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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE TOURISMINDUSTRY: A CASE OF ADDIS ABABA TOURIST DESTINATION CENTRE.

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5 June, 2024

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled "**The effect of social media on the growth of tourism industry: a case of Addis Ababa tourist destination center**" is my original work, has not been presented for a degree in this or any other University, and all sources of materials used for the thesis have been fully acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or in full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any type of degree.

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Date of Submission: June 07, 2024

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Advisor.

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CERTIFICATION

St. Mary's University Department of Business Administration.

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Tamrat Seme Legesse entitled "**The effect of Social Media on the Growth of Tourism Industry: a case of Addis Ababa Tourist Destination Center**" and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Art in Business Administration complies with the regulations of Post Graduate Program of St. Marry University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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May **GOD** Bless You All!!!

Thank you.

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Abstract

This study, titled "THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY: A CASE OF ADDIS ABABA TOURIST DESTINATION CENTRE," investigated the multifaceted influence of social media on tourist attraction in Ethiopia. The main objective was to understand how various social media aspects impacted tourist decisions and contributed to the Growth of the Tourism Industry (GTI) in Ethiopia.What triggered the initiation of this research is the recognition of the transformative power of social media within the tourism sector. The Ethiopian tourism industry holds immense potential, yet a crucial gap exists in our understanding of how social media can be most effectively harnessed to attract tourist'ssurvey distributed to 365 stakeholders yielded a response rate of approximately 95.9%, with a final sample size of 350 usable responses. The analysis revealed a diverse tourist base, with a significant portion falling within the 45–54-year-old age group (44.3%) and Europe as the leading source region (28.9%). Family travel emerged as the most prominent travel style (27.1%).The study investigated the social media landscape preferred by tourists interested in Ethiopia. Facebookreigned supreme (35.7%), followed closely by Instagram (28.9%), highlighting a preference for visual platforms for travel inspiration and planning.Correlation analysis revealed positive associations between social media aspects and the Growth of the Tourism Industry. Regression analysis supported the hypotheses regarding platform selection, social media content, and frequency & timing, indicating their significant positive impact on tourist attraction.This study highlights the importance of social media for the Ethiopian tourism industry. By strategically selecting platforms, creating engaging content, and optimizing posting schedules, stakeholders can attract tourists and propel industry growth.

Key words: social media, tourism, tourist, tour operator, content

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The tourism industry is recognized as a cornerstone of economic growth and cultural exchange, contributing significantly to a nation's global standing and prosperityPulido-Fernandez et al. (2014). Ethiopia, with its diverse landscapes, historical landmarks, and vibrant cultural heritage, possesses immense potential to emerge as a prominent player in the global tourism arena. Addis Ababa, as the capital city and a melting pot of cultures, holds a central role in shaping the nation's tourism landscape. However, the realization of this potential is contingent upon the industry's ability to adapt and harness contemporary tools for engagement and promotion.

According to Kasavana et al. (2010),in recent yearsthe proliferation of social media platforms has redefined the dynamics of communication and marketing across industries. Social media, encompassing platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, has become an integral part of daily life, influencing consumer behaviors and shaping perceptions. Recognizing the transformative power of social media, businesses, including those in the tourism sector, have increasingly turned to these platforms to engage with existing and potential customers(Sigala, 2018).

Studies by scholars such asAdekuajo et al. (2023),and Scott and Orlikowski (2012)highlight, the transformative impact of social media on the tourism industry globally. Social media is not merely a promotional tool but a dynamic platform influencing travel decisions, providing real-time updates, and fostering interactive relationships between service providers and consumers. In the context of Addis Ababa's tourism industry, where cultural richness and historical significance are paramount, leveraging social media strategies holds the potential to attract a greater number of tourists while enhancing their overall experience (Mamma, 2013).

Recent studies byTham et al. (2020), and Van Nuenen and Scarles (2021), emphasize the importance of understanding the complexities of social media practices within the local

tourism industry. This research aims to provide insights that are not only academically enriching but also practically beneficial for tour operators, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in the sustainable growth of the Ethiopian tourism sector.Despite the global recognition of the impact of social media on the tourism industry, there exists a gap in the literature specific to the Ethiopian context, and more specifically, within the unique dynamics of Addis Ababa. This study aims to address this gap by delving into the intricacies of how selected tour operators in Addis Ababa leverage social media to attract tourists, enhance customer service, and contribute to the overall development of the tourism industry.As the tourism landscape undergoes transformational shifts, it is imperative to explore the specific challenges and opportunities faced by tour operators in Addis Ababa. This research seeks to unravel the complexities of social media practices within the local tourism industry, offering insights that are not only academically enriching but also practically beneficial for tour operators, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in the sustainable growth of the Ethiopian tourism sector.

The prevalent portrayal of Ethiopia in global media often centers on themes of hunger, conflict, and desolate landscapes, leading many in the Western world to perceive Ethiopia primarily as a recipient of charitable aid. To counteract these distorted images in the international media, the country can capitalize on its considerable tourism potential through the development of effective promotion and marketing strategies. It is evident that economic advancement significantly influences the shaping of a country's image, and enhancing the perceptions of the international community becomes particularly crucial for nations like Ethiopia. Despite possessing remarkable historical, cultural, and natural attractions, Ethiopia's image has been overshadowed by its historically low economic development, making it imperative to highlight these positive aspects through strategic promotion.

Enhancing the tourism sector is not merely about acquiring foreign currency; it also plays a crucial role in shaping the image of Ethiopia. Safeguarding against external media influence is imperative, and one effective approach involves integrating media with the tourism sector. A significant challenge lies in determining whether media content authentically reflects reality. Often, media content is presented through the lens of those

who wield control over the media outlets. As Makanda (2022) notes, mainstream media tends to distort facts, portrays minority dissent as violence, misrepresents marginalized groups, neglects critical local issues, lacks diversity, and predominantly serves the interests of the powerful. In addition to promoting tourism-related products and services such as hotels, restaurants, and destinations, there is a pressing need to effectively promote the country's tourism attractions.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

While Ethiopia possesses a wealth of cultural, historical, and natural treasures, the international perception of the country, largely shaped by external media, remains influenced by outdated narratives of starvation and conflict.The tourism industry in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, holds immense potential for growth and economic development. However, despite the rich cultural, historical, and natural attractions the country offers, there exists a discrepancy between this potential and the actual influx of tourists. Ethiopia, often portrayed internationally through a lens of historical challenges, strives to reshape its image and leverage its tourism assets. The prevailing perception of the country as a charity case rather than a vibrant tourist destination persists, hindering the realization of its full tourism potential(Abbink, 2021). These distorted images not only hinder the potential for tourism-driven economic growth but also contribute to a persistent view of Ethiopia as a charitable cause rather than a robust and vibrant tourist destination(Wondirad, 2020).

The challenge is twofold. First, the existing narrative, perpetuated by mainstream media, tends to overshadow Ethiopia's positive attributes, hindering the country's efforts to position itself as an attractive tourism destination(Kassa & Sarikakis, 2019). Second, the prevailing socio-economic conditions and historical low economic development further complicate the task of reshaping Ethiopia's image on the global stage. In order to effectively utilize the tourism sector through social media promotion for economic growth and image-building, it is crucial to address these challenges comprehensively(Zhang & Zhang, 2018).

The persistent portrayal of Ethiopia in international media predominantly focuses on negative aspects, including famine, conflict, and barren landscapes(ABATE, 2020). Such

representations contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes and discourage potential tourists from exploring the diverse and culturally rich offerings that Ethiopia has to offer. This distorted image not only deters tourists but also limits the country's ability to attract foreign investment, collaborations, and partnerships in the tourism sector.

The nexus between economic development and image formation is evident. Ethiopia's historical low economic development has, to some extent, overshadowed its glamorous historical, cultural, and natural attractions. To address this, the tourism sector must be leveraged not only for economic benefits but also as a tool for reshaping the overall image of the country. This requires a strategic approach that integrates media, tourism promotion, and economic development efforts.

In light of these challenges, this research seeks to investigate the role of social media in reshaping the international image of Ethiopia, with a focus on how tour operators in Addis Ababa can strategically use social media to present a more accurate and appealing narrative that aligns with the country's true potential.

What triggered the initiation of this research is the recognition of the transformative power of social media within the tourism sector. The Ethiopian tourism industry holds immense potential, yet a crucial gap exists in our understanding of how social media can be most effectively harnessed to attract tourists. While previous research acknowledges the general impact of social media in tourism promotion, there's a lack of specific insights regarding the Ethiopian context.This research gap necessitates a deeper dive into several key areas. Firstly, the influence of social media platform selection requires exploration. Do tourists seeking Ethiopian experiences favor specific platforms like Facebook or Instagram? How does platform choice affect their travel planning and ultimately, their decision to visit?Secondly, the effectiveness of social media content itself needs evaluation. What types of content (text, photos, and videos) resonate most with potential visitors? How can tour operators curate compelling content that not only informs but also inspires tourists?Furthermore, the role of a tour operator's online presence is unclear. Does a robust and well-maintained social media profile influence tourist decision? How do tourists perceive these online profiles?Additionally, the impact of social media execution style on tourist attraction warrants investigation. Do the way tour operators

manage their social media presence (e.g., tone of voice, interaction frequency, responsiveness to comments) influence tourist attraction?Finally, the effect of posting frequency and timing deserves exploration. Is there an optimal frequency for social media posts that maximizes tourist engagement and attraction? Does the timing of posts (e.g., time of day, day of the week) influence tourist behavior?By addressing these critical gaps, this study aims to equip Ethiopian tour operators with invaluable insights. This would empower them to make informed decisions regarding platform selection, content creation, online presence development, social media execution strategy, and posting schedule optimization. Ultimately, this would ensure they reach their target audience at the most opportune times.This research has the potential to significantly contribute to the growth of the Ethiopian tourism industry by empowering tour operators to leverage the full potential of social media in attracting tourists.

1.3 Research Questions

1.To what extent the selection of social media platforms significantly affect tourist attraction rates?

2. To what extent the content of social media posts significantly affect tourist attraction rates?

3. To what extent the online presence of tour operators significantly affect tourist attraction?

4. What is the effect of social media execution style (e.g. tone, language, visuals) on tourist attraction rates?

5. To what extent frequency and timing of social media posts significantly affect tourist attraction rates?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

This study's overarching aim was to evaluate social media's influence on the tourism industry with a specific focus on attracting tourists to Ethiopia.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

- To explore the impact of social media platform selection on tourist attraction.
- To assess the impact of social media content on tourist attraction rates.
- To examine the online presence of tour operators and its influence on tourist attraction.
- To investigate the effect of social media execution style on tourist attraction rates.
- To explore the impact of frequency and timing of social media posts ontourist attractions.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

H1: The selection of social media platforms has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rates.

H2: Social media content has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.

H3: The online presence of tour operators has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.

H4: The social media execution style has a statistically significant effect on the tourist attraction rate.

H5: Frequency and Timing of Social Media posts have a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds immense significance for the organization under examination. By meticulously assessing the impact of social media on tourist attraction rates and scrutinizing the effectiveness of marketing strategies, the findings offer actionable insights for refining current practices. The organization stands to gain a competitive advantage by understanding the dynamics of social media content, platform selection, and online presence, thereby fostering more targeted, engaging, and successful tourism marketing campaigns.

Similar organizations within the tourism industry can leverage the outcomes of this study to enhance their digital marketing endeavors. The research illuminates best practices,

shedding light on successful strategies and pitfalls to avoid. By drawing upon these insights, similar entities can optimize their online presence, fine-tune content creation, and strategically select social media platforms, contributing to a collective upliftment of the industry's digital marketing standards.

This study significantly contributes to the body of knowledge in business administration and tourism. By exploring the intricate relationship between social media and tourist attraction, it bridges existing gaps in the literature. The nuanced insights garnered from this research add a layer of depth to our understanding of contemporary digital marketing practices in the context of the tourism industry. Academics and scholars can draw upon these findings to enrich their teachings, theories, and future research endeavors.

For fellow researchers, this study serves as a foundation for further exploration into the dynamic intersection of digital marketing and tourism. The detailed analysis of social media strategies, platform selection, and their impact on tourist attraction rates offers a roadmap for future investigations. This research opens avenues for collaborative efforts and encourages a more comprehensive understanding of evolving trends and best practices in the ever-evolving landscape of tourism marketing.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

1.7.1 Area Delimitation

This study would primarily focus on tour operators in Addis Ababa. The geographic delimitation allows for a targeted examination of platform selection strategies within a specific context, ensuring depth and relevance to the chosen area. The research would encompass tour operators of varying sizes, including small, medium-sized, and large operators.

1.7.2 Concept Delimitation

The study would specifically investigate the impact of social media employed by tour operators for the promotion of tourist attractions. Delimiting the focus to social media platforms ensures a concentrated exploration of the influence of social media on the tourism industry which play a crucial role in contemporary tourism attraction.The research would delve into the criteria influencing tour operators' choices of social media platforms.

1.7.3 Methodology Delimitation

The study adopts explanatory research design and quantittaive research approch. This methodological delimitation allows for a comprehensive exploration, quantitative data gathered through structured questionnaires.Data analysis would involve statistical analysis for quantitative data from questionnaires.

1.7.4 Time Delimitation

The study has beenconsidering historical aspects of platform selection strategies but primarily focus on contemporary practices. This time delimitation acknowledges the dynamic nature of social media platforms and aims to capture the current trends and challenges faced by tour operators. The data collection period has been delimited to March 1-30/2024. This timeframe allows for a focused examination of social media selection during a specific period, ensuring relevance and timeliness in the study's findings.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Keywords

Social Media: Online platforms where users create and share content, connect with others, and build communities (Boyd, 2007).

Tourism: The industry focuses on leisure travel experiences for visitors to the Country (Pattinson, 2013).

Tourist:An individual visiting a country for pleasure or recreation, not a resident of the country (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2020).

Tour Operator: A company or individual specializing in organizing tours and travel experiences catered to tourists in the country(Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)

Content: Information and media shared on social media platforms related to tourism country(Zhang,2018).

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into distinct sections to provide a comprehensive exploration of the impact of social media on tourist attraction, with a specific focus on the strategies employed by tourism tour operators in platform selection. The introduction sets the stage

by presenting the background, problem statement, objectives, and research questions. The literature review encompasses theoretical and conceptual frameworks, an exploration of tourism evolution, an analysis of social media platforms in tourism, and a review of platform selection strategies, identifying literature gaps. The research methodology outlines the chosen descriptive design, the study setting, participant criteria, and the hybrid data collection approach. Ethical considerations and limitations are addressed. The findings and discussion section presents the study's outcomes, covering platform selection strategies, customer service through social media, and contributions to tourism industry development. The conclusion summarizes key findings, highlights contributions to knowledge, offers practical recommendations, and suggests areas for future research. The document concludes with a comprehensive list of references and appendices containing supplementary materials.

