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**The Impact of Social Media on Travel Industry:
The case of selected tour operators in Addis Ababa**

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**The Impact of Social Media on Travel Industry:
The case of selected tour operators in Addis Ababa**

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU = African Union

CSA = Central Statistical Agency

ECTT = European Council on Tourism and Trade

FDI = Foreign Direct Investment

GDP = Growth Domestic product

GNP = Growth National Product

GTP = Growth and Transformation Plan

MoCT = Ministry of Culture and Tourism

MoFED = Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

MSEs = Micro and small Scale Enterprise

NEPAD = New Partnership for Africans development

PASDEP = Programmed for Accelerating and Sustainable Development to end Poverty

RSS = Rich Site Summary

SDPRP = Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program

UN = United Nation

UNECA = United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

WTO = World Tourism Organization

WTR = World Tourism Report

WTTC = World Travel and Tourism Council

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ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled “the impact of social media to attract customer” aim to assess the role social media plays in promoting tourism industry in Ethiopia. It has the objective of assessing the impact of social media to attract tourists in Ethiopia and forward possible ways to promote the Ethiopian tourism sector using internet and social media. The research uses descriptive method following both qualitative and quantities approaches. Research data were collected from both primary and secondary sources through survey questionnaires and interview. A total of 20 tour operators and 80 tourists were selected using purposive sampling and data obtained from those samples were analyzed using simple statistical methods such as average, percentage and ratio analysis. Based on the analysis major findings were outlined, conclusions drawn and recommendations forwarded to utilize the social media for promoting tourism sector in Ethiopia.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Ethiopia has one of the highest unemployment rate in the world. Unemployment is currently a major concern in Ethiopia. The prevailing high unemployment and underemployment rate in both urban and rural settings in Ethiopia continue to create serious socio-economic problems (Nayak, 2018). Although the urban unemployment rate has declined in recent years in Ethiopia, still it is significantly high. Urban unemployment, particularly youth unemployment become one of the major concerns for the Ethiopian Government. The Central Statistical Agency (CSA) survey of 2018 indicates that urban unemployment rate stands at 17.4 % at the national level (CSA, 2018).

Tourism sector is one of the most growing sectors. Tourism industry has experienced steady growth almost every year in the past and the expectations are the same in the following years (Statista, 2015; UNWTO, 2015). According to UNWTO (2015), tourism has become one of the “key drivers for socio-economic progress”. Its contribution for the growth of the national economy is significant as well as its contribution for the global economy. Total tourism contribution for 2018 was approximately more than 7.5 trillion U.S. dollars (Statista, 2015). Therefore, we can say that tourism industry is equally important sector of national and the global economy.

Tourism becomes a large global industry expanding rapidly not only in developed but also in developing countries. 11% of the world’s GNP had been taken by the tourism sector as related activities (tourism and general travel) are included according to Roe et al (2004). Its split on a global economy has been increasing significantly, and it is faster than global output as per United Nation world tourism organization report (2005).

However, complaints have been coming from tourist destination countries on supportive measures to develop tourism potential areas. Activities in most of the tourist destinations are less than the expected ones (WTR, 2007). In line with using already existing sites, developing nations like ours by considering potential tourism attractions promotion and development activities should be done simultaneously to increase the benefits of the sector at large. According to Ashley et al. (2001), one of the main challenges for tourism to position itself as a key economic sector in developing countries is using only the existing tourism resource. There is a necessity for government policies and donor-financed tourism development programs that attempt to develop brand new potential sites in the tourism industry. Contrary to this idea, developing nations without expecting donation can achieve success if different actors of tourism jointly design least cost promotion and development strategies facilitated by the media.

For many years, Ethiopia has attracted the receptive travelers before the appearance of the known Ethiopian tourist sites, that is, Lalibela, Axum, and Lucy. Visitors also celebrated its attractions, yet the country has not benefited from its potential. Ethiopia's territory includes Twelve UNESCO registered World Heritage Sites, four important national parks, a source of the world's longest river, and sites admired among adherents of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and diverse African traditional societies. Ethiopia has very distinct cultural and historic products based on ancient Axumite civilizations and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; the walled Old City of Harar with its seven gates considered.

Ethiopia's predominant image in international media remains one of starvation, conflict and barren landscapes and many people in the West continue to see Ethiopia as a charity case. Therefore, to change distorted images in the international media, the country should use its enormous tourism potential by designing well promotion and marketing strategy. It is obvious that economic development has a pervasive role in image formation;

and accelerating the perceptions of the international communities is equally important especially for countries like Ethiopia, whose low economic development shadows glamorous historical, cultural and natural attractions until recently.

Ethiopia is a potential market source of revenue for local and foreign tourism industry products and services. A research conducted by Theodros (2012) showed that, when we talk about development what comes into our minds are agricultural, industries, mining, etc. But nowadays, tourism-heritage (natural or cultural) has made a huge contribution to development. It is obvious that Ethiopia handles numerous heritages, yet its commitment to use its tourism endowment is very limited. Its shortcomings to develop, maintain and promote our potential are obvious. Such obstacles hinder the country from not harvesting its fruits.

Developing the tourism sector means not getting foreign currency only, but it is also seen as building the image of our country. So protecting external media influence is vital and this can be done through the integration of media with the tourism sector. Even though the media content reflects reality or not is another critical problem. The content is presented from the perspectives of those groups who control the media. According to Howley (2005), the mainstream media distorts facts, portrays minority disobedience as violence, misrepresents marginalized minorities, keeps silent on important local issues, lacks plurality and diversity and serves the interests of the powerful. So apart from facilitating tourism products and services (hotels, restaurants, and destinations) the country tourism attraction needs to be promoted well.

Even though Ethiopia has a long tradition of cleric inscription and its first newspaper publication is a century old, it is far from having a well-established vibrant free press (Shimelis, 2000). However, the circulation of newspapers and magazines went down from 638 and 241 respectively in 1992 to 85 and 39 in 2005 respectively. Seventy seven per cent of newspapers and

sixty one percent of the magazines in the country are controlled by private organizations (Mekuria (2005).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The use of social media for marketing purpose is widely accepted in the glob due to the expansion of the digital technology and the awareness of the people all over theworld. As such social media should be used in collaboration with the traditional media and gradually take over the traditional media. (Safko& Brake, 2009)

The use of social media in Ethiopia faces many challenges such as transmission of unreliable information that usually leads to conflict among different groups, lack of appropriate legal frame work, insufficient infrastructure on digital technology and poor awareness among the stakeholders on the use of social media. (Boni&Stemart 2006)

Failure to address the above issue is believed to hamper the potential of tourism industry in the country to realize the full potential of tourism sector and attract more and more tourists. In addition we will be fall much behind the world if we don't keep pacewith them.

Thus this research addresses the issues on the usageof social media in the tourism sector in general and tour operators in Ethiopia in particular.

1.3. Research Question

The research tries to address the following questions

1. What are the factors that may affect the promotion of tourism in Ethiopia?
2. What are the main information sources for tourists to know about Ethiopia?

3. How much is the practice of using social media to attract tourists among selected tour operators?
4. What are the major challenges hindering the promotion tourism using social media?

1.4. Objective of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to assess the impact of social media on travel industry to attract tourists in Ethiopia and forward possible ways to promote the Ethiopian tourism sector using internet and social media

1.4.2. Specific Objective

The study has the following specific objectives

- To assess the factors that affect promotion of tourism via social media in Ethiopia
- To identify the major information sources for tourists and maximize their utilization using the internet and social media
- To assess the practice of using social media to attract tourists by operators in Ethiopia
- To identify major challenges regarding the use of social media to attract tourists and forward possible solutions to solve these problems

1.5. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study arises from the intended goal of trying to assess the impact of social media on travel industry attracting of tourists in Ethiopia and its contribution towards generating employment and income. In doing so, the study does shed light how the tour operators use the internet technology in general and the social media in particular to promote the tourist potential of the country and attract tourist to Ethiopia.

The study is also believed to be significant to both policy makers and academia due to its endeavor of identifying and suggesting ways in which tourism can be used to contribute towards economic development and foreign currency generation that ultimately improve local livelihood. Reaching at least the target set by the MDGs has been adopted by the government of Ethiopia as a central objective of the national development strategy (MoFED, 2008; 2012). In line with MDGs, since early 2000s the Government of Ethiopia introduced series of National Development Programs namely; Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP), the Programmed for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) and the first and very recently the second phases of Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I and II).

The study benefits also the researcher by giving insight into the issues in the tourism industry and enhance the understanding of the researcher. By conducting extensive analysis of the factors impacting the social media in promoting the tourism sector in Ethiopia the research is supposed to get deep understand and insight into the subject of the study.

Finally the research is expected to benefit the tourism sector and tour operators by increasing their understanding of the use of the internet and social media in attracting tourists and hence increase their respective wallet share and the country's economy.

1.6. Scope and limitation of the Study

1.6.1. Scope of the study

The fact that the discourse on employment and income issue is broad and multi-dimensional.

This study focuses on identifying mainly the impact of tourism on the livelihood of people directly engaging in tourism activity through creating jobs and generating income in Addis Ababa city.

The research design employed, namely, cross sectional design, collects data at one time, and hence, one cannot fully generalize the findings from such one-shot studies to the population only at the time of the survey. Due to data and time constraints, the study focuses mainly on hotels and tour operators, and to some extent on handicraft and souvenir shops who are engaged in the tourism value chain business activities in and around Addis Ababa city.

1.6.2. Limitation of the study

Because of time and financial constraints the research is limited to studying the issue in Addis Ababa. Besides only 20 tour operators from over 340 registered were selected. It also confined to the impact of social media on the tourism sector in Ethiopia.

Chapter 2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. The Concept and Definition of Tourism

Tourism is a rapidly growing phenomenon and tourism activities, taken as a whole, are accounting for a growing share of economic activity in most countries. The tourism industry is among the leading in terms of employment creation and income generation around the world (Stancy, 2015). International tourism has made a huge stride over the past couple of decades attributing to multifarious factors. Globalization, increasing financial and information flows, and growth of personal disposable income among nations of the world are the major factors that caused tourism to grow dramatically (WTO and ILO, 2018).

Countries have been aware of this trend and struggled to develop and promote their tourism resources with a view to reap the socioeconomic, cultural and environmental benefits that can be derived from tourism development (Assegid, 2015). Tourism industries are not readily identifiable. That is why there is lack of unanimity concerning the definition of tourism (UN, 2010). Apparently, the definition of 'tourism' varies from source to source, from person to person.

But when it comes to explaining it with the basic terms we can sum it up as follows; Tourism is a collection of activities, services and industries which deliver a travel experience comprising of transportation, accommodation, food and beverage establishments, retail shops, entertainment business and other hospitality services provided for individuals or groups travelling away from

home (UN, 2010; Ebisa and Andualem, 2013). Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationship arising from the interaction of tourists, business suppliers, host governments and host communities in the process of attracting and hosting these tourists and other visitors (Macintosh and Goeldner, 1986).

Tourism sector is the cluster of production units in different industries that provide consumable goods and services demanded by visitors. Such industries are called tourism industries because, visitor acquisition represents such a significant share of their supply that in the absence of visitors, the production and supply of these would cease to exist in meaningful quantity.

Tourism industries, also referred to as tourism activities, are the activities that typically produce tourism characteristic products; and tourism characteristic products are those that satisfy one or both of the following criteria:

- Tourism expenditure on the product (either good or service) should represent a significant share of tourism expenditures-the demand condition, and
- Tourism expenditure on the product should represent a significant share of the supply of the product in the economy-the supply condition (UNWTO and ILO, 2018).

As a demand-side phenomenon, the economic contribution of tourism has to be approached from the activities of visitors and their impact on the acquisition of goods and services.

However, it can also be viewed from the supply side, and tourism will then be understood as a set of productive activities that cater mainly to visitors or for which an important share of their main output is consumed by visitors (UN, 2010). The ongoing interaction between demand and supply side of tourism activities gives the tourism industry an enormous potential to generate employment and income.

According to UNWTO, tourism comprises activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside of their usual environment for not more than one

consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes. Thus, there are three criteria for tourism to happen:

- It involves displacement outside the usual environment;
- The type of purpose should be different from being remunerated from within the place visited, and
- Duration of stay should not exceed one year (Luvanga and Shitundu, 2003).

The other important point which the readers should bear in mind is that three essential elements make tourism happen, and without these components tourism would not exist.

The list of the basic component of tourism are attractions, accommodations and amenities.

Among the industry practitioners, the basic components of tourism are commonly known as the three A's.

Attraction: In a wider sense attraction includes: climate, scenery, beaches, flora and fauna, events, visitor attractions, excursions, local foods and drinks.

Accommodation: Is part of the hospitality sector of the travel and tourism industry. It includes all types of serviced and non-serviced, catered and self-catering providers of lodgings.

Amenity: The term amenity refers to a tourist destination. Amenities include: shopping, entertainment, sports facilities... etc. (UN, 2010).

