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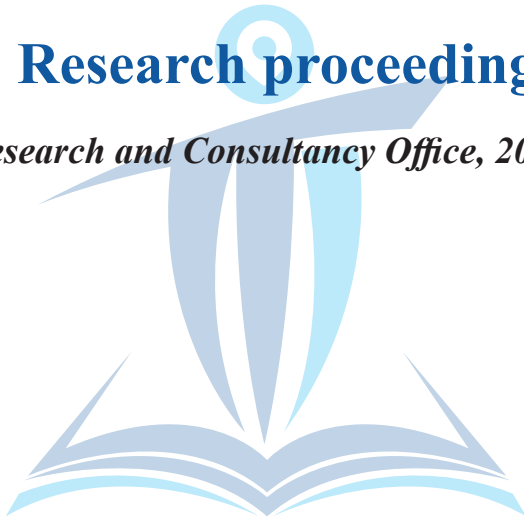


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Ecotourism Potential and Its Contribution to Local Communities Development: The Case of Dawro and Konta Zones.

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Abstract

Ecotourism is a niche market that emerged because of increased market demands for sustainable tourism practices. It serves to provide tourism products and services while accommodating for the economic, social and environmental aspects of society. This study explored, examined and analyzed the economic, social and environmental contributions of ecotourism to the livelihoods of tourist destination communities of Dawro and Konta Zones. The study covered 4 woredas of Dawro and Konta zone. The study applied mixed approach method that includes both qualitative and quantitative data. 271 participants were selected from four woredas by using stratified and simple random sampling and the total of 35 questions were used. Data for this study were collected from primary and secondary sources. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. It was discovered that the overall economic, social and environmental contributions of ecotourism was at infant stage to bring benefit to the local communities.

Keywords: *Ecotourism, economic, social and environment.*

INTRODUCTION

Background and Justification

Tourism remains a basic driver of economic development all over the globe. The latest report out by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) shows that the global economic contribution of the travel and tourism industry was estimated at \$8.8 trillion during 2018 (WTTC, 2019). Tourism industry has developed quickly for the previous eight years such that its advancement had been considered to exceed the global economy. For example, the industry's growth was expected at 3.9% compared to 3.2% growth for the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Furthermore, the industry's impact to the over-all universal economic activities is projected at 10.4% with 10% correspondent to 319 million employment opportunities generated worldwide (WTTC, 2019). Consequently, tourism and hospitality industry has been taken as a fundamental mechanism with which the socio-economies of various countries in the world could be improved meaningfully (Eshun & Tichaawa, 2019; Eshun & Tichaawa, 2020).

Apart its substantial socio-economic effects, tourism growth and associated undertakings can result into many antagonistic effects, especially within the local communities, and these include: distracting, troubling, and/or damaging natural habits, and negatively affecting on socio-economic prospective of the native societies (Carter, Durham, Driscoll & Honey, 2015). Rogerson and Visser (2004) argue convincingly that tourism development and correlated actions can provoke several social, ecological, cultural,, and economic effects that can be dangerous within the local communities, especially in rural communities. In addressing these opposed effects, ecotourism had been well thought-out to be more effective henceforth both cultural and environmental preservation are among its essential purposes (Fennell, 2014; Lawson & Weaver, 2015; Kimbu & Tichaawa, 2018; Yasu, Baños & Hazael, 2018).

Ecotourism is a sub-section of sustainable tourism. Ecotourism's understood as an effective tool for sustainable tourism development which is the central reason why emerging countries are now taking and counting it in their economic development and conservation strategies. Ecotourism, as another option of tourism, involves responsibly traveling to the undisturbed natural areas that promote natural learning, cares about the quality of the environment, and brings economic and social development to local communities. (Blamey, 2001; Donohoe and Needham, 2008).

Its emphases mainly on go through and learning about nature, its landscape, flora, fauna and their habitats, as well as cultural artifacts from the locality. An interdependent and complex relationship between the environment and tourist actions is possible when this philosophy can be interpreted into proper policy, cautious planning and tactful workshops. Today, ecotourism has obtained widespread acceptance among tourists and business sectors in many countries, including Ethiopia.

Tourism is one of the focal sectors of development in Ethiopia. The stretched vision of the government is to make Ethiopia one of the top 10 tourist destinations in Africa by the year 2025 (GTP 2010). The direct receipts from tourists to the Ethiopian economy in 2005 was estimated to be USD 130 million making tourism one of the top export sectors (World Bank, 2006). With an emphasis on minimizing the poverty reducing impacts of tourism (PASDEP, 2006-2010), the significance of including diverse stakeholders in tourism development was getting additional advantage. There was mounting appreciation that tourism to attain most important development impact, bulks of tourists and levels of tourist spending need to increase and that to ensure tourism advancement fetches the intended development benefit, industry arrangement must be formed and stronger linkage to the local community must be established (Mason, 2003). He similarly claimed that including local communities in tourism development is vital for sustainable tourism develop-

ment and further remarked that tourism needs to involve local communities in terms of economic welfares and decision making. The participation of local communities in tourism expansion may improve the social acceptance of policies so that implementation and development may be easier to effect. He also proposed that tourism should be in a position to share profits fairly with the local communities.

According to Tekleab Bulo (2020), Kaffa is gifted with massive potential tourism resources. Flora, fauna, Kaffa biosphere reserve, cultural attractions (food, song, ritual practice, fortune telling, religion), water tourism resources (waterfalls, hot springs, rivers), landscapes (mountains, valleys, caves, natural bridges), heritages (kings grave yards, cultural villages, underground war tunnels, crown and seat of kings), Museums (National coffee museum and Open-Air museum), Ancient city of Bonga in hilly area, handicrafts and coffee tourism resources (coffee history, ceremony, and investment) are among attention-grabbing tourism resources of Kaffa.

In order for ecotourism to encourage patterns of sustainability, which can benefit local communities, protect the environment, and be economically viable, it must be comprehensive and account for the complexity of issues that will be studied in this research. The purpose of this research is to assess the undetected ecotourism potentials of Dawro Zone and its contribution to the local communities' development and suggest viable mechanisms to utilize ecotourism potentials in a sustainable way. Ecotourism as part of sustainable tourism is a recent phenomenon and the central idea of ecotourism revolves around enhancing the engagement of local communities in the protection of natural resources and while economically benefiting the local communities. Thus, simple protection of a given area from destruction cannot be regarded as ecotourism development. In other words, besides protecting a given natural resource and identifying its ecotourism products, engaging the local community in a variety of economic activities is mandatory for the develop-

ment of ecotourism. The general purpose of the study is therefore, to assess the undetected ecotourism potentials of Dawro Zone and its contribution to the development of the local communities.

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify ecotourism resources of the study areas.
2. To determine environmental contributions of ecotourism to the local communities.
3. To examine the economic contributions of ecotourism for the local communities.
4. To explore the social contributions of ecotourism for the local communities.

LITERATURE

Conceptualization of Ecotourism

The conceptual know-how of ecotourism is various (Bjork, 2007; Buckley, 2009; Donohoe & Needham, 2006). One of the sooner definitions is that of Ceballos-Lascurain, who defined ecotourism as ‘‘environmentally responsible travel and visitation to incredibly undisturbed herbal areas, in order to experience and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural functions—each past and gift) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor effect, and gives beneficially energetic socio-financial involvement of neighborhood populations’ (stated in Björk, 2007, p.26). In step with carrying and Neil (2009), Ceballos-Lascurain emphasized the natural aspect and this supplied the starting point in understanding the nature of ecotourism.

Many students have reviewed and synthesized disparate ecotourism synthesizes and are available to one-of-a-kind conclusions (see Donohoe & Needham, 2006; Fennell, 2001; Honey, 2008; Weaver & Lawton, 2007; sporting and Neil, 2009). For instance, Fennell (2001), who reviewed 85 definitions,

declares ‘variability’ as a distinguishing characteristic within the literature. He identifies not unusual additives within the definitions as; natural setting, conservation, sustainability, way of life, advantages to locals, and schooling. In preferred, the plethora of definitions emphasizes center awareness of ecotourism: ecotourism as contributing to nature conservation (Cater, 2006; Fennell, 2001; Reimer & Walter, 2013; carrying & Neil, 2009), and sustainable livelihood development (Fennell, 2008a; Foucat, 2002; Reimer & Walter, 2013; wearing & Neil, 2009). In considering those two middle components, Stronza (2007) writes that: especially for communities bordering protected areas, conservationists have promoted ecotourism as a device for integrating conservation and development, and for shielding herbal sources whilst additionally assembly human desires. In those places, ecotourism is a catalyst of alternate in family economies, leading to new opportunities for employment, and new assets of cash income.

The definition that captures the two core cognizance of ecotourism and reflects the purpose of this take a look at that of TIES (The International Ecotourism Society). It defines ecotourism as an ‘accountable journey to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people (see Björk, 2007, p. 28). In essence, ecotourism fosters the conservation of biodiversity and sustains the properly being of neighborhood people growing a symbiotic court among nearby groups and protected regions (Fennell, 2008; sporting & Neil, 2009). Weaver (2005) adds that the related cultural components and the education value need to be identified.

Ecotourism and Indigenous Network Improvement

Ecotourism can make a contribution to the improvement of indigenous human beings in respect. First, ecotourism can supplement current possibilities and community property and diversify alternative financial activities for indigenous human beings from extractive land that makes use such as logging and farming (Zeppel, 2006; Colton & Harriss, 2007). this is due to the fact

ecotourism allows indigenous human beings to earn earnings from their very own lands and sources via activities that include traditional dances and rituals, language, production of handicrafts, architecture, and the perspectives from their living areas. Ecotourism, then, can beautify attention of their tradition and ecological significance (Hinch, 2001 as noted in Zeppel, 2006) and the significance of environmental conservation of the uncooked materials for handicraft manufacturing and ecotourism sites (Slinger, 2000). Subsequently, growing ecotourism in indigenous communities constructs a pathway for indigenous human beings to turn out to be economically impartial (Altman & Finlayson, 2003); with a purpose to enhance their first-class of existence (Mundine, 2007); to be capable of escaping from poverty conditions (Butler & Hinch, 1996; Ashley, Roe & Goodwin, 2001); and to decorate their cultural and ecological pride and identification (Butler & Hinch, 1996; Stronza, 2001).

Achieving such results, however, can be less difficult in idea than in practice. Björk (2007) emphasized that ecotourism is neither a shape of mass tourism however nor is it an answer for sustainable tourism. A current research discovered a number of sizeable issues with ecotourism development in indigenous communities (Timothy & White, 1999; Altman & Finlayson, 2003; Smith, 2001b, 2003; Swain, 2001; Butler & Hinch 1996; Robinson, 1999; Fagence, 2001; Zeppel, 2006; Cusack & Dixon, 2006).

One of the essential issues is that few promised benefits from ecotourism accrue to nearby people (Higham, 2007; Cusack & Dickson, 2006). The confined infrastructure and access in lots of indigenous communities, located in rural and far-off regions, make investments in undertaking and tourism sports expensive (Zeppel, 2006). The high value, the side of the lack of capital and to be had resources of indigenous human beings, prevents many of them from collaborating in ecotourism sports (Timothy & White, 1999). Extra importantly, the dearth of energy and ecotourism-related skills and knowledge of

indigenous people, mainly, also limits the participation of indigenous people in ecotourism activities and employment (Altman & Finlayson, 2003; Mundine, 2007; Cole, 2006; Timothy & White, 1999; Zeppel, 2006; Sofield, 2003). In developing nations, for that reason, it's far the norm that non-public funding in preference to network funding is the dominant quarter in tourism (Timothy & White, 1999). In many instances, indigenous people aren't the beneficiaries of ecotourism development even though their cultural and herbal resources are core points of interest (Swain, 2001; Higham, 2007). Cater (2006) additionally argued that in which blessings do accrue to indigenous people, it's miles commonly via low-skilled and low-paid employment.

A crucial problem is the overshadowing conservation promise of ecotourism. The improvement of ecotourism guarantees to make contributions to the cultural and natural conservation of nearby groups. However, by way of definition, ecotourism includes travel to pristine and unmodified herbal areas within the host groups. In maximum instances, ecotourism may be extra culturally and environmentally annoying than traditional mass tourism as Eco travelers may additionally choose to visit delicate and fragile regions, visit endangered species, and are seeking the actual life and cultures of nearby communities (Timothy & White, 1999; Fennell, 2008; Zeppel, 2006). Without suitable tracking and regulatory systems, visits to indigenous groups might also destroy and disturb both the indigenous people and the natural world (Begley, 1996 as cited in Stronza,

2001; Farrell & Marion, 2001 as noted in Cusack & Dixon, 2006). Ecotourism can motivate adverse intrusion that could devastate the living environment of indigenous communities (Smith, 2003, Fuller & Gleeson, 2007). Further, this intrusion can result in the failure of relationships or opposed behaviors among hosts and visitors of different cultures and socioeconomic situations (Sinclair, 2003; Fagence, 2001; Fuller & Gleeson, 2007; Smith, 1977).

Some other problem that has been found and mentioned when it comes to the

development of ecotourism in indigenous groups is social war. This battle may be exacerbated because of inequalities in the distribution of economic benefits derived from ecotourism development. Smith (1977) contended that non-participants in ecotourism sports have been green with envy of participants in ecotourism development. Stronza (2001) suggested that this difficulty derives from extended wealth stratification as the end result of ecotourism development in the host communities. Similarly, this jealousy can cause a failure in community relationships and intensification of distrust and mutual antagonism amongst network individuals (Sinclair, 2003).

An insufficient policy response to those problems hinders the effectiveness and sustainability of ecotourism development in indigenous communities (Higham, 2007; Hinch & Butler, 2007; Fennell, 2008). Moreover, Higham (2007) argued that the crucial lack of significant policy may additionally result from the absence of a clear declaration of ecotourism definition applicable to local communities. Björk (2007) stated that diverse definitions of ecotourism create contradictions and constraints in the implementation manner. Narrowly conceived definitions can be appeared as a beneficial guide for builders but might not be applicable in some conditions (Björk, 2007). In assessment, shallow and inadequately operationalized definitions create vague policies without certain thresholds that want to be met (Björk, 2007).

Empirical Studies

Ecotourism's capability to enhance the livelihoods of nearby groups is supported by research displaying that it advantages them in phrases of employment, sales, entrepreneurial opportunities, biodiversity conservation, and socio-cultural revitalization (Honey, 2008; Horton, 2009; Kruger,

2005). in comparison to mass tourism, it's far touted as offering higher sectoral linkages, reducing leakage of benefits, and fostering sustainable improvement (Holden, 2008; Weaver, 2005). There's a considerable wide va-

riety of research showing the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural effects of ecotourism on local human beings (Adams et al., 2004; Barkin, 2003; Buckley, 2003; Eagles, 2002; Fuller et al., 2007; Goodwin & Roe, 2001; Kiss, 2004; Roe & Elliot, 2004; Stronza, 2009). Its contribution to poverty reduction is acknowledged in the literature (Adams et al., 2004; Goodwin, 2000). For instance, Adams et al. (2004) argue that ecotourism is one of the approaches frequently used to reduce poverty through the linkage of conservation and improvement. In assisting its poverty discount prospect, Kiss (2004) feedback that ``the appeal of network-primarily based ecotourism is the chance of linking conservation and neighborhood livelihoods, keeping biodiversity while simultaneously decreasing poverty``.

In terms of the financial implications of ecotourism, studies provide evidence of the employment and income impacts on neighborhood communities and households. In helping this view, many authors record that ecotourism creates a ramification of employment and entrepreneurial possibilities along with tour guiding, restaurant operation, homestays, inn operation, sales of souvenirs, and conventional amusement (Buckley, 2003; Fennell, 2008b; Ross & Wall, 1999). For example, Ross and Wall (1999) file that, resident households of Sagarmatha countrywide Parks in Nepal, received earnings from guiding, promoting local items and clothes, and imparting lodges for vacationers. Those employment opportunities created profits diversification among families (Lapeyre, 2010; Stronza, 2009). In keeping with wooden (2002), those activities play a vital position in the fulfillment of ecotourism as they increased economic advantages to nearby groups. Some research proposes that the blessings stimulate local support for conservation (Alexander, 2000; Doan, 2000; Kiss, 2004; Kruger, 2005; Liu, 2003). Kiss (2004) argues that those blessings enhance the mindset of nearby human beings closer to biodiversity conservation.

Even as many studies substantiate the prospects of ecotourism, other studies

show that the blessings are from time to time-constrained (Agrawal & Redford, 2006; Barrett et al., 2001; Goodwin & Roe, 2001; Ogutu, 2002; Stone & Wall, 2004). This hindrance is linked to the notion of inequity. The argument is made that the benefits are confined to three. For instance, Ogutu (2002) observes that ecotourism gains have been constrained to a few families in Eselenkei, a network in Kenya. Different factors for the limited blessings are attributed to low visitation due to lack of easy-to-see charismatic flora and fauna, get entry to difficulties, and the dearth of mechanisms to comfortable an honest distribution of the advantages inside groups (see Coria & Calfucura, 2012). It is argued that inequity discourages participation and creates or exacerbates divisions in local groups. In lowering the prevalence of inequity, local strategies observed consist of; the use of the revenue generated to guide community development and developing revenue sharing mechanisms (Coria & Calfucura, 2012).

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Ecological development clearly defined as development that meets current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This idea, sometimes referred to as intergenerational disparity, is the need to share natural resources not only with those who currently live on Earth but also with future generations of Earth's inhabitants. Sustainable development integrates economic and social issues with the above environmental goals. Sustainability emphasizes resource conservation (Dixon & Pretorius, 2001; Mebratu, 1998; Jaini, Anuar & Daim, 2012). Dixon & Pretorius (2001) cites the International Regional Environment Initiative Council (ICLEI), which emphasizes environmental, social, and economic concerns, as three different but interrelated elements of sustainable development.

According to Hall (2008), sustainable development and tourism represent a change that refers to the movement from one state or condition to another.

er. Whether such a transition is positive or negative depends on the original criteria used to measure the change. Sustainable tourism requires informed involvement and strong political leadership of all relevant stakeholders to ensure widespread participation and consensus-building. To achieve this, impacts need to be monitored, and necessary precautions and/or corrective actions are taken as necessary. Sustainable tourism also maintains a high level of tourist satisfaction, guarantees a meaningful experience for tourists, raises their awareness of sustainability issues, and promotes sustainable tourism practices among them. Need to promote (World Tourism Organization, 2001).

Sustainable development through ecotourism is a concerning issue in the world today. Many countries have ensured their regional development through this concept. In this concept, sustainable development may occur through ecotourism development simultaneously in an area. Dimensions of ecotourism development refer to the environmental, economic, and social aspects of tourism development, and a suitable balance between these dimensions must be established to maintain its long-term sustainability (Bhuiyan et al, 2012).

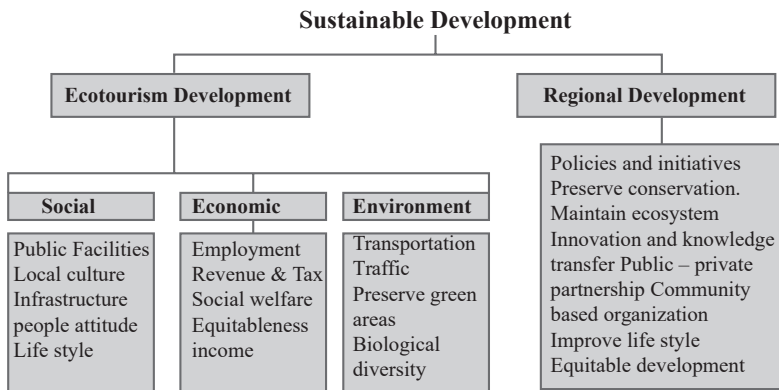


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

RESEARCH DESIGN

In this research descriptive design was applied which employs a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A cross-sectional survey method was also used. In cross-sectional survey, information on all variables were collected at a specific point in time. Descriptive designs are cover-research designs that are intended to produce accurate descriptions of variable relevant to the decision being faced, without demonstrating that some relationship exist between variables (Luck & Rubin, 1992). The descriptive design enabled the researchers to assess ecotourism potential and its contributions to local community development of Dawro and Konta Zones. The design also enabled the researchers to get the root of the actual ecotourism potentials and expected activities which in turn allowed a more comprehensive coverage of the ecotourism under study.

The quantitative aspect of the data mainly focused on description of key demographic profiles, measurement of selected socioeconomic variables and analysis of relationship among the dependent and independent variables.

Qualitative aspect of the data were collected from secondary sources, local communities those who have detailed information about the ecotourism, tourism experts/professionals, tourism service providers and tourists as well as researchers' field observation.

In this study concurrent triangulation design which is familiar to mixed method approach was used. The "triangulation" method which is a mixed method design proposed was used for the research as it increases the validity of evaluation and research findings (Mathison, 1998). It helps to overcome intrinsic biases (measurement bias, sampling bias and procedural bias) and other problems associated with a single research method (Yeasmin and Rahman, 2012).

Sources of Data and Instruments

The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data included an in-depth interview, focus group discussions, and observation. The data gathered from primary sources were substantiated by secondary sources of data involving document analysis of both published and unpublished documents deemed relevant to the topic. It has included dissertations, thesis, research reports, government policy documents, publications, periodic and statistical reports, performance reports, annual plans, books, research papers prepared and presented for policy discussions and conferences both at national and international levels, journals, workshop proceedings, etc.

Target Population

The study was conducted in Dawro and Konta Zones under the newly emerged region of South West Ethiopia. The target groups of the study areas were selected from local communities, tour guides, tourism bureau experts, attraction sites employees, and secondary school teachers of the Woredas.

According to Field (2005), whenever it is possible to access the entire population, it is possible to collect data from sample and use the behavior with in the sample to infer things about the behavior of the population. Field also states that the bigger the sample size, the likely it reflect the whole population. Accordingly, in this study to make the sample more representatives, the sample size of the study is determined using the formula of Slovin (1960) which is re-stated by Yamane (1967). Thus, the formula is selected for survey sample size determination.

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

Where, N= the total population size

n= Total Sample size

e= the error term which is 5 %(i.e. at 95% confidence interval level)

$$n = \frac{840}{1 + 840(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{840}{3.1}$$

$$n = 271$$

Sampling Technique

For quantitative survey data collection; the target groups were selected using simple random sampling technique and stratified sampling technique to sample from the Woredas' target population. To collect qualitative data from the target groups purposive sampling was used as it gives freedom to the researchers.

Data Analysis

Data were collected from the numerous participants in the cluster categorized into different groups according to their common characteristics; Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tables, graphs and pie charts. Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS 26) was used to process and deploy the data into the desired analyses. In descriptive analyses, measures of central tendency and frequencies were used to present information.

Discussion

This chapter presents processed information and discusses the research findings and consequences. To realize the general and specific objectives of the study, eco-tourism potential and its contribution to the local communities of Dawro and Konta Zones had been raised and mentioned. These take account

of economic, social, and environmental concerns of ecotourism. Therefore, the following discourse is made based totally on the feedback accrued from the respondents via questionnaire, FGD, and key informant interviews which can be supplied in phrases of tables, charts, and descriptive evaluation using percentages.

Economic Concerns of Ecotourism

- Culture and sports office experts in the study areas mentioned that economic growth is primarily achieved through the creation of job opportunities. The results obtained from the survey, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis are summarized here under.

