



E-Marketing Adoption: An Overview from Ethiopian Tourism Businesses

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Abstract

The study aims to uncover an overview of e-marketing adoption in tourism businesses of Ethiopia focusing on e-marketing implementation modalities. Methodologically, the study employed a descriptive research design. Being positivist in philosophy, the data were collected based on survey strategy from random samples of tourism businesses to conduct descriptive statistics. The results revealed that most tourism businesses of Ethiopia have embarked on internet adoption as a precursor to e-marketing implementation. Nevertheless, the technopolitics of the country in general and the monopolistic control of the telecom sector in particular, serve to undermine the diffusion of e-marketing. Therefore, the acceptance, routinization and diffusion of e-marketing were lagging behind. Moreover, these businesses seem to stick to websites, email and social media marketing approaches to promote, sell and interact with their prospective customers.

Keywords: e-marketing, adoption, technopolitics, diffusion, tourism, Ethiopia.

Introduction

The internet has embarked on the most prominent developments in marketing strategies. It has introduced gigantic shifts from mass marketing to increasingly segmented, niche dominated and highly interactive marketing. The new marketing technology has shirked the plethora of satisfying collective needs, surpassing the more individualized and personalized needs focusing on customer retention, customer satisfaction and relationship marketing (Özturan et al., 2019). These changes have been governed by a parallel shifting of the behavioural patterns of the new consumers; individualistic, informed, apprehensive and economically capable. The internet era customers' are able to take control over marketing processes and value a personalized approach and in essence prefer products and services that can be promptly adapted to their constantly changing needs (Constantinides, 2002).

The compatibility of conventional marketing strategies to the interactive nature of contemporary marketing on which e-marketing is built, is highly contested. Extensive researches clearly indicate how internet marketing (e-marketing) surpasses conventional marketing strategies. With the advent of the internet, marketing researchers realized that the new medium has brought new opportunities in marketing communications and predicted the demise of traditional marketing functions. They argued that the new internet enhanced strategy incorporates the new ways of targeting, segmentation and promotions. More importantly, unlike the broadcasting promotional style, the internet creates narrowcasting promotional techniques signifying flexibility to address the needs of target markets and developing marketing mixes for personalized target markets. The internet has transformed the distribution function to an electronic marketplace, whereby access to information and ubiquity



is achieved, while interactivity between suppliers and consumers provides major opportunities (Varadarajan&Yadav, 2009; Bern et al., 2015).

The new technology has becoming the strategic asset for hospitality organizations to promote, sell, distribute, interact, design and produce their products and services. There is a growing recognition that new technology enhances hospitality organizations' capability to implement e-marketing (Wang & Qualls, 2007). When we realize the implementation of e-marketing in tourism businesses of Ethiopia, the sector has not crafted the marketing influences of the internet. Thus, unless the country effectively implements e-marketing to promote tourist products and services to the rest of the digitalized world, the tourism businesses of the country may be merely 'tiptoeing' on the ever-growing internationalization of the tourism market (Wagaw & Mulugeta, 2018). Thus, this research intended to uncover e-marketing implementation modalities in the tourism businesses of Ethiopia.

Literature Review

E-marketing as a new Marketing Paradigms: Evidences from Tourism Businesses

The advent of the internet has countermanded the conformist tourism marketing thoughts, principles and practices. The waning significance of physical marketplaces eclectically accelerated the rise of an internet enabled market environment, the digital marketing (Varadarajan&Yadav, 2009). In its pragmatic sense, the internet has put colossal pressures on the existing business models and marketing strategies. As a result, contemporary business leaders and marketers are pressurised due to the unpredictable, complex and competitive marketing environment in which they operate and the apparent customer requirements in terms of product innovation, customization and personalization (Leeflang et al., 2014; Wang, So & Sparks, 2016). Bewildered with these joggles many tourism businesses have been forced to adopt multiple strategies for their marketing and operation. They have started confronting the traditional and conventional operations and adopted a novel technology based marketing, in the form of e-marketing (Hung, 2017; Choshin&Ghaffari, 2017).

The proliferation of web 2.0 and social media have re-engineered the core marketing functions, characteristics and dynamics. Social media has become an important strategic tool for business organizations to build an interactive relationship with the customers (Herrero, Martin & Collado, 2018). In this regard acclaimed scholars like Porter (2001) and Ivanov (2012) have pointed out how the internet has transformed the marketing rules and dynamics by abating the corporate competitive position, while offering consumers many new opportunities and powers. However, Leeflang et al., (2014) has argued that internet technology is not totally a panacea and bonanza, but rather it has a confronting potential to captivate business organizations into a new marketing pull. This idea has been further supported by Porter. He argued that though the internet has been referred to as changing everything, redressing all old rules about business organizations, the exclusive dependence on its functionalities when there is little caution in use, has enormous adverse effects. Porter however also recognized the magnificent benefit of the internet in providing better opportunities for companies to establish distinctive strategic positioning which surpasses that of the previous generation information technologies. He also suggested that the internet can create new industries and reconfigure the existing industries that have been constrained by the high costs of communicating, gathering information and conducting transactions (Porter, 2001).