CHAPTER TWO
RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The literature review serves as a critical foundation for this study, providing an in-depth examination of existing literature related to the impact of social media on tourist attraction. This chapter explores key themes and concepts that inform the research objectives, offering insights into the dynamic interplay between social media and tourist attractions.

2.1 Theoretical Review

Tourism is the travel outside of one's home country or region for pleasure, business, or both. It is a social, cultural, and economic phenomenon (UNWTO, 2019). One of the major industries in the world, tourism contributes significantly to the economies of many nations. Any activities involving a temporary movement of people to locations other than their usual residences fall under the umbrella of tourism (WTTC, 2019). This broad industry includes several different industries or sectors, namely the tourism sector, the field of transport, and others. It is important to understand that travel movements to different locations, including business and pleasure travel, are related to the tourist industry (Kotler et al., 2010). Ethiopia's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) considers tourism as a crucial component to combat poverty and encourage economic growth (Bogale, 2020). Every industry should use technological advancements in this day and age, and digital technology promotion is essential to the expansion of the travel and tourism sector (Chamboko et al., 2021).

2.1.1 Evolution of Social Media

The roots of social media can be traced back to the early days of the internet with the emergence of Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) and online forums. These rudimentary platforms laid the groundwork for digital communication, allowing users to engage in discussions and share information(Edosomwan et al., 2011).

The early 2000s witnessed the rise of blogs and networking sites, such as Friendster and MySpace, marking a shift towards more user-generated content and personal profiles. These platforms introduced the concept of virtual social networks, where users could connect with friends, share updates, and express their individuality.The advent of Web 2.0 technologies further transformed the landscape of social media. Platforms like Facebook launched in 2004, played a pivotal role in popularizing the concept of social networking. Web 2.0 emphasizes user-generated content, interactivity, and collaboration, enabling a more participatory and communal online experienceDhingra & Mudgal, 2019).

Johnson et al. (2022) noted that microblogging platforms like twitter emerged, introducing the concept of real-time communication and short-form content. Users could share updates, thoughts, and multimedia content in concise formats, fostering immediacy and engagement.

The evolution continued with the advent of visual-centric platforms like Instagram and Pinterest, emphasizing the role of images and visuals in communication. These platforms redefined content sharing by placing a premium on visual storytelling and aesthetics.The landscape expanded further with the rise of video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and later TikTok. Video content became a dominant form of expression, offering users a powerful tool for storytelling and engagement.

2.1.2 Key Characteristics of Social-Media

Central to social media is the concept of connectivity, enabling users to establish and maintain relationships irrespective of geographical distances. Networking features allow individuals to build virtual communities based on shared interests, professions, or personal connections.A defining characteristic of social media is the generation of content by users themselves. Whether through text, images, videos, or other forms, users actively contribute to the content ecosystem(Marlowe et al., 2017).Social media platforms prioritize interactivity, providing mechanisms for users to engage with content through likes, shares, comments, and other forms of feedback. Real-time interaction fosters a sense of community and participation.Social media is characterized by its accessibility, making it available to a global audience. The ubiquity of these platforms

ensures that users can engage with content and communities at any time and from virtually any location.

2.1.3 The Societal Effect of Social Media

Social media has revolutionized the way individuals connect and maintain relationships. It serves as a virtual space for socializing, and fostering connections between friends, family, and acquaintances.The rapid dissemination of information through social media has transformed how news and updates are shared. Platforms serve as real-time news sources, contributing to increased awareness and information sharing.Users leverage social media to express their cultural identity, share traditions, and engage in cultural exchange. Additionally, social media plays a role in shaping cultural trends and influencing societal norms (Wang, 2018).

The platform provides a powerful tool for activism and social change. Movements and causes gain momentum through social media campaigns, amplifying voices and catalyzing collective action. Social media has become integral to business strategies, serving as a powerful marketing and communication tool. The economic impact includes the rise of influencers, digital marketing, and e-commerce facilitated by these platforms.

2.1.4 Challenges and Concerns

The widespread use of social media has raised concerns about privacy and data security. Issues such as unauthorized data access, identity theft, and the misuse of personal information have prompted increased scrutiny.The rapid dissemination of information on social media has also given rise to the challenge of misinformation and fake news. The ease with which information spreads can contribute to the amplification of false narratives.The constant connectivity and exposure on social media platforms have been associated with mental health concerns, including anxiety, depression, and social comparison. The anonymous nature of online interactions has led to instances of harassment and cyberbullying on social media platforms, posing challenges to user well-being(Choi & Sung, 2018).

2.1.5 Theories of Social Media in Tourism
2.1.5.1 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

This theory suggests that social media platforms can be used to create and maintain social identities, including those related to tourism (Hogg & Reid, 2016). For example, a traveler may use social media to share their travel experiences and connect with others who share similar interests or identities.

2.1.5 .2 Social Exchange Theory

This theory posits that individuals engage in social media interactions to exchange information, resources, and emotional support (Homans, 2015). In the context of tourism, social media can be used to facilitate exchanges between travelers and tour operators, such as booking accommodations or requesting recommendations.This theory suggests that individuals use social media to satisfy specific needs or gratifications, such as seeking information, entertainment, or social interaction (Katz 2013). In the context of tourism, social media can be used to satisfy these needs by providing information about travel destinations, sharing experiences, or connecting with others.

2.1.5.3 Theory of Planned Behavior

This theory posits that behavioral intentions are influenced by attitudes towards a behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2011). In the context of tourism, social media can be used to influence travel intentions by providing information about travel destinations, sharing experiences, or promoting specific attractions.

2.2 Evolution of Tourism

The roots of tourism can be traced back to ancient times when individuals embarked on journeys for religious pilgrimages, trade expeditions, or educational pursuits. Early civilizations engaged in cross-cultural exchanges, laying the groundwork for the broader concept of tourism.During the Renaissance, the Grand Tour became a rite of passage for European aristocracy. Young elites embarked on extended journeys across continental

Europe to immerse themselves in art, culture, and classical learning. This marked a shift towards travel as a means of cultural enrichment and personal development.

With the advent of industrialization and improved transportation, the 19th century witnessed the emergence of mass tourism. The steam engine and later the automobile made travel more accessible to the general population, leading to the democratization of tourism.The 20th century saw tourism evolve into a global industry. The rise of air travel, advancements in technology, and increased leisure time contributed to a surge in international tourism. Destinations across the globe became accessible to a growing number of travelers, fostering cultural exchange and economic development(Díaz-Andreu, 2019).

As awareness of environmental and cultural impacts grew, niche forms of tourism emerged. Eco-tourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism gained popularity, emphasizing sustainable practices and responsible travel. Travelers sought authentic experiences, contributing to the preservation of local cultures and ecosystems.The 21st century witnessed the integration of technology into every facet of tourism. The rise of the internet, social media, and mobile applications transformed how individuals plan, experience, and share their journeys. This era, often referred to as Tourism 4.0, emphasizes digital connectivity, personalized experiences, and smart destination management.

2.2.1 Key Characteristics of Tourism

Yin et al. (2020) noted that at its core, tourism is associated with leisure and recreation. Travelers seek respite from routine, engaging in activities that bring joy, relaxation, and a sense of fulfillment. Tourism fosters cultural exchange as individuals encounter diverse traditions, languages, and lifestyles. Interactions between tourists and locals contribute to a mutual understanding and appreciation of different cultures.Tourism plays a pivotal role in economic development, generating revenue, creating job opportunities, and supporting local businesses. Popular tourist destinations often experience economic growth due to the influx of visitors. Modern tourism increasingly considers environmental sustainability. Concepts such as eco-tourism aim to minimize the impact of travel on natural ecosystems, promoting conservation and responsible tourism practices.

2.3 Social Media Platforms in Tourism

The advent of social media has revolutionized how individuals plan, experience, and share their travel journeys. Social media platforms serve as dynamic ecosystems, influencing traveler behavior, shaping perceptions, and offering a virtual space for exploration long before the physical journey begins.Social media platforms provide an unprecedented level of connectivity, linking travelers, tour operators, and destinations on a global scale. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Pinterest enable seamless sharing of travel experiences, recommendations, and visual narratives, creating a virtual network that transcends geographical boundaries(Luttrell, 2018).

2.3.1 Facebook: Building Communities and Fostering Engagement

Facebook, with its extensive user base, facilitates the formation of travel communities and interest groups. Travel enthusiasts unite to share insights, exchange tips, and plan group trips. This communal aspect enhances the sense of camaraderie among travelers, fostering a supportive network.

Destinations and tour operators leverage Facebook's features to create dedicated pages, showcasing attractions, events, and experiences. Through event promotion, destinations can amplify their reach, drawing attention to cultural festivals, tours, and activities, thus enticing potential traveler(Hashimy & Halim, 2023).

2.3.2 Instagram: Visual Storytelling and Aspirational Travel

Instagram's visual-centric platform has transformed the way destinations are portrayed. Influencers, travelers, and tour operators utilize captivating visuals to narrate compelling stories. Aspirational travel content, characterized by breathtaking landscapes and immersive experiences, sparks wanderlust and influences travel decisions.The strategic use of hashtags on Instagram contributes to content discoverability and trendsetting. Destinations can create branded hashtags, encouraging visitors to share their experiences under a unified theme. This user-generated content, in turn, amplifies the destination's visibility and attractiveness(Rhee et al., 2021).

2.3.3 Twitter: Real-Time Engagement and Customer Interaction

As noted by Martínez-Rojas et al. (2018) twitter's real-time nature makes it an ideal platform for providing instant updates on events, promotions, and time-sensitive offers. Tour operators and destinations can engage with their audience in real-time, creating a dynamic channel for information dissemination.Twitter serves as a direct communication channel between travelers and tourism entities. Efficient customer service, quick response to queries, and addressing concerns contribute to positive traveler experiences. Additionally, the platform enables destinations to gather real-time feedback and adapt services accordingly.

2.3.4 Pinterest: Curating Inspirational Travel Boards

Pinterest is a visual discovery platform that facilitates travel planning through curated boards. Travelers can create boards for specific destinations, activities, or themes, allowing them to visually organize and plan their itineraries based on inspirational content(Büscher, 2018).Destinations collaborate with influencers to populate collaborative boards, offering diverse perspectives and recommendations. This collaborative approach enhances the authenticity of the destination's image and broadens its appeal to a wider audience.

2.3.5 YouTube: Video Storytelling and Virtual Experiences

YouTube's video-centric platform enables the creation of immersive travel content.Hashimy and Halim (2023)emphasized as destinations and tour operators utilize storytelling techniques through vlogs, travel documentaries, and virtual tours, providing viewers with a firsthand glimpse into the beauty and attractions of a destination.Travelers often turn to YouTube for authentic reviews and testimonials. Video testimonials from fellow travelers contribute to decision-making processes, offering valuable insights into the actual experiences of those who have visited a particular destination or engaged with specific tour services.

2.4   Social Media Content and Tourist Attraction

2.4.1 The Influence of Visual Content

In the digital age, the saying "a picture is worth a thousand words" holds more truth than ever. Visual content has become a powerful tool in communicating emotions, experiences, and narratives(Farinella, 2018). In the case of social media and tourism, the influence of visual elements is unparalleled, shaping perceptions and driving tourist attraction. Visuals possess the unique ability to evoke immediate emotional responses. The vivid colors of a sunset over a tranquil beach, the architectural marvels of historical landmarks, or the immersive experience of a cultural festival—all captured visually— forge a direct and emotive connection with potential tourists, fostering a desire to experience such moments firsthand.

2.4.1.1   The Role of Images in Tourism Promotion

Iconic images play a crucial role in establishing a destination's identity and recognition. Landmarks, natural wonders, and culturally significant sites become synonymous with the destination itself. The visual recall of these images fuels the allure of a place, making it a magnet for tourists seeking to witness the beauty they've admired online (Lee,& Law, 2019).

The authenticity of visual content is heightened when sourced from user-generated contributions. Travelers sharing their own snapshots and experiences provide an authentic portrayal of a destination. Such user-generated visuals resonate with authenticity-seeking tourists, offering a glimpse into genuine encounters and creating a relatable narrative.

2.4.1.2   The Impact of Videos on Shaping Travel Experiences

Videos, with their dynamic and immersive nature, serve as a storytelling medium. Tourism entities leverage video content to craft compelling narratives, taking viewers on virtual journeys through landscapes, cultural events, and adventure activities. This storytelling approach creates a cinematic experience that stirs the imagination of potential tourists(Gerdes, 2015).The advent of virtual reality (VR) and 360-degree videos enables the creation of virtual tours. Prospective tourists can virtually explore accommodations,

attractions, and destinations, providing them with experiential previews that contribute to decision-making. This immersive approach allows travelers to envision themselves in the destination.

2.4.1.3　Multimedia Formats and Audience Engagement

Diversifying visual content across multimedia formats enhances engagement. A mix of images, videos, slideshows, and interactive content caters to varying audience preferences. Tourism promotions strategically leverage this diversity to captivate a broad audience, ensuring that the content aligns with different viewing preferences.Visual storytelling serves as a compelling call-to-action. A well-crafted visual narrative, accompanied by strategic messaging, inspires viewers to move beyond passive observation to active engagement. This engagement may manifest as inquiries, bookings, or sharing the content within their networks, amplifying the reach of tourism promotions(Kim, & Lee,2017).

2.4.1.4　Metrics of Visual Content Success

The success of visual content is often measured through engagement metrics. Likes, shares, comments, and views serve as indicators of the content's resonance with the audience. Virality, where content spreads rapidly across social networks, signifies the content's effectiveness in capturing attention and fostering audience connection.Beyond engagement, the ultimate measure of success lies in conversion rates. Analyzing how visual content translates into tangible actions, such as travel bookings or inquiries, provides insights into its impact on driving tourist interest. Understanding the correlation between engaging visuals and traveler actions informs future content strategies(Fesenmaier, (2015).

2.4.2　Narratives and Storytelling Techniques

2.4.2.1　The Art of Storytelling in Tourism

In the case of tourism, storytelling transcends mere information delivery—it becomes an art form that captivates, resonates, and inspires. The craft of storytelling involves weaving narratives that transport audiences into the heart of a destination, creating an immersive experience through the power of words, visuals, and emotions.Storytelling in

tourism is a vehicle for emotional resonance. The ability to evoke emotions—whether through tales of cultural richness, adventurous escapades, or serene landscapes—forms a profound connection with the audience. This emotional bond contributes to the allure of tourist destinations, fostering a desire to personally engage with the experiences narrated(Kuvbikova, (2014).

