

Assessment on the Role of Internet in Tourism Marketing A Case Study of Mwanza City-Tanzania

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Abstract

This study assessed the role of internet in tourism marketing in Mwanza City. The objectives which guided the research were to identify the status of tourism marketing through internet usage in Mwanza City, to analyse the use of internet in marketing tourism in Mwanza City, to identify the relationship between tourism growth and the use of internet in Mwanza City and to identify the challenges facing the internet usage in marketing tourism in Mwanza City. The sample size of the study was 16 marketing or communication officials whose companies or organizations have registered and have the websites. The research used qualitative and quantitative methods in the presentation of data and research data were collected through interview and content analysis and the use of the secondary data. Data was analysed using thematic analysis, SPSS and Microsoft Excel and findings were presented in narrations, frequencies, percentages and charts. Findings of this research described that internet doesn't play much role as it should. Also the researcher discovered that there is no harmonization within tourism sector in electronic environment as well. But thanks to god the government has played a major role to ensure that the harmony is built within tourism industry by creating a tourism marketing portal which is incorporated by every recognized tourism company information needed by customer (s) or consumer(s) and which will ensure that there is cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders.

Keywords: Role of internet, Internet, Tourism marketing, Mwanza, Tanzania

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1. Chapter One

1.1 Background of the Study

Tourism is considered as the top in all categories of international trade. Its growth on activities spots it as the mainly outstanding economic and social trend in the world (Mekonnen and Egziabher, 2001; Nath and Menon, 2003). Also it is considered as the largest industry due to its industrial diversity. Tourism industry has been of great help to the most of the nations' economies especially developing countries as it contributes the largest amount on the gross national product, employment and foreign exchange of the host countries (Lamsso, Niroomand and Rafsanjani, 2013).

Due to the fact that tourism sector is led by necessitate to provide fast and accurate information to consumers, that is when the internet comes in to ensure the whole dissemination process is surely and effectively enhanced (Pease and Rowe, 2005). The internet has become important for the tourism industry to adapt and uplift its practices and skills of the workforce within in to meet changing customer behaviour (UNWTO, 2011).

In addition to that together with Information Technologies facilitated by internet like websites and social networks within tourism industry to be available, marketing strategies for tourism products has been easier to implement the fact which improve the quality of online service for serving the need of the customers efficiently and effectively (Crnojevac, Gugić and Karlovčan, 2010).

Also, the tendency of the internet to be flexible in concentrating on diverse market has supported

tourism industry to enlarge a marketing plan for apiece end market even though customers are self-motivated targets (Buhalis, 2008).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Historically, internet services in Tanzania started in 1995 (The Citizen, 2014). A few years ago internet was seen as something accessible only by small group of elites but currently the access to internet has been growing rapidly, people can access internet through phones and other gadgets wherever they are (Taylor, 2015). Now Tanzania is using online marketing as another strategy to innovative strategy in tourism promotion due to partnership formed between Tanzanian public relations companies and frontline people together with South Africa to help to provide a good platform for people in Tourism industry in Tanzania to share experiences and learn about newer and innovative ways of promoting Tanzania (Tambwe, 2013). Despite of these known facts, there is no comprehensive study showing how the tourism organizations and companies take advantage of the internet in marketing tourism especially young and new destination like Mwanza City.

1.3 Research Objectives

Objectives are categorized into two general objectives and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

To assess the role of the internet as an effective tourism marketing tool in Mwanza tourism industry.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were as follows;

- To identify the status of tourism marketing through internet usage in Mwanza City
- To analyse the use of internet in marketing tourism in Mwanza City
- To identify the relationship between tourism growth and the use of internet in Mwanza City
- To identify the challenges facing the internet usage in marketing tourism in Mwanza City

1.4 Research Questions

The study was developed under the following questions;

- What is the status of tourism marketing through internet usage in Mwanza City?
- How is the internet used in marketing tourism in Mwanza City?
- What is the relationship between tourism growth and the internet usage in Mwanza City?
- What are the challenges facing the internet usage in marketing tourism?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study, first and foremost, provided knowledge to a researcher who wished to know more about information technologies specifically the internet and the way it is used in tourism in marketing context. Also, it will provide a basis for the Tanzania's tourism board and other tourism organizations on the impact of the utilization of the internet in strengthening Mwanza tourism industry. This would involve compatible activities regarding the empowerment of the industry of tourism in Mwanza through the help of tour operators and travel agents maintaining their respective websites for the City.

