

## **DIGITAL MARKETING PRACTICE AND PROMOTION OF TOURISM SECTOR IN ETHIOPIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose of Study:** The purpose of this study was to analyze the effects of digital marketing tools in promoting tourism in Ethiopia.

**Statement of the Problem:** Ethiopia in general and Bale Zone in particular are rich in natural resources. There are problems mainly related to the lack of infrastructural development, marketing and promotion. In order to make tourism development more sustainable, it is important to look promotion and marketing problems of the tourist destinations and promote the tourist area through digital tools.

**Methodology:** The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Statistical tables based on respondents and descriptive analyses were used to explain the data collected. Interview and questionnaire were the main data gathering tools. And the target population of the study was the tourists (both foreign and domestic).

**Results:** From the mean score value of the tourists information source, Search engines became the most used information source to come to Ethiopia followed by Social Media. Mobile advertising were found out to be the last preference of the tourists to serve as tourist information source. Bale mountain national park Digital marketing may succeed more if it considers user needs as a top priority by identifying its target group. This research found out that the major tourist generating regions to Ethiopia are Europe, Asia and North America and the age group the tourists are middle and old ages. The destinations must also focus on the demographic differences of the tourists so as to arrange digital promotions that fit to the needs and requirements of these different segments of international tourists.

**Conclusion:** Finally Digital marketing has no boundaries; Bale mountain national park can use any devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, televisions, games, digital billboards, and media

such as social media, SEO (search engine optimization), videos, content, e-mail and lot more to promote the park as a tourist destination.

**Keywords:** *Digital Marketing Practice, Marketing, promotion, tourism, customer, Digital*

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## BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Tourism has continued to expand, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020), now one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism has the potential to contribute significantly to economic growth and development in Africa (Abdullahi & Kilili, 2021). Tourism industry is globally becoming an increasingly expanding area and is the most important economic catalyst in many countries. Despite its positive endowment and good growth in tourism over past decade, it remains a sad fact that Africa's tourism potential is underexploited and underdeveloped.

The development of electronic advertising has actually had an effect as well as will certainly remain to impact on tourism market. It has become an important tool for managing the business (Vollrath & Villegas, 2022). Understanding the major motorists of tourism that consists of geographical variety, government campaigns, advancement of personalized packages, altering customer dynamics, quickly offered financing as well as benefits of customized bundles for the target audience are the crucial in the direction of success in tourist. As a resource of instant info, the web/mobile application is the front runner as there are no constraints or restrictions in searching for information. To work out hang on brand name and to produce equity, it is very important to make consistent visibility online (Abdullahi & Kilili, 2021). An additional considerable fact is the ability of electronic marketing to resolve the niche market where clients have specific needs. With web it is currently possible to accommodate specific requirements by offering needed information.

Digital marketing has created deep modifications in the tourist industry affecting clients along with distributors. An evaluation of previous patterns and also possibilities reveals that ICT developments, and also especially Web have created a deep change in consumer practices as well as Expectations. Travelers are much more requiring and also try to find set apart and individualized Services. For that reason, tourist companies should collect customer information at each phase of tourist solution experience (before, throughout, as well as after the trip) and simultaneously offer timely and also accurate info, relevant to their customers. And also it is impacted by this innovation, in regards to advertising a destination and reaching out prospective tourists (Kerdpitak, 2022).

As a result of the arising of digitalization of the economic climate, the tourism sectors are dealing with numerous challenges and also opportunities. The fast development in the use of the web and also mobile phones by tourists to choose touristic locations and buying a trip plans are launching tourist companies to implement most current digital techniques. Taking on digital advertising and marketing is coming to be mandatories in order to get over the difficulty of just how to obtain the right people, at the correct time as well as place. Furthermore, lots of national tourism Organizations (NTOs) are making electronic advertising as the center of their advertising and marketing methods as well as they are spending considerably to boost and upgrade their advertising approaches and strategies in accordance with this cost effective modern technology (Saefudin, 2022).

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tourism is a very competitive industry; the traveler has a wide range of options and gives attention for those which are good value for money. Inadequate quality infrastructure, uncompetitive rates, indifferent or product with poor quality, complexity in getting access to information on travel and tourist destinations, unskilled service providers have really negative effect on the competitiveness of the tourism product (Bayih & Singh, 2020). In Ethiopian instance, there are lots of positive chances that exist for tourist advancement. Most of present tourism to Ethiopia is mostly social and historic, as identified within the National Biodiversity Method and Action Strategy (NBSAP, 2020), environmental and wild animals tourism has massive capacity to add to continuous tourist growth for Ethiopia Tourism Payment and additionally the prospective vacationers are discovering it challenging to identify the called for information as well as are dealing with the issue of information overload.