2.4.2.2 Leveraging Social Media for Storytelling

Social media platforms offer dynamic canvases for storytelling. Short-form narratives on platforms like Twitter, visual storytelling on Instagram, longer-form narratives on Facebook, and immersive video storytelling on YouTube—all present opportunities to convey the essence of a destination through diverse storytelling formats.The participatory nature of social media storytelling allows for user involvement and co-creation. Tourism entities encourage travelers to share their own stories and experiences, contributing to a collective narrative. This collaborative storytelling approach enhances authenticity and broadens the spectrum of perspectives on a destination(Chae, 2017).

2.4.2.3 Elements of Effective Storytelling

Effective tourism narratives often feature protagonists—the people who bring destinations to life. Introducing locals, tour guides, and fellow travelers as central figures in narratives adds a human dimension. Personal stories and perspectives create relatable entry points for audiences, fostering a deeper connection.The setting of a narrative plays a crucial role in evoking a sense of place. Descriptive language, visual elements, and multimedia content collectively create an atmospheric backdrop that transports audiences(Xiang, Magnini, & Fesenmaier, 2015). Whether it's the bustling markets of Marrakech or the serene landscapes of New Zealand, the setting forms a canvas for the narrative. Engaging narratives often incorporate elements of conflict and resolution. While conflict need not imply negativity, introducing challenges or obstacles followed by resolution enhances the narrative arc. This storytelling technique mirrors the journey of a traveler, from the anticipation of exploration to the fulfillment of experiences.

2.4.2.4 Multimedia Storytelling Techniques

❖ **Visual Storytelling: Images that Speak Volumes**

Visual storytelling remains a powerful technique in the tourism narrative toolkit. High-quality images, strategically presented, transport viewers into the heart of a destination. Whether through vibrant photo essays or carefully curated Instagram feeds, visual storytelling engages the audience's imagination (Kaplan, 2018).

❖ **Video Narratives: Cinematic Experiences**

Video narratives elevate storytelling to cinematic experiences. Through vlogs, documentaries, and destination-focused videos, tourism entities craft immersive journeys that go beyond static visuals. Video storytelling leverages movement, sound, and emotion, providing audiences with a virtual tour of a destination(Viddyoze, 2020).

2.4.2.5 Strategic Storytelling for Tourism Promotion

❖ **Branding through Narrative Consistency**

Consistency in storytelling contributes to destination branding. Aligning narratives with a destination's unique identity, values, and themes creates a cohesive brand image. This consistency builds recognition and reinforces the allure of the destination over time(Skyscanner, 2019).

❖ **Seasonal and Event-based Storytelling**

Adapting storytelling to reflect seasonal nuances and events enhances relevance. Whether highlighting winter festivities, spring blossoms, or cultural celebrations, tailoring narratives to specific periods creates timely and contextually rich storytelling that resonates with diverse audiences (Kyle Chayka, 2021).

2.4.2.6 Analyzing Audience Engagement and Feedback

Analyzing audience engagement metrics provides insights into the impact of storytelling. Likes, shares, comments, and video views serve as indicators of narrative resonance. In-depth analytics help discern which storytelling elements contribute most significantly to audience connection and destination allure.

Audience feedback is a valuable resource for refining narratives. Actively listening to the responses, comments, and suggestions from the audience allows tourism entities to adapt storytelling strategies. This iterative process ensures narratives remain relevant, engaging, and aligned with evolving audience preferences.

2.4.2.7 Ethical Considerations in Tourism Storytelling

Storytelling in tourism demands cultural sensitivity and authenticity. Respectful representation of local cultures, traditions, and histories ensures that narratives contribute positively to cross-cultural understanding. Ethical considerations underscore the responsibility to avoid stereotyping or misrepresenting communities.In destinations with complex histories or sensitive contexts, responsible storytelling becomes imperative. Tourism entities must navigate narratives with care, acknowledging historical realities and engaging with sensitivity to avoid perpetuating harm or discomfort (Sue Blaine,2023).

2.5 Social Media Marketing Strategies in Tourism

2.5.1 Visual Content Utilization

2.5.1.1 The Strategic Imperative of Visual Content in Tourism Marketing

The evolution of social media platforms has ushered in a visual-centric paradigm, where images, videos, and multimedia content reign supreme. In the context of tourism marketing, visual content has emerged as a pivotal strategy, influencing traveler decisions, shaping destination perceptions, and driving engagement.A comprehensive exploration of existing research provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of visual content utilization in social media marketing for tourism. This section delves into key studies and findings that illuminate the impact of visual elements on audience behavior, brand recall, and the overall success of tourism marketing campaigns (KevinTjoe,2022).

2.5.1.2 Audience Engagement and Information Retention

Research consistently underscores the heightened engagement levels associated with visual content. Studies by Kulmala (2023)reveal that, social media posts with compelling

visuals receive significantly more likes, shares, and comments compared to text-centric posts. The visual appeal serves as a catalyst for increased audience interaction, creating a more vibrant online community.Exploring the cognitive impact of visual content, Xu (2017) conducted a study highlighting the role of visuals in memory retention. The findings suggest that individuals are more likely to remember information conveyed through images and videos compared to text alone. This cognitive advantage positions visual content as a strategic tool for conveying memorable and impactful messages in tourism marketing.

2.5.1.3 Brand Perception and Destination Allure

Research conducted by Rhee et al. (2021)delves into the influence of visual storytelling on brand identity. The study suggests that consistent and authentic visual narratives contribute to the establishment of a destination's brand identity. Brands that effectively utilize visual content aligning with their unique narrative enjoy heightened recognition and a positive perception among the target audience.Xu (2017)investigation into the emotional impact of visuals in tourism marketing sheds light on the essence of visual allure. The study reveals that visuals evoke emotions more effectively than text, fostering a profound emotional connection between the audience and the destination. This emotional resonance becomes a driving force behind the allure of tourist destinations showcased through visually compelling content.

2.5.1.4 Social Media Metrics and Conversion Rates

The effectiveness of visual content in tourism marketing is quantifiable through social media metrics. Stone et al. (2023)analysis emphasizes the importance of going beyond surface-level metrics like likes and shares. The study explores the correlation between high-quality visuals and conversion rates, indicating that compelling visual content directly contributes to tangible actions such as website visits, inquiries, and travel bookings.Visual commerce, as explored by Zhang and Zhang (2018)investigates, the impact of visual content on purchase decisions. The study suggests that the integration of visually appealing content, such as user-generated images and immersive videos, positively influences the decision-making process. Travelers, when exposed to

compelling visuals, are more likely to convert from inspiration to action, making informed travel choices.

2.5.1.5 Cross-Platform Strategies and Multichannel Campaigns

The research conducted by Hashimy and Halim (2023)delves into the importance of cross-platform consistency in visual content utilization. The findings highlight that maintaining a consistent visual narrative across multiple social media platforms strengthens the destination's image and brand recall. A harmonized approach to visual content contributes to a cohesive and recognizable online presence.

2.5.2 Storytelling Approaches

2.5.2.1 Narrative Arcs: Crafting Journeys of Discovery

One of the fundamental storytelling approaches in tourism marketing involves the use of narrative arcs. These arcs typically follow a structured progression, introducing travelers to a destination's unique features, guiding them through immersive experiences, and culminating in a resolution that leaves a lasting impression.

Crafting narrative arcs involves strategically incorporating emotional peaks and valleys. Peaks signify moments of awe, excitement, or cultural enrichment, while valleys may represent moments of tranquility or reflection. The ebb and flow of emotions create a dynamic storytelling experience, resonating with travelers on a personal level(Viddyoze, 2020).

2.5.2.2 User-Generated Content: Amplifying Authentic Voices

User-generated content (UGC) is a powerful storytelling approach that amplifies authentic voices. Encouraging travelers to share their experiences through images, videos, and personal narratives fosters a sense of community and trust. UGC serves as a testimony to the genuine allure of a destination, providing potential travelers with relatable and trustworthy perspectives.Tourism entities often collaborate with influencers or passionate travelers to co-create narratives. This collaborative approach blends the perspectives of diverse storytellers, offering a mosaic of experiences. Collaborative

storytelling not only diversifies content but also extends the reach of the narrative to new audiences (Anton Ioffeet al.,2023).

2.5.2.3 Seasonal Storytelling: Tailoring Narratives to Timely Themes

Seasonal storytelling involves tailoring narratives to align with the changing seasons and thematic events. Whether highlighting winter wonderlands, spring festivals, or summer adventures, this approach adds a temporal dimension to storytelling. Timely narratives resonate with travelers planning trips based on specific seasons or events.Incorporating cultural celebrations and festivals into narratives enhances their relevance. Research byHolst (2023)suggests that narratives aligned with cultural and festive occasions not only capture the spirit of a destination but also attract travelers seeking unique and culturally immersive experiences.

2.5.2.4 Personalized Storytelling: Tailoring Experiences to Individuals

Personalized storytelling involves tailoring narratives to align with individual preferences and interests. This approach leverages data analytics and user behavior insights to deliver content that resonates with specific audience segments. Personalized narratives create a sense of individualized connection, enhancing the likelihood of audience engagement.By implementing dynamic content recommendations, tourism entities can deliver personalized storytelling experiences. As users interact with content, algorithms analyze their preferences and behaviors to suggest relevant narratives. This adaptive approach ensures that each traveler's journey through the storytelling landscape is uniquely crafted(Katie Morleyet al.,2023).

2.5.2.5 Historical and Cultural Narratives: Unveiling Rich Heritage

Historical and cultural narratives delve into the rich heritage of a destination. By narrating the stories behind historical landmarks, cultural traditions, and significant events, tourism entities create a tapestry of narratives that showcase the depth and uniqueness of a destination's identity.Yin et al. (2020) research suggests that incorporating educational and informative elements into historical and cultural narratives enhances their impact. Providing context, anecdotes, and insights into the significance of

cultural aspects adds depth to the storytelling, appealing to travelers with a penchant for cultural exploration and learning.

2.5.2.6 Emotional Storytelling: Creating Lasting Connections

Emotional storytelling focuses on creating narratives that elicit specific emotions. Whether aiming for a sense of wonder, nostalgia, or inspiration, this approach relies on evocative storytelling techniques. Van Nuenen and Scarles (2021)research indicates that emotionally resonant narratives leave a lasting imprint on travelers, influencing their perceptions and decision-making.Incorporating testimonials and personal accounts into narratives adds authenticity and emotional depth. Travelers sharing their own stories, challenges, and triumphs contribute to the emotional fabric of storytelling. Sofindings suggest that authentic testimonials enhance relatability and foster emotional connections.

2.6 Social Media Platform Selection Strategies

Studies by Sotiriadis (2017)have delved into the social media practices of tour operators, focusing on platform selection strategies. The research provides insights into the considerations that tour operators take into account when choosing specific platforms for their promotional efforts.One key aspect explored is the analysis of target audiences. The study indicates that successful tour operators conduct thorough assessments of their target demographics. By understanding the preferences, behaviors, and demographics of potential travelers, tour operators can align their platform selection with the channels most frequented by their audience.

Research by Ribeiro et al. (2020)focuses on the demographics of users across various social media platforms. The study highlights that different platform attract distinct user demographics. Tour operators leverage this information to strategically align their promotional efforts with platforms where their target audience is most active.Understanding user behavior is crucial in platform selection. Studies by Marlowe et al. (2017)have explored how users engage with content on different platforms. Tour operators consider factors such as user engagement patterns, content preferences, and interaction styles to tailor their content for maximum impact on chosen platforms.The suitability of content formats on different platforms is a key consideration for tour

operators. Van Nuenen and Scarles (2021)work explores how users on specific platforms engage with diverse content formats, including images, videos, and interactive elements. Tour operators strategically choose platforms that align with their content creation strengths and audience preferences.

Visual appeal plays a significant role in tourism promotion. Research by Tham et al. (2020)suggests that platforms emphasizing visual content, such as Instagram and Pinterest, are preferred by tour operators aiming to showcase picturesque destinations. The study sheds light on how the visual nature of these platforms aligns with the inherently visual appeal of travel.The adoption of a multichannel approach is a prevalent strategy among tour operators. Studies by Sotiriadis (2017)delve into how tour operators integrate multiple social media platforms into their strategies. The research indicates that a diversified presence across platforms allows operators to reach a broader audience and cater to diverse content preferences.

Consistency in branding across multiple platforms is a key theme explored by (Ribeiro et al., 2020). The study suggests that maintaining a cohesive brand image, messaging, and visual identity across various platforms strengthens the overall impact of tourism promotion efforts. Tour operators strategically align their messaging to create a unified brand presence. Also tour operators increasingly rely on data analytics provided by social media platforms to assess the effectiveness of their campaigns. The research sheds light on how platforms' analytical tools contribute to informed decision-making in selecting and optimizing promotional channels.

2.7 Empirical Literature

Research has consistently shown that an online presence is a crucial factor in attracting tourists to a destination. A study by Buhalis and Licata (2012), found that online travel agencies (OTAs) and destination websites are the most important sources of information for tourists planning their trips, with 85% of tourists using these sources to research and book their travel. Similarly, a study by Lee and Law (2019) found that tourists who use online sources to gather information about a destination are more likely to visit that destination than those who do not.

Another study by Xiang (2015), found that having a social media presence is also important for tourist attractions, with 74% of tourists using social media to research and plan their trips. The study also found that tourists are more likely to visit a destination if they have a positive experience with its social media presence, such as finding relevant information or interacting with the attraction's staff. Overall, the empirical literature suggests that having a strong online presence is essential for attracting tourists and increasing tourist demand.

The effect of social media content on tourist attraction rates suggests that there is a significant positive correlation between the two. A study by Kim and Stepchenkova (2013) found that social media engagement (measured by likes, comments, and shares) was a significant predictor of tourist destination choice, with higher levels of engagement leading to increased attraction rates.Other studies have also found that social media content can have a positive impact on tourist attraction rates by influencing consumer decision-making. For example, a study by Xiang (2015,) found that social media reviews and ratings had a significant impact on tourists' destination choice, with 60% of participants reporting that they were influenced by online reviews when making travel decisions. Another study by Liu e(2016), found that social media content featuring user-generated reviews and ratings was effective in increasing tourist satisfaction and loyalty, with 80% of participants reporting that they would return to a destination if they had a positive experience.