Moreover, the study will be helpful to the tour operators and the travel agents since there will be a specific study on the performance of their internet marketing tools, which includes websites and their conventional Medias. This study will be the basis on what area they should improve on their internet marketing tools. Moreover, this study will aid in the progress of the emerging tourism industry in Mwanza City.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study was the role of internet in tourism marketing where by the researcher assessed the reality of the field situation. The success depended much on the thoroughly content analysis of the tourism companies and organization websites and respondents' true answers on internet applicability to tourism marketing with particular reference to Mwanza City. Also the study was limited by inadequate Time where by the researcher who is a student had to adhere to the University timetable by doing all required activities including studying effectively while at the same time collecting data efficiently and at a required time. However, the researcher coped with the situation by well utilization of time to accomplish the research report.

As well as financial problem whereby the fact is that researcher needed the money for transport during collection of data and money for typing, printing and photocopying the research paper. However, the researcher tried to minimize the cost by photocopying some of the research papers pages.

1.7 Definition of Key terms

Tourism is the temporary movement of people to destinations outside their normal places of work and residence,

the activities undertaken during their stay in those destinations, and the facilities created to cater to their needs (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

Tourism Marketing is a societal and managerial process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and exchanging products and services of value freely with others (Kotler, 2002).

The Internet is the global 'network of networks' of interlinked computers operating on a standard protocol which allows data to be transferred between them. As an information exchange system, the most important aspect of the Internet is its connectivity, the ability to allow everyone to access the network (Young *et al.*, 1999). The application of the Internet and related digital technologies helps to achieve marketing objectives (Kull, 2007).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Empirical Literature Review

2.1.1 An Overview on Tourism Industry

Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification, becoming one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world (Bethapudi, 2013). According to Tourism Towards 2030, UNWTO's recently updated, long term outlook and assessment of future tourism trends, the number of tourist arrivals worldwide is expected to increase by 3.3% a year on average from 2010 to 2030. This represents some 43 million more international tourist arrivals every year reaching a total of 1.8 billion arrivals by 2030 (Bethapudi, 2013). The phenomenal growth of domestic as well as international tourism has been caused by very specific shifts in social systems and disposable incomes all over the world (Batra, 2006).

Pease and Rowe (2005) confirmed that tourism industry is one of the more successful areas of e-commerce because it is largely consumer oriented and since services and the provision of information is at its centre in a sense that it considers much seamless integration of information and physical service, with flexible configurations of the physical and the informational parts.

Longhi (2008) established that the tourist products are complex and heterogeneous products, combination of elements separated in time and space often pre-defined packages assembling interrelated products and services (transport, accommodation services and leisure services to mention few). This notion of packaging, of bundling, is the core of the activity. Longhi (2008) also insisted that contrary to the traditional good sectors, where resources are transformed to be delivered to the customers, the tourists have to go to the resources: whatever their intrinsic qualities, the resources acquire an economic value only with the organization of the travelling of the tourists and development of the activity.

On the other hand, most of Sub-Saharan countries have been got potential growth in tourism sector following their natural and wildlife resources. Apart from that, their economic status has changed positively due to foreign exchange earnings and local goods demand from tourists (Kweka *et al.*, 2003).