As the concept of tourism is closely related with travel and visit, it is essential to understand what the terms traveler and visitor refers to. A traveler is someone who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration. A visitor is a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for holiday, leisure and recreation, business, health, education or personal purpose, other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited (UN, 2010). These trips taken by visitors qualify as tourism trips. In a similar fashion, a tourist can be defined as:

A temporary visitor staying at least twenty-four hours and not exceeding one year in the country visited for a purpose classified as either holiday (recreation and leisure, sport, visit to family, friends or relatives), business, official mission, convention, or health reasons (UNWTO, 2018).

2.2. Tourism: Global Trend and Economic Contribution

Tourism is one of the economic and social sectors registering rapid growth in the world, and nowadays it has been found to be making its contribution in supporting and accelerating national developments. Tourism makes a tremendous contribution serving as a source of foreign exchange, promoting micro and small-scale enterprises, creating employment opportunities, and ensuring sustainable development (WB and MoCT, 2012).

Globally, the tourism industry is now days identified as a key driver for socio-economic development. In the words of David Scowsill, the president and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the global authority on the social and economic impact of Travel and Tourism; “Travel and Tourism is a key engine for continued global growth, which governments cannot afford to ignore” (WTTC,2013, P.8). In2018, tourism contributed \$7.6 trillion an equivalent of 9.8 % economic activity to the global GDP (direct, indirect and induced impact), generating over US\$ 1.5 trillion from tourism export or close to US\$ 4 billion a day, supports nearly 277 million jobs and 6-7% (indirect) or one out of eleven in terms of employment opportunity. 6.5 million New jobs were created as a result of tourism activity. Its growth of 3.6% was faster than the wider economy and out-performed growth in the majority of leading economic sectors in 2018(WTTC, 2015). According to WTTC forecast, by the end of 2015 Travel and Tourism is expected to contribute US\$7.8 trillion, 10% of global GDP, and to account for 284 million jobs, 9.5% of total employment (WTTC, 2018). The 2015 world tourism day is celebrated on September 27, enchanting the slogan “*One billion tourists, one billion opportunities*”.

The tourism industry is an important source of direct and indirect employment opportunities. In line with the volume of employment generated, the value capture per employment is crucially important. WTTC recommends that for every eight international tourist arrivals, at least one direct job should be created. Notably, one job in tourism generates 1.5 jobs elsewhere (WTTC, 2018; ILO, 2013). The tourism industry continues to be an attraction for investors. The tourism industry has been and still continues to be a major source of foreign exchange earnings for emerging economies. Interestingly, with the positive growth trend of tourist arrivals and receipts in Africa for countries including Ethiopia, the contribution of tourism for foreign exchange earnings has grown tremendously (WTTC, 2015).

Travel and Tourism has become the world's largest and fastest growing industry and its growth shows a consistent year to year increase. With over 1 billion of international tourist arrivals in 2018, countries are increasingly developing tourism as part of their national development strategies, as an effective driver of economic growth and inclusive development, and creating jobs and well beings for communities (UNWTO, 2015). The UNWTO, in its statistical publication, Tourism Barometer of April, 2015, reported that international arrivals and receipts had reached by the year 2018, 1.135 billion and US\$1.245 billion respectively. According to the same source, the figure in the year 2018 compared to year 2013 showed an annual growth of 4.4 % up from 1.087 billion in arrivals and an increase of 3.7 % (US\$48 billion) in absolute terms in receipts. The market share of emerging economies has been steadily increasing to reach 47 % of the global market share in 2013. Africa maintained a 5 % share (56 million) in the world arrivals, and 3 % share (US\$36 billion) in receipts in 2013. Arrivals growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is estimated at 5 % average though the available data of individual countries shows a mixed picture. Although tourism ranks fourth as a worldwide export category, it is ranking first in many developing countries (UNWTO, 2015).

According to UNWTO (2018), international tourist arrivals will increase much in line with its long-term forecast Tourism Towards 2030: +3.3 % a year

on average between 2010 and 2030 to reach 1.8 billion by 2030. UNWTO projection indicates that international tourist arrivals in the emerging destinations will grow at double rate of 4.4 % a year. As a result, arrivals in emerging economies are expected to exceed those in advanced economies before 2020. In

2030, 57 % of international arrivals will be in the emerging economy destinations. African countries too are expected to double their arrivals from the present 56 to 134 million and the same forecast will boost Africa's share in global market from the current 5 % to 7 % (UNWTO,2018).

The tourism sector in Africa has been the fastest growing sector in the recent terms, contributing to the diversification of many African economies. Tourism growth and its total contribution to GDP in Africa have mainly been driven by tourism's induced and indirect economic impacts. The total contribution of tourism to GDP in Africa is twice as large as its direct contribution, reflecting the important role of induced and indirect tourism's economic impacts (WTTC, 2015). This also underscores how critical it is to facilitate strong linkages along the tourism value chain and between the tourism value chain and other economic sectors in order to fully realize all potential.

On the basis of the above backdrop, the main aim of tourism development strategy in Africa is to ensure sustainable tourism development with a view to contribute to socio-economic development and enhancing the livelihood of the community at tourist destinations. The African Union (AU), through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), 2004 Tourism Action Plan, recognizes the important role that tourism can play in socio-economic Development and in improving community livelihood. African Tourism Ministers agreed to and endorsed the AU/NEPAD Tourism Action Plan in 2004 (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2013).

2.3. The Tourism Sector in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has great and largely unexploited tourism potential. Its tourist attractions are many and varied. Ethiopia has much to offer to international tourists. It has a unique historical and cultural heritage, magnificent scenery, a surprisingly cool climate, rich flora and fauna and important archaeological sites. In fact, Ethiopia has nine-world heritage sites, the highest number than any African country (WB and MoCT, 2012). Addis Ababa, serving as a diplomatic capital and regional hub for air transport hosts a number of international events which can be leveraged for tourism purposes (USAID and Precise Consult International, 2013).

In recent years, Ethiopia's tourism sector has been showing a positive trend and steady growth in tourism arrivals and receipts. As the country appeals to diverse interests of tourists, the number of foreign tourists that visited the country have unfailingly been increasing from year to year for the last one decade or so. Just if we see the number of foreign tourist arrivals for some selected years, the figure has been increasing significantly from 227,398 in 2005 to 427,286 in 2009 and then to 523,438 in 2011, and more importantly the recent figure for the year 2018 indicates 770,425 foreign tourist arrivals (MoCT Report, 2018/2015). From 2005 to 2018, the number of foreign tourist arrivals have shown a dramatic progress, from its low base of 227,398 in 2005 to 770,425 in 2018, on a consistent average annual growth rate of 14% (this is well exhibited in the chart 2.1 below); the minimum yearly registered growth rate is 7.1% (for the year 2007 to 2008) while the highest annual foreign tourist arrivals growth level had been 45.1 % (for the year 2005 to 2006). A lot of tourists are growingly paying their attention towards Ethiopia in recent years. To this end the organization named European Council on Tourism and Trade (ECTT) has chosen Ethiopia as a favorite world cultural destination of 2015. The recognition of ECTT is expected to increase tourist flows to Ethiopia and boost the sector in the years to come.

Generally speaking the growing number of foreign tourist arrivals to Ethiopia is the reflection of the robust economic growth registered in a row in the country for more than a decade.

Another important factor which helps us to understand the performance of the sector is to assess how much income/revenue is generated from the tourism sector. Measuring the amount of income from tourism depends on a number of factors; such as purpose of visit, average days spent in the country, prices in the country, the competitiveness in the sector, and variety of tourist supplies that motivate them to expend more (Yabibal,2010). Receipts data obtained from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for the year 2005-2018 and presented in the chart 2.2 below gives a clear understanding on the amount of income generated from tourism. As it is well represented on the chart, receipts from tourism has been consistently increasing in line with the growth of the tourist arrivals for the periods mentioned. The growth rate in receipts has been huge when we compare the 2005 data with the year 2018. Receipts has increased from ETB 138,599,940 in 2005 to ETB 2,884,471,200 in 2018.1

According to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism's report on receipt, the upward change in income had exhibited a slow increase from ETB 138, 599, 940 in 2005 to 411,638,987 in 2011; an annual increase of 20.5% on average. The only exception during the period under discussion is the decrease in receipt recorded between the year 2007 and 2008 by -4.2% (from ETB 213,936,063 in 2007 to 204,855,489 in 2008 for which the Ministry did not give any explanation). The revenue figure struck more than a billion ETB record i.e. ETB 1,190,775,613 in 2012 and then a record high revenue of ETB, 2,884,471,200 in 2018 which is 142% higher than the receipt of 2012, as the report of the Ministry attests.

According to the data obtained from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism by the researcher, recently (after 2011) the average expenditure of a tourist in Ethiopia is computed on \$234 a day, and the average length of stay of a tourist is considered to be 16 days. Based on this assumption the total average expenditure of a tourist is US\$3744 (MoCT Report, 2018/2015).

Nonetheless, by global and African standards, Ethiopia is one of the underperforming countries despite its potential both in terms of tourist arrivals and receipts. With 770, 425 total tourist arrivals at the end of 2018, Ethiopia's share of the African tourism market is still a minimal of 1.2 % (WTTC, 2015). The Ethiopian Government has set ambitious growth targets for the tourism sector during the first phase of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP I) which covers the period from 2010/11 to 2018/15. The target on the number of tourist arrivals by the end of the GTP I period was set at 1 million in-bound tourist arrivals and to increase tourists' expenditures to US\$3 billion (MoFED, 2012; Ebisa and Andualem, 2013). Although the expenditure target has nearly been achieved, the target of inbound tourist arrivals was not attained (MoCT Report, 2018/15).

2.3.1. Institutional Framework

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MoCT) was established by the Proclamation Number 471/2005, and is the leading public entity in charge of supporting the development of tourism in Ethiopia (MoCT, 2009). Its responsibilities includes; policy planning, collection and dissemination of culture and tourism data, supervision of tourism public enterprises, promotion and marketing, and standardization. At regional and district levels, there are Regional, Zonal and Woreda (District) Culture and Tourism Bureaus and Offices, with different arrangements in each of the regions (Ibid).

The regions and the private sector are essential for the delivery of quality tourism products at the destination level, and the direct involvement of destination custodians is critical in order for cultural and natural assets to serve as a source of local economic growth. Ethiopia's tourism private sector is characterized by a dual structure, comprised of a few large businesses and a majority of Micro and Small Scale Enterprises (MSEs). It is weak on collective action, is dominated by domestic businesses with limited foreign direct investment (FDI) participation, and is still characterized by an important,

though declining government presence in certain large tourism companies (WB and MoCT,2012).

The prevailing policy, rules and regulatory framework can either be an obstacle or a catalyst for tourism development in any given destination. Such a framework could, for instance, promote or dampen both FDI, domestic investment and relevant skills development in the tourism industry. The tourism industry is fairly liberalized and open for all investors (with the exception of travel services) and 100% foreign ownership is allowed. Tax holidays and 100% duty exemptions on all imports of investment capital goods are available (USAID and Precise Consult International, 2013). Particular opportunities for private investment are opening up in the hotel sector, and this enabled significant number of newly established hotels to operate at relatively high capacity near major tourist attraction sites. The Ethiopian Government has removed constraints relating to visa and customs regulations, with the objective of positioning Ethiopia as a top-ten African tourist destination (WB and MoCT,2012).

2.4. The use of social media in tourism sector

2.4.1. Definition of Social Media

Most people know what social media is, or at least think they should know, but still find it difficult to define the term in a simple way. And with half-knowledge and lack of confidence comes fear and uncertainty that people often attach to the things they do not understand. (Safko& Brake, 2009).Therefore, it is important to understand what social media is, especially if it is to be used for business purposes.

The beginning of social media takes place long before computer science. People have always had the natural urge to communicate with other people around them. This need combined with the modern information technology has formed an extremely powerful communication tool that has opened up new doors for online marketing (Safko& Brake, 2009).

Social media can be best defined as a group of new kinds of online tools that allow users to participate by contributing with content visible and accessible to anyone. It is characterized by its openness as there are no access barriers, and by its connectedness making use of links, resources and people, and allowing the quickly creation of communities that can effectively communicate (Mayfield, 2008).

Social media can be viewed as the modern version of word-of-mouth. It takes the decision- making process back to what it used to be a long time ago when one's family, friends and acquaintances and their experiences were the main factor helping to form one's opinion on different things. It allows people to share content and to communicate and hold conversations with each other online. Instead of a one-way communication used in most media channels, two- way communication is the base and the meaning of social media (Sigala, Christou &Gretzel, 2012).

With a new and complex social media ecosystem, Safko& Brake (2009) argue that there is still a lot to learn about its functions and even more so for its functions in the business world. Hence, the social media ecosystem is very colorful and each social media channel has something the others do not. This might make social media seem like a difficult subject to tackle for some and especially if it is to be used for business where there is less room for experimenting due to the financial risks.

However, it should be emphasized that social media should not be viewed as a new and revolutionary phenomenon to the world of human interaction but rather as an improved version of communication. People have communicated via writing, pictures and videos for years and years and social media just provides an online medium to continue this trade. Safko& Brake (2009) even argue that it is likely for one to have participated in social media without acknowledging it by e.g. reading a blog, messaging another member of a community or watching a YouTube video.