A study by Kim (2017), found that frequent posting on Facebook increased engagement and attracted more tourists to a destination. The study suggested that posting at least three times a week was optimal for maximizing engagement. Similarly, a study by Wang (2018), found that the timing of social media posts played a crucial role in attracting tourists. The study found that posting during peak hours (12 pm to 3 pm) and on weekends generated more engagement and increased the likelihood of attracting tourists.Another study by Zhang (2016), examined the impact of social media frequency and timing on hotel bookings. The study found that hotels that posted more frequently on social media (at least 5 times a week) experienced a significant increase in bookings. Furthermore, the study found that posting during peak hours (10 am to 4 pm) was more

effective in generating bookings than posting during off-peak hours. The study suggested that hotels should consider adjusting their social media posting schedule based on the target audience's preferences and time zones.

Stephens (2013),found that a hotel's social media presence and engagement style significantly influenced tourists' booking decisions, with hotels that used a mix of promotional and informative content experiencing higher conversion rates. Similarly, a study by Zhang (2018) , discovered that social media influencers' sponsored posts had a positive impact on tourist attraction rates, with influencers who showcased the destination's unique experiences and activities generating more interest among potential tourists. Another study by Kim (2019) revealed that hotels that used Instagram's "Stories" feature to share behind-the-scenes content and human-interest stories about their staff and guests experienced a significant increase in booking inquiries and occupancy rates. Overall, the empirical literature suggests that a well-executed social media strategy can play a crucial role in attracting tourists to a destination or hotel, and hotels should focus on creating engaging content that showcases their unique experiences and human side to drive bookings. (Kim & Stephens, 2013; Zhang ,2018; Kim 2019).

2.8 Gaps on Existing Literature

While existing literature provides insights into the social media practices of tour operators, there is a notable gap in the exploration of small and medium-sized operators. Larger operators may have distinct strategies, resources, and considerations. A more comprehensive understanding of how smaller operators navigate social media platform selection, given potential resource constraints, is crucial for a holistic view.Many studies focus on general tourism promotion, but there is a gap in research that delves into the specific platform selection strategies for niche tourism segments. Tailoring strategies for adventure tourism, cultural tourism, or eco-tourism may require unique considerations. Research exploring how tour operators address the diverse needs of niche segments within the broader tourism landscape is limited.While studies touch on user behavior, there is a literature gap in the in-depth analysis of how users interact and engage with tour operators' content on different social media platforms. Understanding the dynamics of

user engagement, such as the factors influencing likes, shares, and comments, can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of platform-specific strategies.

Existing literature often focuses on immediate outcomes and engagement metrics, but there is a gap in research that assesses the long-term impact and sustainability of platform choices. Tour operators need insights into how their selected platforms contribute to brand loyalty, repeat business, and sustained interest over an extended period.Global tourism involves reaching diverse audiences with distinct cultural backgrounds. However, there is a gap in research that explores how tour operators factor in cross-cultural considerations when selecting social media platforms. Understanding how cultural nuances influence platform preferences and engagement can enhance the effectiveness of global tourism promotion.

Tour operators often employ both offline and online marketing strategies. However, there is a gap in understanding how these strategies are integrated, particularly regarding platform selection. Research that explores how tour operators synchronize their offline promotional efforts with their chosen social media platforms can provide a comprehensive view of their overall marketing strategies.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

In the rapidly evolving landscape of the tourism industry, the integration of effective digital marketing, particularly through social media platforms, has become imperative for tour operators seeking to enhance their visibility and attract a broader audience. This conceptual framework delves into the intricacies of the dynamic relationship between key independent variables and the dependent variable of Tourist Attraction. Guided by contemporary trends in social media marketing, the framework seeks to illuminate the multifaceted nature of tour operators' digital presence. The independent variables—Social Media Platform Selection, Social Media Content, Online Presence of Tour Operators, Social Media Execution Style, and Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts—serve as pivotal elements influencing the overarching goal of Tourist Attraction. As the researcher navigate this framework, we embark on a journey to uncover the nuanced interplay between decision-making, content creation, online visibility, execution styles, and temporal considerations, all of which collectively contribute to shaping the allure and

appeal of tourist destinations. Through an empirical exploration of these variables, this framework aims to provide actionable insights for tour operators, researchers, and industry stakeholders alike, fostering a deeper understanding of the mechanisms driving successful social media-driven tourism marketing strategies.

Independent variables   Dependent variable
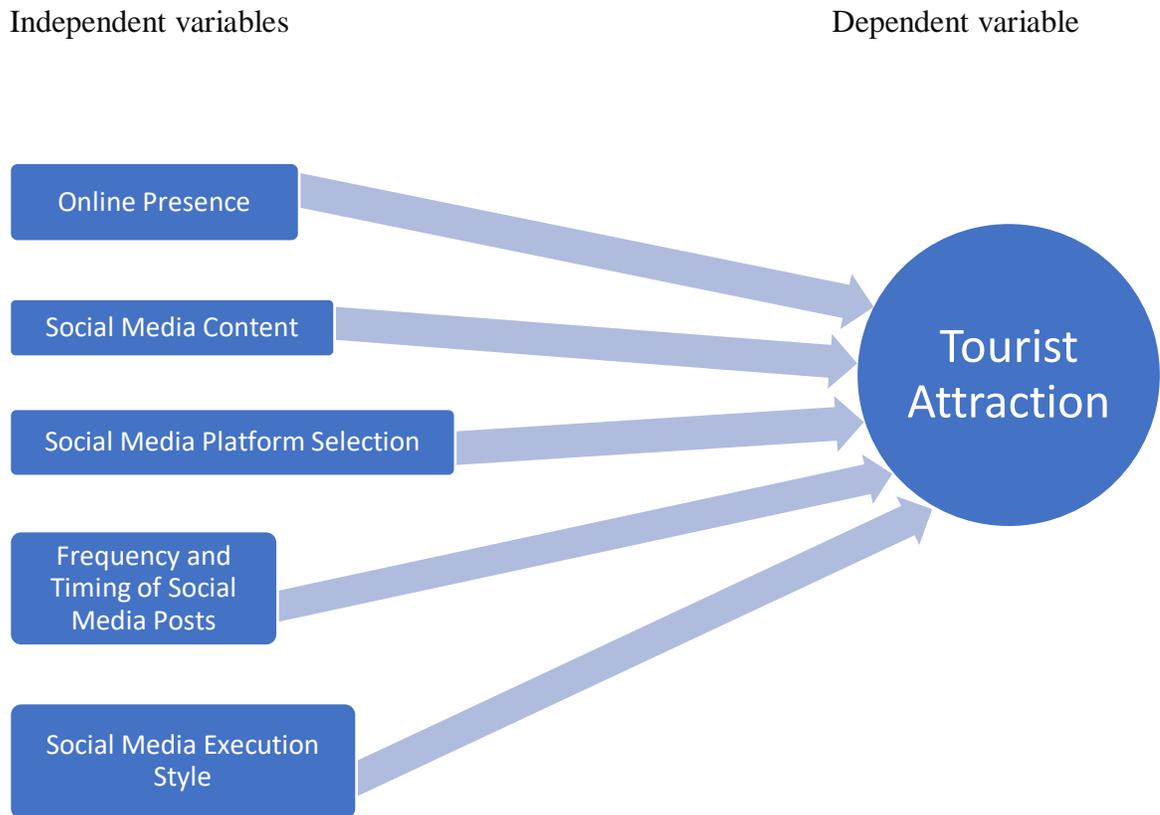
Source:(((Kim (2017),Zhang (2018),Buhalis and Licata (2012)) and others.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The research methodology is meticulously outlined, offering a comprehensive understanding of the approach taken to investigate the intricate relationship between social media dynamics and tourist attraction in the tourism industry. The chapter addresses key elements, including the chosen descriptive and inferential research design, study setting, participant criteria, and the hybrid data collection approach. It illuminates how quantitative perspectives from structured questionnaires wouldharmonized. Additionally, ethical considerations and potential limitations are discussed, setting the stage for a robust examination of the impact of social media on tourism within the study's context.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the overall structure, plan, and strategy formulated to guide a research study. It is the blueprint that outlines the methods, procedures, and techniques employed to collect, analyze, and interpret data to address the research problem or question. Research design is a crucial component of the research process as it shapes the overall framework, providing a systematic approach to achieve the study's objectives.

In this study, the researcher used a combination of descriptive and explanatory research designs, is driven by the need to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. Descriptive research is chosen to capture the current state of social media dynamics and their impact on tourist attraction rates within the tourism industry. This design allows for the systematic portrayal of patterns, trends, and relationships among variables, offering insights into the existing practices of tour operators. By focusing on the "what" and "how" of social media strategies, descriptive research provides a foundational understanding, serving as a starting point for more in-depth analysis.

Explanatory research is introduced to delve deeper into the underlying reasons or causal relationships between social media strategies and tourist attraction. Once descriptive research has outlined the current practices, explanatory research takes the investigation to the next level by probing into the "why" and "how" of observed patterns. This design allows for the identification of key factors influencing tourist attraction rates, offering a nuanced understanding of the mechanisms at play.By combining descriptive and explanatory research designs, the study aims to provide a holistic view. Descriptive research sets the stage by outlining the landscape of social media practices, and explanatory research adds depth by unraveling the causal relationships. This tandem approach allows for a robust exploration of the research problem, ensuring a nuanced understanding that goes beyond surface-level observations.

3.2 Research Approach

This study embraces quantitative research approachto provide a comprehensive exploration of the impact of social media on tourist attraction within the tourism industry.

The quantitative involves the use of structured questionnaires distributed among a larger sample of tour operators. This approach facilitates the collection of numerical data on specific variables such as social media content, online presence, execution styles, and posting frequencies. Statistical analysis of this quantitative data enhances the study's ability to identify patterns, correlations, and trends, adding a quantitative dimension to the overall findings.

3.2.1 Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion criteria for participants in the study are as follows:

- **Active Involvement in Tourism**: Entities actively engaged in providing tourism services and experiences within Addis Ababa.
- **Variety in Operational Scale:** Inclusion of tour operators of varying sizes, from small-scale enterprises to larger firms, to ensure diversity in social media strategies.

- **Utilization of social media:** Tour operators with an active presence on social media platforms, emphasizing a genuine and substantial engagement in digital marketing.

3.2.2 Exclusion Criteria

Entities that do not meet the inclusion criteria or those not willing to participate in the study are excluded from the target population. The focus is on participants with authentic and active involvement in the tourism industry, particularly in the realm of social media marketing.The selection of tour operators as the target population aligns with the study's focus on assessing the impact of social media on tourist attraction rates within the specific context of the tourism industry in Addis Ababa.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study comprises tour operators actively engaged in the tourism industry and tourists who have been visiting Addis Ababa at the time of the research being conducted. The rationale for selecting this specific group lies in its representation of diverse entities contributing to the tourism landscape. The focus is on capturing a cross-section of tour operators, encompassing both small enterprises and larger firms, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of social media dynamics across different operational scales.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

Due to the specific nature of the target population for this study, tourists registered with 10 tour operators in Addis Ababa were selected purposively.This method prioritizes selecting participants who are readily available and accessible within the defined context. In this case, focusing on tourists already visiting Addis Ababa through registered tour operators in April 2024 presented a readily accessible pool for survey administration. Convenience sampling proves particularly suitable for this study due to the specific target population: tourists registered with 10 tour operators in Addis Ababa. This well-defined group offers a significant advantage in terms of accessibility. Compared to targeting a broader population of potential Ethiopian tourists, these individuals are readily available and easier to reach. Furthermore, convenience sampling aligns well with potential time

constraints. The efficient nature of this method allows for data collection within a limited timeframe, a crucial factor if your research timeline necessitates swift data acquisition. Finally, convenience sampling presents a cost-effective option for data collection. Since the target group is already located in Addis Ababa, there's no need for extensive outreach efforts that might incur higher costs.

3.5 Sample Size

The determination of the sample size for this study was facilitated through the use of availability or convenience sampling techniques. Given the practical nature of the research and the accessibility of tour operators in Addis Ababa, this method aligns with the study's logistical considerations. The criteria for participant selection include geographical proximity and the willingness of tour operators to participate in the study, considering their availability and convenience. To determine the required sample size for the study, the researcherutilized the Yamane's sampling formula, which is commonly used in statistical research to estimate the minimum sample size needed based on the total population size and desired margin of error.

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

Were,

N= the total population

n= the sample size

e= margin of error in this case 5%

$$n = \frac{4200}{1 + 4200(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{4200}{11.5} = 365$$

This sample size ensures a 5% margin of error within a 95% confidence level, allowing for statistically reliable findings.The study anticipates involving 10 tour operators. This range is considered sufficient to gather meaningful insights into the impact of social

media on tourist attraction within the constraints of availability or convenience sampling. The use of this sampling approach acknowledges the pragmatic nature of the study, ensuring a feasible and accessible means of participant selection.

The inclusion of tourists in this study involves a thoughtful approach to sampling, considering the unique nature of this population. Given the transient and diverse nature of tourists in Addis Ababa, the sampling strategy adopts availability or convenience sampling techniques. The criteria for selecting tourists encompass factors such as their willingness to participate, availability at specific tourist sites, and a diverse representation of demographics and travel behaviors.

3.6 Typeand Source of Data

The data for this study would be categorized into two main types: primary and secondary. Primary data constitute the core of the research, and it would be collected directly from tour operators and tourists in Addis Ababa. Quantitative primary data has been obtained through structured questionnaires distributed among tourists, capturing numerical insights into variables such as social media content, online presence, execution styles, and posting frequencies applied through tour operators.

In addition to primary data, secondary data would be sourced from existing literature, reports, and studies related to the impact of social media on the tourism industry, both globally and within Ethiopia. This secondary data would contribute context and background information to enrich our understanding of the subject. The combination of primary and secondary data sources ensures a comprehensive and well-informed exploration of the research questions, leveraging the strengths of both original insights and existing knowledge.

3.7 Data Collection Tools

The data for this study would be meticulously gathered through a combination of tailored data collection tools designed to align with the mixed research approach.The quantitative data collection would be facilitated by structured questionnaires, specifically crafted for tourists. These questionnaires wouldextract numerical insights into variables such as social media content, online presence, execution styles, and posting frequencies. So,

quantitative data has been garnered through survey instruments distributed at various tourist sites, capturing their perceptions and behaviors related to social media's influence on travel choices. The structured nature of these tools ensures a systematic and comprehensive exploration of the research questions, allowing for both depth and breadth in understanding the impact of social media on tourist attraction within the Ethiopian context.