Likewise, Rayport, Jaworski and Kynung (2005) as cited in (Varadarajan&Yadav, 2009) have underlined how the internet has put leverage on business organizations to restructure their business models. The new business models have changed consumer-supplier relationships, product production, pricing and distribution (Varadarajan&Yadav, 2009). Furthermore, Porter (2001) established how "the internet technology provides buyers with easier access to information about products and suppliers, thus bolstering buyer bargaining power". Similarly, the internet has improved the bargaining power of suppliers as it has created opportunities to



scrutinize competitors' strengths and also weaknesses so as to offer tailored and differentiated products and services. The role of the internet in responding to the ever- changing demands and keeping up with strong competitive advantages is very important. Likewise, the increased interactivity and interconnectivity as the result of internet development within the tourism industry and the customers', helps tourism businesses to maintain their position and market share (Xiang, 2017).

With the advent of the internet, marketing researchers' realized that the new medium has brought new opportunities in marketing communications and predicted the demise of traditional marketing functions. They argued that the new internet enhanced strategy incorporates the new ways of targeting, segmentation and promotions. More importantly, unlike the broadcasting promotional style, the internet creates narrowcasting promotional techniques signifying flexibility to address the needs of target markets and developing marketing mixes for personalized target market. The internet has also transformed the distribution function to an electronic marketplace, whereby access to information and ubiquity is achieved, while interactivity between suppliers and consumers provides major opportunities (Buhalis, 2004; Varadarajan&Yadav, 2009; Bern et al., 2015).

In light of such developments, the debate on the need for a new marketing thinking has gained a fresh momentum. What seems to emerge is consent on the need to re-define marketing thoughts, approaches and principles. In the past, scholars have proposed relationship marketing as an alternative to conventional marketing approaches while others suggested a customer-focused paradigm based on openness, engagement, cooperation, co- creation and a propensity to help customers rather than control them (Constantinides, 2006; Choshin&Ghaffari, 2017).

The internet and the development around the web 2.0 and social media are shifting marketing considerations. These developments portray for marketing strategists the simple message: survive in the age of the empowered customer by understanding the role of new technology and about how it shapes the marketplace and more importantly engaging in the social media, as part of the marketing toolbox and as a strategic imperative rather than merely depending on traditional mass-marketing tactics (Constantinides, 2014; Ayeh, 2015, Mariani, Styven, & Ayeh, 2019).

Likewise, the internet and the virtual media enable the customers to comment on marketing strategies more than was the case before. They are highly empowered to directly influence the service providers regardless of the product types, colours, designs and packaging. Hence, the customers become both part of the consumption and production processes. Digitization of products and services tends to merge the marketing mixes into relationship marketing facilitating electronic market place than physical market place (Lam, Haut & Oh, 2014). In the case of tourism and hospitality, the internet withholds the role of traditional marketing intermediaries turning them into e-hospitality, e-travel agencies, e-tour operators and e-destinations. This has made Buhalis (2004) use e-tourism as the generic term to demonstrate how far the internet has digitized the whole function of tourism and hospitality marketing.

The internet has blended both unique characteristics and traditional marketing functions (Mulhern, 2009). As an interactive medium of marketing, the internet essentially reshaped the distribution model, promotional style, selling approaches, pricing strategies and product type, preference and process. When we look closely into how the internet significantly shaped the distribution channel, it is possible to witness how electronic intermediaries like Expedia, Booking.com, Travelocity.com and Lastminute.com put huge pressure on Thomson and Thomas Cook to rethink their operations, structure and strategies (O'Connor & Frew, 2004).

The internet is emerging as an effective infrastructure which is helpful in facilitating segmentation, targeting and positioning. The web window is the easiest and most cost effective to intensively identify market segments (Hung, 2017). This is because it fosters



interaction on a one to one basis, the internet helps to distinguish the needs, wants, product quality, design and colour preferences of the customers. Hence, it has eased the need of conducting rigorous marketing research. Regarding pricing of products and services, it is suggested that the internet has made the price of goods and services transparent enabling the customers to engage in rigorous comparison of prices (Berne et al., 2015).