Ecotourism and Job Opportunity

- Economic growth is a prerequisite for increasing productive employment (ILO, 2015). The result of the study portrayed that the majority of respondents 43.9% objected that the ecotourism *potentials of Dawro and Konta Zones were not in a position to create job opportunities and bring good salaries for local communities at the expected level.*
- The areas were absolutely marginalized in the TPLF *regime besides this, due to the absence of various tourism-related companies, infrastructural problems, and the political conspiracy of the earlier regional state to promote the ecotourism potentials of both Zones; ecotourism failed to create employment opportunities for local communities as well as failed to bring economic benefit at the national level.*
- Regarding insignificant tourism *activities of Dawro and Konta Zones, focus group discussants justified that the status of local tourism service providers is not competitive enough and unable to create more job opportunities for the local residents. This implies that the communities do not share the economic benefits of ecotourism. Based on*

the researchers' observations, Dawro and Konta Zone communities are not lucky to utilize the gifts of nature due to insignificant ecotourism *activities*.

Ecotourism and Local Economic Growth

- The survey revealed that the vast majority of the participants agreed that ecotourism-related activities in Dawuro and Konta Zones didn't bring substantial economic growth. Mixed agriculture is the most practiced economic activity. This is not surprising given that the areas of study have a rural setting.
- The overall results portrayed that no company donated ecotourism *income generating tools by creating alliances with other corporations and institutions to bring economic resources to the communities by considering the social benefits of the society in return.*

Ecotourism-Related Economic Revenue

- The study assessed the revenue mainly obtained from ecotourism *reinvested in the local communities of the study areas.*
- The majority around 45% of respondents objected that the revenues obtained from the park and other tourism-related activities were reinvested in the form of capacity building, promotions, and small grants to the communities. The observation result further revealed that the sites are not accustomed to digital marketing and payment.
- It was learned during the observation that except for the attempt made to promote the areas through signposts and brochures, a fundamental aspect of the promotion through other media which are accessible and modern remains to be done. Though there are insufficient signposts on the junction to each site, they are not appealing and noteworthy.

Social Concerns of Ecotourism

- The study assessed social concerns of ecotourism *based on the networks and connectedness of communities with their family and relatives as well as membership in formal and informal social institutions. The selected aspects of social concerns of ecotourism are discussed as follows.*

Ecotourism and Collaborations of Communities

- The result of the survey depicted that the majority about 54.2% of respondents approved that due to ecotourism; collaboration has been created between local communities and organizations. The rest of the respondents almost 31.4% and 14.4% objected and were neutral about the existence of collaboration between communities and local companies. Even if the majority recognized the importance of community involvement in social development, there is no single tour company that facilitated the promotion of social equity through ecotourism *in the communities.*
- As a result of weak ecotourism-related activities, local communities are not well organized, and social engagement only is possible if organizations are being established to create collaborations in accordance with proper management.
- The result of the overall assessment portrayed that the establishment of collaborations between the community and other stakeholders is at an infant stage.

Ecotourism's Contribution to Behavioral and Attitudinal Change

- Information obtained from focus group discussants showed that the attitude and behavior of local communities towards the natural environment is very optimistic. Even if the communities of both Zones are not obtaining economic benefits from the natural and cultural resources

of the area; respondents have developed positive attitudes and become obliged to support rural tourism *in their local environment*.

- Based on the result of the study, the community is eco-friendly and highly attached to nature to preserve it in a sustainable way whereas, the community is not benefiting from it. Due to this, nowadays some of the communities started to practice deforestation for agricultural and other purposes.

Ecotourism and Educational Support

- The study tried to look into how ecotourism *has subjected to support communities in schools. A large number of respondents around 37% complained that children and schools are not supported yet and the rest 35% of respondents remained silent on the issue of ecotourism's contribution in this regard. Information obtained from key informants reflected that the development of ecotourism is at the infant stage, there is no organization that supports schools and it may be difficult for local communities to define their needs. No tourists donated materials to a school in need of repair.*

Ecotourism Contribution to Cultural Promotion

- Concerning the contribution of ecotourism *towards cultural promotion and benefits the majority 54.2% of respondents agreed that the existence of ecotourism has promoted the culture of the study areas. On the issue of promoting culture and receiving benefits from ecotourism in return. The reality on the ground is different when thinking about ecotourism; it is a blessing whereas the activities of ecotourism in the study areas were very limited so, in our assumption tourism didn't promote the culture but rather the cultural music revolution made by different artists has contributed to the communities to promote their culture and bring benefit.*

- The overall result of the study regarding cultural promotion with a mean and standard deviation of 3.217, and 1.294 implies that contribution of ecotourism *to cultural promotion is at a moderate state.*

Effect of Ecotourism on Culture

- The result further indicated that (50.6%), (46.2%), (36.9%), and (43.2%) of respondents confirmed that ecotourism *brought cultural motivation, and cultural interchange, cultural pride, and cultural protection to the localities respectively.*
- The respondents recognized that bringing tourists to local communities has allowed putting the location on a route map, empowering them to be self-sustained, and letting locals be more proud of their particular identity, of their culture, that they have something motivating to share to others. In another way round, this approves the idea that ecotourism *makes locals more proud of their culture, proving to the communities that their cultural input is valuable.*

Environmental Concerns of Ecotourism

- Based on the scope of the study, natural assets include both natural resources found inside and outside the park such as land, water, energy, biodiversity, management of resources, attractiveness, conservation, and protection of resources necessary for the local community's benefit. The local people were asked if ecotourism *development in the area has contributed to social benefits.*

Environmental Protection and Conservation

- One way of promoting environmental protection is to increase local community knowledge and understanding. A large proportion of the respondents (51%) agreed that ecotourism development in the area has promoted environmental conservation however, the researchers ob-

served that there are no community-based natural resource *management projects that could compensate the community to mitigate climate changes. The efforts will be more effective if the concerned bodies recognize local communities as effective custodians of the natural resource base and ensure they have access to the technology and financing they need to cope with climate change and be part of the solution.*

Interaction between Local Communities and Wild Animals

- Regarding the interaction between wild animals and local communities, a large proportion (54.6%) of the respondents revealed the existence of conflict among them. Opposition among rural communities and wild animals over herbal assets is greater intense in developing international locations, wherein nearby human populations generally tend to suffer better costs (Conover, 2002). This facilitates recognizing the timing and place of battle, the behavior of the concerned natural world, and the perceptions of affected stakeholders. Information obtained from various sources revealed that the fauna found in the environment are adversely affecting communities residing adjacent to the park areas.

Ecotourism Impact on the Environment

- It is obvious that the concept of ecotourism *advocates minimal impact and wise use of resources in a sustainable way. Survey results indicated that (38.4%) and (37.4%) of respondents rated agreed and disagreed respectively on the minimal impact of ecotourism on the environment whereas, the remaining (23.2%) were neutral to refer to the level of the environmental impact of ecotourism. According to the focus group discussants, the effect of ecotourism depends on the nature and flow of tourists and the characteristics of the environment. The effects can be direct if caused by the tourist/s activities on the environment or indirect if caused by the infrastructure created for tourists. While*

evaluating the status quo of the ecotourism environment of Dawro and Konta Zones are not much exposed to the negative impact of tourism-related activities due to the minimal flow of tourists to the areas.

- The researchers' observation also confirmed that except the local communities attempt to affect the environment adversely; tourism-related effect on nature is insignificant.

Ecotourism Contribution to Environmental Education

- Regarding behavioral adjustment towards nature the survey revealed that about (50.5%) of respondents believed that ecotourism has educated the locals on how to change their traditional behavior in favor of the environment. Studies by Thapa, Graefe, and Meyer (2005), Stern et al (2008), and Kuo (2002) stated that effective environment-related educational programs could encourage participants to adopt environment-friendly attitudes and enhance their environmental understanding.

Energy and Water Resources

- The majority of the respondents (43.2%) believed that there is a problem with access to clean and safe water and electricity.
- According to the information obtained from focus group discussions, the supply of water and electricity is the duty of the government, in aggregation with other revenue collected from different sectors tourism *directly contributes to the accessibility of water and electricity. The reasons were poor integration between the federal, regional, and local levels in the planning, implementation, and maintenance of water services and other social services.*

CONCLUSION

The study identified the ecotourism potentials of the Dawro and Konta zones. Thus, the result revealed that both zones are endowed with different natural and cultural ecotourism potentials. Further, the study also investigated the economic, social, and environmental contributions of ecotourism to the local community's development. Decisively, there are no ecotourism-related companies that contribute to economic growth. Having plenty of ecotourism potentials companies are not working with the local communities and make them benefit from ecotourism. Except for some job opportunities created around the park, there are no tourism-related companies that could create jobs and are not in a position to help communities to grow and develop on their own. The overall descriptive statistics results of the economic concerns of ecotourism revealed that the benefit to the communities is minimal. Thus, in order to scale up and assure sustainable economic benefits for the local communities; various works remain to be done.

Regarding social concerns, the absence of local school support, environment educational campaigns, local tour guide associations, and lack of community initiations and collaborations made the social benefits of localities motionless. Conclusively, it is essential to establish countrywide tour companies that easily collaborate with communities to bring sustainable development and social benefit.

Ecotourism advocates minimal impact and wise use of resources in a sustainable way. A large portion of respondents agreed that the development of ecotourism has promoted environmental conservation. The conflict between local communities and wild animals is a serious concern for those living adjacent to the park areas. The researchers' observation also confirmed that except the local communities attempt to affect the environment adversely; tourism-related effect on nature is insignificant. In general, ecotourism has educated the locals on how to change their traditional behavior towards nature.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based up on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- The area is known to have a lot of known tourism potential which has not been realized and fully utilized. Therefore, there is a need for new tourism product development strategy which should raise awareness of new cultural and natural tourism products.
- To maintain the ecological balance of tourism in Dawro and Kanta Zones as a destination highly demand for hard works to be made which should ensure a steadiness approach between the conservation of natural and cultural resources upon which the industry depends, improvement of the quality of life of the local communities and enhancing tourists satisfaction.
- Effective discussion between different bodies of the government, hotel associations, tourism associations, tour operators, tour guides, NGO's and CBO's segments concern is need to grow a mutual understanding of the significance of tourism development and the conservation of wild life protected areas in Zones.
- Strengthening capacities of the local governance bodies and improve their knowledge on tourism and sustainability.
- Raise awareness of ways in which tourism benefits the entire community collectively.
- Improving professional knowledge and skills on various visitor management techniques through training of park employees and local guides based on internationally set standards and guidelines.
- Both the federal and regional government support for research, capacity building, networking and skill based training for continued exchange of experiences and ideas. This will improve the awareness about the

conservation of natural and cultural resources and the role tourism plays in improving the livelihood condition of the local communities.

- To promote culture of the tribes, museums should be established at each destination.
- Tourist information centers must be available at each getaway towns.
- Mandate should be given for the zone to issue licenses on tourism business such as local tour operators, local travel agency and car rental companies which further create opportunities for livelihood diversifications.
- It is necessary that tourism economic benefits developed should be increased and retained locally.
- Efforts should be developed to involve more local people in the supply chain and increases the multiplier effect of tourism to the local economy.
- Natural resource rehabilitation projects should be designed.
- The government should create a conducive and supportive environment for local people.
- Adopting a holistic approach to planning, development and management of tourism at every stage which ensures the participation of all important stakeholders (public and private sector, NGOs, CBOs and the local communities including the poor).
- Strengthening and enforcing the regulatory and prohibitive mechanisms especially in the national park.

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Assessing the Practice and Performance of Implementing Competency-Based Hospitality Training: The Case of Some Selected Government TVET Polytechnic Colleges, In Addis Ababa City Administration and Sidama Region

By: Anley Mulgeta Yilma and Tigist Reda Alemu

ABSTRACT

As the quality of service is often perceived as being fundamentally linked with the quality and number of staff. The hospitality industry is viewed as being “labour intensive” (Nigel,E.2003).So as to fulfill the demand, middle level training is taken as the prevailing option. The Ethiopian middle level under the frame of TVET system has been guided by the competence-based training approach since 2008 with the expectation of producing competent workforce in hotel and tourism occupational fields. The purpose of this study was to assess the practice and performance of implementing competency based hospitality training program in some selected government TVET colleges, which provide formal middle level hospitality training in Addis Ababa city administration and Sidama region. The research approach followed in this study was a mixed research, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. This study was conducted in four selected Polytechnic colleges, Entoto Nifas Silk ,Misrak which are located in Addis Ababa Administration , TTI from Federal and Hawassa Poly from Sidama Region. The respondents’ categories were 50 trainers, 171 trainees, 5 department heads. The respondents (trainers and trainees) were all from hotel and tourism departments. The respondents were selected using purposive sampling and data were collected through observation and questionnaires. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The finding showed that the actual training lacks quality and standard and trainers fail to provide support and update themselves. Facilities Shops are found

inadequate , inefficient, old and malfunctioning machines are found. There observed poor support from the management and improper orientation and attitude towards the nature of the training .Cooperative training is found as not timely or there is no proper schedule. It is not found on the field of the trainers not supervised by the colleges' delegates, Poor communication with stakeholders. Generally , the data revealed the fact that the competency based middle level hospitality training is being challenged by: low quality and standard of training, the managements of the colleges under study lacks proper orientation about the specific nature of hospitality training, loss of focus, duplication ,and unstandardized training ;Disparity between the demand of the industry and the training. From the data gathered it is possible to conclude that as 99% of the trainees joined the field based on their interest which implies there is a demand for hospitality training in many areas.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Justification

In 2018 tourism contributed \$7.4 billion to the country's economy an increase of 2.2 % from the previous year. In 2019 , the fact that a record of 812,000 tourists visited the country , bringing a revenue of 3.55 billion USD(4.2% of the gross national product).The sector in those year represent 9.4 of Ethiopian Economy.(<http://www.etihoembassy.org>).

With its backward and forward linkage with other sectors of the economy like transport, construction, handicrafts, manufacturing, horticulture, agriculture etc tourism has the potential to not only to be the economy driver , but also become an effective tool for poverty reduction and ensuring growth with equity.(Alok .K, 2018).

As a result of its economic impact and the nature of the industry Hospitality education has emerged as driving force for developing econ-

omies therefore, these economies recognized hospitality as a vehicle for their envisaged development and growth (Mill&Morrison,1999) . The history of Ethiopian middle level hospitality training and its contribution has been insufficiently studied. Hospitality training was started in the early 1952 /3 where Ras Hotel villas were used as a classroom. The first trainers were Ras Hotel managers taking the responsibility. (Sisay 2017).After recognizing the initiation, the government decided to establish training institute legally.The only establishment in the country that provide basic level and upgrading training to the tourism and hotel industry, until the end of 1991 has been the Catering and Tourism Training Institute.(Tumeso 2004). At the beginning, the training was given at certificate, diploma and on the job training level after wards due to the revised educational policy of the regime CTTI had adopted TVET program.

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) refers to a range of learning experiences which are relevant to the world of work and which occur in a variety of training context, including educational institution and world of work place (Endashaw , 2014).TVET is introduced to the system as a means of supporting the industry with middle level trained man power in 2002.Af-terwards many governmental and private institutions established and pursue trainings from level 1-5 .Hospitality training has emerged to be one of the focuses in TVET. TVET is credited for contributing to the sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting sustained economic growth(by insuring that labor is in constant supply to the economy),social equity, environmental protection, employability and decent work for students(UNESCO,2015).

There are numerous skills which are mandatory for being effective in the hospitality industry. These skills are taught during theoretical and practical lessons. The students expressed the importance of people skills as one of the most important character traits for hospitality students. To be successful

in this industry, students need to have the ability to listen, communicate and relate to others on a professional level.

Many researches have been conducted and come up with reliable facts about the implementation of TVET and challenges in general. As a training policy, TVET was taken as a way out for developing economies. But because of numerous reasons, the system faced challenges starting from shortage of qualified trainers, shortage of basic training facilities to the extent even negative orientation about the policy hampered its effectiveness Yetbarek(2010). Gemechu (2020) also found out similar key challenges include profession challenges, the disparity between possessed skills and market needs, prevalent concern about poor quality of training and training environments, the negative community attitudes. The above mentioned and other researchers conducted on middle level man power training did not try to address hospitality training in focus. Hence, this study aimed at assessing the practice and implementation performance of middle level Hospitality training in government polytechnic colleges so as to trace the challenges and opportunities.

Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was to assess the practice and implementation performance of Hospitality training in TVET polytechnic colleges.

The specific objectives were to:

- assess the delivery of competency based hospitality training,
- examine the availability of facilities for competency based hospitality training,
- assess the provision of trainers' support,
- examine the practice and implementation of cooperative training,
- examine the factors that adversely affect the training.

LITERATURE

Emergence of Technical Vocational and Educational Training TVET

At the second International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education, held in The Republic of Korea in 1999, UNESCO and ILO (in consultation with their respective Member states and partner agencies) jointly agreed upon using the term technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in future in order to unite the field (Rupert M. and David N.). During the 179th session of the Executive Board of UNESCO in April 2008, at the request of Germany and with the very strong support of many member states, there was decision to develop a UNESCO Strategy for TVET. It was suggested that such a strategy could include : the scope, fields of action, and vital aspects of TVET, such as its linkages to employment and self-employment; the UNESCO role inside country specific TVET needs assessment and consultation, as well as complementarity with other providers; the dissemination of best practices in TVET in different training locations, in both formal and informal sectors ;the integration of TVET into secondary education; and finally a review of the internal coherence of the present configuration of TVET staffing and financial resources across different UNESCO units , sections and offices (Burnett,N.2008).

According to Finch and Crunkilton(1999) cited in Afework (2019),TVET refers to education and training that prepares persons for gainful employment .TVET can take place either in formal schools (i.e kindergarten through grade 12or13),or increasingly in post- secondary community and and/or technical colleges, or informally by a means of training at the workplace and increasingly by distance media (Rupert M and David N.).

Throughout its history, vocational education has gone through many changes in meaning and scope. In general, vocation is characterized by teach-

ing skills to students. Over time, various terms have been used to describe elements of the field that are now conceived as comprising TVET. These include: apprenticeship training , vocational education , industrial arts , technical education, technical/vocational education(TVE), education occupational(OE),vocational education and training(VET),career and technical education(CET),etc.(Getachew,2016).

Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) in Ethiopia

Since the imperial period, different policies were enacted to introduce TVET in Ethiopia. As in many other African countries, it was considered as second class education. When vocational education and training was introduced, its objective was to improve the attitudes toward skilled, manual work, and thus diverts at least some young people from seeking the white-collar jobs that were increasingly in short supply, rather to encourage young people to remain in the rural areas where they could contribute to the economy by participating in agriculture (Mesfin,M.2017).

In 1970s, selected high schools were converted to comprehensive high schools where students could have both academic and vocational education. Since 1994, TVET has become an integral part of the whole education ecosystem. In recognition of the critical role it played in emerging economies, the Ethiopian government has been pronouncing the importance of TVET to implement growth and transformation plan and invested significant financial and human resource to improve access, quality and relevance of the TVET programs.

According to 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP), formal TVET is set to be offered at second cycle Secondary Level (Upper Secondary Level). In addition, the policy outlined that non-formal TVET would be given for unemployed people, including youth who failed to complete the education up to 10th grade. TVET strategy plan launched in 2008 set as its objective

to train competence, motivated, adaptable and innovative lower and middle level professionals which can contribute to poverty reduction and social and economic development through facilitating demand driven, quality TVET and transfer of demanded technology (Tassew,w.etal2018).

Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) of Ethiopia aims to provide trainees with technical skills applicable in real world of work. The plan of Ethiopian government is to accelerate sustainable development targets and TVET needs to provide “relevant demand driven training that responds to the needs of the economy and employment (MoE, 2008).

Since 1994, the Education and Training Policy of the country has placed a great deal of emphasis on the development of TVET (TGE, 1994:16-17). In addition to this, MOFED (2006:11) and the European Union (2006:2) state that the priority areas identified by the Ethiopian government are transport, education, agriculture and health. The government allocates 64% of the total budget to the above mentioned sectors. However, success cannot be achieved in these areas without skilled manpower at all the levels under discussion. A dynamic TVET programme with maximum concern for the development of a skilled labor market responsive to the economy is of vital importance (Mesfin, M.2019).

Middle Level Training in Ethiopian Context

Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) is institutionally separate from the rest of the education system, and forms a parallel track. Students entering TVET stream after completing grade 10, have three options open to them, depending on the score received in the national exam:(1) one year training (10+1); 2 year training (10+2), or three year training (10+3). Students who complete three years of training after grade 10 are considered to have completed first year of college level education and can join universities to complete their undergraduate degree. The students that attain level 4 in TVET can continue to higher education, hence, level 4 TVET is con-

sidered by some as the alternative route to get to the university (Pramila,K. and Irina S. 2013).

TVET strategy plan launched in 2008 set as its objective to train competence, motivated, adaptable and innovative lower and middle level professionals who can contribute to poverty reduction and social and economic development through facilitating demand driven, quality TVET and transfer of demanded technology (Tassew,w.eta l2018). As the quality of service is often perceived as being fundamentally linked with the quality and number of staff. The hospitality industry is viewed as being “labor intensive” (Nigel, E.2003).So as to fulfill the demand, middle level training is taken as the prevailing option.

METHODOLOGY

In this section, research approach and research design, sources of data, sampling design, data collection instruments, data analysis methods and ethical considerations are presented.

Research Approach

The research approach followed in this study was a mixed research incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of quantity. Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon relating to or involving quality or kind Creswell (2003).

Research design

Research design is well understood as a logic plan of how to conduct a research. It stands for the advance planning of the methods to be adopted for collecting the relevant data and techniques to be used in their analysis, keep-

ing in view the objectives of the research and the availability of staff, time and money .(Kothari, 2003).Therefore, the study followed a mixed research approach employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Interweaving qualitative and quantitative methodologies enhances the accuracy and authenticity of a research.

Study Population

Population is a group of individuals who have the same characteristic you would like to study.(Creswell, 2003).In considering the resource capacity of the researchers ,geographically, the study included government TVET Poly Technic Colleges which provide formal middle level hospitality training in Addis Ababa city administration and Hawassa city in Sidama region.

Sampling Method

In this study, purposive sampling technique was employed. This sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample which represents the universe (Kothari, 2003).Therefore, Entoto Polytechnic, Nefassilk Polytechnic, Misrak General Polytechnics and the pioneer Catering and Tourism Training institute (now TTI) from Addis Ababa and one polytechnic college from Sidama region were selected purposively since they are accredited to provide middle level formal hospitality training. In these poly technic colleges a total of-164 Trainers and 781-of Trainees were statically counted. To this effect 18 % of the total population was selected purposefully to respond the questionnaire.

Data Collection

Sources of data are primary and secondary. Primary data are those which are collected fresh and for the first time and thus happen to be original in character. These data were collected directly from study respondents through questionnaire, interview and observation data collection methods.

Data Collection Instruments

In this study, questionnaire, interview and observation were used for collecting data from the selected respondents. Questionnaire with open and closed ended questions were distributed to 54 TVET trainers from 164 total population, 171 TVET trainees from 781 total population from this 12 questionnaire from trainees and 4 from teachers were not returned.

The nature of the questionnaire was partial scale-based which is five item likert scale (Very unsatisfactory, Unsatisfactory, Not sure, satisfactory, very Satisfactory). The questionnaires had open and closed ended questions. Likert scales, a Likert scale provides a range of responses to a given question or statement, (Cohen, and Manion 2007).