Tanzania is among of the developing countries in Sub-Saharan countries, which has put close attention on tourism sector to raise its economic status following the growth rate of this sector by 15% at an annum on average for last ten years (DTSPCL, 2011). The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP in 2013 was TZS2,397.4bn (4.5% of GDP). This is forecast to rise by 4.0% to TZS2,492.4bn in 2014. This primarily reflects the economic activity generated by industries such as hotels, travel agents, airlines and other passenger transportation services (excluding commuter services) (WTTC, 2014). But it also includes, for example, the activities of the restaurant and leisure industries directly supported by tourists. The direct contribution of Travel & Tourism to GDP is expected to grow by 6.2% per annum to TZS4,563.1bn (4.2% of GDP) by 2024 (WTTC, 2014). This remarkable growth is in essence to create reliable local market and escape from total dependence of the foreign market so that to increase market share by creating the potential new local market (DTSPCL, 2011). Domestic tourism in Tanzania is growing rapidly. In the forecast period, the country has witnessed a significant increase in the number of locals visiting tourist attractions. This is thanks to initiatives by the Tanzania Tourism Board to encourage residents to visit tourist destinations in the country (Country Report, 2012). The Tanzania Tourism Board has embarked on an innovative strategy to develop domestic tourism and attract more local tourists, promoting live musical performances and campaigning in schools to encourage student tours of tourist attractions. Domestic tourism is also being promoted by the distribution of promotional materials, such as CDs, DVDs and brochures, to locals and displaying them at national tourism fairs. With continuous promotion, domestic tourism has huge potential to develop into an important part of Tanzania's travel and tourism industry (Country Report, 2012).

2.1.2 Information and Communication Technology and Tourism Activity

Most of tourism activities require much of the initiatives from the way information is communicated to make them happen. Ramos and Rodrigues (2010) confirmed that tourism activity has experienced several changes over the past few decades due to the strong development of information and communication technologies (ICT),

which has characterized the world situation. Buhalis (2008) added that the accelerating and synergistic interaction between technology and tourism in recent times has brought fundamental changes on the industry and on our perceptions of its nature. The significance of crossing the new information threshold of universal, ubiquitous communications access have brought the entire tourism industry to the new levels of interactivity, propelling management by wire (Buhalis, 2008). As technology is evolving faster than ever before, it has made most travellers around the world much more technology-savvy than in the past (UNWTO, 2011).

Liu (2000) pointed out that tourism is an information-intensive industry and Kull (2007) proved that the internet is the one true and really global medium or tool for global marketing communications. Liu (2000) supported the statement by adding the reason that internet is the most effective and efficient means in information exchange worldwide. The Net can greatly facilitate the promotion and distribution of tourist products and potentially enable tourism destinations and enterprises to compete on a level playing field.

Tassiopoulos (2014) added that due to tourism sector to experience the strongest impact of the Internet, tourism suppliers have been exploring new ways to expand their channels of distribution to reach target travellers in more efficient and effective ways. The consideration of the Internet in tourism promotion and development and its impact on strategically managing tourism destinations has only recently emerged as a serious area of research (Tassiopoulos, 2014). According to UNWTO (2011), the internet has revolutionized the tourism industry more than any other factor in the last few decades. Also, associated with the development of ICT, the Internet has emerged as an excellent platform for communication and information sharing between various points of the globe (Ramos and Rodrigues, 2010).

However, the Internet is one of the most influential technologies that have changed travellers' behaviour (Buhalis, 2008) in a sense that as more people are connected to each other, with access to the vast pool of information available online, an increasing number of travellers are seeking information via the internet prior to making any travel decisions (UNWTO, 2011). According to Longhi (2008), Internet has been, for the innovators, a dynamic device to access directly to the consumers: it underlies the processes of disintermediation and deconstruction of the traditional value chains in tourism.

2.1.3 Tourism and Internet, Information and Communication

Since today we are living in information age and information technology has become a part of our everyday life (Bhaumik, 2014). Tourism is an information intensive industry. Rapid interaction between information technology especially internet and tourism has led to changes in the industry and in people's perception. Information and communication industry is becoming a key player in the competitiveness of tourism entities and destinations, as well as in relationships which define the tourism system (UNWTO, 2001). Internet provides a great deal of information directly accessible at low costs on prices, products and gain opportunities. The efficiency of internet has been increased by the multiplication of infomediaries offering easier access to the information, the creation of shop bots comparing prices or selecting sites according different choice criteria (Longhi, 2008). Also site can present existing and potential tourists with up to date information, from a variety of sources, about the destination, property, services or attraction in all aspects of tourism Liu (2000) and an Oxford Economic Company (2013) added that at the same time tourism companies provide customers with the contacts information for further information if any, the fact which create closeness between the two whereby in a clarified way, Nadiri and Avci (2000) said that internet contributes for businesses in satisfying relationship marketing activities which focus on achieving customers loyalty.