In terms of promotion, the web window opens an accessibility of tourism products and services to a whole demographic spectrum, enhancing multidirectional communication, flattened geographic barriers, and it also encourages greater convenience for customers and enables organizations to compete in the global market. The interactive ability it offers to the customers, suppliers and other stakeholders facilities two way communication which is an evolving dimension in e-marketing (Tiago & Tiago, 2012; Berne et al., 2015).

Unlike the broadcasting era, the internet has made tourism and hospitality products and services available 24 hours and 7 days a week online making tourism businesses reach customers whenever they are ready to buy a product or service. For organizations and customers, the internet acts as a global database, where data and information are available to make mutual transactions, allowing customers to select best quality products /services by reducing information asymmetry and up scales cost-effective communication platform for one-to-one marketing, which allows low-cost, high-speed information transmission. Lastly, in the modern business world, the internet is encouraging a collaborative ability with customers, suppliers, partners and other stakeholders (Varadarajan & Yadav, 2009).

Moreover, the internet has created amicable grounds for the customers' to be co-producers in the service production system. As co-producers, they provide key information at the time the service is being produced. This enables tourism business organizations to identify specific customer needs in terms product design, type and colour and packages (Sigala, 2018).

The internet increases the effectiveness and efficiency of traditional marketing functions while the technology transforms marketing strategies enabling more efficiently planned and implemented promotion, distribution and pricing of goods and services. It opens up new global markets and international partnerships; it results in new business models that add customer value and increases profitability and enables more effective segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies. The internet also eases time and place constraints on consumers and no longer will products and services be offered primarily at the seller's convenience (power shifts from sellers to buyers)—anytime and anywhere purchasing and consumption is now common. As a consequence, the expectations of consumers have been raised. Communication bandwidths will rapidly rise, and with this, a greater use of internet, social media, smart phones and taps which are more powerful, smarter, easier to use, affordable, portable, cheaper and smaller, while the cost of digital storage is falling rapidly. Once hardware and a truly effective telecommunications infrastructure is in place, an enormous range of services can be exchanged at nominal incremental costs, such as location-independent information, entertainment and leisure services.

Successful marketing in this new environment involves “monocasting”, “pointcast-passive— they have greater control of information flows between buyers and sellers. And they are now using this power. No industry can ignore this long term shift in negotiating power” and “podcasting” of communications with simultaneous mass customisation and personalisation of all marketing mix elements, a high degree of customer involvement and control, a more efficient utilisation of marketing resources with attempts to reduce customer alienation from misdirected marketing stimuli. Above all, there is increased pressure to deliver greater value and intense jostling among enterprises for the loyalties of “desirable” customers (Akehurst, 2009).

Materials and Methodology

Within a positivist epistemological stance, a descriptive research design was predominantly used. The target population and the unit of analysis were the travel agencies, tour operators and star rated hotels and their employees. The data was collected based on a survey distribution strategy from random and non-random samples. Aaker and Day's (1986) formula was adopted to determine the sample size. The survey questionnaires were targeted to 561 tourism businesses from which a total of 340 questionnaires were collected (191 responses from star rated hotels comprising international and local brands) and 149 from three travel and tourism business organizations (travel agencies and tour operators)). Most of the respondents were employees, the top management, owners, marketing/sales managers and the individuals who were in charge of the e-marketing activities within the respective organizations. Since the research intended to uncover the implementation of e-marketing adoption, simple descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data.

Description of the Research Context

From the amalgamation of tourism businesses, this study emphasised the examination of the implementation of e-marketing in tourism businesses of Ethiopia. Accordingly, data were acquired from two categories of tourism businesses. These included the accommodation establishments (star hotels) and tour and travel businesses. The samples were taken only from these tourism businesses realizing that they were keen to demonstrate the organizational behavioural intentions to implement e-marketing. With this in mind the data were collected from every category of the tourism business. The unit of analysis were organizations based on the data extracted from the employees, top managers/owners/marketing/sales managers, middle supervisors, ICT managers and those who are working solely on e-marketing.

