test

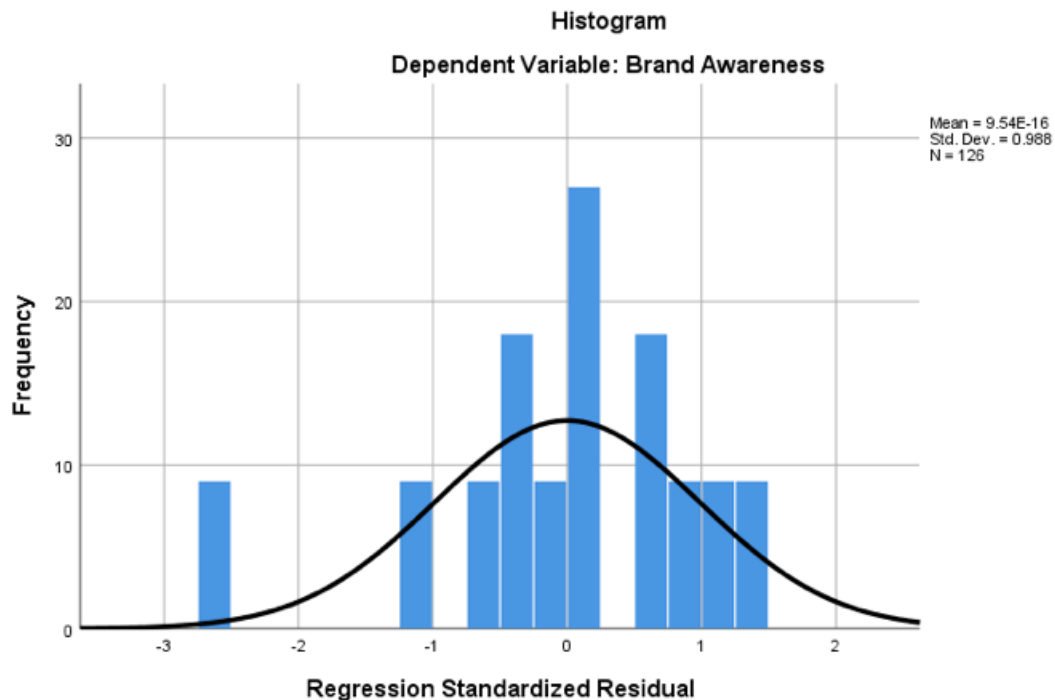


Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.4.4. Normality Test

According to Normality Assumption while dealing with regression, samples are expected to be distributed normally. To emphasize this, Osborn and Waters (2002) advised that there shant be outliers or highly skewed variables in the histogram. Therefore, the below histogram indicates the distribution of the samples of the mean was fairly normal as it overlaps from the normal curve.

Figure 4.4.4. Normality Test



Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.5. Regression Analysis

4.5.1. Correlation Analysis

In order to see the relationship and presence between variables in this study, a Pearson Correlation method was deployed. While measuring using Person's Coefficient, the level of relationships falls between -1 and 1. This tells the relationship between variables in terms of strength and direction. Results between 1 and 0 show that the relationship is positive whereas it is a negative relationship if results show us -1 and below. 0 results show that the variables have no relationship.

Accordingly, the results in table 4.5.1 imply that there are significant relationships between the independent and dependent variables. When we see the relationship between social media marketing, for instance, and brand awareness, the results are statistically significant with a strong positive correlation (0.804). Email marketing has also a strong positive correlation (0.721) and significant relationship with the dependent variable, brand awareness. Again with statistical value of 0.510, SEO marketing has a positive relationship with brand awareness, and it has a strong positive correlation with it. While comparing each other, social media marketing has the most positive correlation with brand awareness while SEO marketing has the least positive correlation with the dependent variable.