The questionnaire was translated to and administered in Amharic as this is the work language of Ethiopia and is spoken by almost all Ethiopians. The researchers argued that, since the average Ethiopian was not fluent in English, results might not be as reliable if questionnaire administration and completion were in English since respondents might interpret questions incorrectly.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with department heads and the data were captured by deep and attentive interview. According to Kumar (2005:87) an experienced interviewer can create trust within an open and relaxed environment, which will encourage interviewees to speak freely. Such an interviewee can collect additional, critical information on the interviewee by observing his/her body language, and prepare interviewees to sensitive questions.

To collect further information, the researchers prepared a checklist used for observation. Observation offers an investigator the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring social situations. In this way, the

researcher can look directly at what is taking place rather than relying on second-hand accounts (Cohen, and Manion 2007).

Data Analysis Technique

The result of the survey was analyzed electronically. All the data collected from the respondents were entered in to and analyzed on a computer by SPSS version 25. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequency distributions, and percentages were used. The qualitative, i.e. interview and observation data were analyzed using the narrative analysis technique.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to assess the practice and performance of implementing competency based hospitality training program in some selected government TVET colleges, which provide formal middle level hospitality training in Addis Ababa city administration and Sidama region. Thus, the study came up with challenges in the practice and performance of implementing competency based hospitality training program. The research put forward the following questions to get the raw data, find out problems and to suggest possible solutions.

- Do the selected training polytechnic colleges deliver competency based hospitality training?
- Do the polytechnic colleges have sufficient training facilities for competency based hospitality training?
- Is there adequate support from trainers?
- Is cooperative training practiced and implemented at the polytechnic college as desired?
- What are the factors that adversely affect competency based hospitality training?

According to the findings :

The delivery of quality competency based training meant to produce competent trainees for the competitive labor market will not be feasible without the full support and commitment of trainers. Trainer's professional interest, setting consultation hour and provision of consultation for trainees and also providing tutorial training are all important areas of support. The collected data in this regard indicate that the professional interest of trainers is satisfactory and above as rated 71.7% of the trainees. On the contrary, 64.8 % of trainees rated the practice and performance of the surveyed polytechnic colleges in setting consultation hour for a trainee is unsatisfactory and below that.

Over all, the average performance of the surveyed TVET polytechnic colleges in delivering competency based hospitality training is found to be significantly below the expected satisfactory level.

Looking at the availability of sufficient training facilities like machineries, tools, equipment, etc. the existing practice and performance of the surveyed Hospitality TVET training polytechnic colleges is rated as unsatisfactory by 46.9% of trainers where considerable proportion (24.5%) of trainers in this regard are not sure whether or not training facilities are sufficiently available in their respective colleges.

With regard to the practice and implementation of a regular program for trainees to visit industries for practical learning, the performance of the surveyed polytechnic colleges was rated as unsatisfactory and below 69.4% of trainers. In terms of cooperativeness of employers to run their cooperative training only 42.9 % of the trainers rated the practice and performance as satisfactory and above while the remaining trainers were not sure and rated the practice and performance as unsatisfactory and below.

In further looking the practice and implantation of cooperative training, data were collected from trainees from each respective hospitality training polytechnic college. Accordingly, the majority of trainees (60.4%) responded that their respective polytechnic colleges have cooperative training schedule which is typically 'whenever available'. Nevertheless, 61% of the trainees revealed the fact that they do not have a chance to be assigned based on their field during cooperative training. Moreover, 71.7% of the trainees responded that their respective colleges do not supervise cooperative training. In addition, 73% of the trainees replied that companies do not carry out continuous assessment during cooperative training.

With respect to administrative support, the result from the collected data from the surveyed polytechnic colleges indicate that the practice and implementation performance is unsatisfactory as rated by 51% of trainers in the respective polytechnic colleges. Further, 40.8 % of trainers in the surveyed polytechnic colleges were not sure about the administrative support in their respective colleges.

According to National TVET strategy objectives (2006), it claims to create motivated and competent work; establish and capacitate necessary institutions. In spite of this, the status of TVET colleges, as stated by large portion of respondents is below capacity because of the following constraints:

- a. Inadequate, out dated and improper workshops, laboratories;
- b. Shortage of consumable materials, machines, tools according to number of trainees;
- c. Lack of proper orientation and focus among the administration;
- d. Funding shortage;
- e. Poor communication networks and platforms with the stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS

As the nature of the industry i.e labour intensive, middle level hospitality training support the industry at large .Currently the prevailing policy for middle level training is competency based which aimed at creating competent work force for the world to fulfill the demands of the industry. In order to achieve the training program, conducive training environment and applicable occupational standard and curriculum are needed, like consistency of occupational standards and curriculum, attentiveness(interest) of trainees, involvement of stakeholders, appropriate procuring policy implementation, qualified and experienced trainers, conducive work shop with adequate training materials and support and follow up from concerned bodies. In view of this, the following conclusions are drawn:

The actual training lacks quality and standard and trainers fail to provide support and update themselves. Facilities and Shops are found inadequate, inefficient, old and malfunctioning machines are found. There observed poor support from the management and improper orientation and attitude towards the nature of the training.

Cooperative training is found as not timely or there is no prior plan or schedule ,trainees failed to be assigned on positions related to their field of study, not supervised by the colleges delegates, poor communication with stakeholders.

Generally , the data revealed the fact that the practice and implementation performance of the colleges in delivering competency based hospitality training, availing facilities for competency based training, trainers support , and also implementing cooperative training are found unsatisfactory. These implies that the training delivered lacks quality and standard .The factors which accelerate this are found to be the managements of the colleges under study lacks proper orientation about the specific nature of hospitality training, loss of focus, duplication and unstandardized training . From the data gathered it is possible to conclude that as 99% of the trainees joined the field based on their interest i.e there is a demand in many areas and the post COVID reviving hotel industry could be utilized as a good opportunity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In the actual training sessions there should be trainer's capacity building scheme, sustainable supervision and support. Trainers should demark that each trainee is able to perform each competency individually, have a time to support, consult and provide timely feedback to their trainees.

2. Facilities such as workshops, classrooms, libraries, vehicles, machines, etc. and materials are not adequate, updated and up to the standards. Training in the absence of suitable facilities and materials is against the objectives of TVET and the nature of the demanding industry. Thus, it is advisable to allocate the utmost budget available to fulfill the necessary facilities. To do so, an effort should be exerted to properly orient the management about the specific and peculiar nature of the field i.e hospitality training. There should be proper maintenances and the purchasing process and guidelines should properly address the demand for critical training materials. Furthermore, it is better to encourage the involvement of the various stakeholders in the expansion and proper running of the training. In connection to this, the colleges should give due attention to the designing of convincing project proposals to get fund from different sources and benchmark completed training facilities.

3. In addition; specialization is needed; where selected colleges will be given the authority to launch competency based hospitality training programs only. This has advantages for government, as well as trainers and trainees in terms of wise use of training resources, man power, time, budgets, and assure training quality to meet industry's demand. Supervision and supporting will be fruitful.

4. Cooperative training seems not to be carried out according to the expectation. There are various reasons for this. Thus, it is better if there is a possibility of introducing this commitment as star package determination criteria, funding, tax reduction and commitment recognition. Furthermore, the colleges should work in close collaboration with hotels and travel companies by preparing and signing Memorandum of Understanding early in the training period and build a harmonized long lasting communication.

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Challenges and Strategies of Street Food Vending for Job Creation in Addis Ababa

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at investigating the challenges and strategies of street food vending for employment opportunities in Addis Ababa. The study targeted street food vendors and consumers along with other stakeholders of the street food vending business. A mixed research design was used incorporating a structured questionnaire, face-to-face interview questions, and observation checklists. A sample of 384 respondents were asked to respond to the structured questionnaire. Cluster sampling accompanied by systematic random sampling were used for collecting data from street food vendors and consumers whereas purposive sampling was used to collect data from experts, academicians, and officials targeted in this study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS V.26) and thematic analysis were used to analyze the quantitative and qualitative data respectively. The study revealed that financial constraints, knowledge gap, legal restrictions, absence of regulation, supply gap, lack of working equipment and space, lack of hygienic food handling and preparation practices, and raw material cost are the major challenges facing street food vendors. Training, legalizing, and regulating street food vending activity, improving the supply of raw materials and equipment, provision of vending sites and stalls, and financial support are important strategies to tackle the challenges of street food vending.

Keywords: Street food vending, Challenges, Strategies, Job creation, Addis Ababa.

INTRODUCTION

Street-sold foods are roadside RTE food items and raw foods that are prepared and sold on street food vending sites (Ma.L., Chen.H., Yan.H., Wu.L., 2019). Street foods are a major source of nourishment for a large number of people in developing countries (Anandhi N., Janani., Krishnaveni N., 2015) and created jobs for many citizens to support their livelihood and assist their national economy (Al MM., Rahman SM., Turin TC., 2013). Street food vending is also an important socio-economic activity for the urban poor and middle incomers in meeting their food and nutritional requirements through affordable prices (M.Ackah, et al., 2011; J.C. Cross &A. Morales, 2007). Street food vending is an economic and commercial activity that takes place outside the government's licensing and regulatory framework where only the entrepreneurs regulate their activities. Being one of the highly visible informal sector activities, street vending is involving unregulated trading activities that take place in public spaces such as streets, sidewalks, bridges, and pavements that can potentially cause social resentment for creating a crowded environment in public places (Joseph, 2011). Street food has faced challenges due to a variety of factors, including unhygienic food handling practices, food preparation, food display, and delivery, and working environments, despite its accessibility, affordability, and importance in meeting the dietary needs of those with low and middle incomes. Access to clean water, waste management, and cross-contamination of ready-to eat food and raw food with pathogens are the other challenges of street food vending activity. Use of unauthorized additives and synthetic sweeteners used to adulterate drinks that contaminate street food is also the other challenge for street foods (Street Food Project Report No. 2, 1990 by WHO &FAO). Consequently, street foods are perceived to be a major public health risk (S. Bhowmik, 2010).

The lack of regulatory framework in licensing and operation of street food vending is the other bottleneck that results in fragmented vending activities and a major challenge for its management (Winarno and A. Allain, 1991). Lack of skills in food handling, preparation, and business management and lack of working capital results in a profound challenge for street food vendors (Jason Cropper, 2017). Street food vending is an important source of employment and income generation for developing countries if properly employed (Al MM., Rahman SM., Turin TC., 2013).

According to Cohen (1986, cited by Winarno, F. G., and A. Allain, 1991) street food vending in Indonesia, Bogor, a city having annual street food sales of USD 60 million and 18,000 enterprises operating in the city of 250,000 population. USD 2.2 billion was the income generated in annual street food sales in Malaysia (Allain, 1988). Street food vending is also a good source of employment for women i.e. 90%, 53%, and 40% of street food vending activities were owned by women in the Philippines, Senegal and Indonesia respectively (M. Cohen, 1986). An international consultation of experts in street food held in Jogjakarta (1988) suggested that local authorities should encourage street food vendors to diversify street food to traditional and ethnic meals along with safe, cheap, and nutritional preparations. The experts further suggested the enforcement of food safety rules and regulations based on information and education to the street food vendors. Winarno, F. G., and A. Allain (1991) also suggested education drive fair licensing and an inspection could be a long-term strategy to tackle the challenges of street food vending activities as the phenomena are inevitable when the population and city grow. Winarno, F. G., and A. Allain further suggested in their article “Street foods in developing countries” that the provision of small credits for street food vendors is important for the improvisation of their street food stalls. Hence, this study aimed to look into the challenges and strategies to avert the challenges encountering street food vending and find ways for more involvement of more job seekers in the emerging phenomena.

Justification of the Study

In Ethiopia, hundreds of thousands of people join the labor force every year (Ethiopian Economic Association, 2007 cited by Amsale, 2017) accompanied by high rates of rural-urban migration than urban job creation which surpasses greatly the capacity of both industrial and urban social service effectiveness to absorb these labor forces (Amsale, 2017). And these emerging workforces are unable to involve only in the formal economic sector due to their limited education, training, and lack of skills for employment. Street vending is the ideal economic activity for self-employment and generation of income for these labor forces and contributes to the national economy of many developing countries (Brhanu Tsegaye, 2019).

Street food vending is one of Ethiopia's street vending activities where a significant number of vendors are involved though plenty of observable challenges exist to flourish like the other developing nations (Samuel Chanie, 2020). This fact is more pronounced in cities that are populous and a significant number of street food vendors are involved for example, in Addis Ababa, the largest populous city in Ethiopia, about 25% of the city's population is involved in the informal sector such as street vending to earn their livelihood (CSA, 2014). The contribution of street food vendors to the national economy of developing nations like Ethiopia has been neglected and left behind though there are abundant specialty cuisines that exist to assist the national economy and job creation through street food vending. To the contrary, street food originated from Asia, Africa, and Latin America has been adopted to be an integral part of the food scene in Europe and America (Winarno, F. G., and A. Allain., 1991.).

Regarding the need for study, there are some studies conducted in Ethiopia taking a broader view of the challenges of street vending of food and non-food commodities at the sub-city level. Unfortunately, the nature of challenges street food vending encounter are different from nonfood items so the re-

searcher believes it is imprudent to study them all at once. More importantly, in this study, strategy to tackle the challenges of street food vending and ways forward to accommodate more employees are pointed out altogether. A panel of international food safety experts held in Jogjakarta (1988) suggested that research on the strategies for improving street food vending activities should be conducted. Hence, the researcher conducted this study due to the above reasons alluded to.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to look into the Challenges and Strategies of Street food vending for employment opportunities in Addis Ababa.

Specific Objectives of the Study

- To look into the challenges of street food vending in Addis Ababa.
- To point out strategies for alleviating street food vending challenges and creating employment opportunities.

LITERATURE

Definition of Street Food Vending and Vendor

Street food vending is a small business activity run by individuals or family members manifest with the sale of ready-to-eat foods and food raw materials on the streets (Nakisani Carol, Chicho Matenge, 2013). A street food vendor is the one who runs the street vending business offering goods and services for street food consumers without having permanent selling facilities, but only using temporary stalls (Bharan, 2004).

Street food vendors predominantly sell egg sandwiches, sambusa, bonbolino, ambasha, boiled potato, and fowl on the streets of Ethiopia (Samuel Chanie, 2010). 2.1.1. Characteristics of Street Food Vendors according to Tinker and

Fruge (1982), as cited in Nakisani Carol, Chicho- Matenge studied in 2013, stated street food vending is a small-scale operation requiring small operational capital cost allowing entry of vendors to street food vending with no or little hindrance. It is like other informal sectors, exhibited little or no regulation following a lack of registration and legal frameworks for starting street vending (Mokgosi, 1997; Butale, 2001). According to Kyoko Kusakabe (2006), street vending is a sort of business operation made by underprivileged people whose livelihood is based on street vending activities for their survival with a make-shift structure or moving from one place to another (Mokgosi, 1997; Butale, 2001; Dardano, 2003). Street food vendors work with a regular clientele (Nasinyama, 1992) operating mainly from a strategic location for business purposes such as bus and train stations, markets and shopping areas, commercial districts, outside schools and hospitals, residential suburbs, factories, and constructive sites (Draper, 1996).

Due to a lack of formality for supervision and follow-up from the government side on what they vend with and how they prepare them, street food vendors operate haphazardly (Muinde &Kuria, 2005). Predominant females and males mainly of low literacy and societal status are the main runners of street food vending (Nirathron. N., 2006). Many studies revealed that women are dominant in street food vending activities though their degree of involvement varies from one country to another country (Draper, 1996). According to FAO and Food Basket Foundation International 1991; Korir 1994; Nasinyama 1992; Mwangi, 2002 disclosed that women were dominant street food vendors in African countries such as Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria having a share of more than 60 percent. FAO's study of 1989 also disclosed a significant number of women street vendors in some Southern American countries, such as Colombia 59 &64 percent of women vendors respectively. In addition to women, street food vending attracted migrant men and women to be a convenient business for the vulnerable (Draper, 1996).

Importance of Street Food Vending in Ethiopia

In a country like Ethiopia where rapid population growth and rural-urban migration are frequent, street food vending can be used to accommodate unemployed women and youth, make production, and income generation to support their livelihood. Street vending shows that this activity can profoundly absorb a significant number of surplus laborers, especially women. Some studies revealed in the time the street vending business flourishes, it results in poverty reduction, increased employment, entrepreneurship, social mobility, peace, and order (Nirathron. N., 2006). Besides street food vendors' role in poverty reduction, employment opportunities, capital accumulation, and economic empowerment of the needy, it plays a paramount role in meeting the nourishment and nutritional requirements of the urban poor and vulnerable. In Ethiopia living cost is soaring alarmingly from time to time and hence, street food vending can be used for economic resilience for street food vendors and consumers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Design & Approach

The study is a cross-sectional study that employed a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A mixed research approach is important for triangulating quantitatively analyzed data with the view of respondents' perceptions collected through face-to-face interviews and non-participatory observation. Street food vendors, street food consumers, food experts, food regulation authorities, and respondents from the trade and industry bureau were the target groups of the study.

Study Area and Population

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa, the capital city of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the seat for continental and international organizations like: the African Union (AU) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The city is a hub for internal migration from all corners of the country which results in high unemployment and informal economic activity (Jemal Abagissa, 2019; Elias Birhanu, 2021). Addis Ababa has 11 sub-cities namely; Akaki kality, Nefas silik lafto, Kolfe keranio, Yeka, Gulele, Lideta, Kirkos, Arada, Addis ketema, Bole sub-city, and the newly established city administration Lemi Kura (City government of Addis Ababa, 2021) with 116 weredas (CSA, 2012). According to Temesgen Eliku (2016), Arada and Gulele sub-cities put up a large number of street food vendors and consumers in the town. Therefore; these two sub-cities were selected for the data collection through cluster sampling over the other sub-cities for their high prevalence of street food vendors.

Sampling and Sample size

According to the ministry of trade and economy (2014), the total number of street vendors was estimated to be 87,000. A random study conducted in 2018 also estimated the number of street vendors to be 177,000 (Capital Ethiopia, 2018). From the estimation, the share of street food vendors was not known, due to this reason the researcher determined its sample size using infinite population sample size determination (Cochran, 1977).

$$n = Z^2 (pq) / e^2$$

Where, n=required sample size

Z= the measure of the degree of confidence level at 95% (i.e. 1.96)

p=a measure of the probability of inclusion positive response (0.5)

$q =$ probability of negative response (0.5)

$e =$ tolerable error $(0.05)^2 (1.96)^2 (.5 \cdot .5) / (0.05)^2 = 384.16 \approx 384$

In addition to the above respondents, 16 respondents were interviewed from street food vendors, consumers, federal food and drug authorities, Addis Ababa city administration food and drug supervision bureau, and the city administration trade and industry bureau. Finally, academicians from the AAU food science and nutrition department and tourism training institute were involved in the study.

Cluster sampling technique was used to collect data from street food vendors and consumers from the study areas, i.e. Arada and Gulele sub-city as these two sub-cities have the largest street food vendors and consumers in Addis Ababa (Temesgen E, 2016).

Purposive sampling was also used to collect data from food experts, academicians, food regulation authorities, trade, and industry authorities. In this study both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data were gathered through structured questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, and observations. Secondary data were collected from published literature, unpublished documents, and reports.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire, semi-structured interview questions, and non-participant observation were employed as data collection instruments for the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Challenges of Street Food Vending in Addis Ababa

The rating of respondents on extracted components of the challenges of street food vending in Addis Ababa. The remaining 10 out of 12 items have provided four-component solutions namely; - “knowledge gap challenge” (Component 1), “Health challenge” (Component 2), “resource challenge” (Component 3), and_” electric power and legal entity challenge “ (Component 4). Component 1 contains items i.e. Street food preparation knowledge gap, and street food vendors’ business management skill gap. Component 2 contains; Lack of personal hygiene, lack of food hygiene, lack of clean food storage and preparation equipment, and lack supply of clean water. Component 3 contains; a lack of supply of quality street food raw materials, and lack of working capital.

The finding regarding the challenges of street food vending in terms of knowledge gap (Component 1) with a grand mean and standard deviation of (mean = 4.14, SD 0.731) pointing out as street food preparation and business management skills as difficult constraints among street food vendors in Addis Ababa city. Food preparation and business management skills are important factors that can play an important role in aggravating the challenges of street food vending (Jason cropper, 2017; Khan Redzwan Habib, 2016; Goba goba & Littrel, 2003). According to the demographic profile of respondents, 73.2% are elementary and high school completed where neither food preparation nor business planning and management training is provided in Ethiopian schools at the elementary and high school level (Unpublished bulletin of FDRE Ministry of education, 2021).

Therefore, a lack of technical training in food preparation and business management is a practical challenge in Addis Abba’s street food vending sites. Lack of personal hygiene, lack of food hygiene, lack of clean food storage

and preparing equipment, and lack of supply of clean water under component 2 are other bottlenecks among street food vendors having a grand mean and standard deviation of (mean = 4.265, SD = 0.785). Measuring items under health challenges such as lack of personal hygiene, food hygiene, lack of storage equipment, and lack of clean water are serious challenges that contribute to the outbreak of food contamination and foodborne illness (Jason cropper, 2017; WHO, 2016; Arambullo et al., 1994; Khan Redzwan Habib).

Lack of supply of quality raw materials and working capital under component 3 is the other street food vending challenge with a mean and standard deviation of (m=3.70, S.D=.781), which is labeled as almost a “difficult” challenge according to the consent of respondents. Lack of supply of quality raw materials disrupts the attempt to produce and provide quality and healthy street food for consumers (Jason cropper, 2017). Besides these items mentioned in components 1, 2, and 3 strict control of the operation of street food vendors and lack of power for street food vending were pointed out as pressing challenges labeled more than “difficult” challenges based on the consent of the respondents.

The findings therefore manifest that the above variables grouped on the four components such as knowledge gap challenge, health challenges, and electric power and legal entity challenge are explored to be serious challenges with all measuring a degree of more than “difficult” challenges according to the consent of the respondents. On the other hand, items under component 3 (resource challenge) weighed with a mean of 3.7 and standard deviation of .781 were regarded as reasonable bottlenecks for street food vendors.

In addition to the data collected through structured questionnaires, face to face key informant interviews and non-participatory observation were also conducted for triangulation purposes. In light of this, street food vendors mentioned the challenges of street food vending facing them in their day-to-day operations. Lacks of convenient vending site and stalls, and strict control

from local law enforcement police are the challenges of street food vendors that they failed to cope up with in their day-to-day street food vending operation. (Joseph, 2011; Jason cropper, 2017; Khan Redzwan Habib, 2016). In fear of the law enforcement police prohibition, many street food vendors get to the street for work after 6:30 pm or 12:30 local time or in the evening time. The researcher's observation group practically observed the level of pestering of the law enforcement police locally known as; “ደንብ አስከባሪ, denib askebari” in prohibiting street vendors and sometimes damaging their vending equipment and stalls.

When street food vending activity is not legalized, it gets hard to regulate their activity and force street food vendors to practice unsanitary practice of street food vending which risks the health of street food buyers (Winarno, F. G., and A. Allain, 1991). However; government authorities set policies and regulations that prohibit the entry of street food vendors into vending activities in many developing countries (Palmer, 2011; Linden, 1993; Joseph, 2011) and authorities lean demolition and confiscation of street vendors' property other than assisting and allowing vendors with specific legal frameworks (Joseph, 2011).