Figure 1. Distribution Business Types

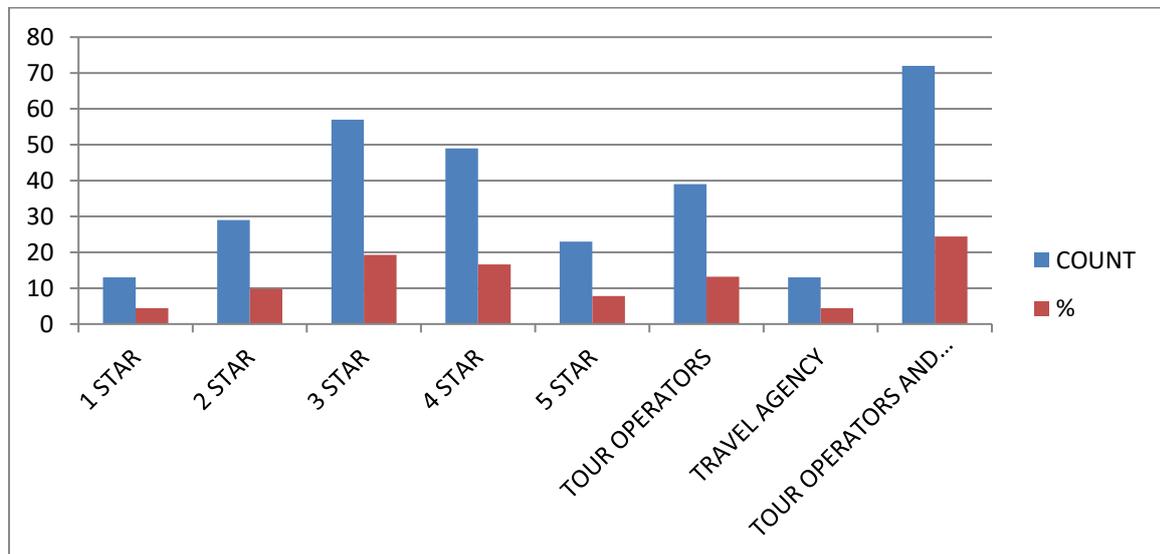


Figure 1 demonstrated the distribution of the data extracted from tourism businesses. The information obtained from hotels category accounted about 57.96% and the tour and travel tourism businesses accounted for about 42.04%. When we examined the specific share, the proportion of the respondents from tour operators and travel agency was about 24.4%, followed by the three star hotels (19.3%), four star hotels (16.6%), tour operators (13.2%), two star hotels (9.8%), one star hotels (4.4%) and travel agency (4.44%). It looks like the data acquired from these tourism businesses helps to make a convincing inference about the e-marketing adoption and implementation. These businesses were the intensive consummates of internet technology for marketing purposes in contemporary marketing context.



Website availability and Internet connectivity

E-marketing adoption and implementation has been arguably depends on the availability of company websites and internet connectivity. This is because tourism and hospitality businesses are now days striving to develop their own internet services and enhance their websites as part of their marketing strategy to effectively communicate with their prospective customers. They are recognizing high quality websites as a critical component of organizational strategic direction since contemporary tourists are increasingly interested in searching for online information about products, services, prices, quality and quantity, colour and package, and buy tourism products and services via the internet. The increasing demand of e-services in many hotels, and a range of travel and tour operation businesses have established websites to promote their products and services and to gain an increased share in the massive online tourism market (Abou-Shouk, Lim & Megicks, 2013).

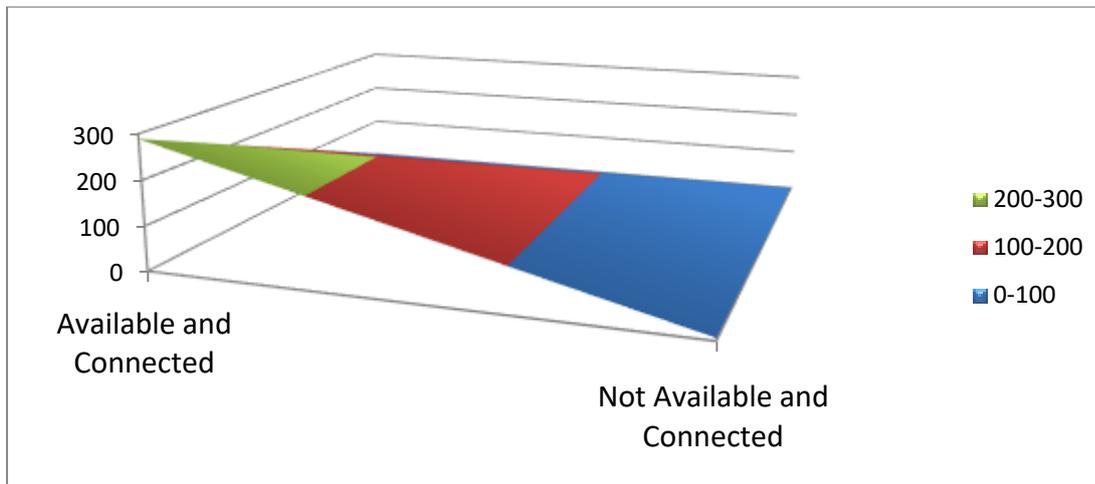
Since the competition in tourism and hospitality is very stiff, designing quality websites and connecting to the internet systems is taken as a vital marketing tool which influences customer buying behaviours (Herrero & Martin, 2018).