Traditional media and traditional marketing have long used the tools social media is founded upon; text, audio, video and photographs. In social media anyone can create and distribute content for free available for millions of people (Zarrella, 2010). With this kind of a reach, the possibilities of social media are endless. Consequently, Safko& Brake (2009) explain that the difference with social media is that basically everyone with an Internet access has the ability to influence by e.g. becoming a citizen journalist by witnessing and capturing a crime on their camera phone, marketing a product by recommending it to others or sharing a story with mentions of companies or products.

Social media is about enabling conversation between people online and looking from a business perspective, this takes a little different meaning by also emphasizing the ways the conversation can be prompted, promoted and monetized (Safko& Brake ,2009). In the new world of social media and with the rapidly growing sum of different social media channels, it is almost impossible to not have people talk about your company or product. On that account, there is a need for social media understanding in every business in the modern world.

2.4.2. Key social media platforms

There are hundreds of platforms where internet users can interact and share information with other users, starting from blogs, forums, wikis, video and photo sharing to social networks, virtual communities, chat rooms and podcast. According to the report presented by according to Bard (Bard) key social platforms can be appreciated in the figure below.



Figure 2.1: categories of Social Media according to Bard

Social Media may be segregated into classes of collaboration and sharing, here is one approach classifying social media into different categories (Bard, 2010): such as Micro-Blogging, Publishing, photoSharing, Aggregators, ,Audio, Video, Live-casting RSS, Mobile, , Virtual Worlds, Gaming, Search engine

These platforms promote different ways of interaction among users since they are designed to supply all segments of consumers. They encourage users and travelers to post and share their (travel) experiences, comments, opinions to serve as a source of information for other users (Xiang and Gretzel, 2009). Depending on the interests, motivations and attitudes of the users they will prefer to use one platform instead of another. It is also important to mention the fact that several platforms may be used as applications in the same webpage.

From the presented figure, it can be highlighted, described and analyzed the main platforms (blogs, social networks, chat rooms, forums, video sharing and photo sharing) which according to the author they may imply major

sources of information and participation for tourists, as it is the main focus of the present study.

The most popular social media platforms are blogs, hotel rating systems, forums, RSS, podcasting and wikis, mash-ups etc. (Chabot, 2007). Some details about them are the following:

- Blogs online diaries with a weak “communitarian” degree: readers can write and add comments. They encourage customers to give their opinions and to share their experiences, pictures and trips (Boni&Stemart, 2006).

There are many blogs in the tourism industry, such as tripadvisor.com, hotelchatter.com etc. Anyone can create a weblog by using a software offered for free at different websites, such as the search engine “Google”, can use it for publishing links to other blogs, texts, images, Webpages, audio and video files etc. Weblogs are becoming a very important information source for international travelers for getting travel advice and suggestions of tourism service providers (Sigala, 2007).

- Forums are also an important which enable a gathering of opinions around a topic or a common interest, developed through discussions. There are a lot of forums focused on tourism issues, where thousands of people exchange views and write comments. Some of them are: www.virtualtourist.com (World Travel Forum), www.tourismzone.com etc.
- Hotel Rating Systems are one of the first tourism collaborative tools. They give the opportunity for customers to give a mark for services provided during their stay in a hotel; so that other future consumers can make a decision about the hotels they will sleep in and find the best offer (Chabot, 2007).
- Podcasting is a contraction of IPod and broadcasting. It is a form of online “à la carte” radio, which uses the RSS technology (Boni&Stemart 2006). Podcasting refers to the uploading of audio and video files by

users on websites. The most well-known website for sharing such content with others is www.youtube.com. Nowadays a lot of tourism service providers are using Podcasting as an effective form of marketing, as well as a communication tool.

- RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication, a file which allows the user to get updated information what he or she is the most interested in (Boni&Stemart, 2006). People do not need to click on each individual website that he/she is interesting to read any new information, because the RSS feeds all new updated information to the users' RSS reader.
- Tagging is a form of keywords or category label used to identify specific contents in the data base. They give a direct access to the information needed. They are used for example by Flickr, the photo sharing website to "find photos which have something in common"(Chabot, 2007).
- Social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, and Myspace are increasing the number of users as well as their role in the customer interaction arena. Social networks are becoming tourism organization destination marketing tools providing a great impact to the tourism markets. Organizations around the world can post valuable information, product videos, pictures, customer testimonials, create discussion forums, and much more (UNWTO, 2013).
- Mash – ups. Mash ups describe the seamlessly combination of two or more different sources of content and-or software for creating a new value added service to users (Sigala, 2007). Generally a mashup is any web feature that builds on services provided by other sites. Some Mash – ups services are provided by Google Maps API services, for finding different locations through an easy and practical way. These application is used very often by tourists for finding hotels, restaurants and other touristic services when are on holidays.
- Wikis. A wiki is a Web site that allows users to add and update content on the site using their own web browsers. Those websites are developed

collaboratively through their users. The most popular is the wikipedia.com, an online encyclopedia that is created and continually updated by its users. In tourism wikitravel.org represents the effort of Internet users to collaboratively create and continuously update an online global travel guide (Sigala, 2007).

2.4.3. Social Media for Business

Social media can be used to create business – a new kind of business. There is a chance you will have a niche somewhere in the social media ecosystem. On the other hand, there is no guarantee of success but the other alternative of waiting and seeing if social media is just one of those short-lived fads that come and go every now and then, is not very lucrative either. So even if you have not been involving yourself with social media before, you are not too late (Safko& Brake, 2009). As history has proven many times before, the early bird catches the worm but also that the people following the first wave of experimenters have been successful by having a good strategy and tactical alternations based upon the experiences by the first-wavers.

Evans & McKee (2010) state that the starting points for social media is often marketing but argues that the meaning of social media for businesses carries far beyond marketing. For businesses social media brings a new dimension to word-of-mouth marketing. If you have a service or a product people seem to enjoy and support, there is no better way to market your services than by word-of-mouth. It is not about controlling what is said about your company, as this is not really even possible with social media, but rather about influencing the conversation (Safko& Brake, 2009). With a good social media strategy and a little research into the social media fundamentals, your company will be able to take full advantage of social media. The fundament for all successful relationships with the customers, employees, vendors and friends is influence and in social media influencing the conversation is the goal.

Safko& Brake (2009) list three rules to social media usage for businesses that will help you form a clearer picture of social media and what its meaning is for your business: firstly, social media is about enabling conversation; secondly, it is not about controlling the conversations and as the third rule states the basis for all business relationships with economic viability is influence. As long as these three rules are accepted and followed, social media can be harnessed successfully as a marketing tool.

2.5. Social Media Advantages for Travel Businesses

While social media presents benefits and advantages for all types of businesses, this paper will just explore those advantages in terms of creating a receptive and responsive travel market for the Ethiopian Tour Operator business in general.

I. Humanizing the Company

According to Finch (2009) the best way to humanize a company is by their willingness to listen: To listen and hold customer's words as a valuable commodity will increase a company's credibility. Humanizing the company is about reaching out and making marketing efforts to connect with customers on a human based level; and companies are blogging to reach that human element (Gergely, 2009).

By using social media platforms, travel companies do not only have an opportunity to share thoughts about business itself but they can be aware of people reactions and comprehend how they are perceived in the market. It also lets customers see how you respond to their comments and reviews (McKay, 2009).

II. Creating Customer Loyalty

One of the keys travel companies can use to increase customer retention and loyalty is to create customer engagement, but customers need a reason to engage. This is most simply and easily accomplished by offering compelling

content that is not about only a company's product, but relevant to the customers' lifestyle.

Putting this content in social tools makes it more scalable and repeatable (McKay, 2009). Social media tools allow customers to get to know the people inside a company. They get to see real people with real personalities, and customers that have positive interactions with the people in a company feel a stronger sense of trust with that organization, a key factor in building customer loyalty (Carroll 2008); it deepens customer relationships and empower customers to become a company's best advocates (Creating customer loyalty through social media, 2008). The deal is not only to participate in digital communities but organize and promote community programs of their own that cultivate a loyal following of "friends". By nature, the community is a self-selecting loyalty program, and by providing tools do not only help to manage the company's identity, but communicate with loyal "friends" and strengthen the company's relevance (Vettese, 2009). As explained by Mott (2009) these tools will continue to influence the way marketers are executing loyalty building programs today as they are inexpensive and becoming a way of life, fulfilling that natural need to connect with others.

III. Building and Reinforcing a Reputation

It is a certain fact that millions of people are getting online to criticize company's products and services, especially if they are related with travel experiences, which were supposed to be enjoyable. The internet has compounded the speed and the geographic distribution of any kind of information (Online Reputation Management, 2006).

With social media ordinary people can affect a business with erroneous rumors, malicious gossip, unfair opinions, and other bad news but it can also become a company's best partner. Businesses can use social media to monitor and control adverse information appearing in those online conversations. Monitoring is a cost-effective strategy that can help prevent negative campaigns

and reviews online (Online Reputation Management, 2006). Businesses can also take advantage of these tools by being actively involved in online conversations with the opportunity to improve the perception of the business, as it allows you to respond directly to critics, clear out mislead information or public an honest comment about a true negative situation (Online Reputation Management, 2006). In the end, speaking the truth in an accessible media builds trust in your consumers and let them realize you are truly listening to them.

IV. Search Engine Optimization

Search Engine Optimization represents an advantage for travel businesses as it is in many ways related with viral marketing. Here, word of mouth is not created through friends and families but with the use of networking in social bookmarking, video and photo sharing websites.

The concept is simple and implements the use of Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds to deliver updated content promptly to the interested, social news buttons, blogging and third-party communities' functionalities like pictures and videos.

Basically, it implements changes in a company's site so it can become more highly visible in social media organic searches in search engines, and more frequently included in relevant posts, blogs, and podcasts and (Bhargava, 2006).

2.6. The Disadvantages of Social Media

As explained by Racoma (2007), one of the main drawbacks of social media ironically comes from the fact that it is social. 'Like with any population or group within a population, social media can easily be gamed or manipulated by dominant factions'.

With the rise of social media there has also been a proliferation of unsolicited commercial content, deliberate self-promotion and more savvy

spammers, all intentional, with minimal incremental costs and little chances of getting caught (Kim. 2009). These online cheaters can deliver the wrong message to consumers about a business, and can damage a brand irrevocably. The accessibility of these tools, which is perhaps one of their main advantages, can also play for the other side allowing users to abuse from them since controlling what is being posted or not is still quite limited (Kim, 2009).

Another disadvantage observed is the lack of content delivery. Social media demands updated content consistently in order to motivate consumers to engage. In the words of Mckenzie (2008), 'these tools are easy to start but really hard to maintain and takes a significant time', which most companies never consider as an important factor, and can actually influence in the balance between work/life of those workers appointed to these communication channels. On the contrary, information overload and social networking overload can also be considered as adrawback due to burnt-out users (Leonard, 2009). Also, the lack of good filters can difficult to find the best content causing lots of information being overlooked (Racoma, 2007).

2.7. Social Media Strategy

A strategy in general is defined as a plan to differentiate the organization from its competitors by having competitive advantage. The organization needs to know what it is they do, what they want to achieve and how they plan to achieve it (Harvard Business School Press, 2005) .Social media strategy is part of the organization's overall marketing strategy. It is basically like any other marketing strategy as the organization must decide upon two main things; what is our target market (customers) and what is the best way to serve them (value proposition)? The target market is chosen by dividing the market into segments (market segments) and then picking out the best segments to target (target marketing). The value proposition is about the values the organization promises for the customer to satisfy their needs (Armstrong & Kotler, 2007) .These values are what differentiate your brand from the others. Consequently,

with a strong value proposition you have competitive advantage in your target market (Armstrong & Kotler, 2007). All in all, having competitive advantage is the aim of any strategic plan in marketing and by communicating it to your customers is the way to success.

Developing a social media strategy for your business starts with analyzing your organization and the business environment. It is critical for the success of your social media strategy. The first step is to assess your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the context of social media by using the SWOT analysis (Safko & Brake 2009, 670). Acknowledging the key internal and external issues for your organization, help you in planning and forming of your strategic objectives. It is beneficial to examine your organization as a whole and in terms of social media, as this will allow you to view the bigger picture and not only a small part of the situation. The SWOT analysis is a good start for your situational analysis but it is important to also understand and analyze your customers, competitors and business environment. After the situational analysis has been conducted, the organization should set the strategic objectives and actions, which need to be taken in order to achieve the goals and objectives (Armstrong & Kotler, 2007).

As you design the communications in social media strategy, you select the right channels for your communications (Kotler & Keller, 2006). One should remember that the customer normally uses more than one social media. Thus, it makes sense for your organization to also market on various social media platforms. This does not mean you have to be present on every social media there is nor should the effort put into marketing be the same for all the Medias (Singh, 2010). For a successful marketing strategy, the organization should be aware of the main social media channels their customers use to be able to concentrate their marketing efforts. There are no single criteria for the choosing of the social media to market in but the main idea is to find the ones where your customers spend most of their time on. Overall, a strategy has little importance if it is not implemented successfully,

thus, the organization needs to spend more time on the implementing part of the strategy and remember that it does not necessarily have to be perfect on the first go as you are likely to improve it along the way. Hence, it is essential to measure the effectiveness of your strategy and actions and the ways of measuring social media marketing are further discussed.