Concerning this, the following respondents blatantly explicated the level of challenges as follows:

Regarding the challenges of street food vending, as a street food vendor, I have been challenged by tremendous challenges vis-à-vis not having convenient vending sites and stalls. The inconvenience of the vending site and the absence of proper vending stall exposed me to harsh weather conditions such as hot and windy weather that showers dust on the ready-to-eat foods displayed for sale and potentially ruins the quality and the hygienic status of prepared foods for sale. Besides to

lack of convenient vending sites and stalls, the strict control from the local authorities worsens our street food vending operation. Many street food vendors including me have been suffering from the intimidation and sometimes the confiscation of cooking equipment and ready-to-eat food prepared for sale. Our operation is regarded as illegal and often exposed for intimidation, confiscation of properties, and damaging of vending stalls. And this is the most serious challenge that I have been going through since the first day of my street food vending operation and it hardens my job (R1).

In connection with the above challenges related to the lack of convenient vending sites and stall an expert labeled as R16 in the interview pointed out that fried foods and soft drinks exposed to direct sunlight result in chemical change within the food and causes the outbreak of some non-communicable diseases to consumers.

Street food preparation and food hygiene knowledge challenge and hardens the operation of street food vending operations as the majority of them elucidated that they begin street food vending after hardly passing through technical food preparation and handling training or any other formal training. Simply the majority of street food vendors explained, that they get into street food vending for having no better job opportunity. And they too agreed with street food vending has to be supported with education and training for better performance and efficacy. Regarding the scenario of food hygiene and safety challenges, street food consumers also mentioned the lack of food hygiene and safety as serious challenges facing street food vendors. Therefore; lack of skills on these parameters is a serious street food challenge (Jason Cropper, 2017). According to the observation, the majority of street food vendors fail to comply with food hygiene procedures and food safety standards. They pre-

pare street foods wearing no hair hats, aprons, and food preparation gloves. Food sold on the street remains in a temperature danger zone resulting in microbial growth in food which causes food intoxication and contamination due to the lack of proper chilling and maintenance of food hot till the time of consumption. A sliced watermelon sold unwrapped exposed for oxidation reaction, enzymatic changes, and cross-contamination. Oxidation reaction and enzymatic change in fruits and vegetables result in quality deterioration (Olusola lamikanra, 2002). During the observation clean water and hand washing facilities were also hardly nearby access to food vendors and consumers even though very few street food vendors complied with it to some extent. The pictures below show unhygienic displays and the preparation of street foods. The other unhealthy practice observed on street food was the recycling of cooking oil several times. The majority of street vendors vend chips or fried potato, donat, bonbolino and other stuffed bread shallowly fry in a saucepan. According to Isidore Sindabarira (2014) cooking oil used for frying has to be either used once or needs to be deep-fried to avoid bad cholesterol, peroxides acid, cancer, and organ cells from being attacked, and the infection of the white blood cells.

The following respondents attested to this fact as follows:

I began street food vending without having any kind of training in the food preparation and handling process. I simply began my job on street food vending to create a job for myself to assist my family's livelihood. But due to this gap, many of my customers are telling me to improve my food handling and preparation techniques (R3). The other respondents also reinforce the scenario of lack of preparation and handling techniques saying: I have been working as a street food vendor for the last seven years but my knowledge still confines to very few foods' preparation (R5).

Lack of personal hygiene, unclean working environment, lack of supply of clean water, improper waste management, and non-compliance to food hygiene and safety practices are the other most noticeable challenges of street food vendors in the city. Street food vendors wash cooking and serving tools such as; glasses, plates, cups, saucepans, sauté pans, and other working utensils at their vending site and remove the waste unsafely. Unsafe waste removal increases the risk of cross-contamination (Khan Redzwan Habib, 2016; Arambullo et al., 1994). The absence of street food regulation aggravates hygiene related challenges of street food vending. No regulation governs the operation of street food vendors. Experts from the Ethiopian food and drug authority and Addis Ababa food and drug administration bureau personally believe there should have been street food regulation to regulate the haphazardly carried out street food vending activities. A senior official from the EFDA also believes in the importance of installing street food regulations as it is a public health concern. Due to the lack of food safety regulation, some unregulated food vending operations are also exhibited on the street. Sometimes it is common to see a food vending site turning into a chat selling and chewing site.

The above issues are supported by the following respondents.

Foods sold on the street are preferable in terms of cost and speed of delivery, but street-sold food is not safe for consumption and I did not choose them to consume due to their unsafe preparation and unhygienic handling and display of the food. Many street food vendors do not maintain the food hot till they are sold and the way they handle the food is unhygienic. Many of the street food vendors do not have the skill and knowledge of how to prepare, handle and display. Simply, they come on the street either having the prepared food for sale or prepare

food on the roadside not wearing an apron, hat, or glove and they sometimes touch their hair, body, pick their nose when preparing food (R10).

The other respondents also illustrate the above challenges from their patronage to street food vending as follows:

Street foods are the source of my resilience to cope with the soaring price of food sold in restaurants and other food vending premises. I often consume street foods due to their affordability and easy access regardless of the cleanliness, and hygiene challenges. I sometimes struggle with the big flies and detect them with a big smack to eschew them from invading me as the vending site is not clean. And to the worst in some vending sites, there are not enough seating chairs and water for washing our hands before seating at a table. While consuming street food, you not only struggle with the flies but also with other customers and the vendors themselves as they work in a narrowly stalled site (R13). Street food is not good for health as much of them are prepared in an unhygienic and safe way. The predominant foods sold are fried bombolino, sambusa, rice balls, and meatballs which are hardly deeply fried and cooked with recycled oil which is not good for health. But, irrespective of these challenges, I see many consumers using street foods due to accessibility, and affordability, but I do not want to use street food because of the above reasons I cited (R11).

Respondents' outlook on the relevance of street food regulation is depicted as follows:

Street food regulation is important to manage the operation of street food vendors and alleviate the risk of public health challenges. There are many risky street food vending operations concerning the production and selling of street foods for consumers, but as a food and drug administration authority, it is our primary concern to supervise their operation though we have not installed street food vending regulations to regulate their activities (R9).

The other respondents also outlined their gap to supervise street food vending operations as follows:

As a city administration, there are many street food vendors operating in different corners of the city. And as a city administration, their activities would have been led by regulations and supervised by standard checklists. But as a city, there is no legislation to overseas the operation of these vendors, and our supervisory legislation is confined only to food vending operations with constant immovable premises such as coffee shops, lounges, cafés, restaurants, and pubs (R8).

The range of street foods sold on the street is regarded as a challenge for many street food buyers. Street food consumers mentioned a limited range of street foods sold on the streets as a challenge. Due to the prohibition of vending of foods other than dried, packed foods, bottled drinks, and vegetables on street and for the sake of reducing the perishable nature of street foods, vendors outweigh fried foods such as packed and dried biscuits, donat, bonbolino, sambusa, kokor, roasted grain, variety of fruits and vegetables. The majority of street sold foods are predominated by carbohydrate enriched

dried, packed, and fried bread as in the case of other countries (Mwangi, 2002).

The above issue is also supported by the following statement and explained as follows:

I usually prefer to vend dried and fried foods to alleviate their perishability and increase the shelf life of foods. If one has dried or fried street food, it can last long without perishing (R2). A government official from Addis Ababa City Administration Trade and Industry Bureau attested that: Street vending is an illegal activity in the city administration though it is allowed for some vendors to have specified products at allowed vending sites. In the city administration readymade clothes, light electronic equipment, packed/bottled soft drinks, dried foods, vegetables, and fruits are allowable items for street vending mainly on Sunday market. Therefore; foods mentioned above are allowed to be sold in the Sunday market and other less crowded areas of the city. After legalizing the vending activities of these street food vendors and regarding the safety compliance of street foods for the public health the Addis Ababa food and drug authority and the federal drug and food authorities would control their safety and healthiness (R7).

The other respondent on the limited range of street-sold food indicate his discontentedness as follows:

I enjoy using street foods several times despite the drawbacks it faces. The street is a good source of nutrition which is affordable. There are nice street vendors in some corners of the city, but they have no large choice of meals for users and I

am really unhappy about it (R12). The relentless rising of the price of street food vending raw materials such as; wheat flour, sugar, cooking oil, egg, tea, coffee, pasta, rice, macaroni, meat, potato, onion, etc that they used in their daily street food vending operation. Due to the rise in the costs of raw materials, the selling price of street food augments consistently discourages street food consumers. Many dictated they are running out of food raw materials due to a rising cost of food raw material and called for a constant food raw material provision with government-subsidized raw material supply chain.

The following respondents elucidate the level of challenges as follows:

I sell fried foods such as bonbolino, sambusa, Ambasha, full (sauce prepared from half crushed bean), tea, and coffee for my customers. But a steady increase in the raw materials like flour, sugar, oil, and coffee damages my business, and my clients are shrinking from time to time and now I am not able to sell what I have on hand. Therefore; there should have been a supply chain from trade unions, cooperatives, and subsidies from the city and federal government (R4). 30 Competition from restaurants and other food vending premises has also challenged the city's street food vendors. Due to lack of hygiene and bad perception of street food vendors, buyers lean to use restaurants and other food vending premises to fulfill their need for food.

Respondents prove the level of the challenge in the following way:

Street food is not good for health as much of them are prepared in an unhygienic and safe way. The predominant foods sold are fried bombolino, sambusa, rice ball, and meat balls which

are hardly deeply fried and cooked with recycled oil which is not good for health. But, irrespective of these challenges, I see many consumers using street foods due to accessibility, and affordability, but I do not want to use street food because of the above reasons I cited (R11). Financial problems and lack of working capital are the other serious bottlenecks the street food vending operation face in Addis Ababa. Many street food vendors mention lack of financial support and working capital escalates the challenges they face. The financial problem results in lack of availability of improved vending stalls, storage, and preparation equipment. Street food vendors lean to use low-quality food raw materials for cooking street foods.

The above point is reinforced by the view of the following respondents:

In addition to raw material supply from cooperatives and trade unions for street food vendors, it is profoundly important if financial support or loan is given for street food vendors to enable them to upgrade vending stalls, and working equipment, and cover costs of important cooking utensils and raw materials. The financial and working capital problems always greatly contribute to the quality of street-sold foods as the quality of raw materials highly correlates with financial issues (R4).

Strategies of Street Food Vending for Employment

Opportunities

The rating of respondents on extracted factors of the strategies of street food vending. The 11 measuring items on strategies of street food vending are reduced to four components and 10 items through principal component analysis. The 10 items are categorized into four components namely; - “ financial support (Component 1), “Training” (Component 2), “material support” (component 3), and_” Legal framework and competition” (Component 4). Component 1 contains; financial support and provision of loans. Component 2 contains; food hygiene, food preparation training, and entrepreneurial skill training. Component 3 contains; Supply of food storage and preparation equipment and utensils to support street food vending, supply linkage with raw materials to ease street food vending operation. Component 4 contains; that legalizing street food vending within a specific legal framework helps street food vendors, street food vending regulations support the operation of street food vendors, and moving to less competitive vending areas helps street food vending.

The finding regarding the strategies of street food vending in terms of financial support (Component 1), component has a grand mean and standard deviation of (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.6875) pointing out as financial support is agreeable strategy. Training (component 2) is the other important strategy for street food vending having a grand mean of (mean = 4.15, SD = 0.598). Material support for street food vending operations named for the naming of the third component is a very agreeable strategy to help street food vending operations with a grand mean and standard deviation of (mean=4.58, S.D=0.569). Legal framework and competition is the other component that is a fairly agreed strategy for street food vending with a grand mean and standard deviation of (mean=3.98, S.D=.592).

In addition to the data analysis of the structured questionnaire, the researcher used key informant interviews. And based on the interview, respondents forwarded strategies that can mitigate the challenges and pave the way for employment opportunities for many women, youth, and other vulnerable members of the city's community.

According to the responses in the interviews, many respondents mentioned that the availability of vending stalls can assist street food vending activities. The challenges concerning street vending stalls were easily observable during the observation survey of street food vending sites. Therefore; the provision of improved vending stalls can significantly ease the challenges of street food vending activities in the city's roadside food vending.

Financial support from the government and loan services from banks can help us upgrade street food vending operations. For example, if I get a loan service, I will improve my street food vending and I also manage to use quality raw materials for my street food vending so that it will result in better street food vending operation. Besides, financial support can help me fulfill important equipments such as a griller, self-movable stall accompanied by fridges, and heat preserving equipment (R1).

Other respondents also supported the idea of financial support to boost the street food vending business as follows:

I have been running out of money to furnish raw materials for my street food vending. The government should recognize our business activity and allow us to get credit service from government banks so that we can sustain ourselves in the street vending business. I know the development bank of Ethiopia provides equipment for another service through lease financing (R4). The other important strategy recommended by many

respondents is supporting street food vendors through vocational training to let them assist improve their food preparation, hygienic food handling practice, customer handling, and business planning to let them understand how to cope with the challenging condition and achieve success passing through it.

Respondents expressed their outlook on this scenario as follows:

It is very easy to understand that many street food vendors get into the business either having no other employment opportunity or because they find street food vending the easiest business to go through. So due to this reason, the majority of street food vendors do not pass through any formal or vocational training to assist their street vending. In the city's administration, there are several governmental and private training institutes to assist them to upgrade their business (R14).

Another respondent also forwarded his expert advice on street food vending as follows:

Street food vending is an important alternative to small street catering businesses to assist many get their nutritional and nourishments as it is relatively affordable and accessible to food catered in restaurants or other catering outlets. Therefore; upgrading, and standardizing their business through support financially and in education and training (R15). The hygiene and cleanliness-related problems are more chronic than any other challenges street food vending faces. Street food vendors could have plenty of consumers if they improve their food preparation, safety, and hygienic problems due to its easiness to save time and affordability. Unfortunately, due to these problems, street food vending is hindered significant-

ly I believe training and education can solve these problems and we can have better street foods if the course of action changes and government stakeholders involve in assisting street vendors (R11). The other significant challenge that aggravates and hinders the street food vending business behind is, the absence of street food regulation and confinement on the legalizing and licensing of street food vending (Mokgosi, 1997; Butale, 2001). The Addis Ababa Trade and Industry Bureau gives working licenses for very limited types of street foods confined to dry foods, bottled drinks, and vegetables and fruits. Not only the license confinement, but the absence of food safety regulations and lack of supervision make street food vending haphazard and everywhere business that can endanger public health (S. Bhowmik, 2010).

One of the respondents shares his view on the relevance of having street food regulations as follows:

I have been working in the area of food safety and the impacts of unsafe food on public health. In EFDA we are working on maintaining the quality of imported and exported food. I try to advise street food vendors to improve their food handling practice and not to sell unsafe food to consumers though it is not compulsory as there is no regulation to treat street food vendors (R16).

The other respondent also has his view on regulation as follows:

We supervise only those vendors having permanent catering premises, but there is no installed regulation to overseas the operation of street food vendors in the city (R8).

CONCLUSION

The principal purpose of this study was to identify the challenges of the street food vending business in Addis Ababa and look for strategies to alleviate challenges for better employment opportunities through improving the standard of street food vending in Addis Ababa. The level of challenges of street food vending is quite serious and different from other commodities vended on street due to the nature of products or street foods vended on street. In this study, different data collecting methods were used to come up with reliable and triangulated results. Thus, the following conclusions regarding the challenges based on the analyzed data collected through a structured questionnaire, interview questions, and non-participatory observation.

Street food vending is a business that thousands are relying on for their livelihood and economic resilience. Thousands are involved in these informal business activities accompanied by several thousand street food buyers involving products that can endanger public health beyond its tremendous livelihood benefit. Therefore; it has to be properly regulated and legally framed for ease of managing the street food vending business. According to the finding of the study and reviewed articles, the absence of street food regulation and legal frames for entry to street food vending is the mother of all challenges adjoining street food vending business (Mokgosi, 1997; Butale, 2001). Street food vending is a growing phenomenon in cities with a large population as it has plenty of benefits for vendors and buyers; street food vendors can employ themselves, and street food buyers can get affordable and nutritious foods from the streets (M.Ackah, et al., 2011; J.C. Cross & A. Morales, 2007).

When street food vendors are prohibited to work they start it in an unsafe and uncontrollable manner which can endanger the health of street food consumers (Winarno, F. G., and A. Allain, 1991.). Therefore, it is alarmingly a growing phenomenon that cannot be avoided; and if we can't avoid it, we have to legalize it for the betterment of street food vending. Street food vending is a

multi-billion dollar business segment in countries like Malaysia where street food vending is a legal business supported by the government and USD 2.2 billion is generated in annual street food sales in Malaysia (Allain, 1988). The other significant challenge of street food vending is lack of capital to improve street vending stalls and sites. Due to lack of capital street food vendors, use low-quality cooking utensils, raw materials, and vending stalls exposed to different food hazards. Lack of food hygiene and personal hygiene of food handlers is the other serious challenge for street food vendors. Many food handlers are working in an unhygienic manner posing health threats to street food consumers. Lack of skills such as business planning, food preparation, and food handling are other serious challenges exhibited by many street food vendors. Regardless of the seriousness of the challenges of street food vending activities, tackling strategies are always behind the scene of challenges. Legalizing, regulating, financial support, training and education, power and clean water supply, raw material and better equipment uses are important strategies to tackle the challenges of street food vending (Narayan et al., 2004; Pansiri & Temtime, 2008; Narayan et al., 2004; Jason Cropper, 2017; Joseph, 2011; Nakisani Carol, Chicho- Matenge, 2013) Alleviating the challenges of street food vending will help street food vendors to secure their job and the street food vending business can accommodate more job seekers if properly run.

RECOMMENDATION

The researcher forwards the following recommendations for the betterment of street food vending in Addis Ababa.

- Street food vending is a growing phenomenon that should be used to accommodate many urban vulnerables such as women, the disabled, and the youth if properly managed in terms of business regulation and formalization.
- Street food vending is a key for the urban poor i.e. vendors and buyers for their economic resilience. Therefore; government should subsidize it tooth and nail. — Street food vending can profoundly endanger public health as millions of people have died of food-borne diseases globally. Therefore; it calls for relentless support, standardization, and supervision.
- Training and education can play a significant role in improving and standardizing the street food vending business, hence training and educational institutions should play a pivotal role in significantly alleviating challenges of street food vending concerning averting the knowledge gap it faces.
- Street food vendors are citizens getting into business for not having better employment opportunities, in light of this, they start their street vending with a little capital and vending equipment. Therefore; government and charity organizations should involve in supporting vendors with very important utensils and tools for street food vending.
- To let street vendors cope up with the soaring price of food raw materials, the government should support them by subsidizing the supply of raw materials. Supply links should be created with farmers so that street food vending can create a job for both raw material suppliers and street vendors.

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Assessment of Green Hospitality Practices' Implementation and their Impact on the Organizational Competitiveness: The case of Star-Rated Hotels and Resorts in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, Ethiopia.

By: Habtu Teka

ABSTRACT

The pressing issue on hospitality businesses to engage not only on profitability but also on social and environmental responsibility has increased in recent times. The study determined the extent of green practices' implementation and empirically tested the relationship between green hospitality practices and organizational competitiveness in the context of star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, Ethiopia. The study used quantitative research design, and the cross-sectional survey method was used for data collection from 97 respondents. Descriptive statistics, and regression analysis were used for data analysis. The results indicated a significant positive relationship between green hospitality practices (Energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste management, clean air & green building, local community support, green purchasing and green marketing) and organizational competitiveness (Cost savings and differentiation) of star-rated hotels. Empirically, the study added to the literature on the effect of green hospitality management on hotels' cost savings and differentiation competitiveness. Practically, the study suggested recommendations that help improve the adoption of green practices by hospitality firms.

Keywords: Green Hospitality Practices, Organizational Competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

Environmental challenges such as global warming, pollution, loss of biodiversity, natural resource depletion, ozone layer depletion, deforestation, and waste disposal have become globally recognized environmental problems. Despite the fact that hospitality industry is a major economic sector in most countries with significant contribution to employment and economic growth, its negative effects towards the environment is countless. Proactive hospitality businesses can also enhance environmental preservation through their activities as a means to alleviate their negative impacts on the environment by adopting green practices that encourage their staff and guests to save water and energy and reduce solid waste and operational costs. Green hospitality practices have been gaining significant attention especially since mid-1990s, initiated by chain-affiliated hotels and resorts (Melissen & Roevens, 2007). Since then, several environmental initiatives have been implemented by enlightened tourism industry associations, hotel companies, and individual facilities. And several environmental guidelines have been developed by various tourism organizations, such as the International Hotel and Restaurant Association, the American Hotel and Lodging Association, and the International Hotel Environment Initiative (IHEI) [now under the umbrella of the International Tourism Partnership] (Bohdanowicz 2005).

Triggered by those initiatives, the words “sustainability”, “green” and “environmental” have been attached to several tourism products and destinations, especially as part of marketing strategies and certification programs; however, how “sustainable” or “green” or “environmentally committed” a tourism product or destination has not always been clear. Sustainability is now seen as a buzzword, rather than an action plan (Henderson 2007). Some of the reasons why environmental practices are not widespread in this industry are the industry somewhat bases its business on perceived affluence, luxury, dignity, lack of government regulations, and low regulatory pressures. Nevertheless,

as the awareness of hoteliers increase, they tend to implement green practices in their operation (Dodds, 2008). The hospitality industry “is in the midst of a sustainability awakening” (Prairie, 2012).

Many hospitality managers seem to be willing to adopt sustainability practices in order to obtain a competitive advantage. Hotels whose managers are dedicated to setting up programs that contribute to preserving the environment now offer guests the choice to not have their bed sheets and towel changed every day, which reduces the usage of water and electricity and the amount of residual laundry soap discharged into the sewer system. Moreover, everything, from the choice of the location, construction, equipment, hotel products, and hotel services is taken into account to preserve nature and the environment.

Despite the multitude of studies conducted on various aspects and issues about green hospitality practices, there is still a need for further study on the implementation of green practices and their effect on organizational competitiveness in the hospitality establishments. On the local scale, few studies have investigated sustainability issues in the Ethiopian hospitality industry. The previously conducted studies in the country’s hospitality industry mainly focused on the areas of hotel marketing, service delivery, hotel manpower, customer satisfaction, and other hotel business (Zelege, 2012; Andargie, 2013; Alelign, 2013; Kifle, 2012; Gobena & Gudeta, 2013; Gebregziabher, 2015; Trevor, 2018).

This indicates that the issues of green hospitality are ignored by both scholars and the government. Besides, no empirical study has been conducted and determined the implementation of green hospitality practices and their effects on the hotels’ competitiveness in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, Ethiopia.

The hotel sector and tourism industry, in general, have been a little slower to make decisions regarding environmental care because its negative effects

tend to be rather invisible, at least in the short term. Owing to these effects, substantial uncertainty exists regarding the long-term implications of such negative environmental impacts, in particular, those relating to global climate change (Rogerson & Sims 2012:291). As an important component of the travel and tourism industry, accommodation operations are characterized by a massive number of activities that collectively exert a significant impact on global resources with the major impact being climate change (Andrea 2007:1916, Kirk 1995:3, Bohdanowicz, Zientara & Novotna 2011:801). According to estimations, an average hotel releases between 160 kg and 200 kg of CO₂ per square metre of room floor area per year and the water consumption per guest per night is between 170 and 440 liters in the average five-star hotel.