Appropriately, the government of Ethiopia (GOE) has actually now started to take vital critical steps in the direction of structuring the Ethiopian tourism sector marketing program (STMP, 2015-2025). Thus, in today's global fad, it is no longer adequate to count only on traditional marketing for destination online marketers, it likewise compulsory to explore just how digital marketing can be utilized for promoting the tourist destination as well as to include them in their marketing mix. This is extremely important action to any type of vacationer location to obtain the needed gain from the field as well as consequently to obtain competitive advantage over its rivals (Organization Vibes, 2021).

A research study performed by Bayih and Tola, (2017) mentioned that the marketing and advertising tasks of Bale region stopped working to meet their best objective as a result of the lack and restricted nature of advertising methods, budget plan lacks, lack of focus from stakeholders and also critically, an absence of competent manpower, yet the study is fail to addressee the contribution of tourist marketing for the tourist destination sustainability. But the researcher is not specified marketing and also electronic marketing tasks.

Study carried out by Dessie, (2018) stated that duty of electronic advertising and marketing which is must to do ingenious promotional method in developing Ethiopia as a traveler destination. To achieve these objectives, any type of destination marketing expert need to recognize exactly how to correctly make use of the 5 elements of digital advertising framework in reaching the target group. The risk related to unsuccessful usage of digital marketing that is especially highlighted in tourist promo is the lack of relevant researches. Besides, the scientist was likewise gone some method to recognize the challenges of ETO to exploit electronic marketing in an effective fashion. However the researcher is not touched which electronic advertising and marketing devices are mainly made use of by tourists, so this study is taking this job as the primary goals to be attended to.

Additionally, Demie, (2019) was evaluated the Aspects Influencing Tourism Advertising when it comes to Bundle Hill National Park. The findings indicate that inadequate image development, lack of proper promotion of tourist attraction, insufficient facilities to as well as inside the location, trouble of safety and security and also safety and security, political danger, and seasonality nature of tourism are aspects affecting tourist marketing. Yet the scientist is not touched how to advertise touristic location electronically, so this study is take this job as the major objectives to be resolved..

Based on the above statement promoting countries tourism using digital marketing is a crucial promotional tool, according to researchers view, using of digital marketing is important for the growth of tourism industry. Though there is a need to study about the digital based promotion of the tourism sector. Thus, the study is with the view of filling this gap.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- i. What are the main information sources for tourists to know about the destination?
- ii. What are the digital marketing tools to be implemented?
- iii. What are the challenges in digital marketing promotion of Tourism?

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- i. To assess the major information sources for tourists to know about the destination.
- ii. To identify the digital marketing tools that used to promote the destination.
- iii. To identify the challenges in promoting Tourism using of digital marketing tools.

### **Tourism Industry**

Tourism industry is considered as one of the major and mainly diverse industries in the world. Beside the machinery and oil industry, this industry as a modern service industry and the means to build connectivity among nations and a variety of peoples in the world have been considered as the significant sectors. Nevertheless countries which are rich in historic, cultural and natural attraction resource give more attention to this industry, because of the lack of marketing; the function of this industry in the developing countries is paler than before (Iamso, et al. 2013). Ecotourism is usually considered to be not only nature-based tourism, but also responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the safety of local people. The principle of ecotourism includes minimizing environmental impact, constructing an environmental and cultural responsiveness and admiration, providing constructive experiences for both visitors and hosts, providing direct benefits for protection, provided that financial benefits and empowerment for local people, and raising sensitivity of countries political, environmental, and social weather of to host countries (Utarasakul et al., 2018).

Tourism consists of the activities of individuals taking a trip to and staying in areas outside their common setting for not over one succeeding year for free time, service and other objectives. It is the biggest and also fastest growing industry, which has the most effective opportunity for developing several brand-new tasks worldwide. It can be executed as company in rural areas given that it does not want years long vocational trainings (Rannersmann, 2020). The traveling and tourist sector has come to be a significant provider to the gross nationwide product of a number of countries, with advertising and marketing traveler locations as well as its products becoming a broadly recognized practice for both public and economic sector companies (Riege & Perry, 2019). Tourist sector is 2 thought about as one of the major as well as generally diverse sectors in the world. Alongside the equipment and oil sector, this market as a modern service industry and also the ways to construct connection amongst nations as well as a selection of individuals worldwide have been considered as the considerable industries (Iamso, Niroomand, & Rafsanjani, 2019).

Ethiopia is among ideal area for tourist attraction because it needs to be affordable in attracting vacationer in order to be competitive tourist destination as well as require to have suitable advertising method in just how to market its tourism capacities (Asmamaw & Verma, 2013). So

regarding remain in the tourist advertising and marketing competitors, companies in both public as well as economic sectors should determine their consumers and also be responsive to their demands. They need to also can making their prospective consumers knowledgeable about their product or services, motivate them and also recommend them that they get advantage if they become real consumers, specifically to travel to the someplace and also wanted location that has been organized with the feature to travel. Advertising in the tourism sector is associated to determining clients want and needs and also producing the worth (product/price) as per their requirement, connecting this value (promotion) to them, and providing the worth (networks) to satisfy their desires (Ndahimana, 2013). Therefore marketing method is among the factors to consider so as advertising tourism potential in tourism location.