2.8. Ways to Market Your Business in Social Media

In this chapter, the different tactics of marketing in social media are discussed and some comparisons are made between the different tools. The focus is on the most important social medias chosen for this research by the researcher; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and TripAdvisor. The purpose is to provide a concrete image of marketing in social media by giving examples of the various tactics.

Twitter offers advertising solutions such as promoted tweets, trends and accounts that provide more visibility for your business or product (Twitter for Business, 2011). On YouTube, you can advertise in various ways through Video Ads, Display Ads and via the Brand Channel. There is also opportunity for custom solutions in advertising (YouTube, 2011).

On Facebook, location based services can be used for your marketing. On Facebook, location based services can be used for your marketing advantage as the content you post (e.g. status updates, events and pictures) can include your location so users can find your organization based on it. It is also essential to add the physical address of your business and as Facebook has a feature called “check-in” you can claim the physical place of your business for your employees and customers to check in on Facebook (Facebook for Business, 2011).

Twitter also offers location based services that can be added to the tweets and the pictures posted on Twitter. Specifically on Twitter, there is an option to include your tweets to a specified subject by using a hashtag that Twitter refers as “the theme for your tweet”. Due to the limited character amount of each

tweet, the messages posted on your account should be clear and short. Consequently, Twitter is good for news and promoting events for which additional information can be found on another website (Twitter for Business, 2011).

YouTube has also included location based services to its catalogue by allowing users to add the location where the video was shot to it so it shows up on a map. But a location is not the most convenient way for your audience to find your video. Hence, you should include an accurate title, description and tags (keyword or label for the theme of the content). This makes your video pop up in the search results. There is an option that puts the featured video of your account on auto play and an opportunity to create a custom background for your profile. (Social Media Examiner, 2011).

On Flickr it is desirable to participate by joining the appropriate groups (e.g. travel related groups for tourism organizations). One tactic that emphasizes your organization is to use your website address as your Flickr screen name so that it appears every time you do something, such as comment or post pictures. Remember to use tags on YouTube and Flickr as well to describe the videos and photos (Small Business Search Marketing, 2010).

A company can create a free business account that makes it possible to update business details and upload photos, receive e-mail notifications of reviews, respond to guest reviews and also promote the business with free widgets and badges. For more advanced business solutions, TripAdvisor offers tourism organizations a chance to upgrade into “a business listing” for a fee that allows creating of special offers, direct contacting and increasing of visibility on the TripAdvisor site (TripAdvisor for Business, 2011).

Flickr offers a variety of paid advertising options such as advertisements on home page and sponsored groups (Yahoo! Advertising Solutions, 2011). You are able to place your advertisement on different parts of the site. Other advanced tactic is creating a Pro account that entitles you to unlimited uploads

and creates authority and respect in the community (Small Business Search Marketing, 2010).

The most essential thing to remember when marketing in social media is the communicative nature of the phenomena. Consequently, you should treat social media differently as a marketing tool compared to traditional media. It is a two way street and to get the most out of your social media campaign, you need to engage your audience and get them to participate in any way possible.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter deals mainly with the methodology and procedures employed in the study.

Research design and approach, target population and sampling techniques, data sources and types, data collection instruments, methods of data analyses and ethical considerations are discussed in details in this chapter.

3.2. Research Method and Design

Descriptive survey method helps to carry out a rigorous study on community, institutions or a phenomena being under study (Jenning, 2001). On the other hand, cross-sectional research design was applied in this study.

The study consists of mixed quantitative and qualitative approaches. The reason for employing both quantitative and qualitative approach is that, the research questions deal with issues that require both deep understanding as well as facts on the study population. A mixed-method approach combining quantitative and qualitative approach is also useful to overcome any kind of data inadequacy. Triangulation, the use of different methods of collecting data, largely with the aim of comparing diverse aspects of the same phenomenon was also employed in the study. The importance of triangulation is that it helps in validating or verifying the accuracy of the information obtained through questionnaire and interview.

3.3. Data Sources and Types

In this study both primary and secondary data sources had been utilized. Sufficient and relevant primary data had been gathered from the research site using various data collection methods. For the analysis purpose, primary data that had been collected through questionnaire and interview were efficiently applied. In addition to the questionnaire and interview, document

analysis had been carried out on available archives, reports, minutes held during meetings and working manuals obtained from Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism office and Addis Ababa City Investment office, and on some pay rolls accessed from tourism enterprises. Further, secondary data had been extensively used for the literature review section. To this end, official statistics and review of earlier studies on the contribution of tourism to job creation and income generation in Ethiopia were collected from books, journals and internet. When the researcher believes that there is data gap and when a need arises to go beyond questionnaire and interview, and as some of the important information might not be officially available or revealed, an additional (own) survey in the case study area were conducted to fill in data gaps and possibly correct or improve upon existing data.

3.4. Population, Sampling Technique and Size

3.4.1. Population of the Study Area

The aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected is called population (Jenning, 2001). For the purpose of this study, the population is defined as the number of tour operators legally registered and operating in Addis Ababa with approximate number of around 340.

3.4.2. Sampling Techniques

The research employed non probability sampling for the following reason. On one hand the tour operators are not on equal terms in terms of number of employees, the tendency of using social media, and number of tourists they serve per given period of time, their capital and infrastructure. So we use such criteria to list and select tour operators that fulfill the above criteria.

3.4.3. Sample Size

Out of the total population mentioned above only 20 tour operators and 80 tourists selected using availability or convince sampling techniques. Besides interview questions were administered for 15 selected tour operators.

To make the selection materialize, the criteria were listed before the selection and the background data from Addis Ababa tourism bureau and tour operator associations. Regarding tourists they are selected based on availability during the research period.

3.5. Data Collection Instruments

The following instruments were used for data collection:

(i) **Document Analysis:** Available documents dealing with the subject matter were reviewed to extract reliable information. These involves collecting information and data from periodic reports (such as monthly, quarterly, biannually and annually) of Addis Ababa Culture and Tourism office, from available archives, pay rolls of some tourism enterprises, minuet held during meetings, working manuals and tourism policy and investment guidelines. Information extracted from these documents were used for quantitative analysis purpose.

(ii) **Questionnaires:** This is used so as to generate information and data, which subsequently had been used for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. The same type of questionnaires were administered for enterprise owners and all employees across the board (top down from managers to craft staffs). By the way, owner managers were treated as owners during data collection period of this study. The questionnaire were prepared in English and then later translated to Amharic. The questionnaire were mainly classified in to close ended and open ended categories.

The questionnaire were designed in such a way that the opinion were ranked and presented in five Likert scale that include strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree assigning from number 5 to 1.

(iii) **Interviews:** Interview questions were designed in such a way that participants (respondents) can easily understand and respond to the questions. This instrument was used to capture specific changes in tourism trend, tourism job opportunities, income status change of households and community livelihood status in the last five years. Key informant interview allowed the researcher to grasp multi-dimensional views of professionals and experts. Structured interview guides were used during interview session. Information extracted through interview enriched data collected through questionnaire and was essentially used for qualitative analysis purpose. The interview was held either in English or Amharic as per the interest of the respondents.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis

Data gathered through questionnaire and interview were analyzed by simple statically tools such as average, percentage, mean mode and media.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

In this research permission was obtained from all respondent after the necessary explanation about the objective of the study had been given to each of them. Respondents were treated with dignity and were informed about the purpose of the questionnaire and interview, and assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the information that they supplied. They were also informed verbally as well as in writing that any information obtained through questionnaire and interview will be purely used for academic purpose and will be handled with the highest order of confidentiality and does not affect their life in any way and anytime.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter will examine the interviewees' experiences and perceptions of using social media as a marketing tool. Furthermore the outcomes obtained through the interviews will be discussed with reference to the existent literature.

4.1. Interview Results

A fundamental factor in this research project is to cross-examine the impact of social media on travel industry for Tour Operators in Addis Ababa. Additionally, other factors such as the motivations for using social media, their attitude toward these tools and their experiences so far would be considered. What is intended is to let the interviewees share their understanding of the topic with their own words. The results of interview have been organized based on the interviews experience with regard to the four research questions for this study and incorporating the themes identified when performing the data analysis.

4.1.1. General profile of respondents

Table 4.2 below presented the characteristics of the survey respondents on the area of sex, age, and educational background.

The sample population was 68 and of which 55.9% are male, and the remaining 44.1% were female. The general profile of the respondents will help to know about the participants responding to the questionnaire.

Table 4.1. *Sex, Age and Level of Education Distribution of the respondents*

Answer	Total Respondents	
	TOTAL	
Gender	Count	Percent
Male	38	55.9
Female	30	44.1
Total	68	100%
Age	Count	Percent
Under 15	-	-
15-19	19	27.9
20-29	25	36.8
30-39	13	19.1
40-49	11	16.2
Above 49	11	16.2
Total	68	100%
Education Status	Count	Percent
Elementary school	-	-
High school	14	20.6
Diploma	20	29.4
First Degree	23	33.8
Masters Degree and above	11	16.2
Total	68	100%

Source: Own survey, June 2018

4.1.2. The Extent Tour Operators In Addis Ababa Are Using Social Media As Platform To Reach Target Customers.

The interviews exposed that none of the Tour Operators were using their social media pages for a determined reason; each of the Tour Operators interviewed use their page for different factors. In fact, as it can be seen in the

Social Media Use Matrix (Table 4.1) each of the travel businesses uses their page for different factors.

T	Humanizing Company	Communi cation	PublicRel ations	Networ king	BrandBu ilding	SalesGen erator	Recru iting
1	X	X			X	X	
2	X	X			X		
3		X			X		
4	X	X	X		X	X	X
5	X	X			X		
6		X			X		
7	X	X			X		
8		X			X		
9		X			X		
10		X			X		
11	X	X			X		
12		X			X		
13		X			X		
14		X			X		
15		X			X		

Table 4.1.2 Social media use matrix

I. Social media as a sales generator

Only two interviewees mentioned the impact of their social media page as a booking lead producer, indicating that the social media platform was not

seen as a sales generator itself. One of the interviewee mentioned that: "Here, I promote my packages and lots of people interested contact me about the promotional prices that I offer...I can say this is basic media for marketing ;Trip Advisor, Lonely planet Forum, Facebook attracted much more customer on significant level to my business." (T.1)

II. Social Media as a Communication Tool

Communicating with customers and building a reputation was the most common reason for engaging in this tool, and all the interviewees mentioned this point. This result tends to confirm the view that social media can be an excellent tool for communicating with customers (e.g. Carroll 2009; Strout, 2009). One of the interviewees sustains that social networks indeed provide contact and communication with customers: "I get the chance to advertise my company and interact with my customers in a more personal way via online."(T.4)

III. Social Media Advantage Over Websites

Several interviewees agreed that a presence in a social network offers greater advantages than a traditional website. One of the interviewee which is owner and Tour Operator states that "it is easier to maintain than a webpage, with a minimal cost that helps to reinforce your product or brand".

Another interviewee added "you can identify those who are viewing your page while using social media such as Facebook and Twitter but not for your website viewers" (T.14).

IV. The Global Factor

The global factor was important for most of the interviewees. One of the interviewee decided to use Social Media platforms for the reason that "...so many people is using it to make contacts, and nowadays it is so popular that I wanted my business to be there as well" (T.3). Another interviewee agreed that "Facebook has become one of the biggest social networks all over the world,

and now it has even open spaces for business and advertisement so anyone can learn about us'(T.5). Another Interviewee took a similar view: "Social networks provide exposure and more importantly dialogue with millions of users. Exceptionally more than that can be reached by traditional one-way media and marketing" (T.1).

V. Social Media for Networking

Networking is another factor mentioned in the literature but not considered by interviews. While Tour Operators can work with Airline Companies, Hotels, TravelAgents, and International Tour Operators no interviewee has mentioned this. This indicates Tour Operators in Addis Ababa are not effectively utilizing social media's potential of networking.

VI. Social Media for Recruitment

Only one of the Tour Operator mentioned usage of social media for recruitment: "We post vacancy announcements on our Facebook when vacancies open though no one contacted as through this page (Facebook)" (T.4).

VII. Social Media for Public Relation

Only one Tour Operator mentioned the use of social media page for Public Relations: "All the attraction belongs to Ethiopian people; we need to build the country image first before selling our products...you can find many among our people who like, share and comment on attractive pictures that we post on our Facebook page so they are following us" (T.4). This indicates Tour Operators in Addis Ababa are not yet utilizing social media potential for public relation.

VIII. Social Media for Small Business

For small companies with limited resources, being present in any social media platform can become helpful while starting and building a marketing presence. For the tour Operator of new company established on 2013 social

media is the main vehicle to reach mass people: “Through social media we were exposed to the world because it keeps you in mind of everybody” .Also added "Our Company is not yet known not only internationally but also nationally to our people so it helps us to inform the world of our presence, fast and in an easy way"(T.3).