For instance, when we examine the empirical studies of Constantinides (2004), the findings revealed that business ventures can influence the customer in the virtual system by focusing their marketing efforts on customers' web experiences. Superior customer web experiences have the potential to influence customers' perceptions, attitudes and drive additional motivations to sales outlets. Constantinides suggested that the key to deliver a superior web experience lies in determining the relevant set of components and understanding their role as inputs in the online customer's decision making process.

This is the first step towards developing and delivering an attractive online presence, which is likely to have a maximum impact on web users. Additionally, the quality of the website can affect the website visitor's decision to re-visit the website and eventually buy its services. Therefore, website quality is a prerequisite for effective internet marketing and reflects its ability to deliver high quality customer service (Bukhari et al., 2013).

This presupposition helps to enhance the website availability and internet connectivity in tourism businesses of Ethiopia and its consequent impacts on e-marketing adoption and implementation. Figure 2 clearly demonstrates that tourism businesses in Ethiopia were not negligent concerning website and internet connectivity as a precursor to e-marketing adoption and implementation.

Figure 2. Website Availability and Internet Connectivity

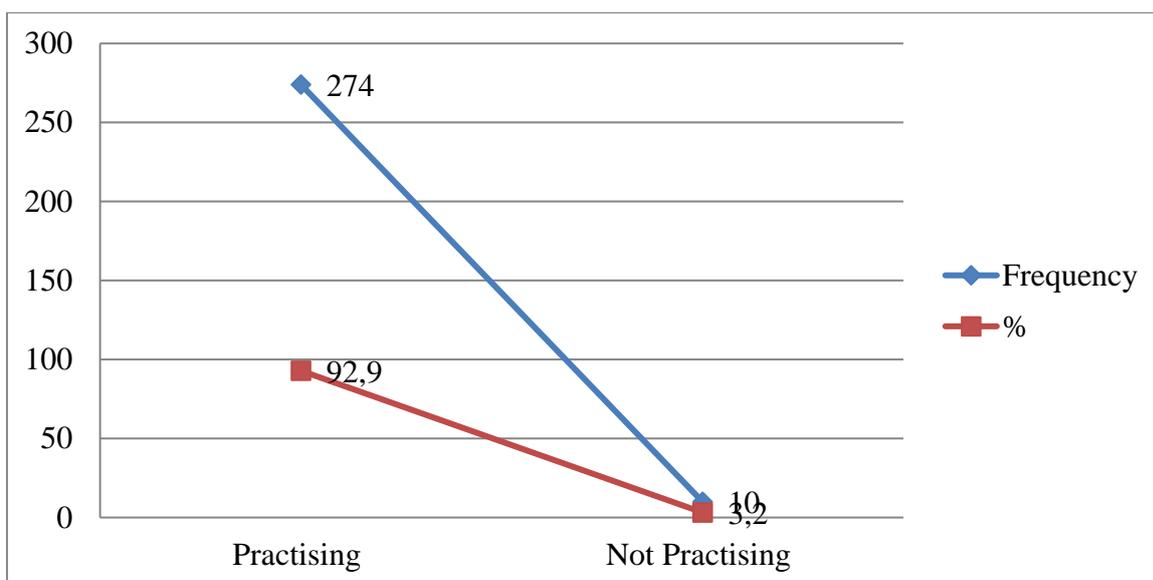


The result illustrated on figure 2 revealed that 98 % (289) of tourism businesses have company websites and are connected to an internet marketing system. This implies that most of them were establishing the minimum preconditions to adopt e-marketing. Therefore, they have a high likelihood to adopt e-marketing as such.

E-marketing Practices

Since the internet has become an integral part of tourism marketing and is a valued portal of information, tourism businesses have acknowledged using the internet as marketing medium to promote and sell their products is vital. In contemporary businesses, the scenario of e-marketing as a new marketing paradigm in using the internet and interactive technology to create and mediate dialogue between the firms and customers is well underway. Tourism businesses have now started to utilize the internet as a panacea to effectively capitalize on their tech savvy customers. In this context, being in the international online system, what is the actual status of e-marketing practices in tourism businesses of Ethiopia? To get an overview on this, dichotomous questions were prepared and the data was collected. Based on the data obtained from questionnaire survey, the status of tourism businesses with respect to e-marketing practices was differentiated as shown on figure 2 below.

Figure 3. E-marketing Practices



The results shown on figure 3 confirmed that all 92.9% of tourism businesses have at least one form of e-marketing practices. This means the majority of tourism businesses of Ethiopia

were not neglecting to connect to the international marketing system in the competitive virtual world.