3.8 Data AanalysisTtechniques

The data collected for this study has been undergo a rigorous and systematic analysis of quantitative techniques to derive meaningful insights. The quantitative data obtained from structured questionnaires has beenundergoing statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics has been employed to analyze numerical data on variables such as social media content, online presence, and posting frequencies among tour operators. Additionally, inferential statistics has been used to identify correlations, and multiple regressionwere employed.The integration of quantitative data analysis techniques ensures a comprehensive interpretation of the findings, allowing for a holistic exploration of the impact of social media on the tourism industry in Addis Ababa.

3.9 Validity and Rreliability

Ensuring the validity and reliability of the study is crucial to establish the credibility and accuracy of the findings. Validity, in the context of this study, pertains to the extent to which the selected data collection tools measure the intended constructs. To enhance validity, a pilot study has been conducted to assess the clarity and appropriateness of the questions, allowing for necessary refinements before full-scale data collection. On the other hand, reliability had been systematically evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency. This statistical method has been be applied to assess the reliability of the quantitative instruments, particularly the structured questionnaires administered to tour operators. High Cronbach's alpha values indicate the consistency of responses across different items, ensuring the reliability of the measurement tools.

Table 3.1 Reliability Test

Description	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Social Media Content	.701	5
Online Presence of Tour Operators	.708	5
Social Media Execution Style	.777	5
Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts	.881	5
Social Media Platform Selection	.734	5
Tourist attraction rate	0.70	5

Source researcher survey,2024

As shown in table 3.1 The Chronbach alpha confidence forall dimensions of the study variable was greater than 7. It implies that the data was highly reliable according to Hinton (2004).

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The study places a strong emphasis on ethical principles to ensure the well-being and rights of all participants involved. Before commencement, ethical approval has been sought from the relevant institutional review board, demonstrating a commitment to conducting research by established guidelines. Informed consent had been obtained from all participants, both tour operators and tourists, outlining the purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits of their involvement. Participants hadthe right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing repercussions. Also, confidentiality had been rigorously maintained throughout the research process. All collected data has been anonymized and stored securely. Furthermore, transparency has been prioritized in all aspects of the study. Participants have been provided with clear and honest information about the research objectives and how their contributions would be utilized. Lastly, findings had been reported in an aggregated and non-identifiable manner to ensure the anonymity of individual participants.

CHAPTERFOUR

DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter delves into the intricate tapestry of social media and its connection to Ethiopian tourism. The researcher utilizeda multifaceted approach, employing a range of data analysis techniques to gain a holistic understanding. The researcher examines the profile of respondents and this foundation provides context for interpreting the subsequent analyses. Finally, the researcherleverages the power of regression analysis to move beyond description and test hypotheses about social media's influence on tourist attraction. This inferential analysis involves examining the assumptions of regression to ensure reliable results. The researcherthen scrutinized the coefficients within the regression model, revealing the individual and combined effects of social media on tourism growth.

4.1 Response Rate

The study employed a questionnaire to gather data on the influence of social media on tourist attraction in Ethiopia. A total of 365 questionnaires were distributed. However, after data cleaning and the exclusion of unusable responses, a final sample size of 350 questionnaires was used for the analysis.This translates to a response rate of approximately 95.9%. This high response rate strengthens the confidence in the generalizability of the findings, as it suggests a representative sample of the target population was obtained.

Table 4.1 Response Rate of Respondents

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Total number of questionnaires distributed	365	100%
Total number of questionnaires returned	350	95.9%
The total number of questionnaires unreturned	15	4.1%
The total number of questionnaires rejected	---	---

Source: Researcher survey, 2024

4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Table 4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

Gender of the Respondents					
Statements		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	194	55.4	55.4	55.4
	Female	156	44.6	44.6	100.0
	Total	350	100.0	100.0	
Age of the Respondents					
Statements		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24 years	10	2.86	2.86	2.86
	25-34 Years	33	9.43	9.43	12.29
	35-44 Years	114	32.57	32.57	44.86
	45-54 years	155	44.29	44.29	89.15
	Above 55 years	38	10.86	10.85	100
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	
Nationality					
Statements		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Europe	101	28.8	28.8	28.8
	North America	89	25.4	25.4	54.3
	Asia	50	14.3	14.3	68.3
	South America	76	21.7	21.7	90.2
	Australia	22	6.3	6.4	96.6
	African	12	3.4	3.4	100
	Total	350	100	100	

Source researcher survey,2024

An examination of the survey data regarding tourist gender reveals a near parity in the composition of male and female visitors to Addis Ababa. While a slight majority of

respondents identified as male (194, representing 55.4%), the female representation remains significant (156, or 44.6%). This suggests that Ethiopia's tourism industry enjoys a balanced influx of both genders. The survey on social media's influence in Ethiopian tourism attracted tourists across a range of ages, with the majority falling within the 45–54-year-old category (44.3%). The 35–44-year-olds also formed a significant portion (32.6%), while younger age groups (18-24 and 25-34) and those over 55 had a smaller presence (2.9%, 9.4%, and 10.9% respectively). This distribution reveals a dominance of middle-aged tourists in the survey sample.

The data on tourist origin reveals a geographically diverse visitor base to Addis Ababa. While Europe is the single largest source region, contributing nearly a third of respondents (101, or 28.9%), tourists from North America (89, or 25.4%) come in close behind. This suggests a strong presence of Western tourists interested in exploring Ethiopia. Interestingly, Asia (50, or 14.3%) also has a significant representation, highlighting a growing interest from that region. Tourists from South America (76, or 21.7%) and Australia/New Zealand (22, or 6.3%) also contribute to the mix, though to a lesser extent. Finally, African tourists themselves account for a smaller portion (12, or 3.4%) of the survey participants. This tourist profile provides valuable insights for Addis Ababa tourism stakeholders. By understanding the origin regions of their visitors, they can tailor their marketing and promotional efforts to resonate with specific geographic areas. They can also partner with travel agencies and tour operators in these regions to reach a wider audience.

Table 4.3 Travel Style of Respondents

Travel style of the respondents				
Statements		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Mid-range Travel	44	12.6	12.6	12.6
	luxury Travel	18	5.1	5.1	17.7
	Solo Travel	21	6	6	23.7
	Budget Travel	57	16.29	16.29	39.99
	Adventure Travel	70	20	20	59.99
	Culturalimmersion	45	12.86	12.86	72.85
	Family travel	95	27.14	27.15	100
	Total	350	100	100	

Source researcher survey,2024

An analysis of tourist travel styles in Ethiopia reveals a multifaceted visitor base with a spectrum ofpreferences. Family travel emerges as the most prominent category, with nearly a third of respondents (95, or 27.1%) selecting this option. This suggests that Addis Ababa is a popular destination for family vacations, offering experiences and activities suitable for all ages. Adventure travel follows closely behind (70 respondents, or 20.0%), highlighting Ethiopia's appeal for tourists seeking active exploration and unique experiences. Cultural immersion experiences also hold significant value for a notable segment (45 respondents, or 12.9%), indicating a strong interest in delving into Ethiopia's rich historical tapestry and traditions. Budget travel is another well-represented category (57 respondents, or 16.3%), demonstrating that Ethiopia caters to cost-conscious travelers seeking affordable exploration options.This suggests that Ethiopia has a strong focus on budget-friendly tourism, offering a variety of activities, accommodations, and transportation options that cater to cost-conscious travelers. This is likely because Ethiopia is a developing country, where budget-friendly options are often necessary to make tourism accessible to a wider range of people.

The spectrum extends to mid-range travel (44 respondents, or 12.6%) and luxury travel (18 respondents, or 5.1%), catering to tourists with varying levels of desired comfort and expenditure. Solo travel has the smallest representation within the data set (21 respondents, or 6.0%).This information provides invaluable insights for stakeholders in the Ethiopian tourism industry. Understanding the predominant travel styles allows them to strategically tailor their offerings and marketing efforts to attract specific tourist segments. This could involve developing targeted tours, curating engaging social media content showcasing relevant experiences, and forging partnerships with accommodation providers catering to different budget preferences. By effectively catering to this diverse range of travel interests, Ethiopia can attract a wider audience and ensure the continued success of its tourism industry.

Table 4.4Preferred Social Media Platforms

Statements	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Preferred Social Media Platforms				
Facebook	125	35.7	35.7	35.7
Instagram	101	28.9	28.9	64.6
Twitter	41	11.7	11.7	76.3
You tube	21	6.0	6.0	82.3
Tiktok	10	2.9	2.9	85.1
Pinterest	52	14.9	14.9	100.0
Total	350	100.0	100.0	

Source researcher survey,2024

The data offers valuable insights into the social media landscape preferred by tourists interested in Ethiopia. Facebook establishes itself as the dominant platform, capturing the attention of over a third of respondents (125, or 35.7%). Instagram follows closely behind (101 respondents, or 28.9%), highlighting a strong preference for established visual social media platforms for travel inspiration and planning. Tourists seem to value the ability to explore destinations and experiences visually through these platforms.

Pinterest also plays a significant role (52 respondents, or 14.9%), particularly for its potential to showcase travel destinations and experiences in an aesthetically pleasing way. While Twitter has a notable presence (41 respondents, or 11.7%), YouTube (21 respondents, or 6.0%) and TikTok (10 respondents, or 2.9%) have a smaller user base among Ethiopian tourism-oriented tourists. This suggests that these emerging platforms might be less relevant for currently reaching this specific audience.Understanding these preferences is crucial for Ethiopian tourism stakeholders. Optimizing their social media presence and content strategy requires focusing on Facebook and Instagram, where tourists are most engaged. This could involve utilizing high-quality visuals and engaging captions to capture tourist attention effectively. While Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok have a smaller footprint currently, they hold potential for future growth, especially with younger demographics. Monitoring trends and strategically experimenting with these

platforms could prove beneficial in the long run, allowing Ethiopian tourism stakeholders to leverage the ever-evolving social media landscape and reach their target audience more effectively.

4.3Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is an essential method used in quantitative research to summarize and present data in a meaningful and interpretable manner. It plays a fundamental role in exploring and understanding the basic characteristics of a dataset, providing researchers with valuable insights into the distribution, central tendency, and variability of their data. This analytical approach involves several key aspects that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the dataset.

One of the primary objectives of descriptive analysis is to summarize data by calculating various statistical measures. These measures include central tendency statistics such as mean which provide a representation of the typical value or central point around which the data points are clustered. Central tendency metrics offer insights into the overall trend of the data and can be instrumental in making comparisons or identifying outliers.Additionally, descriptive analysis encompasses measures of variability, which quantify the spread or dispersion of data points. Common measures of variability includesstandard deviation. These metrics reveal how much the data points diverge from the central tendency and provide an understanding of the data's consistency or variability.

Descriptive analysis would be a critical component of this study on the impact of social media on the tourism industry in Ethiopia. This analytical approach would involve summarizing and presenting data obtained from tourists regarding their engagement with social media platforms and their influence on tourism-related activities. Through descriptive statistics, the researcher aims to understand the typical patterns of social media use among tourists and identify key trends in their behavior. Measures of variability, including standard deviation, would help assess the dispersion of data points and the consistency of tourist preferences. The descriptive analysis would provide a foundational understanding of how social media impacts tourist behavior and preferences in Ethiopia, guiding further analysis and interpretation of the study findings.

Moidunny (2009) describes the interpretation of Likert scales, accordingly, in this study the essence of the interpreted data is as follows: 1.0–1.8 = Very low, 1.81–2.6 =Low, 2.61–3.20 =Moderat, 3.21–4.20 = High, 4.21–5.00 = High.

4.3.1 Respondents' Perception Towards Social Media Content

Social media content plays a pivotal role in influencing tourist behavior and perceptions within the context of the tourism industry. In the realm of tourism in Ethiopia, compelling and engaging social media content serves as a powerful tool for attracting and engaging potential tourists. Effective content strategies leverage visually appealing images, informative videos, captivating narratives, and user-generated content to showcase the unique attractions, culture, and experiences that Ethiopia has to offer. Engaging content not only captures attention but also shapes perceptions, influencing tourists' decisions to explore specific destinations or participate in tourism activities. Moreover, the quality, relevance, and authenticity of social media content contribute significantly to building trust and credibility among tourists, enhancing their overall experience and satisfaction. Tour operators and stakeholders in the tourism sector leverage social media platforms strategically to promote tourism products and services, share testimonials, highlight local experiences, and create immersive storytelling that resonates with diverse audiences. By understanding the impact and nuances of social media content, this study aims to uncover effective strategies that optimize engagement, drive tourist interest, and ultimately contribute to the growth and development of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.

Table 4.5 Respondents' Perception Towards Social Media Content

Descriptive Statistics			
Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The social media content posted by tour operators is engaging.	350	3.74	1.17
The content of the social media promotion strongly influences your perception.	350	3.51	1.06
The quality and relevance of social media content impact my decision to explore tourist attractions.	350	3.41	1.18
Social media content influences my perception of Ethiopia as a tourist destination.	350	3.44	1.13
I find social media content from tour operators informative and appealing.	350	3.66	1.09
Grand mean	350	3.5	1.13

Source researcher survey,2024

The descriptive statistics on table 4.5 above shows for respondents' perception of social media content reveals important insights into the impact of social media on tourist behavior and perceptions within the context of Ethiopia's tourism industry. The data indicates high level of engagement with social media content posted by tour operators, as reflected by a mean score of 3.74 and a standard deviation of 1.17.

Moreover, respondents strongly perceive that the content of social media promotion significantly influences their perceptions, with a mean score of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 1.06. This underscores the pivotal role of compelling and influential social media content in shaping tourists' views and decisions. The quality and relevance of social media content also emerge as key factors impacting respondents' decisions to explore tourist attractions, with a mean score of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 1.18. Furthermore, social media content plays a role in shaping perceptions of Ethiopia as a tourist destination, although there is variability in this regard (mean = 3.44 standard deviation = 1.13).

Regareding this, respondents generally find social media content from tour operators to be informative and appealing, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.09. These findings highlight the critical importance of effective social media strategies in promoting tourism and enhancing Ethiopia's image as a desirable destination.

Further analysis and interpretation of these statistics would contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in driving tourism growth and engagement in Ethiopia.

The overall mean of Social Media Content was 3.5 and st. deviation of 1.13 ,this implies that respondent perception towards Social Media Content was high in the ethiopia tourism industry.This suggests that the respondents have a positive attitude towards social media content, which is often used to promote tourism and travel. The high mean indicates that the respondents generally find social media content to

be engaging, informative, or entertaining, which may be influencing their perceptions of tourism in Ethiopia.