An increased burden of solid waste is an additional key environmental impact of hotel operations (Taylor et al. 1994:173). On average, hotels produce 1 kg of waste per guest per night (Han, Hsu & Sheu 2010:325). Literature reveals that in many parts of the world, accommodation-based sewage and waste materials are dumped directly into lakes, rivers and seas without any kind of processing beforehand thus, creating health hazards and an aesthetically unpleasant environment (Timothy & Teye 2009:82). As a result, hotels, as the primary accommodation establishments, play a major role in hospitality and they exert a significant economical, ecological and social impacts on the environment (Taylor et al. 1994:169).

Because hotels exert a negative environmental impact, it is imperative that the management of hotels take action to mitigate their impact on the environment. A considerable number of studies have focused on environmental management measures in hotels in order to efficiently deal with environmental issues arising from their operations (Alvarez, Burgos & Cespedes 2001:458; Bansal 2005:209; Bohdanowicz et al. 2011:798; Hsieh 2012:98; Timothy & Teye 2009:84).

In these studies, management measures were developed to efficiently deal with environmentally sustainable practices like energy and water conservation, recycling of waste, supplying clean air as well as, environmental education for staff and customers (Hsieh 2012:98). Therefore, it would be characteristic of good ecological stewardship for hotels to take action in this regard in the quest to green the physical environment (Timothy & Teye 2009:81). In the case of Ethiopia, the tourism industry has been growing over the years, but the issue of tourism sustainability has not been sufficiently addressed yet. However, there are some progresses of sustainable tourism development in the form of conservation of national parks, wildlife conservation areas, resort and ecology developments, Ecotourism development, biosphere conservation, and community-based tourism.

In spite of good beginnings, the sustainability practices are not progressing enough due to many factors such as social, economic, and political situations (Lammi, 2019). Hence, the researcher identified lack of empirical literature showing the current extent of green hospitality practices implementation among star rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, Ethiopia. Besides, the researcher wanted to add knowledge to the existing literature about the effect of green hospitality practices' implementation on the hotels' competitiveness in star-rated hotels of Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, Ethiopia. This paper; therefore, has several aims: (a) to identify the extent of green hospitality practices in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu, Ethiopia. (b) to assess whether or not hotels implementing green hospitality practices have better competitive position in the market.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study was twofold: the main objective of this study was to assess the extent of green hospitality practices currently being implemented in star rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu and whether or not the implementation of green practices influence their cost savings and differentiation competitive advantage. Subsequently, this study outlines the following specific objectives:

- To assess the extent of energy efficiency practices' implementation in star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.
- To assess the extent of water conservation practices' implementation in star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.
- To assess the extent of solid waste management practices' implementation in star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.
- To assess the extent of local communities' support efforts in star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.
- To assess the extent of green marketing practices' implementation in star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.
- To assess the extent of green purchasing practices' implementation in star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.
- To assess the extent of green building designs and supply of clean air practices' implementation in star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.
- To assess the impact of implementing green practices in organizational competitiveness of star-rated hotels in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu.

LITERATURE

Environmental Concern of Customers and Hotels

A growing concern to establish a 'green' hotel in the view of customers is evident (Chan & Ho 2006:301), as customers are experiencing an increased awareness of environmental damage and excessive consumption of goods, energy and water (Han et al. 2010:325). In recognition of this eco-friendly consumption need, nowadays many hotel firms seek to incorporate customers' emerging concerns about the environment in their management and marketing decision making. Given that 85% of leisure travelers consider themselves environmentally conscious, that is, 'green' consumers, some hotels have embraced the principles of sustainable development to mirror customer concerns and have thus attempted to minimize the energy consumed during the customers' stay through the introduction of minor measures such as re-using linen and towels (Miller, Mayer & Baloglu 2012:395).

Customers' concern about the environment compels hotels to demonstrate responsible behaviour to become 'eco-friendly hotels' or 'green hotels', which refers to accommodation establishments that have made a commitment to implementing or following various ecologically-sound practices, such as saving water and energy as well as reducing solid waste (Manaktola & Jauhari 2007:365).

As a result, altering their hotel operations to be green (i.e. significantly reducing environmental impacts) is becoming a necessity to attain noticeable improvement in their competitiveness in the market (Kim and Han, 2010: 997). It seems that a great deal of hospitality establishments are now becoming aware that lack of knowledge about these conditions could adversely affect organizational competitiveness (Delmas et al., 2011). In the last two decades, a lot of researchers have studied whether, and under which conditions, sustainability is related to competitive advantage and organizational

performance (Al-Ali Mubarack et al., 2020; Garriga & Melé, 2014; Kuo et Loureiro et al., 2021, Orlitzky et al., 2003).

However, hospitality and tourism studies have achieved no conclusive results in this area (Abughniem et al., 2020; Moneva et al., 2020; Rhou & Singal, 2020; Theodoulidis et al., 2017). The literature shows several examples of how sustainability is linked with competitive advantage (Porter and Kameer, 2006; Branco and Rodrigues; Falkenberg and Brunsael; 2011). In the tourism industry, environmental and social pressures push organizations to get involved in sustainability (Simão, 2010). Leading global companies in the hospitality industry to included sustainability plans in their corporate strategies. Most of them try to show their commitment to sustainability in order to enhance their competitive advantage, to build a brand and to differentiate from their competitors (Jones, Hillier and Comfort, 2014).

This is quite evident because green management practices are meant to attract business from markets that favour green practices (Manaktola & Jauhari 2007:364). Major steps have also been taken by hotels, which have conducted environmental audits to assess the environmental costs of their activities in relation to energy consumption, transport, waste, purchasing, health and the local environment (Mensah 2006:288). Besides, more demands from governments or regulators which required hotels to implement green practices contributed to the emergence and expansion of greening business philosophy (Kim & Choi 2013:159).

Greening Trends in Hotels

Green hotels are referred to “hotels that tend to be eco-friendly through efficient use of energy, raw materials and water while satisfying customers and providing quality services”. As such, green hotels are “Natural tourist lodgings developed and managed in environmentally sensitive ways to maintain their business environment and provide guests with green products, green

services, healthy, refreshing, and comfortable accommodation that reflect the features of natural ecology”. It follows that green hotels typically benefit from reduced costs and liabilities, high return and low-risk investments, increased profits and reduced waste while saving money, as a result, there are a growing number of hotels investing substantial resources in environmentally-friendly practices such as reducing waste, minimizing energy consumption, generating renewable energy, low-flow faucets and shower heads, choosing green suppliers, and adopting recycling practices. Consequently, practices such as recycling of waste, waste management, supplying clean air, energy and water conservation, environmental health, adopting a purchasing policy and environmental education are being considered in various hotels which consider themselves as green hotels (Mensah 2006:415).

Green Hospitality Practices and Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage refers to the situation whereby a firm has a superior position in the marketplace. This enables the firm to outperform its competitors. Barney (1991) argues that sustainability in an economic rather than social or environmental way and that the sustained competitive advantage depends on a firm’s extant resource base. To achieve competitive advantage, a hotel must create and sustain positive values that are equal to or exceed those of rivals. A hospitality firm’s ability to establish competitive advantage lies in customer satisfaction and retention and its ability to promote itself as a responsible corporate citizen is a major differentiation strategy.

Therefore, there is the need for hospitality firms to integrate environmental issues into corporate strategy to achieve competitive advantage. Chen and Chang define green competitive advantage as a situation under which a firm occupies some positions about environmental management that are hard for competitors to copy. GCA is a condition under which firms gain sustainable benefits from successful environmental strategies. Astuti and Datrini describe GCA as a situation in which a firm occupies certain positions regarding en-

environmental protection that rivals find difficult to imitate. Hospitality firms that create environmental innovation can gain competitive advantage through a better company environmental image, retention of existing customers and attraction of new customers, increased market share, and improved performance. According to Ojo et al. (2015), the effort towards sustainability might help a firm gaining competitive advantage over its competitors. Environmental sustainability and green supplier selection have recently been considered as means to attain competitive advantage through reducing costs or differentiation, becoming more efficient and attracting more prospective consumers (Duan et al., 2019; Ojo et al., 2015; Walsh & Dodds, 2017; Yazdani et al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed quantitative approach. The main technique for obtaining data were questionnaires used to gather quantitative data about the extent of green practices' implementation and their contribution towards the hotels' and resorts' competitiveness. The researcher targeted the general managers of the subject hotels and resorts as appropriate respondents, but due to several reasons other middle level managers whom the researcher believed to have possessed knowledge of environmental policies and practices of their hotels were also approached to respond to the questionnaires.

Before the actual data collection, the questionnaire was pretested in a pilot study for a sample of 20 respondents. The results of the pretesting helped to restructure some questions, remove unclear and sensitive questions, and improve face and content validity. One Hundred Forty-Eight (148) questionnaires were sent out physically to the respondents. Three well-trained data collectors assisted the researcher in the data collection process. The phone numbers and email addresses of the respondents and/ or the hotels were ob-

tained during the distribution of questionnaires.

For the questionnaires which were not received on time, a follow-up procedure included telephone calls and email reminders every week. The responses not received after six weeks were treated as non-response. Some hotel managers were not co-operative and others accepted the questionnaires, but it took quite an effort to collect the completed questionnaires. This was not only time-consuming but also proved wastage in terms of transportation and paper cost. Besides, 6 among the returned questionnaires were removed and treated as non-response as a substantial amount of missing information were noticed. This effort resulted in a pool of 97 completed and usable questionnaires (65% return rate).

Measurement of Variables/ Survey Instruments

Green Practices (Independent Variables)

Energy efficiency, solid waste management, water efficiency, local community support, green purchasing, clean air & green building and green marketing were measured on a Likert opinion scale ranging from 1 (that green practice has never been adopted) to 5 (it is very frequently being practiced). The independent variables and their constituting items are based on: Go Green: An Environmental Checklist for the Lodging Industry (DeFranco & Weatherspoon, 1996), Sustainable Tourism Practices Checklist: for the Lodging Industry (East Carolina University Center for Sustainable Tourism, 2011), Trash Talk: Waste Reduction at Bed and Breakfasts (East Carolina University Center for Sustainable Tourism, 2012)

Organizational Competitiveness (Dependent Variable)

The influence of green hospitality practices on the organizational competitiveness were analyzed through their impact on cost savings and differentiation and these items were obtained from the works by (Aragon-Correa,

1998; Gonz, Alex-Benito, & Gonzalez- Benito, 2005; Shrivastava, 1995, Miller, 1988, Govindarajan 1988, Lee and Miller, 1996, Beal 2000, Starik & Marcus, 2000, López-Gamero et al., 2011; Molina-Azorín et al., 2015, and Wagner,2009). Organizational competitiveness was measured using the managers' indication of scales for differentiation (4 items) and cost savings (6 items) on a Likert opinion scales ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(Strongly agree).

Summary of Findings and their Implications

Concerning the demographic characteristics of the surveyed managers and hotels 92% of the managers were males and this shows that large percentage of managerial positions in Addis Ababa and Bishoftu hotels are held by men and the women's appointment in hotels' managerial positions is very low. Regarding the age of the respondents, about 80% of managers' age lies between 30-40 years followed by only 13% whose age is between 40-50 years.

The finding also revealed that the majority of managers had under graduate degree whereas only approximately 25% of them had degree in graduate level. Besides, 69 % of the managers had a long term tenure in their hotels i.e. 5- 10 years. This information was found to be quite important as it made the researcher to rely on the responses the participants gave towards their hotels' green policies and practices. The majority of respondents were from 1 star hotels (35%) followed by 2 star hotels (30%), 3 star hotels (19%), 4 star hotels (11%) and 5 star hotels (4%, only 40% of the total 5 star hotels).

Concerning the number of years of operation, the majority of hotels (approximately 59%) were in business for over 10 years, followed by 33% of the hotels with 5-10 years' operation and only 8% with less than 5 years in the business. The research was actually conducted on the star rated hotels based on the last rating which was made in June 2019. Thus, the research population didn't consider the potential hotels which were opened after June 2019 which might of course incorporated green hospitality business in to their operation.

With regard to the level of each category of green practices implementation in the surveyed hotels, the findings are discussed below. Using energy efficient lighting fixtures and regular maintenance of electrical equipment are the most practiced green initiatives and this is attributed to the fact that electrical fixtures are being manufactured and this current trend and the need of those hotels to buy the most cost efficient fixtures is increasing. Besides, the hotels' engineering departments usually make preventive maintenance to ensure smooth and uninterrupted operation of the hotels.

Using energy efficient appliances like refrigerator, dish washer and boilers and using key cards and sensors which automatically turn on/off power are moderately practiced due to the fact that those fixed assets are usually bought at the businesses' startup phase and the need to replace those obsolete equipment is associated with high costs. Likewise, using central water heater and the installation of electric meters which help monitor power consumption are not given priority and not being practiced in the subject hotels. To the contrary, the use of alternative renewable energy like solar and biogas have never been used by the majority of those hotels.

Regarding water conservation practices, the majority of the hotels installed low flow water fixtures, low flush or dual flush toilet systems and used preventive maintenance programs to avoid water leakage. These were the good practices found in the subject hotels associated with efficient water consumption in their operation. Using water efficient laundry machine and encouraging guests to reuse bed linens and towels are moderately practiced. Recycling and/or reusing water by treating the water from kitchen, swimming pool and other outlets is very rarely practiced.

The least adopted water conservation method was using water from rain and other natural sources as the majority of the hotels surveyed were located away from natural sources of water like rivers and lakes, the hotels which are found in Bishoftu practice this though. For the category of solid waste

management, the majority of hotels were found to be disposing wastes in an eco-friendly manner and return back packaging and condiments for their suppliers. Providing and publicizing recycling bins, sorting recyclable and non-recyclable wastes and reducing the usage of papers by using electronic systems are moderately practiced.

Even though the target hotels sort recyclable and non-recyclable wastes, evidences showed that composting organic wastes is unusual practice by most of the hotels, the lack of performance with this item may be because of a spacing issue on the property or a lack of knowledge in how to create, build, or implement a composting program into their businesses.

Another barrier to the implementation of this practice could be the time investment that it takes to create a compost. The least practiced waste management initiative is using non-disposable soap, lotion, shampoo and conditioner dispensers. For the category of clean air and green building practices, the finding revealed that reduction of the negative impacts of the business to the surrounding environment by minimizing wastes, exhaust gases and noise is the most prevalent practice by most of the hotels.

Procurement of local construction materials and labor force is adopted by most of the hotels. Gardening practices for clean air and aesthetic values are moderately practiced and this could be attributed to the fact that the limitation of spaces in the hotels. Implementing non-smoking policy throughout the property is very rarely practiced environmental initiative for the fact that they provide designated smoking places in their property for their smoker customers. Another issue that most of the hotels didn't take into consideration is the design of their buildings in such a way to acquire natural lighting and ventilation access. From the category of green purchasing practices, the most adopted practice is bulk purchasing which helps minimize packaging. Purchasing local products and materials, purchasing eco-friendly products and materials, purchasing cleaning materials with low environmental impact and

purchasing products from certified suppliers with environmental considerations are moderately practiced in the surveyed hotels. Another green hospitality practice performed by the surveyed hotels is supporting the local community which in turn minimizes transportation of materials from overseas. Based on the survey, forming partnership with local suppliers and purchasing local products and services is frequently practiced by the hotels.

Donation of reusable items to local charities is moderately practiced. The marketing category of this study revealed that promotion of green practices via signage and websites are rarely carried out. And the usage of biodegradable packaging for giveaway amenities and takeaway foods is very rarely practiced. Alongside the above descriptive results of the extent of green practices' implementation, the researcher made statistical analysis using multiple regression to find out whether or not those practices affect the hotels' competitiveness.

Hence, the findings are discussed below. The findings of this study indicated a positive relationship between green hospitality practices and competitive advantages. The results showed that cost reduction and differentiation are two major reasons why hotel managers might be interested in adopting green practices. In an effort to achieve competitive advantage they put their resources and capabilities and establish good will with their stakeholders. And the results are consistent with the previous research works conducted on the topic.

Most studies analyzing the relationship between environmental management and competitive advantage concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship. For example, environmental management allows firms to reduce costs (increasing efficiency and productivity) (Bohdanowicz, 2006; Bohdanowicz et al., 2011; Bonilla- Priego et al., 2011; Chan, 2009; Chan and Ho, 2006) and increase differentiation by improving reputation and image (Chan, 2013; Chen and Peng, 2012; Lee et al., 2011; Leonidou et al., 2013; López Gamero et al., 2009, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Hospitality industry affects the environment detrimentally, a fact that needs to be recognized. Hence, if tourist activities and hotel operations are not properly managed, the negative impacts on the destination environment will be increased and deteriorate the quality of life of generations. However, if hotels could increase their environmental commitment level and integrate green practices into their operations, they would by far get competitive advantage in the market. Although green hospitality practices have been analyzed in the sustainability literature, there are far fewer studies applied to the hotel sector of Ethiopia. The findings of this study not only provided insight into the context of green hospitality practices implementation in the star-rated hotels of Addis Ababa and Bishoftu but also proved the relationship of those practices with the hotels' competitiveness.

In addition, the research findings indicated that sustainability has a significant and positive influence on cost and differentiation competitive advantages, confirming the results of most of the previous researches. Therefore, it continues to be shown that sustainability is very relevant to control the costs of hotels and improve their levels of differentiation through the improvement of their reputation and guest experience. Another conclusion is that this study revealed a growing number of hotels are being green and are adopting green practices with a motive to minimize costs and gain competitive advantage not because adopting green practices is the right thing to do for the environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Green practices are accepted as one of the new trends of tourism in recent years. In an environment where environmental issues are worthwhile, green hotels provide their customers with unique experience and serve the sustainable tourism efforts at an important level. Within the frame of this study, recommendations are made to the concerned authorities, hoteliers and others.
2. Investors and managers in the hotel sector should proactively create common projects with expert architectures, designers and marketing experts in hotel management field, particularly at planning and application levels.
3. They should also evaluate infrastructure of the location whether or not it is ecologically appropriate for the construction and they should consider the impact of construction and their operation on the area's biodiversity and its surroundings.
4. They should also play their important role in aligning their purchasing, marketing and other operations with the environment.
5. They should have robust energy efficiency, water conservation and solid and liquid waste management systems.
6. Hoteliers should take into consideration the competitive advantage they would acquire by going green, as environmental issues have become integral components to competitive success in the hotel sector.
7. They should also incorporate green practices in their standard operating procedures and give environmental education for their employees, customers and local communities to contribute to the environment.
8. Policy makers and other law enforcing authorities should work on making regulations environmentally friendly and follow up their implementation.
9. The concerned authority and other entities working on environment should certify companies with green initiatives and motivate others.

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Perceived Roles, Challenges and Potential Threats of Being a Tour Guide in Ethiopia: Evidences from Bahir Dar, Hawassa and their Environs

By: Meseret Tamir Ertiban

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to identify perceived roles, challenges and potential threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia based on tour guides' perspective by taking evidences from Bahir Dar and Hawassa. The study employed mixed method design where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from purposely and availably selected respondents. Quantitative data were collected from 78 participants drawn from tour guides and experts based on purposive and convenient sampling techniques. Qualitative data were collected from 10 key informants based on purposive sampling technique. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and principal component analysis, while qualitative data were analyzed through content and discourse analysis. The finding revealed that interpretation and conservation, leadership and management as well as marketing and entertainment were bravely identified as perceived roles of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. On the other hand, seasonality of the job and insufficient professional payment, lack of travel insurance and communication barriers, high customer expectations and limited promotion opportunities and psychological stress and not stable income as well as political instabilities and economic crises were identified as current challenges facing the profession of tour guiding in Ethiopia. In addition to current challenges, terrorism and disasters, political instability and wildlife depletion, unexpected incidences and economic instabilities and technology oriented threats were the leading issues that were perceived as future threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia.

Key Words: Tour Guides, Perceived Roles, Challenges, Potential Threats, Hawassa, Bahir Dar and Ethiopia

INTRODUCTION

Tour guiding as a profession is mostly considered as the heart of tourism system that can play an essential role in the success of the sector by delivering diversified and quality services to their customers (Kong, Cheung and Baum, n.d). As one of the oldest human activity providers and the most frontline staff in the world, tour guides are the most engaged workforce in tourism service delivery system. Linked to this, as one of the most active role players in tourism industry, they are always perceived as the first contact persons since tourists spend much of their time at a destination with them to provide the moment of truth (Shegaw, 2015 and European Federation of Tour Guides Association, 2009). Hence, as front – line service providers, they have a great power to create good or bad first and last impression in the minds of visitors. As Zhang & Chow (2004) and Nyahunzvi and Njerekai (2013) added in this regard, in providing the moment of reality or not, they have the power of making or breaking the trip itself. Furthermore, tour guides are expected to play crucial roles in building a positive image on a given tourist destination mainly by reshaping tourists' thoughts via satisfying their needs and expectations (Shegaw, 2015: Ashenafi, 2013: Zhang and Chow, 2004). Thus, having a tour with help of guide and without guide can result a visible difference in tourist satisfaction and experience. As it is mentioned on previous studies, guided tour can provide an appealing experience in view of the fact that it offers knowledge, fun and an opportunity for socializing people around the globe (Ashenafi, 2013).

As Rabolic (2008) additionally mentioned in this regard, guided tour is even very important for the local communities and the development of cultural and other forms of tourism as well in different types of tourist destinations. Tour guides performance to large extent affects the overall operation of tourism business in a given tourist destination including repeat and new business of tourism as well as the image of tour operation companies and tourist destina-

tions (Prakash & Sunayana, 2011). Hence, service professionalism of tourism business has become an important issue as destinations compete to attract more tourists in a very competitive environment (AP and Wong, 2011). Tour guides have to play different roles during their stay with customers. Because of this, they are always described as information providers, social facilitators, cultural hosts, interpreters of natural and cultural environment, people movers, teachers or instructors, safety officers, ambassadors, public relation representatives, entertainers, problem solvers and counselors etc. (Zhang and Chow, 2004 : Black and Weiler, 2005).

In order to fulfill all these things, they need to be professionally equipped in various issues and when they can do this they can make a tour unless otherwise they will break it. Particularly now a days, with the evolution of globalization, tour guiding business is becoming an important field of occupation (Misiker, 2018). This progress is caused due to its economic advantage. In addition to its economic advantage, this profession allows tour guides to act as a bridge between different cultures and tourist destinations (Moteka, 2014). In spite of this reality, this profession is blamed for different types of profession related problems and challenges even at global level. Although it is one of the oldest and most important human activities in tourism visitation, tour guiding career is still unidentified, depreciated, undervalued and underestimated occupation (Branislav, 2011 and Pond, 1983). That is why tour guides are sometimes termed as “Orphans” of tourism industry (Pond, 1983: 47). Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa constituting more than 80 ethnic groups and this diversity and unique features of ethnic identities as well as its physical environment can be used as one of the fertile grounds to promote its tourism industry (Misiker, 2018: Ephrem, 2012).

As it is repeatedly mentioned in different literatures, the economy of Ethiopia has been highly dependent on agriculture in its overall history. In recent years, however, the country is on the track of expanding industrialization and

service sectors including tourism to generate additional revenue (Misiker, 2018). Tourism is considered as an important strategic and typical socio – economic development tool for nations which are rich in diversified tourist destinations and Ethiopia is one of these nations that are very rich in historical, cultural and natural tourist attraction sites (Misiker, 2018: Tadesse and Getaneh, 2018: Shegaw, 2015: Ephrem, 2012). Tourism has continued to play an important role in Ethiopia and it is even rated among the fastest growing sectors in the country (MOCT, 2013). Particularly in these days, the tourism sector has taken as one of the five top priority economic sectors by the government of the country. To make this dream a reality, various home works must be done at grass root level.