Tourist in the Bundle Mountains developed as well as took care of to improve the conservation of BMNP's phenomenal resource values, to create income possibilities for park-associated communities and also to benefit the country all at once whilst developing higher understanding and support locally, nationally and also worldwide (GMP 2007). In BMNP five hundred fingerlings each of Rainbow and also Brown Trout were presented in the Danka as well as Internet rivers respectively (Asmamaw & Verma 2019). In 1969 it was shown that the fish had begun to breed efficiently which stimulated the formation of the Bundle Fly Angling Club. The rainbows did so well that stock was drawn from the Danka and introduced into 7 other streams. The large size and also high quality of the fish brought in many people to join, and also by 1973 the Club had developed a global track record with lots of overseas participants. In between 1970 as well as 1975, when the Club was disbanded, it is approximated that over 10,000 fish were captured by sport fishermen who invested significant amounts of money. Ever since there has actually been no official monitoring of the fishery, which is manipulated primarily by citizens. Nonetheless the trout continue to reproduce and visitor fishermen are still effective, especially in the Web, Danka and Shaiya rivers. Various recreational activity is performed in BMNP and different participants are involved consisting of regional community in giving leisure task.

Advertising has actually no globally accepted interpretation. This is maybe because of the truth that advertising is a comprehensive monitoring feature. Nonetheless, the one meaning which is universally priced estimate is by Philip Kotler. Kotler specifies the advertising and marketing concept as complies with: "advertising principle holds that the secret to attaining business objectives is composed in determining the wants and needs of target audience as well as provide in the desired fulfillments better successfully than rivals" (Raju, 2019).

Automation allowed cultures living in other places, to create a series of consumer products in mass amounts. The products were to be offered to the consumers for consumption. The selling (marketing) thus became an essential service feature (Raju, 2019). One of the fundamental ideas in advertising and marketing is the advertising and marketing communications mix. The marketing interactions mix is additionally called the promo mix. This contains the mix of advertising and marketing, sales promotion, public relations, individual marketing as well as straight advertising tools that the business uses to pursue its advertising and marketing objectives (Garbani-Nerini, Marchiori, Reale & Cantoni, 2022).

Several technologies together have assisted in the increase of electronic marketing. Among these emerged technologies, the Web, browsers, prevalent computer, and also data source innovations are the back bone of electronic advertising and marketing development (Zahay., 2015). In a globe



where over a 170 million individuals make use of social media regularly, every working expert is anticipated to be aware of at the very least the core principles of digital advertising and marketing. In simple terms, Digital Advertising and marketing is the advertising of products online or any kind of kind of electronic media or electronic channels to promote services and products to target audience (Digital marketing Institute, 2017).

“The term Digital Marketing was first used in the 1990s. The digital age took off with the coming of the internet and the development of the Web 1.0 platform. The Web 1.0 system permitted users to discover the details they desired, however did not allow them to share this info over the internet. Up till after that, marketers around the world were still unclear of the electronic Platform. They were not exactly sure if their strategies would certainly work since the internet had not yet seen widespread implementation” (Avantika, 2017). The higher need of firms maximizing their site to attract more consumers towards their internet leads the emerging of the prominent search engine- Google in 1998. Adhered to the digital advertising globe saw its first steep surge in 2006, when online search engine website traffic was reported to have grown to concerning 6.4 billion in a single month (Google, 2017).

Side to side speaking, digital advertising and marketing is any type of advertising and marketing for product and services that make use of electronic gadgets. The reason of arising of digital advertising is adhered to by the consumption of digital tools by bulk of the people in the world. It is assumed that electronic marketing is all about web content marketing as well as social media. While these exist as sorts of digital marketing, they are not both incorporate what electronic marketing is all about. Digital marketing can be done online and also offline (Rob, 2017).

SEO is one of the most general kind of Digital advertising which is utilized to raise the procedure of expanding the on-line exposure in non-paid throughout the online search engine. There are numerous methods associated with this process ranging from on-site technological evaluation and improvement, to blogging, link-building and content development. Online search engine outcomes pages (SERPs) show up to users after they search for an offered set of key phrases using an online search engine like Google or Bing. The seniority on a SERP for a digital marketing, the more website traffic is guided to your site as well as the even more chances of making a passive site visitor an energetic customer. A company's internet site show up at the top of user's non-paid search results page if the website is optimized utilizing SEO (KVR, 2015).