This result is strengthed by Social media has a significant impact on the tourism industry, with 70% of travelers using online platforms to plan and research their trips (Destination Marketing Association International, 2019). Social media content can influence travel decisions, with 55% of travelers reporting that social media has changed their travel plans (Forrester Research, 2018). Additionally, social media platforms provide an opportunity for tourists to share their experiences, with 85% of travelers reporting that they are more likely to book a trip if they have seen positive reviews or photos from other travelers (Skift Research, 2017). This can lead to increased bookings and revenue for tourism operators, as well as increased brand awareness and reputation.

4.3.2 Respondents' Perception Towards Online Presence of Tour Operators

The online presence of tour operators plays a crucial role in shaping tourists' perceptions and behaviors in the digital age. In the context of Ethiopia's tourism industry, tour operators' digital footprint encompasses their visibility, engagement, and reputation across various online platforms, including websites, social media channels, and online travel platforms. A strong online presence enables tour operators to showcase their services, highlight unique offerings, and interact with potential tourists in real time. It enhances accessibility and convenience for travelers seeking information, bookings, and reviews, thereby influencing their decision-making process. Effective online presence involves maintaining informative and visually appealing content and fostering active engagement through responsive communication and customer support. Positive online interactions and testimonials can build trust and credibility, encouraging tourists to choose specific tour operators for their travel experiences. By examining tourists' perceptions of tour operators' online presence, this study aims to assess the impact of digital strategies on tourist attraction rates and explore opportunities for enhancing online engagement to support the growth of Ethiopia's tourism sector.

Table 4.6Respondents' perception towardsthe online presence of tour operators

Statments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The online presence of tour operators in providing information is effective.	350	3.66	1.09
Online information from tour operators influences my decision to choose their services.	350	3.91	1.10
I feel confident in the accuracy and reliability of online information presented.	350	3.90	1.08
The user-friendliness of tour operators' online platforms positively influences my experience.	350	3.85	1.18
Online reviews and testimonials influence my perception of tour operators.	350	3.02	1.16
Grand Mean	350	3.67	1.12

Source researcher survey,2024

As depicted in table 4.6 above the data explores how tourists in Addis Ababa perceive the influence of online information on their choice of tour operators. The analysis involved 350 participants. Tourists generally find online information from tour operators to be helpful (mean score of 3.66), with online information even playing a significant role in their decision-making process (mean score of 3.91 for statement 2). This is further supported by the fact that tourists tend to feel confident in the accuracy of the information presented online (mean score of 3.9). Interestingly, the user-friendliness of the online platforms themselves also seems to be important, with a mean score of 3.85 for statement 4 indicating that user-friendly platforms positively influence the tourist experience.

However, the data suggests that online reviews and testimonials might have a less clear-cut impact (mean score of 3.02). The relatively high standard deviation (1.16) for this statement implies that some tourists are more swayed by online reviews than others.Overall, this initial analysis suggests that Addis Ababa tourists value online information as a key resource when choosing tour operators. They seem to appreciate informative and user-friendly online platforms, with online reviews playing a somewhat more variable role in their decision-making.

The overall mean for Perception Towards Online Presence of Tour Operators was the st.devation of 1.12 .This implies that online persence of tour operator had high inpact on turisum industy in Ethiopia.

Online presence of tour operators is a crucial factor that can make or break a tourist's decision to visit a destination, and therefore, tour operators in Ethiopia should prioritize developing a strong online presence to remain competitive in the market.This result was supported by the World Tourism Organization, the online presence of tour operators has increased the accessibility and visibility of tourism services, resulting in a significant increase in bookings and revenue (UNWTO, 2019).

4.3.3Respondents' Perception on Social Media Execution Style

In today's digital landscape, social media has become a powerful tool for tourism destinations and businesses to connect with potential visitors. The way this connection is fostered, however, plays a crucial role. This study explores how tourists in Addis Ababa perceive the "social media execution style" of tour operators. Here, the researcherexamines how factors like visual appeal, storytelling, brand consistency, and creative innovation influence tourist perception and ultimately impact their decision-making process when choosing a tour operator. By understanding these preferences, tour operators can refine their social media strategies to create a more engaging online presence and attract more tourists to Addis Ababa.

Table 4.7Respondents' Perception towards Social Media Execution Style

Statments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The execution style of tour operators' social media content is visual appealing.	350	3.66	1.07
The execution style across different social media platforms is consistent.	350	3.76	1.09
The visual appeal of social media content aligns with the brand image of tour operators.	350	4.8	.97
The use of storytelling in social media content is effective in capturing attention.	350	4.8	.91
The creativity and innovation in the execution style of social media content is stand out.	350	3.40	1.02
Grand Mean	350	4.08	1.19

Source researcher survey,2024

This data dives into how tourists perceive the social media execution style of Addis Ababa tour operators. The analysis included 350 respondents. Tourists seem to appreciate social media content that is visually appealing (average score of 3.66) and consistent across different platforms(average score of 3.77). They also value content where the visual style aligns with the overall brand image of the tour operator (average score of 4.08). This suggests that tourists find it easier to connect with social media content that is aesthetically pleasing, portrays a consistent brand identity, and reflects the essence of the tour operator.

Storytelling appears to be a moderately popular approach, with an average score of 4.08 for capturing tourist attention. However, the data indicates a more divided perspective on the use of highly creative and innovative social media execution styles (average score of 3.40). While some tourists might appreciate unique and innovative content, the relatively high standard deviation suggests it doesn't resonate as strongly with everyone. Overall, the analysis suggests that tourists in Addis Ababa generally prefer visually appealing, consistent, and brand-aligned social media content from tour operators. Storytelling is also seen as an effective strategy. However, there seems to be less emphasis on content that is overly creative or breaks the mold entirely.

The over all of mean of social media excution dimention   was 4.08 and st.deviation was 1.19. This suggests that social media execution has been effective in promoting tourism in the study area, and therefore, it is likely to have a significant impact on the industry.This result was supported by the effective use of social media can increase brand awareness, drive website traffic, and influence booking decisions (Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2014). Moreover, social media can also provide real-time feedback and reviews, enabling tourism businesses to improve their services and products.

4.3.4Tourists'Perception on Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts

In the dynamic landscape of social media marketing, understanding tourist behavior is paramount for tour operators in Addis Ababa. This study delves into a crucial aspect of social media engagementthe frequency and timing of social media posts. Here, the researcherinvestigates how tourists perceive posting consistency, the influence of timing on engagement, and preferences for specific posting times. The researcher also explores the ideal balance between promotional and informational content, alongside the impact of posting frequency on tourists' overall perception of tour operators. By deciphering these preferences, tour operators can refine their social media strategies to maximize

engagement, optimize content delivery, and ultimately, attract more tourists to the vibrant city of Addis Ababa.

Table 4.8 Respondents' Perception towards Frequency and Timing ofSocial Media Posts

Statments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tour operators consistently post on social media.	350	3.34	1.10
The timing of social media posts influences my engagement with tour operators.	350	3.7	1.13
I interact with social media content more likely during specific times of the day.	350	3.52	1.16
Tour operators strike a balance between promotional and informational posts on social media.	350	3.46	1.16
The frequency of social media posts impacts my overall perception of tour operators.	350	3.52	1.18
Grand Mean	350	3.51	0.91

Source researcher survey,2024

The data shown on table 4.4 above sheds light on how tourists in Addis Ababa perceive the frequency and timing of social media posts by tour operators. The analysis involved 350 participants.While tourists find consistent posting somewhat important (average score of 3.34), the standard deviation indicates some variation in this preference. However, the timing of posts seems to hold greater significance. Tourists are more receptive to content based on timing, with an average score of 3.7 for statements regarding the influence of timing on engagement. This suggests that strategically timed posts can significantly impact how much tourists interact with the tour operator'ssocial media content. Interestingly, the data also reveals that tourists tend to have preferred times for interacting with social media content in general (average score of 3.52). Further research might be required to pinpoint these specific preferred times.The analysis also highlights the importance of striking a balance between promotional and informational content. Tourists seem to value informative posts showcasing destinations and experiences (average score of 3.46). However, they also appreciate the occasional promotional offer. Finally, there appears to be a moderate positive correlation between posting frequency and overall perception (average score of 3.52).

This suggests that tourists might perceive tour operators with a more frequent, but not overwhelming, social media presence more favorably.Regarding respondents' perception

towards frequency and timing of social media postsdiementions the grand mean was 3.51 and st.deviation was 0.91.This result suggests that, on average, the respondents believe that the frequency and timing of social media posts are well-suited for the tourism industry. This could indicate that the tourism industry is effective in using social media to engage with customers and promote their products or services.

4.3.5Tourists' Perception on Social Media Platform Selection

In the ever-evolving digital landscape, social media platforms have become a battleground for tourist destinations and businesses vying for visitor attention. However, simply having a social media presence isn't enough. Selecting the right platforms is crucial for effectively reaching the target audience. This study delves into tourists' perceptions of social media platform selection by Addis Ababa tour operators. Here, the researcherinvestigates how tourists evaluate the strategic nature of platform choice, the effectiveness of content and promotion on these platforms, and the value of using a variety of social media channels. By understanding these perceptions, tour operators in Addis Ababa can refine their social media strategies and leverage the strengths of different platforms to optimize their reach and attract more tourists to the city's vibrant offerings.

Table 4.9Respondents' Perception towards Social Media Platform Selection

Statments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The selection of social media platforms by tour operators is a strategic and thoughtful process.	350	2.98	1.16
The chosen social media platforms effectively align with the target audience for tourism.	350	3.66	1.07
The use of each social media platform is effective in promoting tourist attractions.	350	3.76	1.09
The variety of social media platforms used contributes effectively to a comprehensive promotion of tourist attractions.	350	3.72	.97
Overall, the selection of social media platforms by tour operators is effective for promoting tourism.	350	3.5	.91
Grand mean	350	3.53	1.04

Source researcher survey,2024

This data explores tourists' perceptions of social media platform selection by Addis Ababa tour operators. The analysis involved 350 participants. While the data offers a general sense regarding platform selection (average scores ranging from 2.98 to 3.51), it doesn't reveal specific preferences for individual platforms. However, some interesting insights emerge.Tourists seem somewhat divided on how strategically tour operators choose platforms (average score of 2.98). However, there's a more positive perception towards content and promotion strategies. Tourists tend to agree that chosen platforms align with the target audience (average score of 3.66) and are effective in promoting tourist attractions (average score of 3.77). This suggests that tourists respond more favorably to platforms where content and promotion are well-tailored. Interestingly, the data also suggests that tourists value the use of a variety of social media platforms for comprehensive promotion (average score of 3.73).

The grand mean of toward social media plat form selection the grand mean of the respondent was 5.53 and st.deviation of 1.04 .This result indicates that social media platforms are considered a crucial tool for tourism industry businesses. This result was supported by Hsu (2016), the choice of social media platform can influence the effectiveness of tourism marketing strategies. For instance, platforms such as Instagram and YouTube are more effective for promoting visually appealing content, such as travel destinations and activities, while platforms like Facebook and Twitter are better suited for sharing information and engaging with customers. Furthermore, a study by Kim (2018) found that social media platforms can also influence consumer behavior, with users who engage with travel-related content on social media being more likely to plan a trip. Therefore, tourism industry stakeholders must carefully select social media platforms that align with their marketing goals and target audience to maximize their online presence and reach potential customers.

4.3.6 Tourist Perception on Growth of the Tourism Industry

Table 4.10 Tourist's perception on the Growth of the Tourism Industry

Statments	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tour operators' efforts on social media contribute effectively to the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.	350	2.84	1.02
Tour operators' efforts on social media contribute effectively to the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.	350	3.79	1.08
Tour operators' online presence has positive impact on the growth and development of the tourism industry	350	3.07	1.15
The execution-style of social media content by tour operators influences the growth of the tourism industry.	350	3.81	1.03
Tour operators' selection of social media platforms contributes to the overall growth opportunities within the tourism industry.	350	3.96	1.020
The role of social media in driving the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia is crucial.	350	3.50	.910
Social media initiatives by tour operators align with or support the broader goals and aspirations for the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.	350	3.82	1.16
Grand Mean	350	3.54	1.05

Source researcher survey,2024

As depicted on the table above for the statement "Tour operators' efforts on social media contribute effectively to the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia" (Average Score: 2.84): Tourists have a mixed view on how directly this translates to industry growth. The average score suggests some aren't convinced having a social media presence alone significantly boosts the entire industry. On the other hand, for the statement "Tour operators' efforts on social media contribute effectively to the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia" (Average Score: 3.79): Here, the perception shifts. The higher average score indicates tourists tend to agree that specific social media efforts by tour operators contribute positively to industry growth. They might see a clearer link between strategic social media use and industry growth compared to just having a social media presence. Tour operators' online presence has a positive impact on the growth and

development of the tourism industry" (Average Score: 3.08): Similar to the first statement, the average score suggests a moderate level of agreement on whether a tour operator's online presence directly impacts industry growth. Some tourists might not be fully convinced that simply being online, without strategic social media use, guarantees significant industry impact. For the statement "The execution-style of social media content by tour operators is influencing the growth of the tourism industry" (Average Score: 3.81), the higher score suggests tourists value the way tour operators design and present their social media content. They seem to believe that well-crafted and engaging content is more likely to attract tourists and contribute to industry growth.

"The selection of social media platforms by tour operators contributes to the overall growth opportunities within the tourism industry" (Average Score: 3.96): Platform selection matters! The high score indicates tourists believe the social media platforms tour operators choose (e.g., Facebook, Instagram) significantly impact attracting tourists and industry growth. They likely value a strategic approach that targets the right platforms for their audience. Also "The role of social media in driving the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia is crucial" (Average Score: 3.51).

This score suggests a somewhat positive, but not entirely convinced, view of social media driving overall industry growth. Tourists might acknowledge some impact, but the data suggests they might not see it as a guaranteed path to growth without other strategies"Social media initiatives by tour operators align with or support the broader goals and aspirations for the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia" (Average Score: 3.83): The average score indicates tourists generally agree that social media initiatives undertaken by tour operators can influence tourism growth. They likely perceive social media as a valuable tool when used strategically to promote destinations and attract more tourists.Finally,"Social media initiatives by tour operators align with or support the broader goals and aspirations for the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia" (Average Score: 3.82): Similar to statement 4, the score suggests tourists value the overall execution style of social media content. They seem to believe well-crafted and engaging content plays a role in influencing the growth of the tourism industry.