Early and Late Adopters of E-marketing in Tourism Businesses

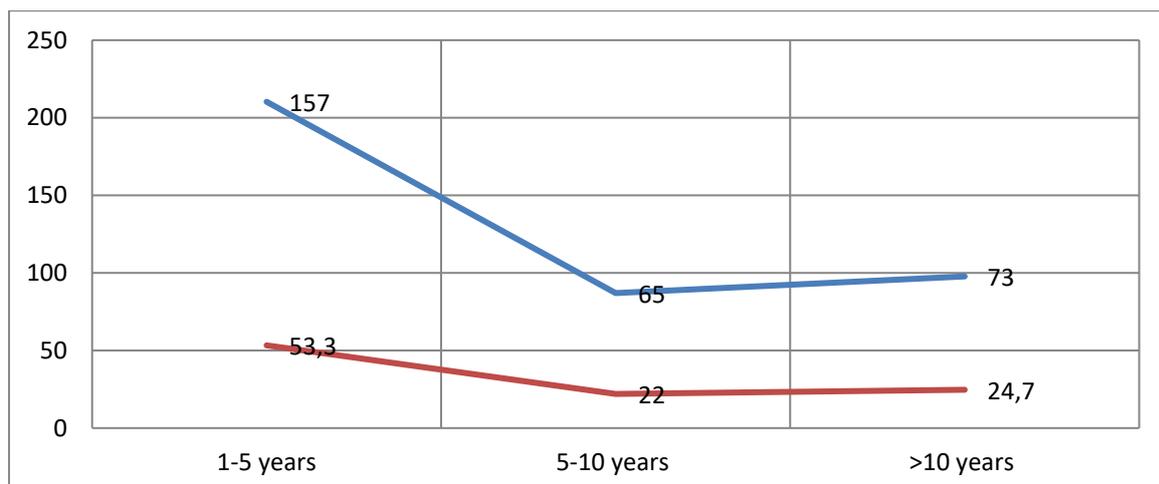
In his analysis Diffusion of Innovation, Rogers (2003) suggested that new innovations and technologies may not be adopted by the individuals and social system simultaneously. The adoption can take place sequentially and this is the reason why he came up with the classification into adopters categories based on the time it takes them to adopt new innovations. The diffusion of new technologies and innovations significantly depends on the individual's extent of readiness or state of change towards new innovation, the legitimacy given to the top management/administration and advocacy of organizations to adopt new innovations.

In the context of tourism and hospitality, being tech sensitive and confident products, the diffusion of e-marketing has been intensified parallel to the internet revolution. Nevertheless, there is a sweeping disparity between/among developed and developing countries in adopting e-marketing as a marketing paradigm. But, it has been accepted as imperative, that tourism and hospitality organizations are the front runners in adopting new marketing technologies and innovations.

With this idea in mind, classification of e-marketing adopters into early, early majority and late adopters were identified. The classification was made based on the duration/how long it takes them to adopt e-marketing. As shown on figure 4, the prior e-marketing experience was classified into three age categories. The first group adopted e-marketing between 1-5 years ago. The second group adopted e-marketing between 5-10 years ago and that last group adopted e-marketing more than 10 years ago.

When we see the rate of e-marketing adoption, the result seen from figure 3 revealed that the early adopters accounted for 24.7% (73), they have adopted e-marketing before 10 years. The share of early majority was 22% (65) and they adopted e-marketing between 5-10 years ago. The late majority adopters accounting for 53.3% (157) have adopted e-marketing between 1-5 years ago. The average age of e-marketing adoption for all tourism business was 1.7 years.

Figure 4. Rate of Adoption



This data shows that e-marketing adoption in tourism businesses of Ethiopia is at its infant stage. Thus, in spite of the boom of a technology based marketing system in travel and hospitality businesses, it is possible to conclude that Ethiopian tourism businesses are laggards in adopting e-marketing.



E-marketing Implementation Modalities

E-marketing tools have provided unprecedented opportunities for tourism businesses to communicate directly with the customers and to build competitive advantage allowing them to reach out to potential customers in the quickest and most effective way. These tools are by far increasing worldwide visibility and access; they also facilitate, sustain and reward interaction between consumers and businesses; and customers can search for and purchase their preferred products and services without any geographical or time constraints. Customers can easily arrange for their own preferred products or services and this simultaneously enables the business entities to better understand their customers' needs and wants. Furthermore, suppliers can enjoy the benefits of lower distribution costs, a fairer competitive environment for businesses with different backgrounds and they can create an opportunity for all businesses to compete in the online marketing system.