The most important advantage of internet, information and communication is both availability and reliable information whereby knowledge is created, shared and widely accessed to the very huge number of people and reduced production cost due to increased efficiency (Mihajlović, 2012). In addition to that Longhi (2012) said that it is for both demand and supply sides of the industry whereby on demand side, it reduces the uncertainty of the information on product quality to tourists and on supply side they allow to act on unforeseen events and induce an in depth renewal of the industry.

Not only that but also, Bojnec and Kribel (2005) insisted that internet provides tourists with the means to gain immediate access to relevant information of greater variety and in-depth than has been available previously, about destinations throughout the world. Liu (2000) added that the internet based on web can not only provide more up to date information but also provide it from a much wider range of sources; while in the past, tourists were solely dependent upon representations and descriptions by the travel trade.

Moreover, internet has influence on tourists' demand whereby Nadiri and Avci (2000) said that the internet provides appropriate utilization of time, place and form by giving customers the opportunity to decide what they want, where and when which acts as favour to marketers.

2.1.4 Marketing

Early marketing thought was built on a foundation of goods marketing, essentially the distribution and monetized exchange of manufactured output. Since marketing grew out of economic science, with models developed and intended to deal with issues of the Industrial Revolution, this goods-based foundation is understandable (Dharmalingam and Panchantham, 2011).

Dibb *et al* (1997) pointed out that marketing is essential for companies as it determines on how well their products sell and satisfying their customers so that they come back again and provide additional custom. Marketing consists of individual and organizational activities that facilitate and expedite satisfying exchange relationships in a dynamic environment through the creation, distribution, and promotion and pricing of goods, services and ideas.

The simple premise marketing is that to be successful, any organization must understand its customers' requirements and satisfy them in a manner that gives the organization an edge over competitors. This involves offering the "right" mix of product, people, service, pricing, and promotion and distribution channel (Dibb *et al.*, 1997).

2.1.5 Tourism Marketing, Information Technology and Internet

The Internet becoming an essential part of media planning provides readily available information to potential customers from around the world and it represents an important 'marketing and communication channel' that can effectively connect the subjects of offer and demand in contemporary tourism (Blanka, 2013). Eraqi and Abd-alla (2008) reported that in the past, tourism managers had less knowledge of marketing as a systematic form of analysis, planning, and control, versus the present-day managers who have vastly inferior information systems on which they base their decisions and marketing research techniques supported by information technology (IT) systems. Tourism marketing has not escaped the influences of the IT sector. Buhalis *et al* (1998) stated that the impacts of IT are evident in tourism products, marketing, distribution and operations for both the private and public sectors even though Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg (1997) argued that although the four Ps (Product, place, price and promotion) of marketing will remain constant in marketing processes, IT will continue to influence the marketing environment. Kotler (1991) supported this statement by stating that the marketing mix will continue to grow, for example people, packaging, programming and partnership had joined the four Ps (Morrison *et al*, 1989) however the list should now include, "issues of technology such as the internet. (Boon *et al*, 1998) In other words conventional marketing needs to remain customer driven but should adept to becoming more technology based.

Eraqi and Abd-alla (2008) added that the information and communication technology (ICT) menu in tourism marketing has five main segments. All of them make possible the more effective and cost-efficient use of marketing techniques in travel and tourism. All of them influence the competitive position of the businesses. These segments are: the Internet as an information exchange system Computerised Reservation Systems and Global Distribution Systems, Destination Marketing Systems, Marketing Decision Support System and E-commerce and tourism marketing.

2.1.5.1 Computer Reservation System

A computer reservation system is a database that enables a tourism organization to manage its inventory and makes it accessible to its distribution channel partners. It confirmed that the quick expansion of both tourism demand and supply in recent decades could only be managed by powerful computerized systems. Airlines were the pioneers of this technology, although international hotel chains and tour operators realized the potential and followed by developing centralized reservation systems. In recent decade the expansion of tourism industry as well as demand and supply has caused Computer Reservation System to be a necessity good;

For tourism demand, Computer Reservation System makes the needs of the consumers by allowing transparency and providing best ways to make information comparison on various choices, packages available, services offered and actual prices to incur for the products in a particular destination. By being flexible, it also builds good relationship with prospective travellers through personalizing the service offered at a comparable price to those of standard ones.