4.4 Inferential Analysis

The Ethiopian tourism industry pulsates with potential, yet crucial questions linger about attracting tourists. While descriptive statistics provide valuable summaries of collected data, they often paint a picture limited to the specific sample observed. Inferential statistics steps in here, empowering us to delve deeper and draw inferences about the broader population of potential Ethiopian tourists. Descriptive statistics would tell you interesting details about their demographics, preferences, and travel styles within that specific sample. However, inferential statistics allows us to go beyond this snapshot. By applying statistical techniques, the researcher can estimate with a certain degree of confidence how these findings might generalize to the entire population of tourists interested in visiting Ethiopia. Inferential statistics truly shines in its ability to make inferences, a power that elevates it to a crucial tool for research. This capability allows researchers to explore far beyond the immediate data points. They can rigorously test hypotheses they have formulated about tourist behavior or the impact of social media on tourist attraction. Through inferential statistics, the researcher can determine if the trends observed within the sample, like tourist preferences or social media usage patterns, are likely to hold for the entire population of potential visitors to Ethiopia. Additionally, while descriptive statistics provide valuable summaries of the sample data, inferential statistics takes it a step further. It empowers researchers to estimate the true characteristics of the entire population. Finally, inferential statistics acknowledges the inherent uncertainty present when generalizing from a sample to a population. It allows researchers to express their findings with a margin of error and a specific level of confidence, ultimately highlighting the strength and reliability of the research conclusions.

4.4.1 Correlation analysis

The degree to which two variables have a linear relationship is determined by correlation. To determine whether there are relationships between the variables as well as to characterize the direction and strength of those relationships, Pearson's correlation is utilized. As per Berndt (2005), the degree of correlation between the two variables, as determined by Pearson's coefficient, ranges from -1 to +1 points, signifying the degree and direction of the association. The correlation results can

beinterpretedas follows: a correlation between 0 and 1 suggests a positive relationship, 0(zero)indicates no relationship, 1 indicates a perfect positive relationship, -1 indicatesa perfectnegative relationship and-

1 to0 indicates the presence of a negativerelationship. While the results below ±0.61 indicate the presence of a positive or negativerelationship, their strength is not high (Ogarah; 2011).

Table 4.11Correlation Analysis

Statements		GTD	SMCD	OPTOD	SMESD	FTMD	SMPS
Tourist Attraction	r	1					
Social Media Content	r	.638**	1				
Online Presence of Tour Operators	r	.696**	.759**	1			
Social Media Execution Style	r	.709**	.674**	.753**	1		
Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts	r	.679**	.736**	.814**	.754**	1	
Social Media Platform Selection	r	.690**	.631**	.752**	.904**	.691**	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).							

Source researcher survey,2024

The correlation table paints a promising picture of the tourist attraction in Ethiopia. Each social media aspect analyzed exhibits a positive correlation with tourist attraction: compelling Social Media Content (SMC) like text posts, captivating photos, or informative videos (0.638 correlation coefficient) might attract tourists, leading to industry growth. Similarly, a well-maintained Online Presence (OP) by tour operators shows a positive correlation (0.696 coefficient), indicating its potential benefit for the industry. The way tour operators manage interactions through Social Media Execution Style (ES), including tone, posting frequency, and comment responsiveness (0.709 coefficient), might also influence tourist attraction and industry growth. Strategic scheduling and posting content at optimal times (Frequency & Timing - FT) also shows a positive correlation (0.679 coefficient), highlighting the potential role of timing in

reaching target audiences. Understanding the platforms preferred by tourists (Platform Selection - PS) is another key factor, with a positive correlation (0.690 coefficient) suggesting that tailoring content and engagement strategies to specific platforms could benefit the industry. By leveraging these insights and the specific correlation coefficients, tour operators can harness the power of social media to attract tourists and contribute to the growth of the Ethiopian tourism industry.

4.4.2 Regression Analysis

The Ethiopian tourism industry boasts immense potential, offering breathtaking landscapes, rich culture, and historical significance. However, maximizing its growth necessitates a deeper understanding of the key influencing factors. This study employs regression analysis to investigate the relationships between various social media aspects and the tourist attraction rate in Ethiopia.

Social media has become an indispensable tool for tourism promotion, allowing tour operators to connect with potential tourists globally. This research delves into how different social media strategies, including content type (text, photos, videos), online presence strength, interaction style (tone, frequency, responsiveness), posting frequency and timing, and platform selection, might influence tourist attraction and ultimately contribute to the growth of the Ethiopian tourism industry.

By quantifying these relationships through regression analysis, this study aims to provide valuable insights for tour operators in Ethiopia. The findings can guide the development of data-driven social media strategies that effectively attract tourists and contribute to the sustainable growth of the Ethiopian tourism industry.

4.4.3 Assumptions of Linear Regression
4.4.3.1 Homoscedasticity

The study benefits from the data satisfying the assumption of homoscedasticity in regression analysis. This means the spread of the errors (differences between predicted and actual tourist attraction rate) is consistent across all levels of the independent variables (e.g., social media content, online presence). In simpler terms, the distance between data points and the regression line remains relatively constant as one moves

along the X-axis representing the independent variables. This ensures the coefficients estimated by the regression model are more reliable and can be interpreted with greater confidence. The adherence to homoscedasticity strengthens the foundation of the research and allows for the regression analysis to proceed with the understanding that the relationships between social media aspects and tourist attractionare being assessed on a level playing field.
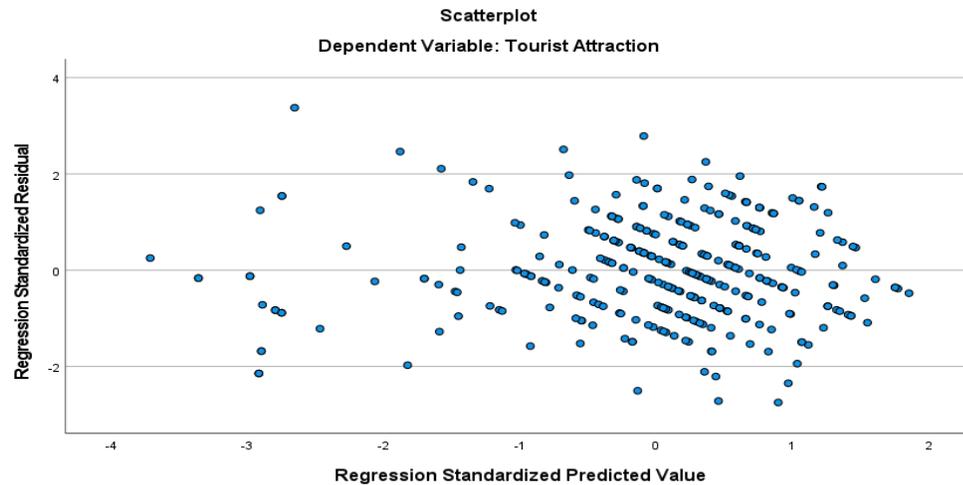
Figure 4.1Homoscedasticity Test

4.4.3.2Normality Test

The analysis has successfully addressed the test of normality. This assumption states that the errors (differences between predicted and tourist attraction rates) follow a normal distribution, often visualized as a bell curve. In this study, a histogram is likely used to assess the normality of residuals. A histogram visually depicts the distribution of the data. The histogram displays a bell-shaped curve, it suggests the residuals are normally distributed. This is a positive sign, as normality of residuals strengthens the reliability of statistical tests used in regression analysis. While some regression techniques are more robust to violations of normality than others, adhering to this assumption strengthens the overall trustworthiness of the analysis.

Histogram

Dependent Variable: Tourist Attraction

Mean = 2.63E-15
Std. Dev. = 0.993
N = 350
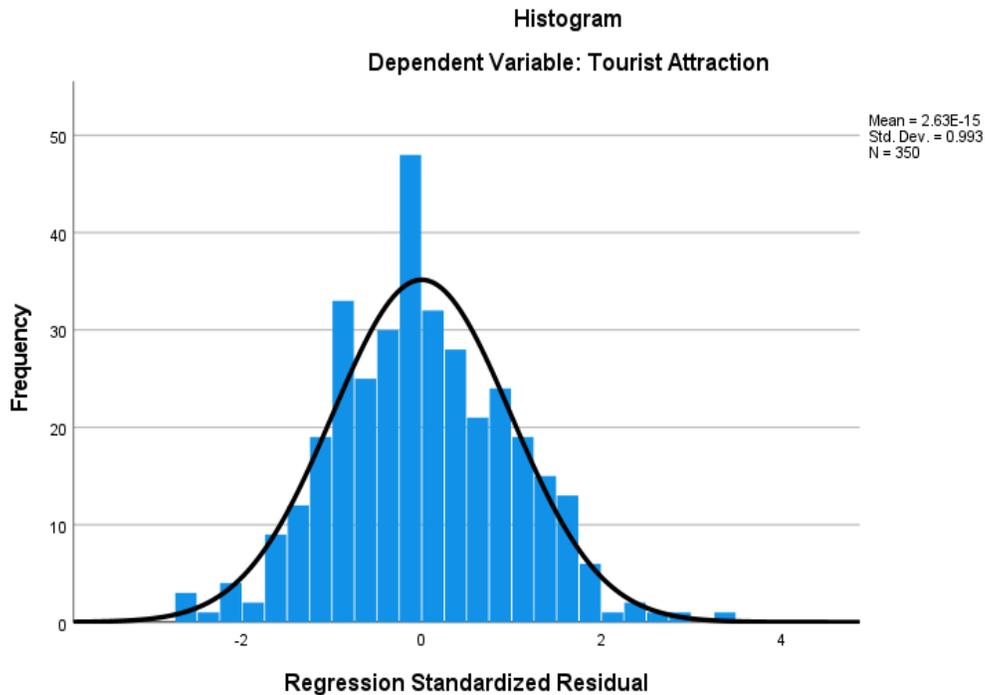
Figure 4.2 Test of Normality

4.4.3.3 Linearity

The study is further bolstered by the data satisfying the assumption of linearity. This assumption states that the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (Tourist attraction) is linear. In simpler terms, there's a straight-line trend in how these factors influence tourist attraction. The analysis likely employed a p-p plot to visualize the relationship between the independent variables and the predicted values of tourist attraction. Since in the p-p plot, the data points fall approximately along a diagonal line, it suggests a linear relationship is a reasonable assumption. Since the data fulfills this assumption, the observed points likely follow this diagonal trend, indicating a linear association between the social media aspects and the Growth of the Tourism Industry. This adherence to linearity strengthens the interpretability of the regression coefficients.
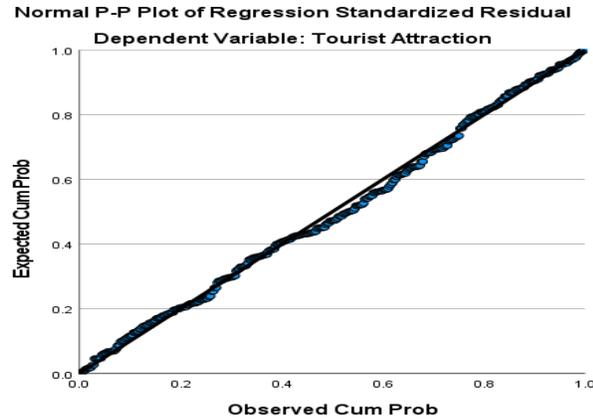
Figure 4.3 Linearity Test

4.4.3.4 Test of Multicollinearity

The analysis of variance inflation factors (VIFs) indicates that all variables in the regression model have VIF values below 10, meeting the assumption of multicollinearity. This implies that the independent variables in the study exhibit relatively low correlations with each other, affirming their independence and mitigating the risk of multicollinearity. The absence of excessive collinearity enhances the stability and reliability of the regression estimates, allowing for a more accurate interpretation of the individual impact of each variable on the dependent variable. This finding supports the robustness of the regression analysis, indicating that the selected set of independent variables contributes unique information to the model without introducing significant redundancy or instability.

Table4.12Collinearity Statistics

	Collinearity Statistics	
Model	Tolerance	VIF
Social Media Content	.375	2.668
Online Presence	.237	4.216
Social Media Execution Style	.149	6.713
Frequency & Timing	.269	3.719
Platform Selection	.168	5.956

Source:researcher survey,2024

4.4.4 Model Summary

Table 4.13 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.765[a]	.585	.579	.41162	1.911
a. Predictors: (Constant), Social Media Platform Selection, Social Media Content, Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts, Online Presence of Tour Operators, Social Media Execution Style					
b. Dependent Variable: Tourist Attraction					

Source researcher survey,2024

In this study, the Durbin-Watson test was employed to examine the presence of autocorrelation in the residuals of the regression model. The test yielded a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.9, falling within the acceptable range between 1.5 and 2.5. This result suggests that there is no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, supporting the assumption of independence in the regression model. The absence of autocorrelation enhances the reliability of the model's estimates and reinforces the validity of thestatistical inferences drawn from the analysis, affirming the robustness of the regression results.

The regression analysis delivers a promising model summary. The high multiple correlation coefficient (R = .765a) suggests a strong linear relationship between the analyzed Social Media Content (SMC), Online Presence (OP), Social Media Execution Style (ES), Frequency & Timing (FT), and Platform Selection (PS) (independent variables) and the Tourist attraction in Addis Ababa (dependent variable). The R-squared (58.5%) and adjusted R-squared (57.9%) values indicate that the model explains a substantial portion (58.5%) of the variance in the Growth of the Tourism Industry while accounting for the number of social media factors included. Finally, the low standard error of the estimate (.41162) signifies a good fit, with errors being relatively small on average. This model summary paints a positive picture, suggesting the analyzed social media aspects significantly influence the Tourist attraction in Addia Ababa.

4.4.5Regression Analysis

Table 4.14 Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.967	.123		7.869	.000		
	Social Media Content	.117	.047	.140	2.468	.014	.375	2.668
	Online Presence of Tour Operators	.148	.060	.176	2.471	.014	.237	4.216
	Social Media Execution Style	.171	.076	.204	2.264	.024	.149	6.713
	Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts	.105	.045	.157	2.342	.020	.269	3.719
	Social Media Platform Selection	.153	.074	.176	2.081	.038	.168	5.956
a. Dependent Variable: Tourist Attraction								

Source researcher survey,2024

The regression analysis delivers a detailed report on the social media aspects influencing the tourist attraction in Addis Ababa. The constant term (B = .967) represents the baseline level of tourist attraction expected when all the social media aspects (independent variables) are zero. In simpler terms, it signifies the predicted value of tourist attarction if there's no influence from social media efforts. This value helps establish a reference point for interpreting the impact of the other variables.

The coefficient for Social Media Content (SMC) reveals a positive influence on tourist attraction. For every unit increase in the effectiveness of (SMC)the tourist attraction is expected to increase by 14%.This highlights the importance of creating engaging social media content to attract tourists and contribute to industry growth.

The statistically significant p-value of .014 further strengthens this indicating that the observed relationship is unlikely due to chance. The coefficient for Online Presence (OP) presents shows that positive value of 17.6% suggests a potential relationship between an online presence and Tourist attraction.