The target market is chosen by dividing the market into segments (market segments) and then picking out the best segments to target (target marketing). The value proposition is about the values the organization promises for the customer to satisfy their needs (Armstrong & Kotler, 2007). Developing a social media strategy for your business starts with analyzing your organization and the business environment. It is critical for the success of your social media strategy. The first step is to assess your organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the context of social media by using the SWOT analysis (Safko& Brake, 2009).

While several interviews were present on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube TripAdvisor Brodt Guide and Lonely Planet Forum, Only one of the interviewees had presence in other social networks:

"Our online presence includes social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Lonely Planet Forum, Brodt Guide, Google+, YouTube, as well as Flickr”(T.1).

4.1.2. The Potential Of Social Media as Effective Marketing Tool Witnessed By Tour Operators Located in Addis Ababa.

Although none of the interviewees had measured the performance of their social media marketing campaign to determine the ROI (Return on Investment) of their social media activity, several were able to identify specific opportunities which had originated as a result of using it.

4.1.2. 1.Social Media Effectiveness for Promoting Business

Nearly all the interviewee mentioned the effectiveness of social media for promoting their business. “Our products are not domestic and we are dealing

with people we don't even know so we must use social media to attract tourists to our business... I believe in social media more than I believe in having an asset because in the tourism industry your assets are meaningless if Tourists are not attracted to it" (T.3). Other Tour Operator sustains "Our business by its nature needs a huge promotional effort; social media pages has helped us on our promotional campaign.....our customers are involved on our social media pages through posting and commenting, this means they are promoting our product in effective way" (T.4).

4.1.2.2. Social Media Effectiveness for Humanizing The Company

Humanizing the company is about reaching out and making marketing efforts to connect with customers on a human based level; and companies are blogging to reach that human element (Gergely, 2009). By using social media platforms, travel companies do not only have an opportunity to share thoughts about business itself but they can be aware of people reactions and comprehend how they are perceived in the market. It also lets customers see how you respond to their comments and reviews (McKay, 2009).

Businesses can also take advantage of these tools by being actively involved in online conversations with the opportunity to improve the perception of the business, as it allows you to respond directly to critics, clear out mislead information or public an honest comment about a true negative situation (Online Reputation Management, 2006). In the end, speaking the truth in an accessible media builds trust in your consumers and let them realize you are truly listening to them. One of the interviewee has mentioned that:

"After I review comments, I'll respond by liking their post or thank them if it is on our Facebook page. If they comment on Trip advisor, I'll send them a message using their personal email, in this way I maintained relationships with my customers" (T.1).

4.1.2.3. Social Media Effectiveness for Search Engine Optimization

Other main factor for using social media which is agreed by most of the interviewees and mentioned on literature is search engine optimization .Most of the interviewees mentioned about search engine optimization and the benefit in terms of high ranking on Google search. Concept is simple and implements the use of Rich Site Summary (RSS) feeds to deliver updated content promptly to the interested, social news buttons, blogging and third-party communities' functionalities like pictures and videos. Basically, it implement changes in a company's site so it can become more highly visible in social media organic searches in search engines, and more frequently included in relevant posts, blogs, podcasts ,and (Bhargava ,2006).

“When we post photos on our Facebook, people will comment and share our posts finally we will meet our goal, higher ranking on Google search and or search engine optimization” (T.2). One of The Tour Operator who has got around 11,000 likes on the face book page of his company sustains that “This is the main factor that I got higher ranking on Google search and you can get my company website address at the first page when you search with the title Tour Operators in Ethiopia”(T.4).

4.1.2.4. Social Media Effectiveness for Communicating With Target Market

One of the most outstanding advantages of social media platforms cited in the literature and by the interviewees themselves is communicating with customers. However, the traffic statistics only indicate how many people are visiting their pages, not of the 'conversation' which may be taking place. Customer feedback, via Facebook's wall to wall comments is potentially a valuable source of marketing information, and this was acknowledged by one of the interviewees:

"The personal experiences of a guest have a unique character and when they are shared they conform the most efficient marketing that exists, the most influential one: word of mouth". (T.1)

Most interviewees also sustain this by considering social media as initial contact. One of the interviewee mentioned "we are now using social media as initial contact....after reviewing our posts on Facebook for example ,we got inquires through our company email from those who are interested to learn more about our company"(T.3).

4.1.3. Benefits of Social Media as Perceived By Tour Operators in Addis Ababa

Updating and posting information in social networks represents an opportunity cost for companies, consuming resources that could be employed elsewhere. The question under examination is whether the users consider that the investment in time they do is justified by the results obtained. For this, it is imperative to learn how to measure it. Return on Investment (ROI) is a simple concept: it measures the profitability of returns, when compared against costs.

However, measuring the ROI for social networking can be a little difficult because the returns out of networking via social media are not direct and immediate (Maki, 2008).

4.1.3.1. Measuring the effort

Although none of the interviewees had measured the performance of their social media marketing campaign to determine the ROI of their social media activity, several were able to identify specific opportunities which had originated as a result of using it:

"We don't have yet made cost benefit analysis on our social media pages as we do on our involvement on trade fare and exhibition but I believe the benefits we perceived are not comparable to what we pay for internet connectivity"(T.5).

4.1.3.2. Social Media Benefit Over Traditional Printed Media

One of the Tour Operator mentioned social media advantage over traditional printed media “At early times we were using printed media such as brochures which are much costly, time consuming and inconvenient but now thanks to Facebook we just post on it to reach mass people” (T.5)

To summarize, while nearly all of the interviewees believed that their online presence in social platforms was bringing benefits to their company, none was able to measure the ROI in simply financial terms. When evaluating the costs of using social media the interviewees tended not to take into account the amount of time they spent on this activity: "you need to update it regularly", " I am busy" where the common answers. In some cases, using social media such as Facebook had become part of the daily routine, making it all but impossible to estimate its comparative cost in terms of time allocated.

4.1.4. The Experience of Tour Operators In Addis Ababa Regarding The Disadvantages of Using Social Media

Among social media users interviewed some perceived indirect disadvantages of using it. One of the interviewees pointed out that it was difficult to filter people that do not match target market while on these platforms:

“The disadvantage of Facebook for example is that you don’t know who you interact with as it is free media” (T.5).

Another interviewee mentioned that “Any company can upload pictures from your company page of Facebook or YouTube, and they will post it on their own pages as you can’t claim...Ones I have got a Tour Operator who uploaded from our company face book page with our logo on it”(T.2). As explained by Racoma (2007), one of the main drawbacks of social media ironically comes from the fact that it is social. Like with any population or group within a population, social media can easily be gamed or manipulated.

Another risk mentioned by one of the tour Operators “Customers can exhibit their complain for millions of people.”(T.15)

As been read throughout the literature, social media platforms are one of the preferred ways to dialogue with customers. One of the users draws attention to the risks involved in such a dialogue:

"You have to try to not post much information about your company, only the necessary, because there are a lot of people dedicated to use that information for other means that can be prejudicial for your business"(T.12).

Rather than the perceived disadvantages, most interviewees mentioned lack of online payment in Ethiopia as a limitation for effectively utilizing social media potential for marketing tourism business.

4.2. Results of questionnaire survey on selected Tour Operators

Resulted obtained from questionnaire survey of selected Tour Operators for the study is presented as follows:

4.2.1. Commonly Used Social Media Platforms By Tour Operators

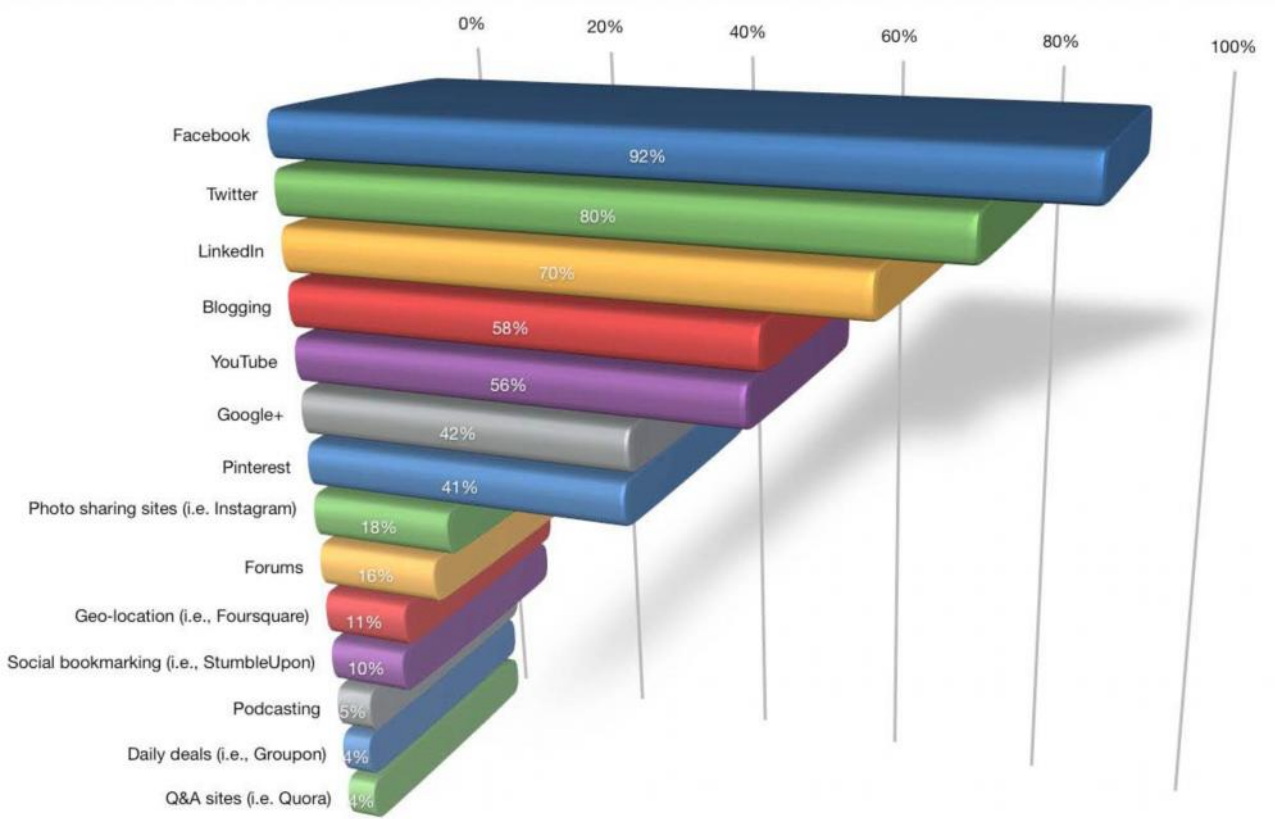


Fig 4.1. Commonly used social media platforms by Tour Operators

Source: Own survey, June 2018

From multiple choices were available on the questionnaire Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging and YouTube were the top five platforms used by Tour Operators, with Facebook leading the pack. All of the other platforms paled in comparison to these top five.

4.2.2. The Most Important Social Platform For Tour Operators

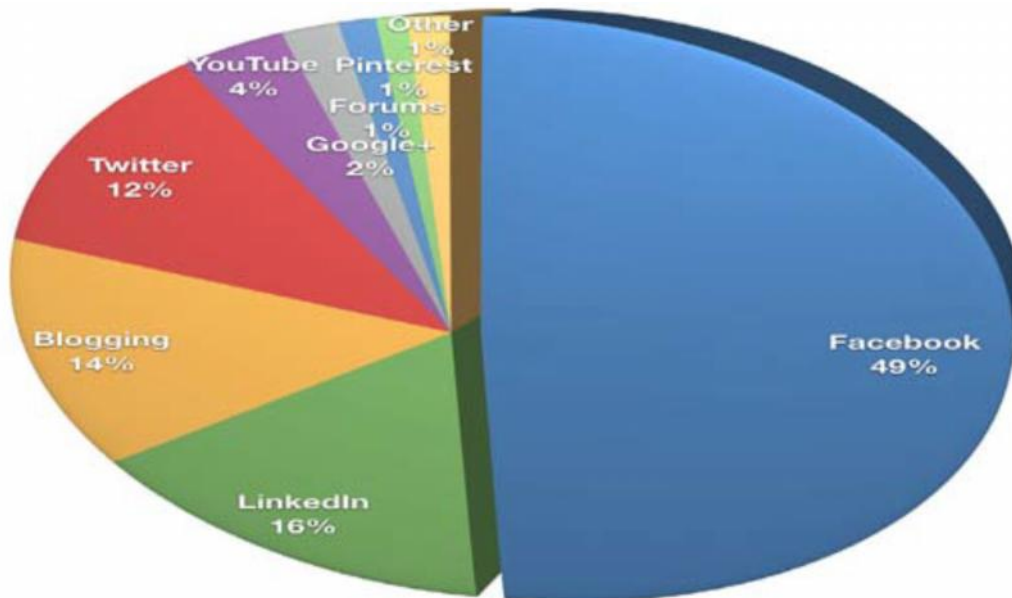


Fig.4.2. the most important social platform for Tour Operators

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Tour Operators were asked to select the single most important social platform for their business.