Unlike to what a great deal of individuals assume, Social media site Advertising and marketing is far more than simply publishing on socials media: it additionally includes having a great approach, defining some previous goals, determining networks where the audience is in order to have presence and also be able to target, exercise a particular calendar of content for social media networks, connect with customers and gauge each action and also communication in real time. Social media is a critical part of a digital advertising and marketing technique. It permits a marketing expert to get in touch with their customers in an extra intimate way. From this interaction, they can gain important customer responses that enables you to improve your client service, product, or service. Instances of the recognized social Medias are Facebook, Twitter, Break conversation, and LinkedIn (German, 2015).

Social media site are especially vital for tourist, which is information-intensive task. Tourism consumers require info that can help them in the process of travel preparation as well as choice

making pertaining to the option of tourist locations as well as of various kinds of tourist products. Personal recommendations are specifically vital in this context, due to the intangibility of tourism items. Social media supply this with the material created by the customers (consumer-generated material -), as well as with the comments that can be relied on. Social media site has an unique significance for the tasks of destination advertising companies (DMO). Locations online marketers can utilize social media sites before the travel (to influence, inform, involve), during the traveling (to help with at destination) and also after the end of the traveling (to bear in mind, share as well as involve).

Affiliate advertising and marketing refers to the process of paying for conversions, in an additional words, it is a type of efficiency based advertising. It is much like employing a sales individual offer for sale of a business's services or product considering that the associate earns a commission like the worked with sales individual. There is no in advance price to affiliate advertising, the business can figure out the price for associate advertising and also it is just paid for conversions. Associate advertising is made use of by several bloggers or shopping internet sites. The terms ought to be reviewed a head of a marketing experts pick to use associate marketing. The affiliate represents the firm's brand name, so marketers desire them to carry their brand's message close to the affiliate.

As blogged by (Susan, 2017) Email advertising and marketing permits a company to update its e-mail subscribers regularly concerning a firm. This promotes a partnership unlike any one of the various other sorts of electronic advertising. A business email updates supply worth to its consumer. Because of this, a firm constructs brand depend on and also brand loyalty. The best e-mail advertising campaigns involve a checklist of clients earned by a business's content as well as firm, not spent for by its company. People that opt-in to a firm's e-mail subscription show most likely to come to be active customers.

Inbound advertising and marketing is a company approach that brings in clients by producing beneficial material as well as experiences customized to them. While outgoing advertising and marketing disturbs your audience with material they do not always want, inbound advertising forms connections they are seeking and also solves issues they already have. Advertising and marketing automation is technology that takes care of advertising processes and also multifunctional projects, across numerous networks, automatically. Marketing and also sales divisions utilize advertising automation to automate internet marketing campaigns and also sales activities to both rise profits and also make best use of performance. Each of the kinds of digital advertising and marketing can occur on a mobile phone. Some types of marketing utilizing a smart phone do not fit the above types of digital advertising. These consist of short message marketing which could confirm an asset to neighborhood advertising and marketing initiatives. An electronic online marketer can trigger your customers to utilize brief message to get special deals, vouchers, as well as updates from your firm (Cheryl, 2013).

## **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

As explained by Edward Brooker, Jason Burgess, (2018), the development of digital marketing affected consumers' behavior, in this case tourists purchase decision in good way. This a day, using different digital marketing tools such as social network sites, blogs or websites, tourists are enabled to reach information quickly and in a great detail. These Different forms of electronic

marketing provide an alternative for travelers in their choice of vacationer destination. The development of ICTs and particularly the digital media encouraged the "new" tourist that is becoming educated and is looking for remarkable values for money and time. They are much less curious about following the crowds in packaged excursions and also much crazier about pursuing their very own choices and also schedules.

Process of transforming habits of the visitors, their preferences and need undertakes the procedure of boosting value of digital advertising as a marketing tool in tourism sector, as a result, coming to be a vital variable in our research study (Singh, 2015). In conclusion, digital advertising and marketing has affected as well as changed the means exactly how vacationers search as well as get not only an excursion package, but also it refers to associated services as well. It influences people's traveling preparation: where to go, when is the very best time to go, what to see, where to consume, what other state about location as well as a variety of other details concerning location are offered online (Jason Citizen, 2018).