From the tourism supply perspective, Computer Reservation Systems are known to be the "circulation system" of the tourism product as they enable tourism providers to control, promote, and sell their products globally, while assisting them to increase their occupancy or load factor levels and to reduce seasonality. They enhance numerous business functions. In addition, Computer Reservation System often charges competitive commission rates in comparison with other distribution options, while enabling flexible pricing and capacity alterations in order to adjust tourism supply to demand fluctuations. CRS also reduces communication costs, while providing managerial information on tourism demand patterns or competitors' position. Computer Reservation System can affect price competition through cost savings and efficiencies in operational management and communication, allow an increased volume of transactions to be handled, and allow the process to be both simplified and accelerated (Eraqi and Abd-alla, 2008).

2.1.5.2 Global Distribution Systems

Global Distribution Systems are systems which distribute reservation and information services to sales outlets around the world. Unlike the Computer Reservation System used solely by an airline or hotel chain, GDS distributes more than one CRS to users who are usually travel agents. GDSs were formed from the airlines of several Computer Reservation Systems, each of which had its airline backer. Once formed, there was a period of some consolidation and shakeout, after which four main Global Distribution Systems emerged. These are

Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre and World Span. These world's leading Global Distribution Systems are switches or simply computers that are connected on the one side to many different supplier systems and on the other side to many end users. The end users of switch comprise travel agents with a single reservation system to support the sale of airline seats and related travel products such as hotel-and car hire, via a single computer terminal, usually a Personal Computer. All the Global Distribution Systems are owned by a group of airline companies. Global Distribution Systems require massive investment because they are extremely large computer systems that link several airlines and travel principals into a complex network of Personal Computers, telecommunications and large main frame computers. Global Distribution Systems are the macro version of Computer Reservation Systems with a specialized and improved information technology for the distribution of Travel products (Eraqi and Abd-alla, 2008).

2.1.5.3 Destination Marketing Systems

A Destination Marketing System is a computer-based information system founded on geographical linkages that form a destination (Hornby, 2004). DMSs are referred to a variety of different ways, such as Destination Databases, Destination Management Systems, or travel information systems (TIS). They encompass information and reservations and operate at national, regional, and local levels. Destination marketing and reservation systems can be defined as Destination Marketing System (DMS). They, or parts of them, may be referred to elsewhere as Destination Database (DD) or Destination Management Systems (DMS). On the demand side, they offer multiple forms of access by potential visitors, directly or through travel agents and tour operators; to call-centres, visitor information centres, and the like and increasingly by distribution through airline GDS, home shopping networks (both on TV and computer), and the Internet. On the supply side, DMS provide a comprehensive database of products and services about the destination offer (Eraqi and Abd-alla, 2008).

Destinations developing products and services databases today need to be aware of the many changes in distribution technology, and the rapid introduction of multimedia. They need to include the ability to store text, still and moving images, and sound in their database. Due to the worldwide travel industry is changing at an extraordinary rate, as there is an increasing trend towards more independent travel, more short breaks, and more vacations. DMSs offer quick information to customers and provide possibilities of booking easily, with the quality assurance to the service offered. CRSs are worthwhile for tourist boards to evaluate seriously, especially those that attract high numbers of independent travellers (Eraqi and Abd-alla, 2008).

2.1.5.4 Marketing Decision Support Systems (MDSS)

The importance of information and efficient information management is steadily increasing not only due to the evolution of new technologies and high-capacity storage media but also to the growing market dynamics that raise information needs. Marketing Decision Support System supports organizations in collecting, storing, processing, and disseminating information and in the decision-making process by providing forecasts and decision models. In order to solve complex problems, decision makers need to have a factual knowledge of the industry (declarative knowledge) and the methodology used (procedural knowledge). The wealth of knowledge is drawn from two pools: that obtained from the "storage" of already existing experiences, and by generating knowledge in the respective field. Combining these two pools creates an arena for problem solving. The major aim of Marketing Decision Support System is an optimal information supply and decision support for the tourism industry. The first step is to provide online tourism survey data, as well as evaluation programs to transform data into precious management information. Marketing Decision Support System (MDSS) predominantly include a database containing tourism market research data (declarative knowledge), various program modules (method base, procedural knowledge) converting acknowledged methods or models into simple surfaces, and various administrative programs that assist the maintenance of the database and track and control the information search behaviour of users. A Marketing Information System (MIS) is a continuing and interacting structure of people, equipment, and procedures that together sort, analyze, evaluate, and distribute pertinent, timely, and accurate information for use by marketing decision makers to improve their marketing planning, implementation, and control (Eraqi and Abd-alla, 2008).