Because only one choice was allowed, the findings are revealing. Nearly half of the Tour

Operators (49%) chose Facebook as their most important platform, followed by LinkedIn (16%),

Blogging (14%) and then Twitter (12%). This chart clearly reveals Facebook is the powerhouse

Platform for marketers. However, it is interesting to note the prominence of blogging.

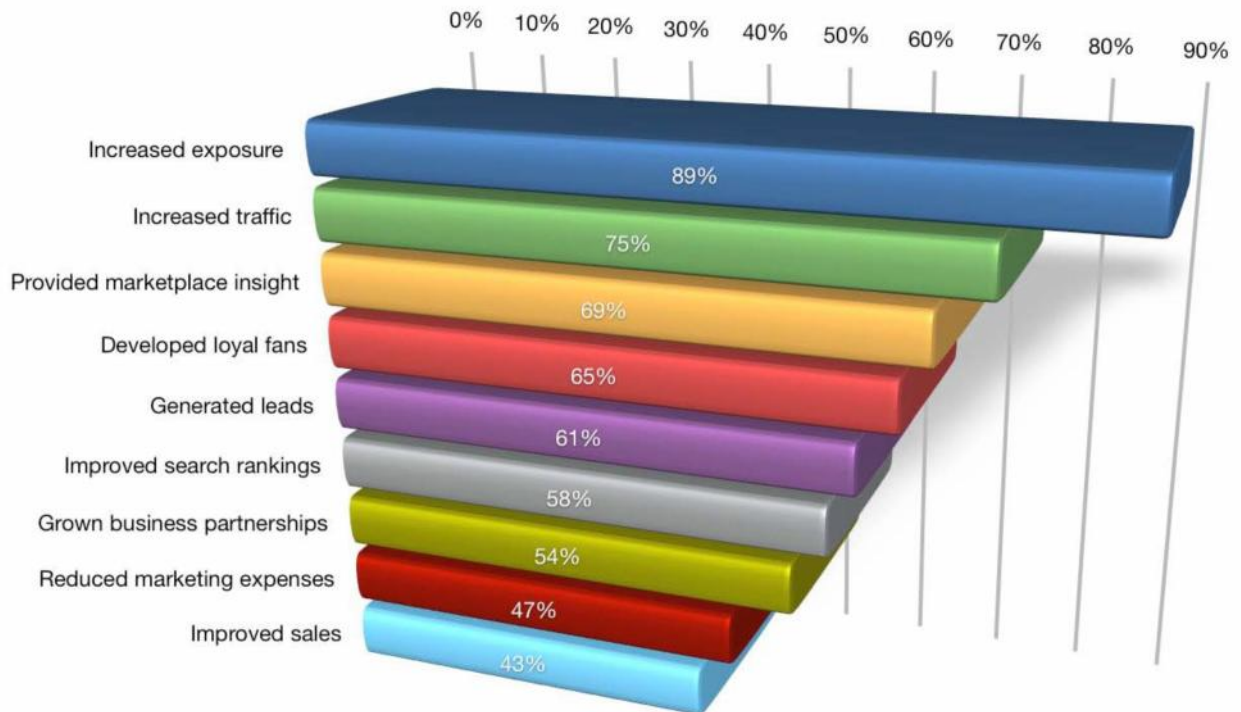


Fig.4.3. Benefits of social media marketing

Source: Own survey, June 2018

4.2.3. Benefits of social media marketing

The top two benefits of social media marketing are increasing exposure and increasing traffic.

Significant 89% of the respondents indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses. Increasing traffic was the second major benefit, with 75%

Reporting positive results. Most Tour Operators are using social media to gain marketplace Intelligence (69%) and develop loyal fans (65%).

4.2.4. Effectiveness of marketing using social media

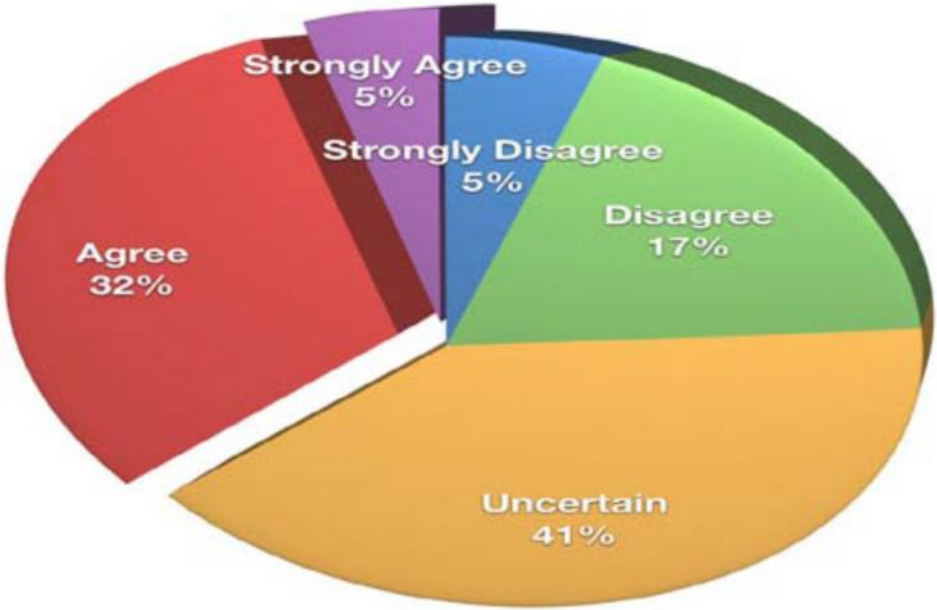


Fig.4.4. Effectiveness of marketing using social media

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Tour Operators were asked if they agreed with the statement: "My social media marketing isEffective." To our surprise, only slightly more than 1 in 3 (37%) agreed.

4.2.5. Integrating social media activities with traditional media

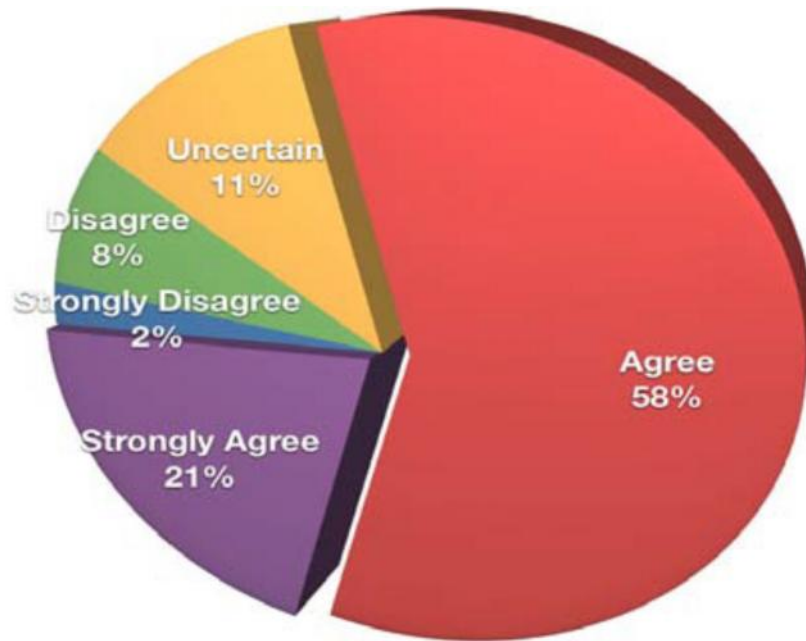


Fig.4.5. Integrating Social Media Activities With Traditional Media

Source: Own Survey, June 2018

Tour Operators were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I have integrated social media into my traditional marketing activities. "A surprising 79% (16) agreed that they had integrated their social media and traditional marketing activities.

4.2.6. Measuring social media

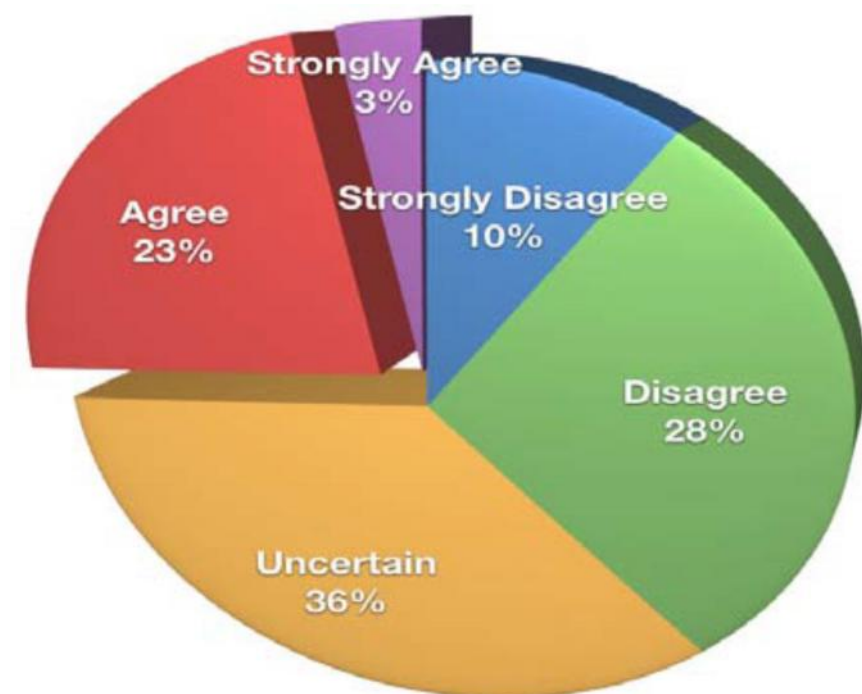


Fig.4.6. Measuring social media

Source: Own survey, June 2018

To understand Tour Operators ability to measure their social media activities, they were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement: "I am able to measure the return on investment for my social media activities. "Only about one in four (26%) agreed they are able to measure their social activities. This indicates that most of the Tour Operators are not measuring their social media activity though they are investing resources on it.

4.3. Results of questionnaire survey of Tourists

Results obtained from questionnaire survey of tourist are presented as follows:

4.3.1. Social media platforms often used by tourists to interact with Tour companies

Table 4.3. Social media platforms often used by tourists to interact with Tour Operators

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Facebook	28	41.2	41.2	41.2
YouTube	3	4.4	4.4	45.6
Twitter	6	8.8	8.8	54.4
LinkedIn	6	8.8	8.8	63.2
Trip Advisor	17	25.0	25.0	88.2
Lonely planet forum	8	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Results revealed that the most often used social media site by travelers to interact with Tour companies is Facebook (41.2%), followed by Tip advisor (25%), and lonely planet (11.8%). This confirms that Facebook can be the power house for Tour Operators to interact with travelers.

4.3.2. Weekly time commitment for social media by tourists

Table 4.4 weekly time commitment for social media by tourists

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Throughout the day	4	5.9	5.9	5.9
At least one time per day	43	63.2	63.2	69.1
Few times per week	14	20.6	20.6	89.7

At least one time per week	7	10.3	10.3	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

The majority (63.3%) are using social media at least one time per day, followed by those who spend few times per week. This indicates that using social media is among the daily activities of travelers.

4.3.3. The General Opinion of Travelers Towards Interacting With Tour Companies Through Social Media

Table 4.5. The General Opinion Of Travelers Towards Interacting With Tour Companies Through Social Media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6.8	8.8	8.8	8.8
Uncertain				
Agree	47	69.1	69.1	77.9
Strongly agree	15	22.1	22.1	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Tourists were asked to rate their agreement to the following statement “overall my attitude towards interacting with tour companies is positive. “To our surprise 90% were agreed to this statement, this revealed that the general attitude of travelers towards interacting with tour companies is positive. Besides, only 9% were uncertain about the statement and none of the respondents are either strongly disagree or disagree.

4.3.4. Opinion of Travelers Towards Using Social Media To Consult About Products And Services With Tour Operators

Table 4.6. The General Opinion Of Travelers Towards Interacting With Tour Companies Through Social Media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	20.6	20.6	20.6
Uncertain				
Agree	46	67.6	67.6	88.2
Strongly agree	8	11.8	11.8	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Tourists were asked to rate their agreement with the following statement” If I have a question or concern about products /services of Tour Company, I would use social media to consult with the company. “Results reviled that the great majority (88.2%) agreed to this statement.

This indicates the potential of social media as a powerful tool to communicate with customers.

4.3.5. The interest of Tourists regarding the use of social media by Tour Operators to communicate with customers

Table 4.7. The interest of travelers regarding the use of social media by Tour operators to communicate with customers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Disagree	4	5.9	5.9	5.9
Uncertain	11	16.2	16.2	22.1
Agree	23	33.8	33.8	55.9
Strongly agree	30	44.1	44.1	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Tourists were asked to rate their agreement on the following statement “Tour companies can make use of social media to communicate with their customers.” 77.9% of respondents agreed to this statement. This indicates tourists are interested to communicate with Tour Operators using social media platforms.