Table 4.5.1 Matrix of Correlation

		Social Media Marketing	Email Marketing	SEO Marketing
Brand Awareness	Pearson Correlation	.804**	.721**	.510**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000
	N	126	126	126

Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.5.2 Analysis on the role of digital marketing on tourism brand awareness

The study has identified the value of R square for measuring the strength of the relationship between the variables and the model. This helped the study to determine the wellness of the model in fitting with the data. As it is shown in table 4.5.2.1, the R Square value is 0.697. This implicits that almost 70% of the variability of the dependent variable can be explained by the included independent variables meaning other variables (factors) which were not included in this particular study could affect the variation of the dependent variable by only 30%. On the same note, the value of the Adjusted R Square (0.689) implies that the proportion of the variation in the brandawares (dependent variable) by the three independent variables for the linear regression model. Nearly equal with the R Square, the value of

Adjusted R Square (69%) shows the regression of Digital Marketing on tourism brand awareness implying the fitness of the model.

Table 4.5.2.1 Model Summary

Model Summary^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.835 ^a	.697	.689	.47947

a. Predictors: (Constant), SEO Marketing, Email Marketing, Social Media M.

b. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.5.2.2 ANOVA

For testing if potential differences in brand awareness can be explained by various predictors, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) has been run. As it is displayed in table 4.5.2.2, the elements of digital marketing could statistically (as well as significantly) predict brand awareness with significance value of 0.000 which is quite lower than 5% (0.05). Therefore, the model was well fit.

Table 4.5.2.2 Analysis of Variance

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	64.448	3	21.483	93.449	.000 ^b
	Residual	28.046	122	.230		
	Total	92.494	125			

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

b. Predictors: (Constant), SEO Marketing, Email Marketing, Social Media Marketing

Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.5.2.3. Statistical Significance of Variables

From the below table 4.5.2.3, it could be understood that both Social Media Marketing and Email marketing, the independent variables, are statistically significant whereas SEO marketing with a p value of 0.405 is not statistically significant as its p value is more than the advised p value which should be below 0.05. However, the former two variables have p value of 0.000, so they are significant. For more clear understanding about the p value and significance, a detailed explanation is provided below for the identified variables in respect to the model (with a confidence level at 95%) formulated.

$$\text{Brand Awareness} = -1.116 + 0.748(\text{Social Media Marketing}) + 0.438(\text{Email Marketing}) + 0.058(\text{SEO Marketing}) + \varepsilon$$

As we can see in the same table below, the beta of Social Media Marketing is 0.748 with 0.000 significance value inferring that a unit change in Social Media Marketing affects Ethiopian tourism brand awareness as the significance value is below the standard 0.05. With a coefficient beta of 0.438 and significance value of 0.000, Email Marketing has a significant influence on brand awareness. The third variable, SEO Marketing, with a beta value of 0.058 and 0.000 significance value, it does again affect the Ethiopian tourism brand awareness.

The above results along with the explanations provided could answer the research questions formulated for this particular study.

Table 4.5.2.3 Coefficients

Coefficients^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.116	.297		-3.754	.000
	Social Media Marketing	.748	.116	.546	6.449	.000
	Email Marketing	.438	.097	.320	4.533	.000
	SEO Marketing	.058	.070	.054	.835	.405

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

4.5.2.4 Collinearity Diagnostics

A condition index with a value of more than 30 implies that there is a strong multicollinearity problem whereas condition index value condition number between 10 and 30 indicates weaker multicollinearity presence. Keeping this in mind, there are no signs of strong multicollinearity problems as the condition Index values don't exceed 30.

Table 4.5.2.4 Collinearity Diagnostics

Collinearity Diagnostics^a							
Model	Dimension	Eigenvalue	Condition Index	Variance Proportions			
				(Constant)	Social Media Marketing	Email Marketing	SEO Marketing
1	1	3.949	1.000	.00	.00	.00	.00
	2	.029	11.669	.14	.00	.06	.65
	3	.016	15.902	.64	.24	.10	.11
	4	.006	25.052	.22	.76	.84	.24

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Awareness

Source: SPSS (v.26) Analysis Result, 2020

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

This chapter briefly discusses the findings of the research. Conclusions are made on the findings based on the objective of the research which was assessing the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness followed by the recommendation section which is given with regards to the analysis made in the previous chapter. The gaps of this specific study have been identified and directions for further studies are indicated.