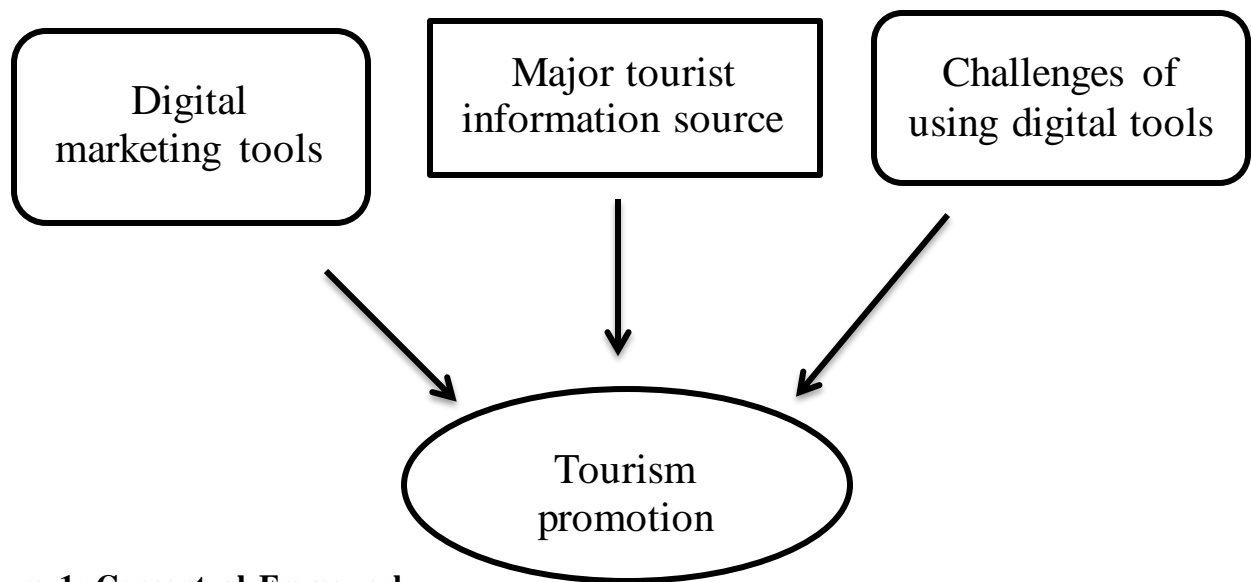
Social media site is "a powerful source for travel planning" and also several various other researches concur pertaining to vital role of social networks as well as its impact on traveling choice (Michaela, 2017) There are a multitude of opportunities to market as well as brand solutions (and products) via social media sites. Awareness, correct networking, evaluation of your rivals, attending to all concerns, brand worth, much more online visibility and credibility management are a few of facets to deal on social media network websites (Singh, 2015). The research carried out in India-Delhi University wrapped up that any type of company, specifically destination marketers, to be successful electronically, they call for to have quality internet site, SEO, Email advertising and marketing, Presence on social networks, web content, mobile-friendly. These tools of electronic advertising play an extremely critical function in promoting a nation's tourist location (Kaur, 2017) for the objective of this research study, the researcher was focused on exactly how these critical electronic advertising tools were used.

Thompson (2014), in a research study qualified, "Usage as well as effectiveness of internet marketing tools amongst B2C firms in Singapore", investigated the 5 digital marketing structures; The initial element of the Digital Marketing Framework involves exactly how to attract consumers to the companies' digital advertising tools. After drawing in the focus of the customer, the next step of the Digital Marketing Framework is to involve consumers. When customers have been brought in as well as involved, marketing experts require to keep them, which is the third action to relate back to the consumer. Ultimately, he has concluded that the use of Digital Advertising and marketing Framework works for examining the effectiveness of numerous digital marketing devices.

These electronic advertising and marketing framework operate in measuring the efficiency of digital advertising and marketing devices is more gone over by (Munar, 2012) who recommended that, to be successful in digital marketing devices needs the destination advertising and marketing company is to preserve updated and also important web content, find out about consumers via involvement, utilizing responses, discussion and various other multimedia tools and also specifies that DMOs require to offer info consisting of those of the organization, offer adjustable multilingual content to provide customer-- pleasant websites (Relate Back) that would foster sustained location competitiveness.



## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Bale Zone which is one of the most important tourism destinations of Oromia region as well as Ethiopia because of its tourist sites such as Bale Mountains National Park, Sof Omar cave, and Dirre Sheik Hussein Muslim shrine. Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP) is a protected area of approximately 2,200 km<sup>2</sup> and located 400km southeast of Addis Ababa and It belongs to the Bale-Arsi massif, which forms the western section of the south-eastern Ethiopian highlands. The study employed a mixed research approach to conduct the research i.e. quantitative and qualitative. Mixed research approach is preferred because the study requires the mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. The researcher was try to investigate the facts of the existing situation of the tourism promotion in the areas and seeks to describe it.

Based on its basic purposes, the major focus of the study was on the description of data related to digital marketing and promotion activities in BMNP. So, the research design used for this study was descriptive research design for fully answering research questions. From different methods of descriptive research design the study was utilized survey research design based on the purpose of the study. Moreover, the study also employed cross-sectional type of survey research design in which data is collected at one time for the purpose at hand because the data gather only at one time from the respondents. The target populations of the study were the tourists from both domestic and foreign countries who visited the park and marketing experts of BMNP. This study employed convenience sampling method, because the researcher selects the closest live persons as respondents. And in convenience sampling, subjects who are readily accessible or available to the researcher are selected.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The study established that among the total number of respondents 90(54.5%) are male and 75(45.5%) of the total respondents are female. It can be said that the number of male tourists who visit BMNP are by 9% higher than female tourists. Participants (tourists) were categorized by Young age (18- 29 years; n = 15), adults (aged 30 -45years, n = 32), middle-aged adults (46 - 60, n = 80) and earlier (60+ years old, n = 38). This shows that most of the tourists in this sample were older adults between ages 46 to 60 that consisted 80 (48.5%) of the population. The table illustrated that these age groups are higher in number in visiting area because such group is mainly interested in history, culture and landscape. They want to encounter new places and out-of-the-ordinary experiences that is why they select a country like Ethiopia which is very rich on history, culture and landscape.