4.3.6. Opinion of Tourists regarding the promotional activities of Tour Operators

Table 4.8. Tourists Opinion regarding the promotional activities of Tour Operators

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	17	25.0	25.0	25.0
Disagree	41	60.3	60.3	85.3
Uncertain	10	14.7	14.7	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Tourists were asked to rate their agreement on the following statement “Promotional activities of Tour Operators should not appear on social media. “To our surprise 85.3% of tour operators disagree to this statement. Results revealed that the general attitude of tourists towards promotional activities of Tour Operators on social media platforms is positive.

4.3.7. The perception of tourists towards the benefit obtained from social media

Table.4.9. The perception of tourists towards the benefit obtained from social media

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Uncertain	4	5.9	5.9	5.9
Agree	44	64.7	64.7	64.7
Strongly Agree	20	29.4	29.4	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

When travelers were asked to rate their agreement on the following question “It is for mutual benefit to share promotional information on social media.” Results revealed that 94.1% of Respondents agreed to this statement. This is an indicator that social media benefits both Tour Operators and Tourists and this is among the outstanding advantages of using social media.

4.3.8. The experience of Tourists towards sharing benefits/disadvantages derived from products and services through social media sites

Table 4.10. The experience of Tourists towards sharing benefits/disadvantages derived from products and services through social media sites

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Uncertain	13	19.1	19.1	19.1
Agree	39	57.4	57.4	76.5
Strongly agree	16	23.5	23.5	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

When tourists were asked to rate their agreement to the following statement “I used to share benefits/disadvantages derived from products and services on social media.”80.9% of respondents were to agree on this statement, and the rest were uncertain. This revealed that tourists are sharing their experience to others using social media sites which indicates that social media potential for Tour Operators as words of mouth promotion.

4.3.9. The level of trust while using social media platforms

Table.4.11. The level of trust while using social media platforms

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	18	26.5	26.5	26.5
Disagree	9	13.2	13.2	39.7
Uncertain	37	54.4	54.4	94.1
Agree	4	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total	68	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own survey, June 2018

To evaluate the level of trust while using social media, tourists were asked to rate their agreement on the following statement “I would trust any product or service information that I got from Tour Operators”. To our surprise 54.4% of respondents were uncertain, 39.7% disagree, and only 5.9% agreed. This indicates that tourists are unsure to trust information which is posted on social media. This result indicates that Tour Operators need to find ways on how their promotional activities on social media can be trusted.

4.3.10. Cross tabulation between age and social media platforms used often

Table 4.12. Cross tabulation between age and social media platforms used often

Count								
		Question number 1						
		Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	LinkedIn	Trip Advisor	Lonely planet forum	Total
Age	15-19	7	3	3	1	5	0	19
	20-29	17	0	0	1	2	5	25
	30-39	3	0	0	2	5	3	13
	40-49	1	0	3	2	5	0	11
Total		28	3	6		17	8	68

Source: Own survey, June 2018

Cross tabulation of results between age and social media sites used often indicate that Facebook is most often used by 15-29 age groups to interact with Tour Operators. Respondents with age 30-49 use Trip Advisor most often to interact with Tour Operators.

This indicates Tour Operators need to select the age groups and the preferred social media site before interacting with tourists.

4.4. Discussion

This research project was put together to cross-examine the use of social media as a marketing and communication tool for Tour Operators in Addis Ababa. This chapter will be dedicated to discuss the outcomes obtained through the interviews and questionnaire survey with reference to the existent literature.

Through this study it has been confirmed what it has been already expressed in the literature published, that social media is indeed an effective marketing and communication medium for businesses in general, but

particularly to travel businesses since experiences are involved, and people usually likes to share those experiences with others.

The main advantages attributed to social media as it can be used for multiple purposes depending on each company marketing strategy; it is most commonly used to increase exposure. Viral Marketing, best known as word of mouth, was also suggested as a benefit from social media. Nearly all those interviewed and responded to questionnaire were able to express how their presence on social media platforms page had bring some benefits to their business, mostly for promoting their company. Besides they mentioned Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which is considered as an important advantage for social media since it allows pages and links to be more visible in search engines making it possible to drive traffic, which is a key factor for maintaining these types of interactive platforms online.

In the literature we found that the general concept established is that social media is good for any type of business. Though, several limitations became noticeable during the interviews. Lack of time was the problem cited most often. Besides, in Ethiopian case lack of online payment was a main limitation considered by participants of this research which is affecting the effective use social media as a marketing tool. Then again, certain obstacles regularly mentioned in the literature, including worries about users perceiving them as spammers, did not seem to be a problem for these users.

Shockingly, Return on Investment (ROI) was not even considered by both the interviewees and respondents of questionnaire survey as a determinant factor while investing time and resources in this medium. Most of them believed in the positive impact of being present in social Medias despite the lack of measurable results in terms of increasing revenue and customers. Being present in social media sites was also perceived as an advantage over websites. This can also be found in the literature published, although having both channels is highly recommended. The users' experiences and attitudes

towards the tool varied to a great extent but all the participants had one view in common: a belief in the medium. They believed in the impact of social media as an effective marketing and communication tool. The belief and commitment to update their pages as a regular activity can be considered as the key success aspect for Tour Operators or any business in general, using social media. The results from questionnaire survey of a sample of tourists revealed that the general opinion of Tourists towards interacting with Tour Operator is positive though they were unsure on trusting the information posted. This suggests for further research focused on making information posted on social media platforms more trustable.

The linkage between the survey and interview has been discussed on the last chapter under major finding, conclusion and recommendation. The information obtained from survey questionnaire and interview complement each other and the major findings are similar. Certain points should be clarified here that on the survey questions the ideas are limited because of the nature of the questions while interview questions gather more open data and information

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Summary of Findings

From the data analyzed the following major findings were outlined

- Face book is the most popular social media used by tour operators followed by twitter and LinkedIn
- Almost 90% of respondents believe that social media increase the exposure of their business
- Regarding effectiveness of social media only 37% believe that their social media usage is effective
- However most respondents(79%) believe that the social media marketing is well integrated into traditional marketing
- Regarding the usage rate of social media the majority of respondents use social media at least once a day
- More than 67.7 of tour operators use social media to interact with travelers
- Overwhelming number 85% believe that social media should also serve as promotional tool for tour operator
- More than 80 % of tour operator believe that they get benefit from using social media.
- Most tour operators has low level of trust in social media
- Young tour operators tend to use social media more frequently than older once

In this final chapter the conclusions extracted from the results was discussed and complemented with the theory. Finally the researcher was propose some recommendations for future research.

5.1. Conclusion

There is a groundswell support for social media in the published literature and businesses using these technologies seem to be more than just because is the latest trend. In theory, social media is indeed an effective business tool. There are many articles in the web, books, research-based evidence to prove it. The result of this study suggests that Tour Operators in Addis Ababa are able to use social media for a great variety of purposes from promotion to booking lead procedure. The consensus between all the interviewees was that social media represent a valuable tool for increasing the visibility and credibility of a business, regardless of the difficulties involved with it such as lack of time and/or updates. Besides, they are willing to accept new social media platform which can bring valuable outcomes to their business. In addition, the results of this study indicate that most of the Tour Operators in Addis Ababa are not using social media through developing social media strategy and the resulting SWOT analysis for effectively utilizing the existing potential of social media as a marketing tool.

In general the following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis and the finding thereof

- Most social media users inclined towards using face book as primary tool and the use of other social media is minimal. This indicate that much need to be done in order to put our companies at the same level as the world's major companies
- It is understood that by using social media as marketing tool the exposure of their business is increased significantly
- The use of social media by most tour operator is not as effective as it should be intended
- Integrating social media marketing with traditional marketing is the great leap forward by surveyed tour operators

- Social media is used to interact with travelers and the general public. This indicates that the use of social media for business is getting momentum in Ethiopia
- Despite its popularity social media has still low level of trust among the majority of tour operators because of reliability and control
- The tendency and willingness to use social media as promotional tool is increasing as more and more people use the platform for social and business purpose
- The use of social media is rampant among young tour operators as compared to their older counterparts.

5.2. Recommendation

Social media is the new platform for doing media, as mentioned in the definition it is opposed to traditional media and more customer focused. It is true that tourist behavior is a complex field; however, in order to develop a success marketing strategy it is of need importance to develop a good strategy from the basis of tourist behavior. From there it is possible to satisfy in a better way tourists.

In order to reap the benefits associated with the use of social media for marketing activity and minimize the possible negative consequences associated with it, the researcher would like to recommend the following

- As we are in the digital era, government should enhance the infrastructure especially the internet in order to enable companies use the social media with best possible quality
- At the same time the concerned organ should outline the legal framework of social media usage as it could be used for destructive aims
- Tour operators should make extensive usage of social media for promoting their companies mission and vision as well as promoting Ethiopia's tourist attraction sites and heritages

- Integrating social media marketing with the traditional marketing practice enhance the attraction of tourists and as such should be given maximum attention by tour operators
- Tour operators should widen the use of social media to incorporate other platforms other than face book and twitter like what sap, viber, LinkedIn and telegram.
- Inorder to minimize the risk associated with imagination of false information through social media it is important to publicize official social media account on their websites and newsletters to their customers
- Proper training and awareness creation should be given for staffs of the tour operators on the usage of social media so as to maximize its benefits and minimize its risks

5.3. Implication for further research

Another factor that would be interesting to analyze is that the literature tends to take in to account the need for developing social media marketing strategy and consideration of the resulting SWOT analysis. The results of this indicate that most of the Tour Operators are not using it through developing social media strategy and the resulting SWOT analysis for effectively utilizing the existing potential of social media as a marketing tool. This is also an indication for further research.

One final point that the researcher would like to address is the little interest by the interviewees towards ROI measurement. This can also be an item for additional research.

All in all, there are countless opportunities for future studies due to the diverse nature of social media marketing and thus, Tour Operators should consider some of them to receive ideas and suggestions to advocate innovativeness and creativeness

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APPENDIX A: E-MAIL INVITATION FOR TOUR OPERATORS

Dear Sir / Madam

Greetings!

My name is Nuredin Nasser. I'm a Marketing Management graduate student at Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce. Currently I am researching about ***The impact of Social Media on travel industry: The case of selected Tour Operators in Addis Ababa.*** If your organization is using social media platforms such as Trip Advisor Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube or any other as a marketing tool, I hope you can help me in obtaining a better investigation.

I would like to get to know more about your organization's perception and attitude towards the impact of Social media on travel industry. Do you perceive it as effective or ineffective for marketing and communication? What benefits you perceived from using and what are the disadvantages of using social media?

Would it be possible to meet with you to further discuss on the topic for not more than half an hour and your possible involvement in research? I am available at any time which will be convenient for you.

I would like to thank you in advance for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Nuredin Nasser

Student ID: GSD/0122/08

Address: Addis Ababa

Phone 0911609623

E-mail: Nuredinnasser200@gmail.com

Appendix A

Amharic version of email invitation for tour operators

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ንግድ ስራ ትምህርት ቤት

የተከበሩ የጥናቱ ተሳታፊ

ስሜ ኑረዲን ናስር ይባላል። በ አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ንግድ ስራ ትምህርት ቤት የድህረ ምርቃ ተማሪ ስሆን የማስተርስ ዲግሪ መመረቂያ ጥናታዊ ፅሁፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለው። መመረቂያ ፅሁፌ የሚያጠናው “ የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎች በ ተጓዥ ቱሪስቶች ላይ ያለው ተፅዕኖ ፡ በ አዲስ አበባ በተመረጡ የጉዞ ወኪሎች እና ተጓዥ ቱሪስቶች ” በሚል ርዕስ ላይ ነው። ድርጅትዎ እንደ ፌስቡክ፣ ትዊተር፣ ሊንኪዲን፣ ዩቲዩብ የመሳሰሉትን የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎችን ለመሸጥ ጥበብ የሚጠቀሙ ከሆነ የተሻለ ጥናት እንዳደርግ እንደምትረዱኝ ተስፋ አደርጋለሁ።

ድርጅቶ የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎች በ ጉዞ ወኪሎች እና ተጓዥ ቱሪስቶች ላይ ያለው ተፅዕኖ ላይ ያለውን ዕይታ በደንብ ለማወቅ እወዳለሁ። ተፅዕኖው በመሸጥ እና በመገናኛ ላይ ያለው ሁኔታ ከድርጅቶ ዕይታ አንፃር ውጤታማ ወይስ አጥጋቢ ያልሆነ ሆኖ አግኝተውታል? የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎችን በመጠቀም ምን ጠቀሜታዎችን አግኝተዋል፣ ጉዳዮቹስ ምን ምን ናቸው?