2.1.5.5 E-Commerce and Tourism Marketing

E-commerce is sharing business information, maintaining business relationships, and conducting business transactions by means of telecomm networks. It is defined as, "the sales activity undertaken through electronic distribution channels" (World Trade Organization, 2001). E-commerce is considered now a distribution channel for hotels, tour operators, and travel agents. For instance, chain hotels are applying ecommerce processes completely, starting from promoting their facilities to booking these facilities and making of e-payments available. These hotels use attractive websites that comprise slide shows for hotel facilities and virtual reality tours or interactive hotel tools. E-commerce tools comprise promotion tools for goods and services like e-catalogs, shopping mall centres, Internet advertising supported with multimedia, and business exchange management tools like e-mail, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), electronic contracts; service delivery tools like electronic bar codes and electronic document interchange; pre or post-selling tools like maintenance booklets, assurance documents; and payment tools that comprise electronic funds transfer using smart cards. The first step

in the e-commerce process is the marketing activity to inform consumers of the product and its characteristics, and motivate them to buy it. Marketing is considered one of the e-commerce process sides. In other words, if the e-commerce process is successful, it means that marketing products are also successful. E-commerce is one of the most effective information systems in tourism marketing, especially because it does not know spatial or geographic boundaries by using electronic media it can be managed from anywhere at any time (Eraqi and Abd-alla, 2008).

2.1.6 Internet Features

The main features of the Net, in comparison with conventional media and with relevance to marketing, as an effective and efficient communications means;

2.1.6.1 Addressability

Internet through media like emails has a distinctive value in addressing the users from one-to-many to one-to-one marketing communication. (Bostanshirin, 2014) said that despite of having some challenges like dependency on the respondent(s) consent and some problems like being easily to be ignored or to be misled as spam messages, it is considered to be the most effective online marketing technique with high response rate and low costs. Also Raad *et al* (2010) supported the idea by saying that using emails as promotional messages has been well thought-out to be the most effective means of online marketing.

2.1.6.2 Interactivity

Unlike traditional marketing, internet has ability to respond to the users' inputs. It has the ability to give feedback depending to the customer or user action on the internet because if emails or/and web forms are present it is even much easier. According to Nadiri and Avci (2000) clarified more that internet contributes for businesses in satisfying relationship marketing activities which focus on achieving customers' loyalty. Also an Oxford Economic Company (2013) added that at the same time they provide customers with the contacts information for further information if any, the fact which creates closeness between the two.

Through the internet, the user has great control of choosing and processing information about the company. According to Liu (2000), the customer has a decisive power on whether to surf the net, which web site to visit, which web page to browse, for how long, how often and how much information to obtain.

2.1.6.3 Flexibility

It has the ability to provide updated information depending to the feedback given by the customer or user. For instance, a virtual catalogue can be gradually developed and organised based on the actual interest of consumers. According to Belch and Belch (2012) internet can also keep consumers constantly informed of the company's new product offerings, latest price changes and sales promotion initiatives. This is possible mostly to the company's website or blogs where much information can be displayed.

2.1.6.4 Accessibility

According to Liu (2000) the net greatly improves, both spatially and temporally, the information availability and user interaction as the web not only provides virtually unlimited access for hundreds of million users but also delivers unlimited amount of information on the Web as there is practically no restrictions in terms of the *space of advertisement* - the number of pages a web site can accommodate or the "bytes" of data an online database can hold.

2.1.6.5 Service Improvements

According to Liu (2000) internet through the web improve customer services in four major ways including to provide a wide choice depending with the vast set of products option, fast service payment due to automation of payment systems, reduce delivery time and provision of detailed information. The web-based tourism distribution systems help the consumer's needs to be satisfied because it allows comparison of information and transparency. Also it enhances immediate reservation through flexibility provision (Buhalis 2008).