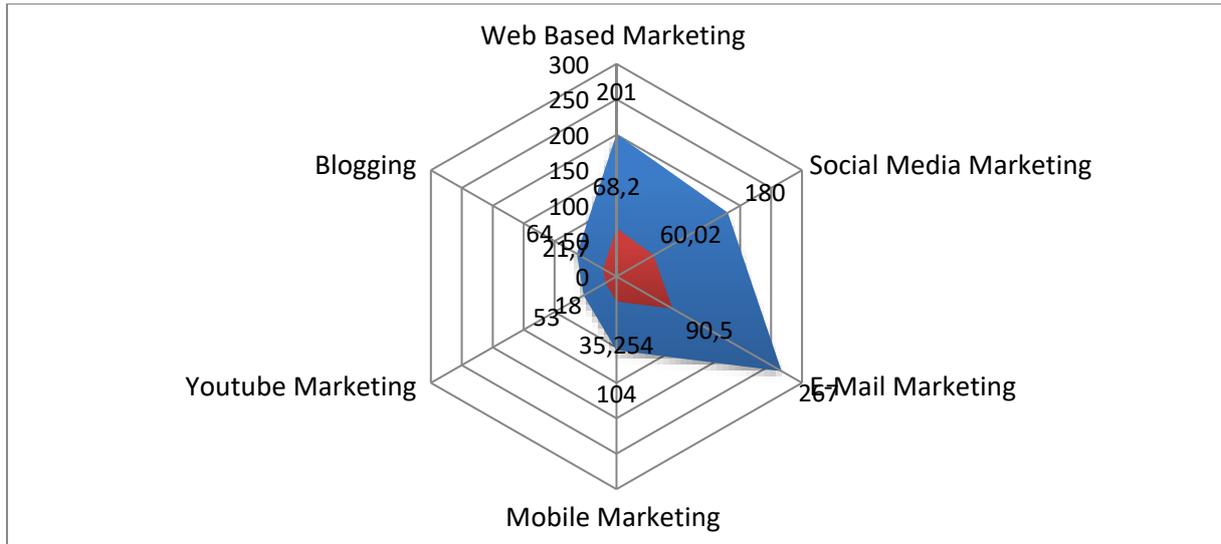
There are many e-marketing tools utilized in tourism and hospitality. For instance, web based marketing becomes an important aspect in dealing with the intangible nature of the tourism products and services. In contemporary competitive marketing environment, websites of tourism businesses have become increasingly a source of information that managed to allow the customers' interest and participation to be felt; and it also helps to capitalize on the information about the preferences of the customers. This helps tourism businesses design tailored strategies to meet the needs of more personalized customers. There are many other forms of e-marketing tools utilized in the field of tourism and hospitality (Madhavarm & Appan, 2010).

E-mail marketing is another form of e-marketing that can render the best communication modalities between the customers and businesses organizations. Empirical research findings shown that e-mail marketing produces approximately twice the return on investment of the other main forms of online marketing such as web banners and online directory adverts. In fact, gaining explicit permission to send email marketing to a person is a prerequisite for successful email marketing. However, all emails sent by organizations and the individuals in that organization can be seen as marketing opportunities.

Simultaneous to the internet revolution, the impact and usage of social media marketing has become very pronounced in travel and tourism. Social media has become an integral part of the path leading the visitors to find exactly what they are looking for and making the tourist products and services a perfect fit to their prescribed preferences. Nowadays social media integrated into marketing mix leads visitors and customers to the right travel information and helps tourism businesses to provide personalized messages and contents directly to the interested segment of customers. Thus, tourism and hospitality businesses are effectively utilizing social media to engage customers in a more personal way, and that is why almost two-thirds of tourism businesses plan to increase their social media marketing.

Moreover, the advancement of the internet, mobile technology and smart phones has offered a new marketing opportunity for tourism businesses. The smart phone has now days emerged to be the most important technology used mostly to target audiences by sending marketing information to the customers in the form of texts, multimedia messages such as images, videos and audios, applications attached to marketing, location based marketing approaches, voice marketing and using mobile ads and banners. This idea further helps to closely look into the extent and utilization of different e-marketing tools as a major marketing strategy among the tourism businesses of Ethiopia in general and those of Addis Ababa in particular.

Figure 5. E-marketing Tools



When we see the extent and utilization of e-marketing tools shown on figure 5, 90.5% tourism businesses of Ethiopia were utilizing e-mail marketing. Perhaps web based marketing was also occupying the second echelon next to e-mail marketing. In this case, 68.2% of the firms utilized their website to market their products and services. Though less when compared to e-mail and web based marketing, social media marketing ranks third as the most widely used e-marketing tool with 60.02%. Whereas, the utilization of mobile, blog and YouTube as marketing tools is significantly low it still accounts about 35.254, 21.7% and 18% respectively. though the degree differs, tourism businesses were using more than one e-marketing tool. This finding is consistent with a meta-analysis study conducted by Alalwan et al., (2017) on how social media has contributed to organizations' marketing objectives with respect to customer involvement, customer relationship management and communication. Munar and Jacobsen (2014) and Xiang & Gretzel (2010) have elaborated as to how social media has influenced tourism businesses to promote their products and services in more interactive, participatory and personalized ways, by using a wide array of online forums such as blogs, posts, chat rooms, customer-to-customers emails, podcasts and photo sharing sites which instantly influence awareness creation, information acquisition, pre, purchase and post purchase behaviours.