በርዕሱ ዙሪያ በደንብ ለመነጋገር በጥናቱ ላይ በሚያደርጉት ተሳትፎ ከሰላሳ ደቂቃ የማይበልጥ ጊዜዎትን ሰጥተውኝ በአካል ማግኘት ይቻላል? ለእርስዎ ምቹ በሚሆንበት ሰአት እገኛለሁ።

የእርስዎ ትብብር ለጥናቱ መሳካት ወሳኝ መሆኑን ላስታውሱት እወዳለሁ።

ስለሚያደርጉልኝ ትብብር በቅድሚያ አመሰግናለሁ።

ኑረዲን ናስር

የመለያ ቁጥር: GSD/0122/08

አድራሻ: አዲስ አበባ

ስልክ: 0911609623

ኢሜይል: Nuredinnasser200@gmail.com

APPENDIX B

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES (TOUR OPERATORS)

CODE/Gender	POSITION
T.1 M	Owner, Tour Operator and Guide
T.2 F	Tour Operator
T.3 F	Tour Operator and Tour Guide
T.4 M	Owner Tour Operator and Tour Guide
T.5 M	Owner and Tour Operator
T.6 F	Tour Operator
T.7 M	Tour Operator
T.8 M	Tour Operator
T.9 F	Owner and Tour Operator
T.10 M	Tour Operator
T.11F	Tour Operator
T.12 M	Tour Operator
T.13 M	Owner and Tour Operator
T.14 M	Tour Operator
T.15 F	Owner and Tour Operator
T.16 F	Owner and tour operator
T. 17 F	Tour operator
T.18M	Owner, Tour Operator and Guide
T.19 M	Owner and tour operator
T.20 M	tour operator

APPENDIX C

Interview Guideline for Tour Operators

The following questions is confidential and has the purpose of investigating the attitudes, perceptions, practices and motivations Tour Operators in Addis Ababa using social media as a marketing tool.

Interview Questions

- 1) In which social media platforms you maintained your presence?
- 2) How long you have been using social media platform/platforms for your business?
- 3) Why you decide to use social media platform in general for your business? Please explain.
- 4) Does someone specifically in your organization is in charge of the social media page?
- 5) Do you perceive social media page/pages have been effective as a marketing tool for your business? Please explain in depth.
- 6) How effective do you perceive your social media page has been on the communication with your target groups? Please explain in depth.
- 7) What benefit in you perceived from using it and how?
- 8) Have you perceived any limitations of using social media to promote your business? Please explain.
- 9) Are you willing to adopt new social media platforms and technologies if necessary to your business? please explain in depth
- 10) What do you recommend about using social media as marketing and communication tool while using this media? Please explain.

APPENDIX C

Amharic version of Interview Guideline for Tour Operators

የጥናት መጠይቅ መምሪያ

የሚከተለው መጠይቅ ሚስጥራዊ ሲሆን የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎች በ መሸጥ እና በመገናኛ ላይ የሚኖራቸውን፣ አመለካከት፣ ዕይታ፣ ልምድ እና ተነሳሽነት ለመመርመር ይረዳል።

የቃለ መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች ዝርዝር

- 1) ለድርጅቶች መስተዳድር መሰረት የሆነው የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴ ምንድን ነው?
- 2) የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎችን ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ሲጠቀሙ ቆይተዋል?
- 3) በምን የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎችን ለንግድ ስራዎ ለመጠቀም ወሰኑ?
- 4) በድርጅታቸው ውስጥ ራሱን የቻለ የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ገፅ ተቆጣጣሪ አላችሁ?
- 5) የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ገፅ በመሸጥ እና በመገናኛ ላይ ያለው ሁኔታ ከድርጅቶች ዕይታ አንጻር ውጤታማ ሆኖ አግኝተውታል? እባክዎን በጥልቀት አስረዱ።
- 6) ደንበኞቻችሁን ለማግኘት እና እቅዳችሁን ለማሳካት የተተቀማቸዎት የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ገፅ መንገድ ምን ያህል ውጤታማ ነው? እባክዎን በጥልቀት አስረዱ።
- 7) በመጠቀም ምን ጥቅም አግኝተዋል? እንዴት?
- 8) የንግድ ስራዎን ለማስተዋወቅ የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ በመጠቀም እንቅፋት ወይም መጥፎ ጎን አግኝተውታል? እባክዎን አስረዱ።
- 9) ለንግድ ስራዎ አስፈላጊ ከሆነ ልሎች አዳዲስ የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ስርዐተ-ዘዴዎችን ለመጠቀም ፍቃደኛ ናችሁ? እባክዎን በጥልቀት አስረዱ።
- 10) እንደ የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴ ተመቃሚ በ መገናኛው ስለ ዘዴው ምን ትመክራላችሁ? እባክዎን አስረዱ።

APPENDIX D questionnaires' for Tour Operators

Dear Respondents,

My name is Nuredin Nasser undertaking Masters Degree in Marketing Management at Addis Ababa University; School of Commerce .This questionnaire is prepared for fulfillment of the program.

The general objective of this study is to assess the impact of social media on travel industry: the case of selected tour operators in Addis Ababa. I assure you that all information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and it will be used only for educational purpose.

Filling this questionnaire will not take more than 15 minutes and there is no need to write your name in the questionnaire. Your honest and sincere response will highly contribute to the success of this research and I sincerely appreciate your cooperation in advance. If you have any query please do not hesitate to contact me through the following contact address

Email: Nuredinnasser200@gmail.com

Tel: 09-11 60 96 23

Note:-

- ✓ You are not required to write your name
- ✓ Please mark in the boxes available for your response
- ✓ Please skip this questionnaire if your Organization is not a social media user

Section A: Social media platforms used by your company

1. Which Social media platform often used by your company? Mark all possible

Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Blogging

YouTube Google+Pinterest Photo sharing sites (i.e.Instagram)

Forums Geo-location (i.e.Four square) Social bookmarking(i.e.StumbleUpon)

Producusting Daily deals (i.e. Groupon) Q&A sites (i.e. Quara)

Other Please specify_____

2. From the above question which social media platform is the most important for your business?

Please choose only one

Section B: Your Opinion towards Social media benefits

3. Which benefit/benefits your Company perceived from using social media?

Mark all possible

Increased exposure

Increased traffic

Provide marketplace insight

Developed loyal fans

Generates leads

improved search rankings

Grown business partnerships

Reduced marketing expenses

Improved sales

Other please specify_____

4."My social media marketing is effective."

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree

Strongly Agree

Section C: Your social media marketing Activities

5. "I have integrated social media into my traditional marketing activities."

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree

Strongly Agree

6."I am able to measure the return on investment for my social media activities."

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree

Strongly Agree

APPENDIX D

Amharic version of questionnaires' for Tour Operators

የተከበሩ የጥናቱ ተሳታፊ

ስሜ ኑረዲን ናስር ይባላል። በ ኦዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ ንግድ ስራ ትምህርት ቤት የድህረ ምርቃ ተማሪ ስሆን የማስተርስ ዲግሪ መመረቂያ ጥናታዊ ፅሁፌን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለው። ስለሆነም ይህንን መጠይቅ ጊዜ ሰጥተው በጥንቃቄ እንዲሞሉልኝ በ አክብሮት እጠይቃለሁ።

የዚህ ጥናት ዋና አላማ የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴዎች በ ኦዲስ አበባ በተመረጡ የጉዞ ወኪሎች እና ተሻሻሮ ቱሪስቶች ላይ ያለው ተፅዕኖ ለመመርመር ነው። ለዚህ መጠይቅ የሚሰጡት ምላሽ እና መረጃ በሚስጥር እንደሚያዝ እና ለዚህ ጥናታዊ ፅሁፍ ማዘጋጀት ብቻ እንደሚውል ላረጋግጥሎት እወዳለሁ።

ይህንን መጠይቅ ለመሙላት ከ15 ደቂቃ በላይ አይፈጅም። የእርስዎ እውነተኛ እና ታማኝ ምላሽለጥናቱ መሳካት ወሳኝ መሆኑን ላስታውሱት እወዳለሁ። ስለሆነም ስለሚያደርጉልኝ ትብብር ከልብ አመሰግናለሁ።

ይህንን መጠይቅ ሲሞሉ ግልፅ ያልሆነሎት ነገር ካለ በሚከተሉት አድራሻ ቢያቀርቡልኝ ልረዳዎት ዝግጁ መሆኔን በአክብሮት እገልጻለሁ።

ስልክ:0911609623

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መመሪያ

- ስሞትን መጻፍ አስፈላጊ አይደለም
- ከተዘረዘሩት አማራጮች መካከል በሚፈልጉት አማራጭ ትይዩ የ “X” ምልክት በማድረግ ይምረጡ
- እባክዎን ድርጅቶ የ ማህበራዊ መገናኛ ተጠቃሚ ካልሆነ ይህንን መጠይቅ ይለፉት

ክፍል 1:ድርጅቶ የሚጠቀመው የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴ

1) ድርጅትዎ የሚጠቀመው የማህበራዊ የመገናኛ ዘዴ የትኛውን ነው? የሚጠቀመውን ሁሉ ምልክት ያድርጉ

ፌስቡክ ትዊተር ሊንከዲን ብሎጊንግ

ዩቲዩብ ጉግል + ፒንተረስት የፎቶ መጋሪያ ድህረገፅ (ምሳሌ ኢንስታግራም)

መገኛን ፈልጎ ማግኛ (ምሳሌ ፎር እስኩዌይር) ማህበራዊ ዕልባት መስጫ (ምሳሌ ስታምብልኦን)

ፕሮዴካስቲንግ እለታዊ መግባቢያ (ምሳሌ ግሩፖን) ጥያቄ እና መልስ ድህረገፅ (ምሳሌ ቁዋራ)

ሌላ ካለ ይግለፁ _____

2) ከላይ ከተዘረዘሩት ውስጥ ለድርጅታችሁ በጣም ጠቃሚ የሆነው የማህበራዊ የመገኛ ዘዴ የትኛው ነው?

እባክዎን አንድ ብቻ ይምረጡ _____

ክፍል 2: የማህበራዊ መገኛን በተመለከተ የእርስዎ አመለካከት

3) ድርጅትዎ የማህበራዊ መገኛን በመጠቀሙ ያገኘው ጠቀሜታ የቱን ነው? ያገኘውን ሁሉ ምልክት ያድርጉ

ከፍተኛ እውቅና

ከፍተኛ የተጠቃሚ ቁጥር

የገበያ ግንዛቤን አስገኝቷል

ታማኝ አድናቂዎችን አስገኝቷል

ቀዳሚነትን አስገኝቷል

የተሻሻለ የተፈላጊነትን ደረጃ አስገኝቷል

የገገድ ሽርክና እንዲያድግ አድርጓል

የመሸጫ ወጪን እንዲቀንስ አድርጓል

የተሻሻለ ሽያጭ እንዲኖር አድርጓል

ሌላ ካለ ይግለፁ _____

4) “የምጠንጠቀመው የማህበራዊ መገኛ ውጤታማ ነው”

በጣም አልስማማም አልስማማም ሀሳብ የለኝም እስማማለው በጣም እስማማለው

ክፍል 3: የማህበራዊ መገኛን እንቅስቃሴዎች

5) “ባህላዊ የመሸጥ ጥበብ ጋር የማህበራዊ መገኛን አዋህጄ እጠቀማለው”

በጣም አልስማማም አልስማማም ሀሳብ የለኝም እስማማለው በጣም እስማማለው

6) በማህበራዊ መገኛ ያወጣሁትን መልሼ መተካት ችያለው

በጣም አልስማማም አልስማማም ሀሳብ የለኝም እስማማለው በጣም እስማማለው

APPENDIX E

Dear Respondents,

My name is Nuredin Nasser undertaking Masters Degree in Marketing Management at Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce .This questionnaire is prepared for fulfillment of the program.

The general objective of this study is to assess the impact of social media on travel industry by selected Tour Operators in Addis Ababa. I assure you that all information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality and it will be used only for educational purpose. Filling this questionnaire will not take more than 15 minutes and there is no need to write your name in the questionnaire. Your honest and sincere response will highly contribute to the success of this research and I sincerely appreciate your cooperation in advance. If you have any query please do not hesitate to contact me through the following contact address

Email: Nuredinnasser200@gmail.com

Tel: 09-11 60 96 23

Note:-

- ✓ You are not required to write your name
- ✓ Please mark in the boxes available for your response
- ✓ Please skip this questionnaire if you are not a social media user

Section A: Background information

1. Gender

Male Female

2. Age

Under 15 15-19 20-29 30-39
40-49 50-59 60 and above

3. Educational background

Elementary school High School Diploma
First Bachelor Degree Masters degree and above

Section B: Your Habits and preference

4. Which social media platform do you often use to interact with Tour companies?

Facebook YouTube Twitter LinkedIn TripAdvisor
Lonely planet forum Bradt Guide

Other please specify _____

6. How often do you use social media?

Throughout the whole day At least one time per day
Few times per week At least one time per week

Section C: Your attitude towards interacting with Tour Operators through social networking sites

7. Overall my attitude towards interacting with Tour Operators in social media is positive

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree
Strongly Agree

8. If I have a question or concern about products /services of Tour Operators, I would use social

Media to consult with the company

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree
Strongly Agree

9. Tour Operators can make use of social media to communicate with their customer

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree
Strongly Agree

10. Promotional activities of Tour Operators should not appear on social media

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree
Strongly Agree

11. It is for mutual benefit to share promotional information on social media

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree
Strongly Agree

12. I used to share benefits/Disadvantages I derived from products and services on social media

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree
Strongly Agree

13. I would trust any products or services information that I got on social media from Tour Operators

Strongly Disagree Disagree Uncertain Agree
Strongly Agree