5.1. Summary of Findings

Focused on members of Ethiopian Tour Operators Association, assessing the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism brand awareness was the main objective of this research. While examining the role of social media, Search Engine Optimization, and Email marketings for improved brand awareness, the following major findings were reached during this study.

According to this particular study, it has been found out that almost 70% of the variability of the dependent variable, tourism brand awareness, can be explained by the included independent variables: Social Media Marketing, Email Marketing, and SEO marketing). This explains other variables (factors) which were not included in this specific study could affect the variation of the dependent variable by only 30%.

In addition, this research has found out that the elements of digital marketing could statistically (as well as significantly) predict brand awareness with significance value of 0.000, which is quite lower than 5% (0.05). Compared with other variables, social media marketing has been found with the strongest relationship with the dependent variable at a value of 80%.

The study has further tried to see the significance value of the role digital marketing has on tourism brand awareness. Therefore, it has been found out that each independent variable has a significant impact on the dependent variable with positive beta and below 0.05 significance values. This asserts that a unit change in one of the independent variables significantly affects Ethiopian tourism brand awareness.

As per the condition index calculated in collinearity diagnostics, the study has discovered a weaker multicollinearity presence which is below 30.

5.2. Conclusion

With the objective of examining the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian tourism awareness, the below are the major conclusions drawn based on the findings of this research.

Based on the Descriptive Analysis done by the Respondents' general awareness towards digital marketing tools, all of the respondents have a business website available, and they all have also an email address. Only a couple of respondents don't do search engine optimization.

Only 3% of the respondents said that the digital marketing activities are performed by dedicated digital marketing teams while the most significant

number of the respondents (75%) replied that their operations management teams do the digital marketing tasks.

It was also found that most of the respondents agreed (with 4.0833) that they are implementing the major effective components of email marketing for improving their brand awareness.

The study also shows that members of the Ethiopian Tour Operators Association are a good practice of digital marketing for improving their brand awareness. There is a significant and positive relationship between their digital marketing practice and their business brand awareness.

The finding of the study shows the relationship between the independent and dependent variables are found to be positive. From this, it can be deduced that when one improves the usage and practice of independent variables, there will be more positive improvement in the Ethiopian tourism brand awareness. It is found that the dependent variable is influenced by all independent variables.

5.3. Recommendations

- ✓ In order to improve the tourism brand awareness across the globe digitally, the study has come up with the following recommendations based on the observations and conclusions made in the previous sections. The recommendations below are given by the researcher taking the findings into consideration.
- ✓ The companies are recommended to assign a dedicated digital marketing team for performing the digital marketing tasks for a better outcome as the study found out that only 3% of the respondents have

a dedicated team for doing the digital marketing activities for improving their brand awareness.

- ✓ Even though only 2% of the participants are not implementing Search Engine Optimization (SEO) marketing, it is highly recommended for them to start practicing SEO marketing as it will uplift their rankings across the search engines. This will help them receive more traffic to their website and learn about their brands.
- ✓ As per the mean value analyzed, the practice of social media marketing is still moderate. This implies the companies are not executing highly for outstanding presence in front of the digital communities. Therefore, the researcher recommends the companies to maximize their practice towards social media marketing in order to achieve significant results.
- ✓ Despite the fact that the companies have a moderate implementation of digital marketing components, they need to give reasonable emphasis for all components for a more positive cumulated outcome in improving their brand awareness digitally.

5.4. Directions for Further Studies

The regression analysis showed from the study results that the model could explain 70% variability of the dependent variable, tourism brand awareness. This means that, by adding further variables that could influence the dependent variable considered in this analysis, there is still a space for more studies. Possible factors to look at during further studies may be pay-per-click advertising (PPC) and content marketing as well as display advertising.