But there are still different types of home works to be done and multifaced challenges and obstacles to be tackled at the grass root level. In spite of its huge potential, the tourism sector in Ethiopia is still in poor performance as compared to other African countries including Kenya (Misiker, 2018; Ephrem, 2012). As Misiker additionally added in this regard, the total number of tourist arrivals in Ethiopia and Kenya in 2006 was 290, 000 and 1, 644, 000 respectively. According to this statistics, Ethiopia has registered more than five times smaller number of tourist arrivals than our neighboring Kenya. This is a very frustrating information which is not really compatible with existing manmade and natural tourism resources of the country.

Even though, tourism is considered as one of priority sectors by the current government, it is still at its infancy stage. There are so many reasons for this failure and one of these reasons is directly or indirectly linked with problems and challenges of tour guides (Misiker, 2018: Tsegaw and Teressa, 2017: Shegaw, 2015: Ephrem, 2012).

In order to appropriately utilize multifaced and diversified tourism resources and the good attention of the current government towards the sector, we have to invest more on the capacity building of tour guides since they are the most

frontline staff of the tourism business. Especially, in a country like Ethiopia in which most of the well-known attraction sites are historical and cultural, which need clear clarification and interpretation, the tour guides have to act as key actors of tourism industry (Ashenafi, 2013). But the profession of tour guiding in Ethiopia is blamed for different challenges and problems.

The same is true for selected research areas. Bahir Dar and Hawassa with their respective environs are one of the top and leading tourist destinations in Ethiopia and even these destinations compete with each other in terms of different destination attributes. Hence, they have been attracting both domestic and foreign tourists because of their own unique attractions that differentiate them from other tourist destinations of Ethiopia (Gedecho, 2015). Even though these two tourist destinations have huge tourism resource potential and practice, they still face different challenges and problems particularly linked to tourism service delivery and one of these challenges and problems are observed in tour guiding service.

Most of the researchers ignore the views and opinions of tour guides when they investigate roles, challenges, obstacles and related issues of tour guiding. They simply try to incorporate only the demand part of the view. But sometimes it seems better to study their side regarding what they perceive their roles as well as deep and root causes for their poor performance instead of blaming them for all failures by fully incorporating their views, perceptions and opinions. This study is initiated to fill these gaps. Thus, this research, therefore, tries to explore perceived roles, challenges facing and potential threats of tour guides in Bahir Dar, Hawassa and their surrounding environs.

Despite its typical contribution and long term existence, tour guiding profession is one of largely ignored and under-researched aspects of tourism business in Ethiopia. The researcher only found few studies and literatures on the area of tour guiding profession in Ethiopia particularly focusing on its roles, challenges and opportunities. Actually most of the existing works and studies

are inclined towards mixed issues of overall tourism studies.

Few of the previous studies on the area focused mainly on analyzing the discourse of tour guiding communication particularly focusing on Rock – hewn churches of Lalibela (Shegaw, 2015): the status of tourist guides and tourism management in and around the City of Gondar (Misiker, 2018): tour guiding quality assurance mechanisms and respective tourist satisfaction on Southern Ethiopia (2017), principles and practices of tour guiding in Addis Ababa (Ashenafi, 2013).

But nearly none of the above researchers have tried to undertake their research by exclusively incorporating tour guides' views, opinions, and perceptions regarding their roles, challenges and potential threats facing them and their profession. Furthermore, such studies were conducted in specific areas and there is no comprehensive study that has looked into perceived roles, challenges and potential threats of being tour guide in Ethiopia.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to explore perceived roles, challenges and potential threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia particularly focusing on Bahir Dar and Hawassa.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research were:

- To assess the understanding of tour guides of Bahir Dar and Hawassa regarding their desired roles
- To identify challenges of being tour guides in Bahir Dar and Hawassa
- To identify potential threats of being a tour guide in Bahir Dar and Hawassa

Research Questions

This study tried to address the following research questions. These are:

1. What roles of tour guides are perceived in Bahir Dar and Hawassa as desired in tour guiding profession?
2. What are the challenges tour guides face in Bahir Dar and Hawassa?
3. What are the potential threats existed for tour guides in Bahir Dar and Hawassa?

LITERATURE

Empirical Review of Tour Guiding

Roles of Tour Guides

The profession of tour guiding constitutes a strategic factor in the representation of a destination area since it has a great power in influencing the quality of tourist experience, length of stay and the resulting economic benefits for local communities (Prakash & Sunayana, 2011). Tour guides are considered as one of the most visible and front - line players in tourism business, little scholar attention has been given to this profession even at global level (Hu, 2007).

According to Cohen (1985) the major roles of tour guides are associated with instrumental, social, interactional and communicative roles. As front – line service providers, they have a great power to create good or bad first and last impression for visitors. As Zhang & Chow (2004) and Nyahunzvi and Njerekai (2013) added in this regards, they are the most front line staff who can provide the “moment of truth” for tourists and have the power of making or breaking the trip. Actually, tour guides have to play different roles during

their stay with customers because of this, they are always described as information providers, social facilitators, cultural hosts, interpreters of natural and cultural environment, people movers, teachers or instructors, safety officers, ambassadors, public relation representatives, entertainers, problem solvers and counselors etc. (Zhang and Chow, 2004 : Black and Weiler, 2005).

Challenges and Threats of Being a Tour Guide in the World

Tour guides are the most marginalized staff in the world of tour and travel (Prakash et al., 2011 among many others). As the most front line staff in tourism system, they are very much responsible for the overall impression and satisfaction of tour services offered by a given tourist destination (AP and Wong, 2011) as cited in Malia (2017). These types of different and multifaceted engagements and responsibilities create different types of burdens and stresses in tour guides' day to day life. They may actually face challenges both from within and from their operating context and may also exercise personal limitations of skills and competencies and in other dimension they must have to comply with existing rules and regulations on their areas of operations, their employers and their clients (Prakash et al., 2011). That's why; they are often pressed for time, caught between their obligations to please their employers, tourists and government regulations (Dahles, 2002 and Dritsa, 2006) as cited in Prakash et al. (2011).

Above all, tour guides are perceived as forgotten employees within the services provision chain of tourism and their services are only required during the high seasons and hence during the off or low season they are jobless and must look for alternative source of livelihood options (Kabii, Okello and Kipruto, 2017). As AP and Wong (2001) as cited in Prakash et al. (2011) mentioned in this regard, non – existence of training for new entrants, lack of refreshment training opportunities and other challenges and potential problems resulting from unhealthy industry practices, complicated bureaucracies

in certification, registration or licensing systems, absence of healthy monitoring and evaluation practices and related issues are grouped under existing problems and challenges of tour guiding profession at global level.

Challenges and Threats of Tour Guides in Ethiopia

Tour guiding profession faces many challenges in Ethiopia. Few scholars and organizations have tried to mention some fragmented lists of challenging issues of tour guiding in Ethiopia (Misiker, 2018 : Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017 : Shegaw, 2015 : MOCT, 2009). Hence, lack of professional tourist guides is always considered as one of the dissatisfaction attributes of tourists and one of the blamed issues in attracting more tourists in Ethiopia (Misiker, 2018 : Tsegaw & Teressa, 2017 : Shegaw, 2015). One of these deficiencies is particularly associated with problems of interpreting cultural and historical attraction sites. As World Bank (2006) report strongly mentioned in this regard, there is a lack of qualified and skilled service providers in the Ethiopian tourism sector. This report additionally highlighted that because of poor training delivered to tour guides, the level of interpreting history and culture is very poor in Ethiopia. The other challenge that is frequently mentioned by scholars is seasonality nature of tourism in Ethiopia (Misiker, 2018). The other challenges of tour guiding are associated with lack of practical training, absence of strong monitoring practice, Lack of strong licensing and certification procedures, involvement of non – professionals and like (Misiker, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive and correlational research designs were used to investigate roles, challenges and potential threats of being a tour guide in Bahir Dar and Hawassa. To get appropriate data for this finding, both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used.

Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

This study focused on tourist destinations of Bahir Dar and Hawassa particularly targeting on perspectives of tour guides. Cluster, purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to identify appropriate respondents that include local tour guides; national tour guides; officials and experts/ professionals.

Data Collection Instruments

Primary data were collected from selected respondents using questionnaire survey and key informant interview.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and principal component analysis by using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, followed by Cronbach's alpha reliability testing. Finally, the results of the analysis of quantitative data were augmented by qualitative data analyzed using content and discourse analysis.

Data presentation, analysis and discussion

In this research, perceived roles, challenges and potential threats of being a tour guide in Hawassa and Bahir Dar were appropriately examined. The data collected through questionnaire survey were analyzed by SPSS version 25 and the data collected through key informant interview were analyzed through content and discourse analysis.

Certification and Qualification Profiles of Respondents

This section describes about certification and qualification exposures of respondents mainly linked to job license, COC certification, work experience and whether they are currently working or not working as a guide.

Table : Certification and Qualification Profiles of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent (%)
Are you a licensed tour guide?	Yes	56	71.8
	No	22	28.2
	Total	78	100
Are you COC certified?	Yes	52	66.7
	No	26	33.3
	Total	78	100

Amount of work experience in tour guiding profession	Less than 5 years	38	48.7
	5 – 10 years	21	26.9
	11 – 15 years	12	15.4
	M o r e than 15 years	5	6.4
	Missing	2	2.6
	Total	78	100
Are you currently working as a guide?	Yes	60	76.9
	No	17	21.8
	Missing	1	1.3
	Total	78	100

As the table clearly displays, the majority of respondents (71.8 %) are licensed tour guides. On the other extreme, the remaining respondents (28.2 %) are not licensed. This indicates that the respondents have relatively better conditions to perform their duties in this regard. The majority of respondents (66.7 %) are COC certified. On the other extreme, the remaining respondents (33.3 %) were not COC certified. This indicates that the respondents have relatively better qualification in this regard.

Regarding the amount of work experience of the respondents in tour guiding profession, the majority of respondents (48.7 %) have work experiences of less than 5 years followed by the respondents that have work experience of 5 - 10 years (26.9%), 11 – 15 years (15.4%) and more than 15 years (6.4%) respectively. The remaining respondents' work experience (2.6 %) is not iden-

tified (missing). From this, it can be concluded that nearly 48.7 % respondents have work experiences of more than 5 years in tour guiding profession. Therefore, the respondents are capable enough to understand the issue and to respond to the questionnaire survey appropriately.

Perceived Roles of Being a Tour Guide in Ethiopia

The rating of respondents on extracted factors as perceived roles of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. As it is clearly stated above, the PCA of the remaining 6 items has provided three - factor solutions namely; - “Marketing and Entertainment” (Component 1), “Leadership and Management” (Component 2) and – “Interpretation and Conservation” (Component 3). Component1 (C1) contains 2 items namely: tour guides are entertainers and tour guides are marketers, sellers and promoters. Component2 (C2) contains 2 items namely: tour guides are information providers and tour guides are leaders and managers. Component3 (C3) contains 2 items namely: tour guides are interpreters of culture, history and nature and tour guides are motivators of conservation. As it is clearly revealed in table 4, respondents have placed their high value of agreement on interpretation and conservation (Component 3) with grand mean and standard deviation (mean = 4.50, SD = 0.68), leadership and management (Component2) with grand mean and standard deviation of (mean = 4.44, SD = 0.71) and marketing and entertainment (component1) with grand mean and standard deviation (mean = 4.23, SD = 0.83) as perceived roles of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. This finding therefore revealed that, in spite of some limitations, tour guides in Bahir Dar and Hawassa have adequate understanding towards fundamental roles of tour guides. Results from the analysis of key informants also confirmed this.

According to key informants, the most important roles of tour guides in Ethiopia are highly linked to providing tour commentary, providing narration to

nature and culture, information providing, entertainment and guiding service, leading and managing the group and the tour itself.

The results of this study are highly compatible with previous literatures. Hence, as it is clearly mentioned in various studies, tour guides can play multifaceted roles particularly via serving as a vital link between visitors and tourism industry in various tourist destinations (Yaw and Nana, 2022). In this regard, a review of literature in various studies clearly shows that tour guides can be educators, interpreters, storytellers, information providers, environmental conservators and activity experts (Bogdan & Lasinski, 2019; Rokenes, Schumann and Rose, 2015; Weiler & Walker, 2014; Wong and Lee, 2012) as cited in Yaw and Nana (2022). As it is additionally mentioned by Weiler and Black (2015), well documented tour guide roles are leadership, instrumental, social, mediatory, interactionary, communicative, resource management, motivator and environmental interpreting roles. Thus, the major findings of this study are more compatible with previous studies.

Results of Research Hypotheses on Perceived Roles of Tour Guides

As it is clearly stated in chapter one, the researcher had formulated the following research hypothesis to be tested on perceived roles of tour guides in Ethiopia.

Ho1: Gender hasn't a significant effect on perceived roles of Tour guides

Ha1: Gender has a significant effect on perceived roles of Tour guides

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance					t-test for equality of means		95% confidence interval of the difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Aggregated	Equal variances Assumed	.002	.961	2.377	74	.020	.294	.124	.048	.541
	Equal variances not assumed			2.104	17.228	.050	.294	.140	.000	.589
Mean of Perceived Roles										

As it is clearly revealed in the table above, the p – value is less than the significance level. Hence, the researcher has statistically significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, based on this, the researcher can easily conclude that gender has a significant effect on perceived roles of tour guides in this particular study.

Challenges of Being a Tour Guide in Ethiopia

The rating of respondents on extracted factors as challenges of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. As it is clearly stated, the PCA of the remaining 12 items has provided five-factor solutions namely; - lack of travel insurance and communication barriers

(Component 1), high customer expectations and limited promotion opportunities

(Component 2), work load and bad weather conditions

(Component 3), seasonality of the job and insufficient professional payment

(Component 4) and psychological stress and not stable income

(Component 5). Component1 (C1) contains 3 items namely: “lack of travel insurance in tour guiding profession”, “difficulties in language/ communication barriers” and “tour guides have to deal with difficult people”. Component2 (C2) contains 2 items namely: “limited promotion opportunities in tour guiding profession” and “inability to meet expectations of demanding tourists”. Component3 (C3) contains 2 items namely: “there is a burden to work nearly 24 hours a day”, “repeat travel to the same place is boring” and “the existence of bad weather conditions”. Component4 (C4) contains 2 items namely: “tour guide’s professional payment is not sufficient” and “seasonality of the tourism business is affecting our life”. Component5 (C5) contains 2 items namely: “there is no stable income in tour guiding profession” and “there is work stress in tour guiding job”.

Respondents have placed their high level of agreement on seasonality of the job and insufficient professional payment (C4) with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.965) and lack of travel insurance and communication barriers (C1) with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.02) and their moderate level of agreement on high customer expectations and limited promotion opportunities (C2) with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.67, SD = 1.08) and psychological stress and

not stable income with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.60, SD = 1.07) as current challenges of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. Finally, the respondents showed their low level of agreement on work load and bad weather conditions with grand mean and standard deviation with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.20, SD = 1.20) as challenges of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. Hence, the result generally revealed that seasonality of the job and insufficient professional payment with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.965), lack of travel insurance and communication barriers with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.02), high customer expectations and limited promotion opportunities with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.67, SD = 1.08) and psychological stress and not stable income with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.60, SD = 1.07) are the leading challenges of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. The data that were obtained from key informants also strengthen the above challenges mentioned in this finding as obstacles of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. The most frequently mentioned challenges that were raised by key informants were: the seasonality and sensitivity of tourism business, communication barriers, lack of promotion, non – existence of fruitful training opportunities, low support from government side. Parallel to this, very hot issues that were boldly identified by key informants as challenges of being a tour guide in Ethiopia were political instability and war, Covid – 19 impacts, hooliganism, the existence of street beggars (mainly children), poor infrastructure and occasional security problems.

Results of Research Hypotheses on Perceived Challenges of Tour Guides

As it is clearly stated in chapter one, the researcher had formulated the following research hypothesis to be tested on perceived challenges of tour guides in Ethiopia.

Ho2: Gender hasn't a significant effect on perceived challenges of Tour guides

Ha2: Gender has a significant effect on perceived challenges of Tour guides

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance					t-test for equality of means		95% confidence interval of the difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Aggregated Mean of Perceived Challenges	Equal variances Assumed	.187	.667	-.981	74	.330	-.139	.142	-.422	.144
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.002	17.223	.328	-.139	.139	-.430	.151

The p – value is greater than the significance level (i.e. >0.05). Hence, the researcher has no statistically significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, based on this, the researcher can easily conclude that gender has no a significant effect on perceived challenges of tour guides in this particular study.

Potential Threats of Being a Tour Guide in Ethiopia

The rating of respondents on extracted factors as potential threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. As it is clearly stated above, the PCA of the remaining 9 items has provided four - factor solutions namely; - technology oriented threats (Component 1), terrorism and disasters (Component 2), unexpected incidences and economic instabilities (Component 3) and political instability and wildlife depletion (Component 4). Component1 (C1) contains 3 items namely: “tour guides’ role may be substituted by robots”, “tourists may use digital interpretation instead of guides” and “tourists may use modern applications in tourist sites”. Component2 (C2) contains 2 items namely: “terrorism may be a future threat for tour guiding profession” and “the guiding profession may be deeply affected by natural disasters and epidemics”. Component3 (C3) contains 2 items namely: “the guiding profession may be negatively affected by economic instabilities” and “it may be difficult to help out the tourists at the time of crisis”.

Component4 (C4) contains 2 items namely: “tour guiding profession may be affected by political unrest and hooliganism” and “wildlife depletion may highly affect tour guiding profession”. As it is clearly stated in table 6, respondents placed their high level of agreement on terrorism and disasters (C2) with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 4.11, SD = 0.94), political instability and wildlife depletion (C4) with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.96), unexpected incidences and economic instabilities (C3) with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.86, SD = 1.12) and technology oriented threats (c1) with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.02) as potential threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. Hence, the result generally revealed that terrorism and disasters with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 4.11, SD = 0.94), political instability and wildlife depletion with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 4.09, SD = 0.96), unexpected incidences and economic instabili-

ties with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.86, SD = 1.12) and technology oriented threats with grand mean and standard deviation (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.02) are the leading issues that were perceived as future threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. The data that were obtained from key informants also supported this finding. Hence, the most frequently mentioned issues stated by key informants as potential threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia were civil war, political instabilities, global issues, poor attention paid to tour guiding profession, the seasonality and sensitivity of tourism business, drought and existence of non – licensed tour guides.

Results of Research Hypotheses on Perceived Threats of Tour Guides

As it is clearly stated in chapter one, the researcher had formulated the following research hypothesis to be tested on perceived challenges of tour guides in Ethiopia. Ho3: gender hasn't a significant effect on perceived threats of tour guides Ha3: The gender has a significant effect on perceived threats of tour guides by clearly considering these issues into account, the results are presented in this section as follows.

As it is clearly revealed in the table below, the p – value is greater than the significance level (i.e. >0.05). Hence, the researcher has no statistically significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Hence, based on this, the researcher can easily conclude that gender has not a significant effect on perceived threats of tour guides in this particular study.

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variance					t-test for equality of means		95% confidence interval of the difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Mean of Perceived Threats	Equal variances assumed	.350	.556	-1.208	74	.231	-.187	.155	-.494	.121
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.229	21.052	.208	-.187	.144	-.485	.112

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this study was to identify perceived roles, challenges and potential threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia by taking evidences from Bahir Dar and Hawassa. Hence, the main intention behind this study was to understand how tour guides perceive their roles, current challenges and potential threats by taking Bahir Dar and Hawassa as cases.

The results of this study showed that interpretation and conservation, leadership and management as well as marketing and entertainment were boldly identified as perceived roles of being a tour guide in Ethiopia. Lots of factors hindering tour guiding profession in Ethiopia were identified in this study. Linked to this, the leading challenges of being a tour guide in Ethiopia are seasonality of the job and insufficient professional payment, lack of travel insurance and communication barriers, high customer expectations and limited promotion opportunities and psychological stress and unstable income.

The remaining obstacles are shortage of training opportunities, political instabilities and conflicts as well as economic crisis due to various factors. These were identified as current challenges the tour guiding profession faces in Ethiopia. In addition to current challenges of being a tour guide in Ethiopia, perceptions of tour guides on future threats of their profession were also identified in this study. Linked to this, terrorism and disasters, political instability and wildlife depletion, unexpected incidences and economic instabilities and technology oriented threats were the leading issues that were perceived as future threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The investigator wants to provide the following recommendations that might help to upgrade and modern tour guiding profession in the study areas in particular and in Ethiopia in general. More importantly, the researcher strongly believes that the mission cannot be achieved by single actor but can be successful through all-inclusive and harmonized approach i.e. via coordinated and collaborated efforts of several actors and stakeholders. From this perspective, the researcher wants to forward the following recommendations:

- First of all, it seems better to launch continuous awareness creation campaigns to build the capacities of tour guides particularly linked to basic roles expected from them and their profession.
- It seems better to strengthen coordinated and collaborative efforts of various stakeholders to upgrade and modern the sector at global standard.
- It seems better to launch different types of incentives for the betterment of tour guiding job in Ethiopia
- It seems better to launch various recovery strategies to improve the lives of tour guides.
- It seems better to proactive tactics and strategies to minimize or avoid the impacts of future threats of being a tour guide in Ethiopia.
- The researcher strongly believes that tourism is a peace passport. Hence, all actors and stakeholders must pay due attention for peace, safety and security of our country
- It seems better to protect and conserve wildlife resources
- Tour guides themselves must develop saving habits and other proactive measures to tackle seasonality and sensitivity impacts of tourism.

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Bird Watching Tourism: The case of Lake Tana and the surrounding

By : Abiy Nigussie

Abstract

The study aimed at examining the existing bird watching practices and challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding. A descriptive research design and mixed research approaches were employed. 76 samples were selected from target populations. Purposive sampling techniques were employed. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mean were computed. Qualitative data were triangulated. The result confirmed that Lake Tana and its surrounding have good potential resources to develop bird watching tourism. The current level of bird watching tourism practices is existed at its infancy stage mainly due to scarcity of suitable bird watching tourism facilities and non – existence of qualified bird watching naturalist guides, tour operators and bird watching tourists. Shortage of suitable of facilities and human – birdlife conflicts, natural and manmade disasters and seasonal migration of birds and infrastructural expansions are perceived challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding environment. There is lax management in terms of policing legal actions in order to conserve bird's natural habitat. Besides, there are no any specific rules and regulations that legally support bird watching tourism activities in the country in general and in Lake Tana area in particular. The existing challenges and policing legal actions need to be resolved for effective utilization of the untapped bird watching tourism resources of the area. Success factor for bird watching tourism development such as favorable natural characteristics, good tourism infrastructure, and market presence need to be prioritized by tourism planners and key stakeholders for bird watching tourism development of the area. Recommendation for future research includes survey of bird watching tourist flow in the country in general and in Lake Tana in particular; bird watching tourist need assessment, the state of conservation of the area's bird life resources, the development of bird watching trials in Lake Tana area, and policing legal actions towards bird life.