Discussions and Conclusions

Simultaneous to the growing ubiquity of internet application as precursor to e-marketing adoption, 98% of tourism businesses in Ethiopia have developed their own website and internet services as an integral part of a marketing strategy to pursue a competitive advantage and have embarked on the first step towards delivering an attractive customer service. There is a high likelihood that the use of the internet and new technology to create and mediate interactive dialogue with the customers, and increase the number of customers who are visiting the company websites to engage in effective communication is increasing. Agag and El-Masry(2016), Bilghan and Bujisic(2015) and Sigala (2018) and (Bigne&Dercop, 2019) stressed the danger of neglecting the utilization of websites and internet systems in tourism and hospitality. They argued that the since the new technologies transformed tourism management and marketing from the static and utilitarian to a more vibrant tourist or 'prosumers' than the conventional passive tourists or 'Homo Economicus', the sustenance of these businesses depends on their willingness, capability and readiness to cope with the ever changing marketing dynamics that exist. The new vibrant technologies are very helpful in reducing their distribution costs, reaching a larger customer potential of the target market, enhancing service quality, gathering information making direct contact with the potential customers and above all providing a novel approach to create needed long-term customer relationship(e-loyalty).



Nevertheless, ICT and internet diffusion is lagging behind in Ethiopia. Demeke and Olden (2012) and Demeke, Olden and Nocera (2016) argued that the successive Ethiopian governments have kept the major organizations under their monopolistic control like the telecommunication sector, which is the sole provider of internet services. This has influenced how the sector functions, including its ownership, competitiveness, affordability and availability of ICT and it plays a critical role in the adoption and diffusion processes.

The effect of the monopolistic control of the telecom sector, ethiotelecom, seriously affected the structural, operational and functional efficiencies of travel and tourism businesses of Ethiopia. Demeke and Olden (2012) noted that though critical for the operation of tourism and hospitality businesses, the interruption of the internet system and high prices imposed on broadband services have hampered the effective utilization of the new technology for marketing purposes. This implies the presence of company websites and internet connections was not a guarantee to commence e-marketing if political, legal, telecommunication, infrastructural and socio-economic problems remain unsolved. Thus, though tourism businesses have found the match between e-marketing and its application, and attempted to invest resources and technological resources which were available at a juncture, e-marketing acceptance, routinization and infusion (utilization and application of e-marketing within the organizations to its fullest potential) have not been that effectively used.

In spite of the fact that travel and tourism were the front-runners in the adoption of ICT and the internet, the diffusion of e-marketing has evidently remained at the infant stage in tourism businesses of Ethiopia. When we realized the adopters' categories, the majority of these firms adopted the new technology between 1-5 years ago and a few of them have adopted it before 10 years ago. But the average age of adoption was 2 years. Perhaps this age was highly palatable with the global acceleration of the internet, and with the development of WIFI, Web.2, smartphone and other social networking.

Globally during the last ten years, when the tourism business of Ethiopia have attempted to adopt new innovations, the marketing environment has been characteristically witnessing a remarkable boom in social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, whatsapp, Google+ and other collaborative tools. The new technologies have emerged as helpful tools to create novel ways to connect customers with the customers, customers with suppliers and suppliers with suppliers. These technologies provided unprecedented opportunities for tourism businesses to directly communicate with their prospective customers and to build on a growing competitive advantage. The empirical results have identified that the advancement of internet and social media has clearly changed the static and utilitarian marketing approach into an interactive and participatory marketing one. Moreover, consistent with the works of Loureiro (2018), the ongoing technological innovation has brought countless ranges of opportunities for tourism businesses allowing them to conduct marketing electronic research, promote products to the specific target customer and develop new business models for the creation of values.

Similarly, the distribution of e-marketing tools indicated that websites, e-mail and social media have been widely used among the tourism businesses of Ethiopia. However, mobile marketing, YouTube marketing, blogging and other user generated contents were not widely used to market tourism products and services. But contemporary tourism marketing scholars have argued that e-mail and websites are a more static form of technology based marketing than the effervescent and bubbling marketing strategies like for example social media, smartphones and other user generated contents. Thus, it is likely to conclude that the Ethiopian tourism businesses depend more on conventional technologies than divergent and ever-growing marketing approaches to promote and sell products and services and communicate with their global and domestic customers.

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