One statistical approach for determining equivalence between groups is to use simple analyses of central tendency (Mean). The mean indicates to what extent the sample group on average agrees or does not agree with the different statement. The lower the mean, the more the respondents disagree with the statement. The higher the mean, the more the respondents agree with the statement (Bhattacharjee, 2012).

**Table 1: Tourists' Information Source**

Tourists' information source	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean
Social media (like Facebook, YouTube ,Twitter, LinkedIn)	0(0%)	15(9.1%)	14(8.5 %)	55(33.3%)	81(49.1 %)	4.22
Search engines (like Google and etc.)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	67(40.6%)	94(57.0 %)	4.55
E-commerce Websites	3(1.8%)	8(4.8%)	59(35.8%)	46(27.9%)	49(29.7 %)	3.79
E-mail marketing	3(1.8%)	17(10.3%)	85(51.5%)	43(26.1%)	17(10.3 %)	3.33
Content marketing (like blog, e-newsletter #)	2(1.5%)	17(10.3%)	64(38.8%)	56(33.9%)	26(15.8 %)	3.53
Mobile advertising (SMS)	19(11.5%)	17(10.3%)	75(45.5%)	36(21.8%)	18(10.9 %)	3.10

For the question asked for the source of information regarding (Table 1) shows that the highest mean are search engines which are 94(57.0 %) tourists as strongly agree, 67(40.6%) agree and 4(2.4%) neutral, followed by social media the mean of 4.22 which are 81(49.1%) tourists as strongly agree, 55(33.3%) agree, 14(8.5%) neutral and 15(9.1%) are disagree and on E-commerce websites the tourists respond as 49(29.7%) strongly agree, 46(27.9%) agree, 59(35.8%) neutral 8(4.8%) disagree, and 3(1.8%) strongly disagree and its mean are 3.79 and also on e-mail tourists information source the tourists respond as 17(10.3%) of tourists as strongly agree, 43(26.1%) agree, 85(51.5%) neutral, 17(10.3%) disagree, 3(1.8%) of tourists are strongly disagree and its mean of 3.33 and content marketing showed as 26(15.8%) strongly agree, 56(33.9%) agree, 64(38.8%) neutral, 17(10.3%) disagree, 2(1.5%) as strongly disagree and its mean of 3.53 and mobile advertising are 18(10.9%) as strongly agree, 36(21.8%) agree, 75(45.5%) neutral, 17(10.3%) disagree, 19(11.5%) as tourists strongly disagree and its mean are 3.10. From the above analysis E-commerce website, E-mail, content marketing and mobile advertisings shows that the majority of tourists are responded neutral.

The major information sources for tourists to know about the destination was met by the survey conducted through questionnaire. The result depicted that Search engines became the most used information source to come to BMNP followed by Social Media. Mobile advertising were found to be the last preference of the tourists to serve as tourist information source during planning their trip. As a result, the destination has failed to boost its digital presence. So as to make it well known the destination must be develop digital marketing tools which can be used to promote the touristic destination and the majority of the tourists' information sources are directed to search engines followed by social media. The researcher made own observation by checking the Google search engine and social Media like Facebook, and YouTube, the destination have followers but it is not enough.

**Table 2: Attraction while Searching Information**

Variables	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
user friendly website (easily accessible website)	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.6%)	29(17.6%)	135(81.8%)	4.81
Websites found the top of any search engines	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(1.2%)	42(25.5%)	121(73.3%)	4.72
digital promotions which present a profile and contact details of the company	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	42(25.5%)	119(72.1%)	4.70
websites or other digital marketing which present attractive content	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	42(25.5%)	119(72.1%)	4.70
digital promotions which present sales promotion	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	42(25.5%)	119(72.1%)	4.70
Which give immediate response online or from offline FAQ(frequently asked questions)	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	42(25.5%)	119(72.1%)	4.70

Table 2 shows that digital marketing tools in which tourists were attracted. It showed that user friendly web site which are 135(81.8%) as strongly agree, 29(17.6 %) agree, 1(0.6%) neutral & Mean of 4.81 are the leading one which the tourists' were attracted. websites which are found at the top of any search engines 121 (73.3 %) as strongly agree and 42(25.5 %) agree, 2(1.2%) and Mean 4.72. The rest of the variables which are digital promotion with contact and profile details of the company, websites or other digital marketing which present attractive content, digital promotions which present sales promotion and Which give immediate response online or from offline FAQ are 119 (72.1 %) strongly agree, 42(25.5%) agree, 4(2.4%) neutral and Mean of 4.7. And referring the mean for the above mentioned variables, all of the rate shows Mean > 4 which means that all of the above mentioned digital marketing tools help in attracting tourists towards any digital promotion, especially if it is user friendly website (Mean= 4.81). From the above analysis it can be observed that the majority of the tourists attracted to visit the park were as a result of user friendly website (the information of the website easily).