Key words: Bird watching Tourism, Avi-Tourism, Tourism, Lake Tana

INTRODUCTION

Avitourism is a responsible travel for bird watching/birding, which is the act of observing and identifying birds in their natural habitat (Cordell et al., 1999; Sekercioğlu, 2002; Opperman, 2008; Asefa et al., 2013). It is becoming the most rapidly growing ecotourism segment, making a significant contribution to the socio-economic development of and combating poverty among many poor local communities and the protection and development of threatened natural areas around the world (Sekercioğlu, 2002; Opperman, 2008). However, this idea has been little recognized and only few countries have been exploiting the opportunity (Sekercioğlu, 2002; Admasu et al., 2013).

This is especially true for developing countries like Ethiopia where rich and unique avifauna is found, but many of the birds and their habitats are facing conservation threats losing their ecological, social and economic values (EWNHS, 1996; Borghesio et al., 2004; Asefa et al., 2013). Birdwatchers form the largest group of ecotourists, and are, on average, well-educated and wealthy, which makes them good potentials to improve the financial and environmental wellbeing of local communities, educate locals about the value of biodiversity and create local and national incentives for successful protection and preservation of natural areas (Wiedner and Kerlinger, 1990; Sekercioğlu, 2002; BirdLife South Africa, 2008). In multiple regions, bird watching tourism represents a good alternative for generating income in the private sector, protected areas and local communities (Glowinski, 2008).

However, success will depend not only on the presence of birds, but also on safety, accessibility, infrastructure, and knowledgeable and experienced guides (IDB, Audubon & CREST, 2015). Ethiopia is a country endowed with great natural and cultural diversity. It covers an extraordinary number of the world's broad ecological zones with a high plateau and a central mountain range divided by Great Rift Valley. The country harbors 926 species of birds of which 639 are residents and 224 are regular seasonal migrants, including

176 from the Palearctic and 48 inter-African (Lepage, 2016). It is also indicated that 24 species are endemic to Ethiopia whereas, additional 13 are shared only with Eritrea. So far in the country, 73 hotspots have been identified as Important Bird Areas (IBAs). Of these, 30 sites (41%) comprise wetlands, while the rest are representatives of other types of ecosystems. Nationally, Ethiopian IBA sites have been grouped into three conservation categories based on distribution and abundance as Critical (19), Urgent (23) and High (31) (Mengistu, 2003). Despite the rich bird assemblages in Ethiopia, due to enormous habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss their survivals of many bird species including the endemic and globally threatened ones are endangered (Lepage, 2014, 2016).

Particularly, expansion of agriculture, livestock encroachment, deforestation, indiscriminate fire fuel by the ever increasing human population has been often cited as the major cause of birds' habitat degradation, fragmentation and loss in Ethiopia ultimately affecting the survival of birds (Aynalem & Bekele, 2008; Mengesha et al., 2011). It has been indicated that threats to bird species of Ethiopia have been diagrammatically increasing in the past few decades, as it is true to other wildlife (Aynalem & Bekele, 2008). Lake Tana biosphere reserves were recorded by UNESCO as Ethiopia's fourth natural heritage (UNESCO, 2015). The lake environment and terrestrial wetland in the lake's vicinity with more than 260 bird species (Muluaem, 2010:5; Sefrien, 2012: 44). Besides, The Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve is a hotspot of biodiversity, and it is part of the two biodiversity hotspots i.e., Eastern Afromountain and Horn of Africa biodiversity hotspots. It is internationally known as one of the 73 Important Bird Areas (IPA's) in Ethiopia (Aynalem and Bekele 2008; Tassie and Bekele 2008). The major challenges for avitourism development in the Ethiopia are lack of recognition and understanding of its potential and the lack of preservation of important bird areas (Asefa, 2008; Asefa et al., 2013). However, despite these issues there are many positive opportunities that exist for avitourism development in Ethiopia; inclusion of tourism in

its Growth and Transformation plans as one major tool to poverty-reduction (EMCT, 2015).

Updated information on bird watching tourism activities at Lake Tana and the surrounding is lacking. Most bird studies in Ethiopia focused on characterizing the bird's species composition and abundance on specific regions of the country (Aynalem& Bekele, 2008; Mengesha& Bekele, 2008). Few studies attempted to determine the seasonal abundance of bird species in relation to environmental variables such as vegetation species composition and structure (Mengesha et al., 2011). However, the potential of the area for bird watching tourism development is not investigated. Besides, Intertwined factors and bottlenecks as well as the root causes of the obstacles that deterred bird watching tourism development in Lake Tana area are not investigated. It is this gap that initiated the researcher to undertake a study on this thematic area.

Species composition, relative abundance and distribution of bird fauna of riverine and wetland habitats of Infranz and Yiganda at southern tip of Lake Tana(Shimeles&Afework,2008), birds of Lake Tana Sub-basin(Shimeles,2022).However, the existing bird watching tourism practices and challenges for bird watching tourism development in Lake Tana area was not examined. Thus, the significance of this study hinges upon the fact that it especially contributes knowledge about the bird watching tourism resources potential, the economic contribution, and challenge occurred in the study area. Such a study would be of great value for natural resource managers, and tourism and conservation experts who work in this area, and serve as baseline data for future researchers.

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the existing bird watching practices and challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding.

Specific Objectives

- To assess the existing practices of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding
- To identify challenges facing bird-watching tourism development in Lake Tana and its surroundings.

LITERATURE

Who are the avi-tourists?

The global growth of avi-tourism is clear to see in the development of tourism companies which recommend avi-tourism experiences. In addition to these, many websites and tourist guidebooks promote avi-tourism. A wide range of bird-safaris and avi-adventures have been designed for serious bird watchers. Avi-tourists in general, are typically involved in viewing as many different bird species, especially rare and endangered species (Leuschner et al. 1989). This search for new and rare species of birds takes birdwatchers from across the globe to progressively distant locations and this undoubtedly leads to the emergence of once insignificant places as modern niche avitourist destinations. The vast majority of birdwatchers who become avitourists, generally emanate from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, Australasia as well as Scandinavia. They are usually relatively well educated middle-aged males with money available to spend on travel abroad (Jones & Buckley, 2004). As in the case of most nature-based tourists, birdwatchers

generally emanate from the affluent strata of their societies (Mehmetoglu, 2007). More often than not, due to job constraints, they do not have much time to spend on trips abroad and are consequently likely to spend more money on avitourism over a relatively short period of time so as to gain maximum benefit from their experiences (Eubanks et al., 2004). Birdwatching is growing in part due to the increase of nature-based television programmes being produced globally which tend to encourage potential avitourists to undertake trips abroad mainly as a form of escapism from the concrete jungles which are modern cities, and to experience unique parts of the globe and see exotic species (Rodger et al., 2007). It is significant to note that the quantity of global avitourists has noticeably appreciated in first-world nations.

According to Scott and Thigpen (2003), there has been a marked 225 per cent increase in the number of birdwatchers in the United States of America between 1982 and 2002 and the numbers are growing even more as birdwatching is becoming a very popular recreational pastime (Weidensaul 2007; Sali et al. 2008). There has also been a significant rise in birdwatching in the United Kingdom, where membership of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has doubled (Huxley, 2007). Similar increases in bird watching numbers are also documented for France, Australia and New Zealand and the potential impact on avitourism is great. The majority of birds are found in grassland, cultivated lands, wetlands, fynbos, thornveld, woodland, evergreen forests, mountains or karoo biomes. There are also 122 Bird Areas that are home to some 45 threatened avian species. Bird distribution is of course, in a continual state of flux. It is not uncommon for entire avian populations to relocate, often influenced by climatic cycles or environmental degradation.

Birdlife and Other Wildlife in Lake Tana Area

A comprehensive biodiversity assessment has been made by the BoCTPD (2009). The wetlands and forests host various aquatic and terrestrial mam-

mals. Hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*) as the most prominent large mammal can be found in the inlet and outlet of Lake Tana and Blue Nile River. Higher mammals are endangered by habitat fragmentation, overgrazing, farmland expansion, settlements, hunting and deforestation (Marye et al. 2011). Among the reptiles, particularly the python is critically endangered by habitat loss and hunting. The Lake Tana is also inhabited by globally threatened and biome-bound bird species and large numbers of waterfowels (as many as 20,000) including Palaearctic and intra-African migrants (the bird life of Lake Tana has been documented by Francis & Aynalem 2007, Tassie 2007, Tassie & Bekele 2007, Aynalem & Bekele 2008).

Bird Conservation in Ethiopia

Ethiopia has diverse and endemic wildlife species and unique ecosystems. The economic and environmental values of Ethiopia's biological diversity for the nation and the world at large are well recognized by the Federal Government of Ethiopia (Hillman, 1993; Leykun, 2000). The Ethiopian government has given due attention to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection through issuance of policies and strategies [Environmental Protection Authority (EPA, 1997)]. At macro level, the relevant government institutions that are related to the management and development of wildlife conservation are the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (IBC), Ethiopian Wildlife Development and Conservation Authority (EWDCA) and the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

Recently, the government has declared a Wildlife Policy and has been endorsed to strengthen the sector with clear vision and to lead the wildlife development sector more appropriately in the country (Feyera Senbeta and Fekedu Tefera, 2001). The value of conserving the biodiversity is not only to maintain the diversity and integrity of the biological resources, but their benefit and services play important roles to sustain life and to meet the basic

needs of all human kind. To conserve these diverse and important biological resources, 9 National Parks, 11 Wild-life Reserves, 3 Sanctuaries and 18 Controlled Hunting Areas have been established as refuge (Hillman, 1993).

These protected areas represent only a small fraction of the total land mass (about 2% of the total area of the country) and represent only a few of the diverse ecosystems of the country. In Ethiopia, 73 hot spots have been identified as important bird areas (IBAs). Of these, 30 sites (41% of the total) comprise wetlands, while the rest are representatives of other types of ecosystems. Nationally, Ethiopian IBA sites have been grouped into three conservation categories based on distribution and abundance as critical (19), urgent (23) and high (31) (Mengistu, 2003). In Ethiopia, the various ecosystems of high biological importance are threatened and need strong conservation action supported by undesirable plant species following flooding, shrinkage of lakes and wetlands due to industrial and agricultural development, the expansion of seasonal cultivation, and the negative attitude of people in some areas towards birds particularly Cranes and Goose for the damage they cause to crops and burning to control long grasses. The birds are telling us that our current practices on agriculture, forestry, fishery, water management are not sustainable for the environment and biodiversity. Therefore, dramatic change in outlook and policy to reverse this dramatic change in countryside is required (Mengistu Wondafrash, 2003). Even though avian have a number of significant roles their life is threatened from time to time due to different factors (Fjeidsa, 1999). Some of the factors are deforestation, commercial logging, subsistent farming, plantation and mining. A decline in the quality of habitat through grazing by livestock and agricultural intensification leads to loss of habitats. In order to sustain the livelihood of avian, these habitats should be managed and protected.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design was employed to assess practices and challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding.

Data Collection Techniques and Tools

Quantitative data were collected using self-administered structured questionnaires. For the qualitative parts of the study, data were collected using open-ended questions and interview guides to catch data, which could not be addressed by the survey.

Secondary Data

To increase the validity and credibility of the findings, important secondary sources were reviewed. In this regard, available published and unpublished sources such as articles, books, web pages, policy directives, reports, project papers, and archives, etc. were used.

Primary Data Sources

Questionnaire survey was used to collect primary data. The questionnaire was composed of closed and open questions. The questionnaire has two sections. The first section was about background of the respondents. In the second section, respondents were asked about their perceptions on each item. To help respondents understand and answer the questions, a brief summary of objective of the survey was included in the first page of the questionnaire.

Sampling And Sample Size

Respondents were selected using convenience sampling method. Random sampling technique was not used because of the unavailability of a sampling frame that has been identified.

Table 1: The Sampling Frames of the Research

S. N	Name of Selected Stakeholders	Number of selected respondents	Remarks
1	Amahara Culture and Tourism	4	2 officials and 2 experts
2.	Ethiopian Wildlife conservation Authority	4	2 officials and 2 experts
3	Bird-watching specialized Tour companies	15	15 officials and senior tour operators
4	Conveniently selected specialized national bird-watching guides	10	10 national tour guides
5	Bahir dar city local guide Association	10	10 tour guides
6	Zege-peninsula Tour Guide Association	10	10 tour guides
7	Tis Abay Tour Guide Association	15	15 tour guides
8	Tourism Instructors (Bahirdar University)	8	8 Instructors
Total			76

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and principal component analysis. Data were coded, cleaned, and then entered into statistical software (SPSS, version 22) for analysis. Descriptive analysis such as frequency, mean, and percentages were computed, and tables and texts were utilized to present the result. Discourse and content analysis were used to present qualitative data in triangulation with quantitative findings in accordance with research objectives.

Result and discussion

Results on Practices of Bird Watching Tourism in Bahir Dar and Its Surrounding

One of the specific objectives of this study was exploring practices of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding. Hence, the main intention of this specific objective was to evaluate the existence of bird watching tourism practices in Lake Tana and its surrounding. In order to investigate this, practices of bird watching tourism were assessed by using 11 items extracted from ranges of previous studies. Hence, respondents were asked to rate the extent of their agreement or disagreement on these extracted factors as practices of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding. These 11 items were entered in to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, followed by Cronbach's alpha reliability testing.

The rating of respondents on extracted factors as practices of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding environs. As it is clearly stated above, the PCA of the remaining 6 items has provided three – component solutions namely; - *Practices on existence of bird watching guides, operators and tourists* (Component 1), - *The natural suitability of the area for bird watching tourism practices* (Component 2) and - *The existence of suitable bird watching tourism facilities* (Component 3).

As it is clearly revealed that, respondents placed their high level of agreement on the natural suitability of the area for bird watching tourism practices (Component 2) with grand mean and standard deviation ($mean = 4.21, SD = 1.05$). On the other hand, respondents placed their low level of agreement on the existence of suitable bird watching tourism facilities (Component3) with grand mean and standard deviation of ($mean = 2.24, SD = 0.98$) and on the practices on existence of bird watching guides, operators and tourists (component1) with grand mean and standard deviation ($mean = 2.49, SD = 1.16$) respectively as practices of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding environment.

The finding therefore revealed that, in spite of the natural suitability of the area for bird watching tourism practices, the current level of bird watching tourism practices were found to be at infancy stage mainly due to scarcity of suitable bird watching tourism facilities and non – existence of qualified bird watching naturalist guides, tour operators and bird watching tourists.

A result from the analysis of key informants and FGD also confirmed that there is no adequate infrastructure in the area for bird watching tourists. The Lake Tana area is an ideal habitat for birds, according to Mr. Melkamu Adam, director of tourism development. Additionally, more than 10,000 migratory birds inhabit the region on a seasonal basis. To capitalize on the region's potential for bird watching tourism, there were not any marketing or tourism development initiatives. There were no developed essential materials for bird watching tourism, such as, marketing materials and a bird's guidebook.

There is also no guidebook specific to the birds of Lake Tana and available publications are relatively dated and do not represent Lake Tana's full species coverage. The best of those available for bird identification are Birds of Lake Tana Area (Shimels,2013), Where to watch birds in Ethiopia(- Claire, Merid, and Julian,2022),Birds of the Horn of Africa(Nigel, Terry, and

John,2016) ,and Birds of East Africa (Stevenson & Fanshawe, 2020) .

Any local person in a community keen to embrace avitourism as a possible career path, must acquire a genuine awareness and special knowledge of the natural environment and local cultural characteristics, that will convert him or her into serious conservationists(Becker, 2009).

Bird watching Guide interviewed added that he earns about 120 USD per day as Bird watching Guide. Bird watching tourists will stay 3-4 days in Lake Tana and the surrounding. He usually does 2 bookings in a month at peak season (September-January) while Simien Mountain National Park is included in the package, bird watching tourists may stay 10-14 Days.

“Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, I was able to witness the highest tourist flow ever and Bird watching tourist number was increasing. My assumption is that 20% of tourists are Bird watchers. Many studies have indicated that bird watching has brought substantial market value to local economies (Carver 2009, Molloy et al. 2010, Wenny et al. 2011).

If avitourism is to be developed in especially rural communities these considerations need to be carefully weighed-up. Local guides need to benefit financially if they are to support an avitourism initiative (Sanderson, 2005).

More often than not, due to job constraints, they do not have much time to spend on trips abroad and are consequently likely to spend more money on avitourism over a relatively short period of time so as to gain maximum benefit from their experiences (Eubanks et al., 2004). In addition, according to Orthodox Christian doctrine, birds are regarded as a holy. Birds, particularly the dove, are believed to possess a holy spirit, and their nests are protected, which contributes to the area’s natural fit for bird viewing, according to the local priest who was interviewed.

Results on Challenges of Bird Watching Tourism in Bahir Dar And Its Surrounding

One of the specific objectives of this study was noticing existing challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding. In order to investigate this, challenges of bird watching tourism were assessed by using 17 items extracted from ranges of previous literatures. Hence, respondents were asked to rate the extent of their agreement or disagreement on these extracted factors as practices of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding. These 17 items were entered in to Principal Component Analysis (PCA) using Varimax with Kaiser Normalization, followed by Cronbach's alpha reliability testing. From these 17 items, 7 were dropped through principal component analysis.

The rating of respondents on extracted factors as challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding environs.

As it is clearly stated above, the PCA of the remaining 10 items has provided three – component solutions namely; - *Natural and Manmade Disasters* (Component 1), - *Shortage of Suitable Facilities and Human – birdlife Conflicts* (Component 2) and - *Seasonal Migration and Infrastructural Expansion* (Component 3).

As it is clearly revealed that, respondents placed their high level of agreement on the shortage of suitable facilities and human – birdlife conflicts (Component 2) with grand mean and standard deviation ($mean = 3.86$, $SD = 1.03$) and their moderate level of agreement on the natural and manmade disasters (Component1) with grand mean and standard deviation of ($mean$

$= 3.42$, $SD = 1.28$) and on the seasonal migration and infrastructural expansion (component3) with grand mean and standard deviation ($mean = 3.35$,

$SD = 1.23$) respectively as challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding environment.

This finding revealed that, shortage of suitable facilities and human – birdlife conflicts, natural and manmade disasters and seasonal migration of birds and infrastructural expansions were perceived challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding environment. Native trees and wildlife are abundant in the region. However, the land is being deforested by residents who use the forests for sale. Additionally, the indigenous trees in the treated area will eventually become extinct.

In order to exploit the land for agriculture, there are unlawful fires in the forest. Findings from field observation showed that visitor access to bird watching facilities such trails, boardwalks, bird hides, canopy walkways, and canopy towers is typically lacking in the area. Thus, several potential bird watching sites like Eganda wetland, Fogera wetland and Zege- Peninsula and Gorgora shore have no birding trails and bird watching facilities.

Regarding lack of guiding resources, in the country in general and in Lake Tana particular, it is not easy to access specialized bird watching equipment's such as binoculars, telescopes, directional microphones, books and cameras, and these are expensive for individual guides. Bird watching guide interviewed added *"I have only received support for my tourist-guiding materials from actual tourists."*

These facilities are also ideal places for new avitourists to introduce themselves to birdwatching as very often, rare birds are usually difficult to spot in natural settings (Rodger et al, 2007) and in any case, new birdwatchers rarely have the necessary telescopes and binoculars for viewing.

Mr.Gedefaw Amsalu, a specialist in tourism marketing research, stated that *"in 2003 E.C., while the office was under the jurisdiction of Culture, Tourism, and Parks, study on the wild life resource of the Lake*

Tana area was conducted. However, biodiversity is neglected while the bureau is revived through culture and tourism.”

“Our Bureau is unaware of the number of bird species in the area, where to find them, or the ideal times to watch birds.”

Findings from research are not used to direct advertising or tourism promotion efforts, according to the results of the interview and FGD. Additionally, the region’s tourism business isn’t flourishing as it should due to a lack of cooperation among key stakeholders.

The local natural environment conservation authority has made progress in reducing the use of illegal fishing nests and pesticides during fishing.

In addition, fishing with *Millettia ferruginea* (Local name *_Birbra_*) is prohibited since it harms the fish population. Researches show that non-cash benefits for a community, such as the extent of local ownership and local property rights, education level of the community, equity and empowerment are deemed to be far more important than monetary incentives when conservation is an issue (Berkes 2004; Fabricius 2004). If there are effective support mechanisms, and a genuine desire to create additional sustainable job opportunities for local communities and promote conservation (Roe et al, 2002), avitourism is one answer.

Conclusion

This study addressed a research gap by establishing empirical evidence for the development of bird watching tourism through describing the tourism research potentials, challenges, and economic contribution in the study area.

The Lake Tana Biosphere Reserve is a hotspot of biodiversity, and it is part of the two biodiversity hotspots i.e., Eastern A fromontane, and Horn of Africa biodiversity hotspots. It is internationally known as one of the 73 Important Bird Areas (IPA's) in Ethiopia. The lake environment and terrestrial wetland in the lake's vicinity with more than 260 bird species and the biosphere reserves were recorded by UNESCO as Ethiopia's fourth natural heritage. Despite these plentiful resources, the region has not yet reaped the benefits of its unrealized potential for the development of the bird watching tourism in the area. The current level of bird watching tourism practice is found to be at its infancy stage mainly due to scarcity of suitable bird watching tourism facilities and non – existence of qualified bird watching naturalist guides, tour operators and bird watching tourists.

Shortage of suitable facilities and human – birdlife conflicts, natural and manmade disasters and seasonal migration of birds and infrastructural expansions are perceived challenges of bird watching tourism in Lake Tana and its surrounding environment.

Although there are rules and regulations in place to protect wildlife generally and birdlife specifically, there is loose management in terms of policing such legal actions. Besides, there are not any specific rules and regulations that legally support bird watching tourism activities in the country in general and in Lake Tana area in particular.

Recommendation

Increasing the awareness of local communities in and around the Lake Tana area towards bird watching tourism resources is very important. To make Lake Tana area and its environs attractive bird watching destination, the potential resources of the area should be well promoted through different media/tools. The main challenges facing the development of bird watching tourism scarcity of suitable bird watching tourism facilities and non – existence of qualified bird watching naturalist guides, tour operators, shortage of suitable facilities and human – birdlife conflicts, natural and manmade disasters and seasonal migration of birds and infrastructural expansions and loose management in terms of policing legal actions need to be resolved for effective utilization of the untapped bird watching tourism resources of the area.

Success factor for bird watching tourism development such as favorable natural characteristics, good tourism infrastructure, and market presence need to be prioritized by tourism planners and key stakeholders for bird watching tourism development of the area.

Recommendation for future research includes survey of bird watching tourist flow in the country in general and in Lake Tana in particular, bird watching tourist need assessment, the state of conservation of the area's bird life resources, the development of bird watching trails in Lake Tana area, and policing legal actions towards bird life.

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Assessment of tourists' facilities, services and gaps in afar region

By: Maru Emagnu and Seid Yesuf

ABSTRACT

The prime objective of this study was to assess the existing tourist facilities, services and gaps in Afar Region. The study applied mixed approach where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from purposely selected respondents. A sum of 149 questionnaires were collected from domestic and foreign tourists. Qualitative data through key informant interview were collected from tourism experts, tour guides, tour operators, hoteliers and community leaders. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, while qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis. The research finding revealed that the existing tourist facilities and services were inadequate and gaps were identified. The research finding also indicated inadequacy of hotels, resorts and restaurants; poor waste disposal, toilet facilities and campsites in each tourist sites. Moreover, the study revealed inadequacy of destination and travel related information, tourist information center, signage and information boards, viewpoints, hiking routes, walking paths and parking lots. The finding further pointed out limitations among stakeholders mainly local, regional and Federal tourism authorities. Generally, the findings of this study showed that the region has enormous and unique tourist attractions and activities. However, the existing tourist services and facilities were inadequate and gaps were identified at basic levels.