The research can also be translated to better results by extending the current study to a wider sample size or geographical area. Using qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews or focus group conversations to gather the data may have helped to discover other factors that may have an impact on Ethiopian Tourism brand awareness.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Dear sir/madam,

I am a student at Addis Ababa University studying Masters of Arts in Business Management. I am conducting this research with a purpose of examining the role of digital marketing in improving Ethiopian Tourism brand awareness. This study is being conducted through Addis Ababa University. This questionnaire asks your understanding and experience of using digital marketing to build your brand awareness. Consider how you are creating awareness about your tourism products digitally; think of the impacts of online marketing in your improving your brand awareness. Please do NOT write your name on this questionnaire. Your responses will be anonymous, and will never be linked to you personally. Your participation is entirely voluntary. Please skip them if there are questions you do not feel comfortable to answer.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Questionnaire for Tour Operators in Ethiopia

Friendly Instruction

For the questions below, kindly mark '✓' in the box for your choice/s.

Part I-General Personal Information

1. Gender (1) Female (2) Male

2. Your age group (in years)
 (1) Below 20 (4) Between 41 and 50
 (2) Between 21 and 30 (5) Above 51
 (3) Between 31 and 40

3. Your highest educational level
 (1) Certificate (4) Second Degree
 (2) Diploma (5) Others _____
 (3) Degree

4. How many years of work experience do you have?
 (1) 0-5 (4) 21-25
 (2) 6-10 (5) Above 26
 (3) 11-20

Part II-Awareness towards Digital Marketing Tools

1. Which team or department performs the company's digital marketing tasks?
 (1) Operations Management (3) Digital Marketing Team
 (2) Sales and Marketing (4) IT

(5) Human Resource Management

(6) Other/s

2. Does the company have a website? (1) YES (2) NO

3. If your answer YES for 'Question No. 2', do you do Search Engine Optimization (SEO)? (1) YES (2) NO

4. Does the company have any social media accounts? (1) YES (2) NO

5. Does your company have an email address? (1) YES (2) NO

Part III-Role of Digital Marketing in Improving Tourism Brand Awareness

For question I-IV, kindly rate the statements with the provided rating scales.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)

2 = Disagree (DA)

3 = Neither agree nor disagree (N)

4 = Agree (A)

5 = Strongly agree (SA)

I. What is the role of Social Media Marketing in improving your brand awareness?

Variable	RATING				
Social Media Marketing	SD 1	DA 2	N 3	A 4	SA5
Social media marketing helps me to differentiate my brand from others on the same business.					
I include a link in my social media campaigns in order to drive more traffic to my website.					
I have a high conversion rate because my social media posts are compelling.					
My social media contents require users to visit my website multiple times to enter or find information.					

II. What is the role of Email marketing in improving your brand awareness?

Variable	RATING				
	SD 1	DA 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
Email Marketing					
I use email marketing to generate leads instead of only communicating with my audience.					
The "Subject Lines" of my emails identify the intent of the main inbox.					
I send emails to my audience using my actual name.					
The body of my emails clearly communicates what is my offer and why it is valuable.					
I include relevant images in my emails.					
My emails include a "Call-to-Action" toggle.					

III. What is the role of SEO Marketing in improving your brand awareness?

Variable	RATING				
	SD 1	DA 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
SEO Marketing					
I optimize my website in order to improve search engine rankings.					
SEO helps me earn organic traffic to my website.					
I carry on producing quality content for boosting my brand in the search rankings.					
Building relationships and presences on external sites and platforms affects my search engine rankings.					

IV. Tourism brand awareness

Variable	RATING				
Brand Awareness	SD 1	DA 2	N 3	A 4	SA 5
My brand is available on all relevant social media platforms.					
I engage my brand with other brands and communities on social media.					
I receive most of my business through my website.					
My keywords rank better than my competitors' branded keywords on search engines.					
I have a high email open-rate.					

Thank you very much again for participating!