**Table 3: Digital Promotion Tourists Spend More Time and Participate**

Variables	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
virtual online communities	0(0%)	9(5.5%)	21(12.7%)	73(44.2%)	62(37.6%)	4.14
websites which provide information in different languages	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.6%)	29(17.6%)	135(81.8%)	4.81
trip advisory on websites (recommendation about the tourist destinations)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(3.0%)	34(20.6%)	126(76.4%)	4.73
social media interaction in handling tourists complains on time	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	42(25.5%)	119(72.1%)	4.70
New introduced digital marketing tool	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.6%)	74(44.8%)	90(54.5%)	4.54
Online social discussion	0(0%)	9(5.5%)	21(12.7%)	73(44.2%)	62(37.6%)	4.14
digital promotion which has lucky draws	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	42(25.5%)	119(72.1%)	4.70

Table 3 indicates that the tourists degree of time spend in digital marketing tools. virtual online communities, 62(37.6%) as strongly agree, 73(44.2%) agree, 21(12.7% neutral, 9(5.5%), while none of them are strongly disagree and dis agree and its Mean are 4.14, websites which provide information in different languages 135 (81.8%) as strongly agree, 29 (17.6 %) agree, 1(0.6%) neutral and none of them are strongly disagree and dis agree and its Mean are 4.81, and trip advisory on websites 126 (76.4%) as strongly agree, 34 (20.6 %) agree, 5(3.0%) neutral and Mean are 4.73, on time interaction on social media 119(72.1 %) as strongly agree, 42 (25.5 %) agree, 4(2.4%) neutral and Mean are 4.70, and new introduced digital market tool 90(54.5 %) as strongly agree, 74 (44.8%) agree, 1(0.6%) neutral and Mean are 4.54, online social discussion 62 (37.6 %) as strongly agree, 73 (44.2%) agree, 21(12.7%) neutral, 9(5.5%) disagree and its Mean are 4.14 and digital promotion with lucky draws 119 (72.1 %) as strongly agree, 42 (25.5 %) agree, 4(2.4%) neutral and Mean are 4.7. Referring the mean for the above mentioned variables, all of the rate shows Mean > 4 which means that all of the above mentioned digital marketing tools help in time spend tourists towards any digital promotion, especially if the websites provide information in different languages (evidenced by Mean value of 4.81).

**Table 4: Digital Promotion of Tourist Destination**

Variables	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I prefer if the websites support chat groups	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	42(25.5%)	119(72.1%)	4.70
I suggest if they update customers about content change on their websites	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.6%)	71(43.0%)	93(56.4%)	4.56
I suggest if they spend their time for communication with tourists	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(1.8%)	50(30.3%)	112(67.9%)	4.66
Provide personalized reactions in order to get responses	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(1.8%)	50(30.3%)	112(67.9%)	4.66
Provide linkages to other related & relevant links	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.6%)	29(17.6%)	135(81.8%)	4.81

Table 4 shows the participants' suggestion on features to be presented on the digital promotion of tourist destination. The degree of their preferences of these features is presented as follows: 119 (72.1 %) of the respondents reported as they strongly agree and 42(25.5 %) of the respondents exhibited as they agree and 4(2.4%) are neutral on the inclusion of web site support chat groups , while none of them are disagreed or strongly disagreed for its inclusion. & the Mean value is 4.7. And also 93(56.4%) of the respondents as they strongly agree and 71(43.0%) of the respondents exhibited as agree and 1(0.6%) of the respondents are neutral on the inclusion of update customers about content change on their websites and its mean are 4.56 while none of them are disagree and strongly disagree. And 112(67.9%) of the respondents as strongly agree, 50(30.3%) agree and 3(1.8%) of the respondents are neutral for the inclusion for both spend their time for communication with tourists and personalized reactions in order to get responses and mean are 4.66, while none of them are strongly disagree and agree. And lastly 135(81.8%) of tourist as strongly agree, 29(17.6%) agree, and 1(0.6%) of the tourists are neutral, while none of tourists are strongly disagree and agree and its mean are 4.81. Referring the mean for the above mentioned variables, all of the rate shows Mean > 4 which means that tourists' towards features to be presented on the digital promotion of tourist destination, especially if Provide linkages to other related & relevant links (evidenced by Mean value of 4.81).