Key Words: *Tourist facilities and services, stakeholders, role, Afar Region, and destination attributes and destination requirements*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has been well recognized as a means of economic development for developing and developed countries (Ephrem, 2012; Creaco & Querini, 2003; UNWTO, 1998). It has been seen as the main driver for regional development that helps to stimulate the economy (Creaco & Querini, 2003). Tourism has been growing globally rapidly and constantly in terms of volume and importance, mainly associated with personal prosperity, growth of leisure time such as holidays with pay have added a great deal in facilitating more people to travel globally and regularly (Sharpley, 2009).

Ethiopia is a gifted country with abundant tourism resources such as natural attractions of fauna, flora and landscape, cultural resources of colorful festivals, traditions and long aged historical monuments, cave paintings religious sites and practices are to mention some (Ephrem, 2012). The natural beauty of Ethiopia is astonishing and possessed a great escarpment and spectacular outlook in which some of them must rank among the greatest spectacles in Africa today (Daniel, 2011).

Its biodiversity makes the country a valuable place for scientific studies and research, abundant birdlife, endemic mammals, beautiful flowers, butterflies, and with many more indigenous plants, the country is a suitable place for living things to go through a normal range (Bekele and Estifanos, 2018). Since the 1960s, Ethiopia has been working on understanding the value of tourism and development of tourist destination and state-owned protected areas by outlining strategies in line with the national economic development and poverty reduction strategy of the country such as investment and job creation (Frew and Solomon, 2018; Daniel, 2011).

One of the identified core strategies of tourism development policy was the development of tourist destination facilities with the participation of public and private investors on accommodation and other service provisions such

as lodge, food, beverage, etc (Frew and 2 Solomon, 2018). As a result of the developments of nature based tourist destination, Afar region becomes an important tourist attraction site in Ethiopia, especially for élites and nature lover tourists (Bekele and Estifanos, 2018).

Tourist facilities are also defined as services which enable tourists to inspire for the destination package purchase and also it ease movement of tourists, and maximum enjoyment of their visit (Bhatia, 2002). Whatever the geographical size and the type of tourist destination, decision making, and development is becoming complex phenomena, this is partly associated with tourists dynamic needs and unpredictable global changes tourists destination requires more advance strategic thinking (Marinna, 2011).

At the moment, Ethiopia has 9 UNESCO, inscribed tangible and 4 intangible cultural heritages and consequently, the duty of properly utilizing this tourism potential is lied down on the adoption of establishing proper tourist facilities and services (EWCA, 2013). Some researchers have conducted on tourist service qualities and destination attractiveness in Ethiopia. However, researches dealing with destinations' facilities and services gap have not been conducted in Ethiopia as best of the researchers' knowledge. Tourist facilities, service supplies, the role of stake holders and quality tourist experience as an integral composite have not given due attention.

Tourist destinations are currently in strong competition to attract tourists and provision of standard services with appropriate facilities, much simultaneity with the emergency of new destination with unique features which has a great important to the destinations. Tourist facilities are fundamental block stone for the development and competitiveness of tourist destination (Khadaroo and Seetana, 2016).

In the case of Afar region where many tourists are attracted by its unique features of active volcano, adventures, camel caravans, hot springs, salty lakes,

waterfalls, and wild life added with the Afar people's culture. Tourists require a minimal quality services and facility to enhance their destination experience; this would again maximize the benefit of local people in the destination and their tourism businesses in the utilization of these facilities and services (European Commission, 2002). Each destination tries to benefit from its tourism advantages and this would not be possible without recognizing factors affecting the choice of tourist destinations.

The main motive of the assessment of tourist services and facilities is a crucial requirement in attracting and satisfying tourists as a core feature of destination development and marketing (Taplin, 2012). Tourist facilities and services significantly determined what is to be developed, to what extent and where priorities should be stretched out and where solutions might be found. Every tourist destination has unique sights and essentials that are unique for tourists unlike other tourism destinations. Consequently, those distinguishing factors are reasons for the fulfillment of tourist experience and the extents of public participation (Homayoon, 2005).

Putting all these in consideration, the researchers identified absence of valuable researches that had been conducted in assessing tourist services and facilities in Afar Region. Therefore, the research on the assessment of the existing tourist facilities and services in Afar Region focused on the questions: what are the existing facilities and services in Afar Region? ; What are the gaps in tourist facilities and services? And, what are the roles of stakeholders for the enhancement of tourist facilities and services in Afar region?

General objective

The general objective of the study was to assess tourist facilities and services in Afar region.

Specific objectives

The following were specific objectives of the study:

1. To identify the existing tourist facilities and services
2. To assess tourist facility and service gaps in Afar Region
3. To assess the roles of stakeholders in the provision of tourist facilities and services.

Literature Review

Tourism Facilities and Services

Tourism facilities and services are sum of economic, social and environmental concept wise destination development. To elaborate this, economic capital focuses accommodation facilities, tourist path, parking lots, streets, waste disposal whereas, social capital focuses on health services, safety and security services and infrastructure focuses more on providing telecom and communication (Mera,1973). Moreover, tourist facilities and services are the basic component of sellable tour packages which are specifically designed for preferred tourist destinations. These include hiking, trekking and walking trails, observation breathtaking seats, and view point facilities. The sum of tourist facilities and services are vast and interconnected to all those elements in a destination which creates and enhances tourist destination development. In line with this, various aspects of tourism facilities and services can be considered as elements of tourism infrastructure. In a broader sense, it includes

all those facilities that tourists use when they leave their homes, reach their destination and return back home (Lohmann and Netto, 2017).

Above all, consideration of the existing tourist facilities and services is the property for scientific viability of a tourist destination in providing the best tourist experience for tourists. In addition to that tourist destination has to be well developed in all aspects to be a preferred one. Similarly, tourist facilities and services could also show the attractive feature of tour packages for a specific destination. So, it is essential to assess the important existing and missed components of preferred tourist destination. (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2001), Tourism facilities in the travel and tourism industry range from physical infrastructures such as ports of entry to modes of transport to urban infrastructures such as access roads, electricity, water supply, sewerage and telecommunication. The sectors related to the travel and tourism industry include airlines, surface transport, accommodation (hotels), and infrastructure and facilitation systems, among others. (Martha and Raymond, 2009).

However, infrastructure facilities such as air, rail, road connectivity, and hospitality services at many destinations and the connecting cities are inadequate. Moreover, many tourist circuits depend on roads. Despite numerous efforts to improve road infrastructure, connectivity remains a major problem. There is a greater need for strengthened road and rail network, development of more expressways, and tourist specific routes to improve connectivity to various locations across different regions (Martha and Raymond, 2009).

Aviation infrastructure is also critical since it is a major mode of entry for inbound tourism. Passenger traffic is expected to increase in the coming years; however, infrastructure facilities at airports are causes for concern. Expansion and development of airports at major gateway cities is underway to cater to the increasing passenger traffic. However, in addition, airport facilities at important secondary cities and tourist destinations also need to be improved to be able to handle greater passenger traffic. Amenities available at various

tourist locations and enroute need to be improved. These include basic amenities such as drinking water, well maintained and clean waiting rooms and toilets, first aid and wayside amenities (to meet the requirement of the tourists travelling to tourist destinations) such as lounge, cafeteria, and parking facilities, among others (SNV, 2007).

Availability of skilled manpower is a major challenge faced by the travel and tourism industry, one of the largest employment generators in many countries. To sustain growth in the travel and tourism industry, trained manpower/workforce is required at every level: managerial, supervisory, skilled or semi-skilled. Challenges faced at each level are different. At mid and senior management levels, the industry faces talent crunch and at the front-line staff level, although human resources are adequate, a boom in other service industries such as banking, retail, airline etc. have resulted in shortage of manpower at this level for the travel and tourism industry. High proportion of untrained manpower would adversely affect quality of services offered to the tourists. Attrition, shortage of tourism training infrastructure, qualified trainers, and lack of proper strategies and policies for human resource development also affect the industry. The industry needs to address these problems at the earliest (MoED, 2011-2016).

Security has been a major problem as well for growth of tourism for a number of years. Terrorist attacks or political unrest in different parts of different countries have adversely affected sentiments of foreign tourists. Terror attacks at Mumbai, India in November 2008 dealt a strong blow to tourism in the country. The terror attacks raised concerns of safety. In addition, insurgency in different parts of countries also affects countries' image as a safe destination (Tourismos, 2012).

Continuous awareness and training for communities, staffs of destinations, associations in the destinations etc. has role to commit these concerned bodies to deliver better service for visitors. Among the challenges in tourism

and hospitality industry is lack of skill and knowledge of the sectors, less/lack of commitment and unethical service have big share. Many countries in the world are exerting maximum effort for the development of tourism and hospitality industry development through opening colleges to train experts and lower level staffs (Martha and Raymond, 2009). Cooperatively working with airlines; travel agents and tour operations help destinations for their promotion. Airlines organizations and tourism destinations will have mutual benefits by promoting each other and travel agents and tour operations are more beneficiary if they closely work with tourism destinations. It is also good opportunity to have better accommodations by introducing investors on the sectors. Investors will build lodges, hotels etc. in and around destinations (MoCT, 2014).

Continuous assessment of the facilities and services will provide the destinations the opportunity to identify the gaps and find out solutions in fulfilling the required facilities and services. Unless research and assessment get consideration even with adequate budget, better commitment and stakeholder involvement tourism sector's problems will not be clear (Tourismos, 2012)

Key Players in The Development Tourism Facilities and Services

While there is no doubt about the importance of investing in infrastructure to expand tourism activities, there are certainly different perspectives on how this can effectively be accomplished. The role of both the public and the private sectors need to be defined in order to cater for a sustainable tourism. Investment in infrastructures is often influenced by political constraints and incentives, market characteristics (visitors' taste and preferences), the ability of the destination to promote itself and political stability. Developing countries, such as Mauritius, need to understand the role of investment in tourism infrastructure and how to ensure that national policies can support the sustainable development of tourism infrastructure. Often, this requires

the elimination of institutional and financial obstacles that impede investment and make them counterproductive (Gunn, 1988).

The expansion of tourism anywhere is strongly related to the development of suitable infrastructures ranging from public to private infrastructure and tourism related infrastructures. It has been agreed that a country's infrastructure is one of the underpinnings for economic activities. Poor infrastructure impedes a nation's economic growth and international competitiveness. Tourism is in fact dependent on infrastructure and the absence of it will critically undermine the marketability of the tourism product. Infrastructure like accommodation, restaurants, attractions and tours are primarily provided by the private investor while others such as power, water, transport, health, and telecommunications, which represent basic services, are supplied by the government. The provision of infrastructure by the public sector, in the long term, is mainly for the following two reasons: firstly to provide adequate, convenient, safe facilities and services at competitive price to meet the basic needs of the population and secondly to provide support facilities for the productive sectors and act as catalyst for development in desired areas (Delmon, 2006).

The tourism product is the complex consumptive experience that results from a process where tourists use multiple of services (information, relative prices, transportation, accommodation, and attraction services) during the course of their visit. Other economic and political conditions and structural features are also important factors shaping many tourist experiences and contribute to the nature of the destination product (Murphy, 2000).

Methodology

Study Design

Mixed research approach was employed as it provide more comprehensive answers to research questions going beyond overcoming the limitations of a single approach (Creswell, 2003). This research used both quantitative and qualitative data to come up with better findings of the study. Cross-sectional study design i.e. investigations and data collections were undertaken simultaneously. Yin (1994) suggested that the best research method to be used for a study depends on that study's research purpose and the accompanying research questions.

Data Sources

Information for this study was collected from both primary and secondary sources so as to get relevant and adequate data for this particular study. Primary data were collected from key informant interviews of the region's tourism leaders, tourists, tour operators, field survey, personal observation; and questionnaires were administered accordingly. Secondary data were collected from different documents which were written and recorded about the region. Particularity review of administrative records, published articles, proceedings, books, tourist reviews and thesis research conducted in different aspects of the study area.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

For interview questions the participants were site managers, Afar tourism bureau experts, specialized tour operators who frequently sale tour packages to Afar region, and accommodation managers who own and operate their business in the study area. In the key informant interview, there were 15 respondents comprised of tourism experts, tour guides, tour leaders, tour operators and local community members who had more than five years' experience in Afar region's tourism activity. Questionnaires were sent for 149 respondents via e-mail and Google forms for both domestic and foreign tourists who visited Afar region.

Due to the fact that the research was conducted at times of security problems and Covid-19 impact, non-random sampling data collection technique was employed to select sample respondents. Non random sampling technique was the ideal sampling technique to determine the number of tourists whose general population number is unknown to make an accurate sample size determination during the data collection period. 15 Among the total number of tourists who visited Afar during the study period, significant respondents were chosen as sample size using the formula described by (Israel, 1992). After the determination of the sample size, convenience sampling was employed for questionnaire administration.

Result and discussion

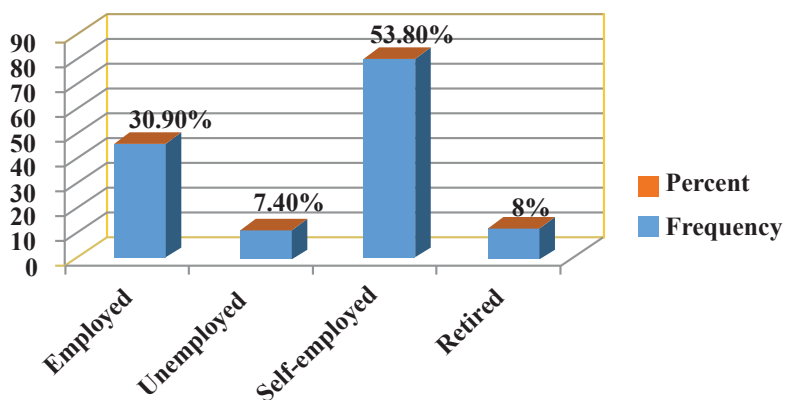
General Characteristics of Respondents

Relevant characteristics of sample respondents were collected. Gender, age, level of education, employment status, and nationality of respondents were gathered and interpreted. According to the survey data , 54 of respondents (32.1%) were female and 114 (67.9%) were male. Taking in to account the collected data, most of the respondents were found to be male visitors of Afar region.

The statistical data accounted that the majority of respondents (52.4%) were mainly between the age group of 30-40. The survey showed respondents with the age groups of 41-49 and above 50 represented by 17.9% and 10.7% respectively.

The findings of the survey indicated that the majority of respondents (52.4%) have bachelor degree and followed by (28.6%) masters, (14.3%) diploma, and (4.8%) high school level of education respectively. The summary of the data showed that the majority of the respondents were found to have bachelor degree.

Figure 1: Employment status of respondents



Source: Own survey (2022)

The result indicated in the above figure revealed that significant number of respondents were self-employed visitors. The survey result supported that most of the tourists who visited the region were from European countries.

Table 1: Nationality of respondents

Nationality	Frequency	Percent
Ethiopian	44	29.5
Belgium	5	3.4
Australia	9	6
Japan	10	6.7
French	18	12.1
USA	7	4.7

Indonesia	4	2.7
Austria	3	2
Spanish	7	4.7
Thailand	6	4
Poland	7	4.7
United Kingdom	10	6.7
German	12	8.1
Switzerland	3	2
Canada	1	0.7
South African	2	1.3
Egypt	1	0.7

Source: Own survey (2022)

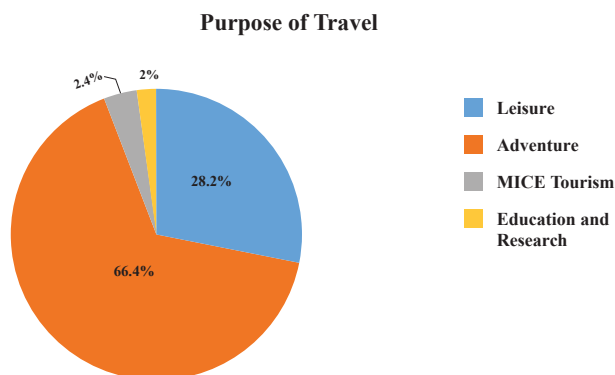
According to the survey result from the above table, the respondents (29.5%) were from Ethiopia and followed by (12.1%) France, (8.1%) Germany, (6.7%) Japan and (6.7%) United Kingdom. Visitors from Australia, USA, Spain, Poland, Thailand, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, South Africa and Egypt were also accounted as visitors of Afar region.

In fact, according to statistics from Afar regional Culture and Tourism Bureau, the main tourist market of the area comes from European nationalities. Apparently, the survey result supported that most of the tourists who visited the region were from European countries.

Travel Characteristics of Respondents

The respondents travel characteristics were collected and interpreted. In this regard, respondents were asked to state their purpose of travel, sources of travel information, frequency of visit, travel companion, length of stay, the prime site of visit, type of transportation used, and activities undertaken during their visit in Afar region.

Figure 2: Respondents purpose of visit



Source: Own survey (2022)

The statistical result revealed that Adventure experience is significant travel purpose of visitors in Afar region. The above statistical data presented in the above figure showed there are few visitors for MICE, Research and Education purpose, the informants pointed out that the region has a great potential to attract researchers, seminar and workshops on volcanic geological formation, paleontological and archeological sites.

To sum up, hiking, village tour, national park and sightseeing of paleontology sites found to be preferred tourist activities in Afar Region. The informants soundly revealed that the region has a variety of activities to accommodate preferences of different visitors

Availability of Facilities Services and Infrastructure

The study discovered that service at the airport is relatively very good with the mean score of 4.04 and the majority of tourists (40.5%) and (29.8%) responded the availability of service at the airport is good and very good in Afar Region.

Regarding the availability of facilities for children, disabilities and special needs, respondents rated as poor with mean score value of 2.09 indicated. The result presented that respondents answers regarding the cooperativeness of local police and rangers were average statistically rated with mean score value of 2.5(SD). The mean score value (2.70) signifies that the availability of tour service providers is not far from the average level.

The majority of respondents (47.6%) replied that there was absence of shopping facilities for tourists visiting Afar Region. The statistical data regarding police services around tourists sites indicated that (45.6%) informants responded that there was the absence of police services in Afar region.

The key informants supported that there was no systematic and continuous cooperation among stakeholders mainly local, regional and Federal tourism authorities, tour operators, hotel owners, NGOs in improving facilities and services in Afar Region.

Conclusion

The main objective of this research was to assess the existing tourist facilities, services and gaps in Afar Region. The Region has a variety and unique tourist

attractions mainly features of active volcano, adventures, camel caravans, hot springs, salty lakes, waterfalls, and wild life added with the Afar people's exotic culture.

The provision and enhancement of tourism facilities and services to meet the needs of tourists, including providing transportation, accommodation, food and drinking establishments, entertainment, activities and other supportive services (Pearce, 1998). Moreover, tourist facilities and services incorporated camping facilities, optional tour routes, attractive tour package, health facilities, communication facilities, safety and security service and shopping facilities (Adina, 2011). Even though, Afar region has abundant tourism resources, the research finding revealed that the existing tourist facilities and services were not adequate and gaps were identified which are crucial requirements in attracting to the region and satisfying tourists during their stay.

The research finding indicated that, Afar Region has been frequently visited by tourists from European countries for the main purpose of adventure experience. Apparently, the research finding pointed that, limited visitors were engaged in research and education purpose associated with paleontology and archeological site ;on the contrary, the region is popular for its origin of mankind and archeological findings. Further, the research identified, the majority of tourists got information from tour operators and their visit was organized by travel intermediaries. While the majority of visitors were travelled in group and visited the region once.

Beside to that, the research finding figured out that, most preferred tourist sites were Erta'le , Dallol and Awash National Park and mainly of them engaged in hiking, village visit and visiting wild life and natural setting activities. Moreover, the majority of them travelled with privately rented cars and joined organized tours. There is limited transport access to major tourist sites in the region for domestic visitors and foreign independent and budget travelers.

Fundamentally, the findings presented, the flight services at the airport was convenient to visit the region. The finding further indicated that, there were limited tourist facilities and services for people with disability and children. Even though, the result presented the region has a great potential of various tourist activities, there was no adequate equipment, resources to undertake adventure tourist activities.

In nutshell, the research findings, assessed there are inadequacy of hotels, resorts, restaurants in each tourist sites. Apparently, the result pointed that one of the major gaps in the area was inadequacy of campsites with poor waste disposal and toilet facilities. Regarding friendliness of locals and personal safety and security of visitors coupled with the cooperativeness and support of local police and rangers were identified welcoming and encouraging to visit the region.

The finding of the research further pointed that, there was sufficient site interpretation; however, there was inadequate destination and travel related information, reinforced with lack of, tourist information center, signage and information boards which indicate particularly important sites.

Essentially, regarding onsite facilities and services, it was noted that there were lack of viewpoints, hiking routes, walking paths, parking lots, toilets and waste disposal facilities in the study area. The personal observation of researchers and the key informants also vividly supported there were limit-

ed tourist facilities, particularly in the popular tourist sites.

The research indicated that, there were adequate tour service providers with understanding of visitors' interests, language and culture in Afar Region. There were sufficient available tour packages designed and sold by tour operators; however, there was inconsistent and instant price changes by local service providers in the region.

Furthermore, the study pointed out that there were lack of auxiliary services, mainly shopping centers, health posts, telecom and internet, police and emergency stations in and around major tourist sites. Regarding the role of stakeholders' involvement, the finding pointed out that there was inadequate, systematic and continuous cooperation among stakeholders mainly local, regional and Federal tourism authorities, tour operators, hotel owners, NGOs in improving facilities and services in Afar Region. Generally, this research finding conclude that, Aar Region has enormous and unique tourist attractions and activities; however, the existing tourist services and facilities were inadequate and gaps were identified at basic levels.

Recommendations

The Afar region widely known as origin of mankind and archeological findings so, the region should give special attention to attract potential research and education oriented visitors.

To increase the number of visitors, length of stay, repeat visitations, expenditures, the region should improve the current tourist facilities and services in each site. Furthermore, the region should give focus for the emerging potential domestic visitors by providing optional transports access to major tourist sites in the region.

Adventure tourism experience is the major tourist product of the region thus, it is vital that the region should prioritized in improving equipment, and resources to undertake adventure tourist activities in the region. The region should work on fulfilling the basics of site facilities, particularly campsites with adequate and proper waste disposal and toilet facilities. Furthermore, destination and travel related information, tourist information center; signage and information boards should be established and improved. Besides to that, tourist sites should have well-designed viewpoints, hiking routes, walking paths, parking lots, toilets and waste disposal facilities in each site. Moreover, the concerned authorities should work to improve auxiliary services and facilities mainly shopping centers, health posts, telecom and internet, police and emergency stations in and around major tourist sites.

There should be systematic and regular stakeholders' cooperation among local, regional and Federal tourism authorities, tour operators, hotel owners, NGOs in improving facilities and services in Afar Region.

In general, the regions' tourist facilities and services should be regularly assessed in terms of the availability, existing situation, gaps in basic facilities and services and thereby the concerned body should improve and fullfill the required tourist facilities and services in and around the tourist destinations in Afar region.

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