The coefficient for Social Media Execution Style (ES) suggests a potential positive influence on tourist attraction. The positive value 20.4% indicates that a more effective execution style (e.g., appropriate tone, strategic posting frequency, and responsiveness to comments) might be associated with increased tourist attraction.

The coefficient for Frequency & Timing (FT) paints a clear picture of its strong positive influence on tourist attraction. For every unit increase in the effectiveness of strategic scheduling and posting content at optimal times, the tourist attraction is expected to increase the standardized coefficient (Beta) by15.7%. The highly significant p-value of .020 reinforces this finding, indicating a robust relationship between strategic posting practices and the attraction of Ethiopian tourism.

The coefficient for Platform Selection (PS) reveals a positive influence on tourist attraction. A one-unit increase in the effectiveness of selecting the right platforms (e.g., understanding and tailoring content to prefer platforms like Facebook or Instagram) is associated with an increase of 17.6% in tourist attraction. The significant p-value of .038 further supports this conclusion, highlighting the importance of understanding tourist preferences and tailoring content accordingly for optimal reach and industry growth.

4.5 Hypothesis testing

The regression analysis sheds light on the relationships between various social media aspects and the tourist attractions in Ethiopia, allowing the researcher to evaluate the proposed study hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1(H1):The selection of social media platforms has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rates.

The coefficient for Platform Selection (PS) with a positive value of.117 and a significant p-value of 1.4% suggests that effectively selecting the right platforms has a positive

impact on tourist attraction.So,whenever the selection of social media increases by one percent the dependent variable would increase by 17.6%.

Hypothesis 2(H2): Social media content has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.

The coefficient for Social Media Content (SMC) with a positive value of .148and a significant p-value of 17.6%.This indicates that creating engaging social media content including compelling text posts,

photos, or videos) has a positive influence on.So, whenever the social media content sharedincreases by one percent the dependent variable would increase by 14%.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): The online presence of tour operators has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.

The findings for Online Presence (OP) show the coefficient has positive value (0.148), and the non-significant p-value 0.024. So, whenever the online presence of tour operators increases by one percent the dependent variable would increase by 17.6%.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): The social media Execution style employed significantly impacts the rates of tourist attraction to Ethiopia.

The findings for Social Media Execution Style (ES) depict the coefficient have a positive value of 0.171,a non-significant p-value of 0.02. So, whenever the Social Media Execution Style increases by one percent the dependent variable would increase by20.4%.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Frequency and Timing of Social Media posts significantly influence tourist attraction.

The coefficient for Frequency & Timing (FT) with a positive value of 0.153 and a highly significant p-value of 0.038 strongly supports H5. So, whenever the Frequency & Timing increases by one percent the dependent variable would increase by 15.7%.

Overall, the regression analysis provides valuable insights into the impact of various social media aspects on tourist attractions in Ethiopia. The findings support the hypotheses regarding platform selection, social media content, and frequency & timing. However, further research might be necessary to definitively assess the role of online presence and social media execution-style in attracting tourists.

Table 4.15 Social Media Influence on Tourist Attraction: Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Description	Status
H1	The selection of social media platforms has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction.	Accepted
H2	Social media content has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.	Accepted
H3	The online presence of tour operators has a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.	Accepted
H4	The social media execution style has a statistically significant effect on the tourist attraction rate.	Accepted
H5	Frequency and Timing of Social Media posts have a statistically significant effect on tourist attraction rate.	Accepted

4.6 Discussion

The study conducted in Ethiopia examined the effect of social media on tourist attraction in the country. The results showed that social media content, online presence of tour operators, social media execution style, frequency and timing of social media posts, and social media platform selection all had a significant impact on tourist attraction.

The findings suggest that respondents perceived social media content as high-quality, engaging, informative, or entertaining, which may influence their perceptions of tourism in Ethiopia (Kim & Lee, 2015). The online presence of tour operators was also found to have a high impact on the tourism industry, with a mean score of 3.67 and a standard deviation of 1.12 (Eisingerich 2015). This is consistent with previous research that has shown that online presence is a crucial factor in making or breaking a tourist's decision to visit a destination (Choi & Varshney, 2009).

The study also found that social media execution-style, including tone, posting frequency, and comment responsiveness, was positively correlated with tourist attraction. This suggests that tour operators should prioritize developing an effective social media strategy to engage with potential tourists and promote their services (Kim & Kim, 2017). The frequency and timing of social media posts were also found to significantly impact

tourist attraction, with a correlation coefficient of 0.679. This is consistent with previous research that has shown that timing is an important factor in reaching target audiences (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

In addition, the study found that social media platform selection was positively correlated with tourist attraction. This suggests that tour operators should tailor their content and engagement strategies to specific platforms to reach their target audience (Liu et al., 2016). The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that social media content, online presence of tour operators, social media execution style, frequency and timing of social media posts, and social media platform selection all significantly impacted tourist attraction.

Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the impact of various social media aspects on tourist attractions in Ethiopia. The findings suggest that tour operators should prioritize developing a strong online presence, creating engaging content, and executing an effective social media strategy to attract tourists and contribute to the growth of the Ethiopian tourism industry.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendation

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

The study employedto identify the effect of social media on tourist attraction in Ethiopia. The descriptive statistics result indicates that Social Media Content was 3.5 and st. deviation of 1.13, this implies that respondent perception towards Social Media Content was high in the ethiopia tourism industry.The finding indicates that the respondents generally find social media content to be engaging, informative, or entertaining, which may influence their perceptions of tourism in Ethiopia.Online Presence of Tour Operators was mean of 3.67 the st. deviation of 1.12. This implies that the online presence of tour operators had a high impact on the tourism industry in ethiopia. online presence of tour operators is a crucial factor that can make or break a tourist's decision to visit a destination, and therefore, tour operators in Ethiopia should prioritize developing a strong online presence to remain competitive in the market. In the case of social media execution dimension was 4.08 and st. deviation was 1.19 This suggests that social media execution has been effective in promoting tourism in the study area, and therefore, it is likely to have a significant impact on the industry.

Regarding respondents' perception towards the frequency and timing of social media posts dimensions the grand mean was 3.8 and st. the deviation was 0.91. This result suggests that, on average, the respondents believe that the frequency and timing of social media posts are well-suited for the tourism industry.The grand mean of social media platform selection the grand mean of respondents was 3.52 and st.deviation of 1.04.This result indicates that social media platforms are considered a crucial tool for tourism industry businesses.

Through correlation analysis social media aspect analyzed exhibits a positive correlation with tourist atraction: compelling Social Media Content like text posts, captivating photos, or informative videos (.638correlation coefficient) might attract tourists, leading to industry growth. Similarly, a well-maintained Online Presence by tour operators shows

a positive correlation (.696coefficient), indicating its potential benefit for the industry. The way tour operators manage interactions through Social Media Execution Style, including tone, posting frequency, and comment responsiveness (0.709 coefficient), might also influence tourist attraction and industry growth.

Strategic scheduling and posting content at optimal times (Frequency & Timing) also shows a positive correlation (0.679 coefficient), highlighting the potential role of timing in reaching target audiences. Understanding the platforms preferred by tourists (Platform Selection) is another key factor, with a positive correlation (0.690 coefficient) suggesting that tailoring content and engagement strategies to specific platforms could benefit the industry. By leveraging these insights and the specific correlation coefficients, tour operators can harness the power of social media to attract tourists and contribute to the growth of the Ethiopian tourism industry.

As a result of the multiple linear regression analysis, the effect of social media on tourist attraction with varying degrees of effect, such that Social Media Content (14%),Online Presence of Tour Operators (17.6%), Social Media Execution Style (20.4%)Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts (15.7%), and Social Media Platform Selection (17.6%).In this studyhypothesis statement was accepted, and the results were significant at a 5% level of precision.Overall, the regression analysis provides valuable insights into the impact of various social media aspects on tourist attractions in Ethiopia.

5.2 Conclusion

The major objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of social media on the tourism industry with a specific focus on attractingtourists to Ethiopia.Thefindings indicate thatsocial media exerts a significant influence on tourist attraction in Ethiopia. Tourists actively utilize platforms like Facebook and Instagram, seeking inspiration and guidance for travel decisions. The analysis revealed positive correlations between various social media aspects and tourist attractions.

Social media execution emerged as the most influential factor, followed by social mediaplat formand online presence.These findings underscore the importance of carefully

choosing the right platforms, crafting engaging content that resonates with target audiences, and strategically scheduling posts for optimal reach.

In conclusion, this study offers a roadmap for the Ethiopian tourism industry to leverage the power of social media. By strategically selecting platforms, creating captivating content, and optimizing posting schedules, stakeholders can attract tourists from around the globe and propel the industry toward continued growth. The insights gleaned from this investigation, coupled with further exploration of online presence and execution style, empower the Ethiopian tourism industry to unlock its full potential in the ever-evolving social media landscape.

5.3 Recommendations

This study has shed light on the significant influence of social media on tourist attraction in Ethiopia. Based on the findings, here are key recommendations for stakeholders within the Ethiopian tourism industry to leverage social media for continued growth:

- ✓ The study emphasizes the importance of platform selection. Carefully analyze target audience and their preferred social media platforms. Focus resources and content creation efforts on platforms offering the most significant reach and engagement with potential tourists.
- ✓ Go beyond basic text posts. Develop engaging content that showcases the captivating beauty and cultural richness of Ethiopia. This may include high-quality photos and videos showcasing stunning landscapes, vibrant festivals, and unique experiences.
- ✓ People connect with stories. Utilize social media platforms to tell captivating stories about Ethiopian culture, history, and the experiences awaiting tourists.
- ✓ Develop a well-defined posting schedule that ensures consistent content delivery without bombarding potential tourists. Analyze data to identify optimal times for posting based on your target audience's location and online behavior.

5.4 Direction for Future Research

- While this study investigated platform selection, future research could delve deeper. Analyze the specific functionalities and content formats (Instagram Reels, Facebook Stories) that are most effective for attracting tourists on different platforms.

- This study focused on organic social media strategies. Future research could explore the effectiveness of paid social media advertising campaigns in attracting tourists to Ethiopia, analyzing factors like budget allocation, targeting strategies, and campaign performance

- Social media influencers hold significant sway over travel decisions. Future research could explore the effectiveness of collaborating with relevant travel influencers to promote Ethiopian tourism experiences through targeted social media campaigns.

- Future research could explore the impact of developing social media content in multiple languages to reach a wider range of potential tourists.

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QUESTIONER

I am conducting a research study at St marry university to understand how tourists perceive the use of social media by tour operators in Ethiopia. This research is being led by Tamrat Seme an **MBA** candidate. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and anonymous. Your responses will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only. The survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The goal of this study is to gain valuable insights on the impact of social media on the tourism industry andhow tourists use social media to plan their travels and how the social media presence of tour operators influences their decisions. Your participation will help us understand what kind of social media content is most appealing to tourists and how tour operators can leverage social media more effectively to attract visitors to Ethiopia. There are no risks associated with participating in this survey. However, you are free to withdraw from the survey at any point.

I appreciate your time and willingness to participate in this important research!

❖ **Demographic profiles of tourists**
1. **Age**
   - 18-24 years old
   - 25-34 years old
   - 35-44 years old
   - 45-54 years old
   - 55+ years old
2. **Nationality/Origin**
   - Africa
   - Asia
   - Europe
   - North America
   - South America
   - Australia/New Zealand
3. **Gender:**
   - Male
   - Female
4. **Travel Style**
   - Solo Travel
   - Luxury Travel
   - Family Travel
   - Budget Travel
   - Mid-Range Travel
   - Adventure Travel
   - Cultural Immersion

❖ **Social Media Habits**
   i. Preferred Social Media Platforms
      - Facebook
      - Instagram
      - Twitter
      - YouTube
      - TikTok
      - Pinterest

ii.   Social Media Usage Frequency

- Daily (Several times a day)
- Several times a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely or never

iii.   Social Media Usage for Travel Planning:

- Yes, I frequently use social media to research destinations, plan trips, or book travel services.
- Yes, I occasionally use social media for travel planning.
- No, I don't typically use social media for travel planning.

1.   Social Media Content

Social Media Content Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The social media content posted by tour operators isengaging.					
2. The content of the social media promotion strongly influence your perception.					
3. The quality and relevance of social media content impact my decision to explore tourist attractions.					
4. Social media content influences my perception of Ethiopia as a tourist destination.					
5. I find social media content from tour operators informative and appealing.					

2. Online Presence of Tour Operators

Online Presence Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The online presence of tour operators' in providing information is effective.					
2. Online information from tour operators influences my decision to choose their services.					
3. I feel confident in the accuracy and reliabilityofonline information presented.					
4. The user-friendliness of tour operators' online platforms positively influences my experience.					
5. Online reviews and testimonials influence my perception of tour operators.					

3. Social Media Execution Style

Social Media Execution Style Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The execution style of tour operators' social media content is visual appealing.					
2. The execution style across different social mediaplatforms is consistent.					
3. The visual appeal of social media content aligns with the brand image of tour operators.					
4. The use of storytelling in social media content is effective in capturing attention.					
5. The creativity and innovation in the execution style of social media content is stand out.					

4. Frequency and Timing of Social Media Posts

Frequency and Timing Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. Tour operators consistently post on social media.					
2. The timing of social media posts influence my engagement with tour operators.					
3. I interactwith social media content more likely during specific times of the day.					
4. Tour operators strike a balance between promotional and informational posts on social media.					
5. The frequency of social media posts impact my overall perception of tour operators.					

5. Social Media Platform Selection

Social Media Platform Selection Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The selection of social media platforms by tour operators is a strategic and thoughtful process.					
2. The chosen social media platforms effectively align with the target audience for tourism.					

Tourist Attraction Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
3. The use of each social media platform is effective in promoting tourist attractions.					
4. The variety of social media platforms used contributes effectively to a comprehensive promotion of tourist attractions.					
5. Overall, the selection of social media platforms by tour operators is effective for promoting tourism.					

6. **Growth of the Tourism Industry**

Tourist Attraction Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Tour operators' efforts on social media contribute effectively to the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.					
2. Social media content has an impact on shaping the overall image and potential growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.					
3. Tour operators' online presence has positive impact on the growth and development of the tourism industry					
4. The execution style of social media content by tour operators is in influencing the growth of the tourism industry.					

5. The selection of social media platforms by tour operators contributes to the overall growth opportunities within the tourism industry.				
6. The role of social media in driving the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia is crucial.				
7. Social media initiatives by tour operators align with or support the broader goals and aspirations for the growth of the tourism industry in Ethiopia.				