**Table 5: Contribution of Digital Promotion by a Destination Marketer**

Variables	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
Make me to be well aware of Ethiopia	0(0%)	0(0%)	4(2.4%)	63(38.2%)	98(59.4%)	4.57
Provide me a lot of preferences of different tourist attraction places	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(0.6%)	29(17.6%)	135(81.8%)	4.81
Provide me travel information for safety and Security	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(1.8%)	50(30.3%)	112(67.9%)	4.66
Provide the local service providers information	0(0%)	0(0%)	3(1.8%)	50(30.3%)	112(67.9%)	4.66



Based on the data on Table 5, concerning the question asked about their level of agreement or disagreement on the contribution of digital promotion by a destination marketer to them; while 98(59.4%), 63(38.2%), 4(2.4%) of them strongly agreed, agreed, & became neutral, respectively, for its contribution to make them well aware of the country, none of them were disagreed or strongly disagreed for its contribution in this regard. The mean value in this case is 4.57 and 135(81.8%) of the respondents as strongly agree, 29(17.6%) agree, 1(0.6%) neutral responds for its contribution to digital promotion make a lot of preferences of different tourist attraction places, none of them were disagreed or strongly disagreed and the mean value in this case is 4.81. and tourists contribution to make me travel information for safety and Security and Provide the local service providers information responds as 112(67.9%), 50(30.3%), 3(1.8%) of them strongly agreed, agreed, and neutral respectively and its mean is 4.66. it showed that they highly expect a destination marketing organization to provide a lot of tourist attraction preference through its digital marketing tools.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study to meet its objectives addressing the raised research questions by employing different analysis techniques. So as to address its objective the research through analyzing different prior studies and theories come up with digital marketing tools that promote tourism industry. The first point is that Digital Marketing contributes to attract tourists. The result indicated that digital marketing tool which is majorly user friendly (easily accessible website) followed by Websites found the top of any search engines are more in order to attract tourists.

The second points Digital Marketing relates to tourists interest and Participation in digital promotion, after attracting them to the digital promotion, probably to create interactions or process transactions. However, the result of this research identified that BMNP failed in realizing this. The tourists response showed that they can be engaged more if the digital marketing of tourist destination makes use of virtual online communities, websites which provide information in different languages, trip advisory on websites, on time interaction on social media, provide updates on new services, social discussion and digital promotion with lucky draws.

The last point raised for the tourists were to provide their suggestions on features to be presented on digital promotion, the majority of respondents suggestion as the destinations need to Provide linkages to other related & relevant links and if the websites support chat groups. And on contribution of Digital Promotion by a destination marketer the tourist responded that digital promotion Provide me a lot of preferences of different tourist attraction places.

The first specific objective of this research digital marketing tools that promote the destination was met by conducting face to face interview with BMNP marketing experts which are Social media accounts (YouTube, Facebook), Search engine optimization, content marketing and mobile advertising. The research concluded that digital marketing tools used by Bale mountain national park are not to the required level.

In addition, the second specific objective of this study major information sources for tourists to know about the destination was met by the survey conducted through questionnaire. The result depicted that Search engines became the most used information source to come to BMNP followed by Social Media. Mobile advertising were found to be the last preference of the tourists to serve as tourist information source during planning their trip.

In general, the result shows that several digital marketing tools were not extensively adopted by Bale mountain national park. This study pointed some plausible reasons Contributing for this is to be. These are: lack of manpower to manage the digital marketing tools, perception of the decision makers towards the effectiveness of digital marketing ,inadequate financial resources to undertake digital marketing campaigns; lack of ICT infrastructure and inadequate skills and expertise in the digital marketing field.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The implementation of the digital marketing strategy requires significant resource investments. Although financial investments are quite minimal, as digital marketing initiatives are cost-effective, human and infrastructure investments have to be substantial. Therefore, it is essential for management to develop the infrastructure and human resources accordingly. To implement, maintain and develop the digital marketing tools in order to attract the tourist, digital marketing tools need to be managed by skilled manpower with capabilities and knowhow on the digital technology. Such human resources enable proper use of digital marketing tools through continuous delivery, control, and optimization of digital tools and content.

The concerned bodies should raise awareness about the benefits and concept of digital marketing tools and promotion. After establishing relevant digital marketing tools the concerned government body at all levels should intensively promote the destination using all the appropriate digital marketing tools. The destination (BMNP) must give due emphasis on working towards search engine optimization in order to present its web page on top of search engines. As this research found that search engines are the major sources of information for tourists.

Digital channel in tourism marketing has become essential part of strategy of many destinations marketing in the world. Nowadays, even for small tour companies, there is a very cheap and efficient way to their products or services. Digital marketing has no boundaries. Bale mountain national park can use any device such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, social media, SEO (search engine optimization), videos, e-mail and lot more to promote the park as a tourist destination.

This research found that while the major tourist generating continents are Europe, Asia and North America. The age groups constituting the largest proportions of the tourists are middle and old ages. The destinations must also consider the demographic differences of the tourists so as to arrange digital promotions that fit to the needs and requirements of these different segments of international tourists.

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