Also Liu (2000) said that apart from accuracy and relevancy of tourism information, tourists' satisfaction is solely depending with the promptness of customers' requests response; people always tend to tolerate disconnection and instability of the systems but they won't tolerate is not getting timely and accurate information.

2.1.6.7 Internet Service Cost Savings

According to Dones (2000) the web presence, by providing information on the internet, and allow customers to find answers to their inquiries themselves can also help to reduce telephone charges based on toll-free numbers. Tyler (2000) added that the Internet has also great potential for saving distribution costs. Distribution, the selling and marketing of tickets, is one of the biggest cost items in the airline industry.

2.1.7 The Challenges Facing the Internet Usage in Marketing Tourism

Internet usage facing many difficulties in operating environment and among of the mentioned is privacy issues and cyber-crimes like as auction fraud, vacation fraud, gaming fraud, spamming, and identity theft whereby Buhalis (2009) said that these are threats to the organization mostly in electronic commerce thus, he suggested that the organizations have to pay attention not to get loses and to protect its customers, even though it is difficult to prevent or detect these malicious acts by law enforcements alone. Apart from that, Rayport and Jaworski

(2003) confirmed that privacy on customers' information is now one of the fiery issues of the Internet. It commonly revolves around security and privacy of confidential customer information related to online sales and transactions, the collection and use of customer data and statistics, as well as the protection of a customer's right to privacy.

On the other hand, Belch and Belch (2004) added that though there is an even increase in internet users its reach is still outlying the traditional Medias like radio. Also, Nothnagel (2006) identified that because a firm's Web site has to compete with millions of other sites, there is intense competition in an Internet environment for the reason that all of businesses are trying to attract and retain people. According to Belch and Belch (2004), to ensure that there is reach and awareness to all of targets, many business organizations have bowed to traditional media to support Internet communications for the fulfilment of the business goals.

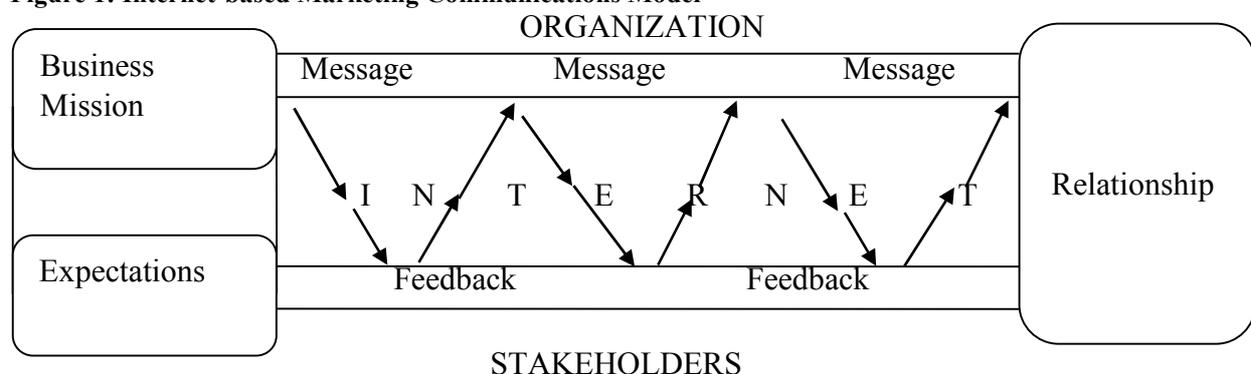
2.2 Theoretical Literature Review

2.2.1 Internet-based Marketing Communications Model

This study will be guided by internet-based marketing communications model. This model was remodelled by Katrin Kull in 2007 from model of communication -based marketing model for managing relationships by Duncan and Moriarty (1998) and the communication model of Shannon and Weaver from 1949 as adopted by Fiske (1990) that include Internet or interactivity after recognizing the fact that the existing models and theories do not give a sufficient overview of the Internet as an integral part of communication principles in marketing context.

On the figure 1 below, Kull (2007) begun to state the model by saying that the marketing process has a goal of developing a profitable relationship between the customer and the organization and the basis of the business process for and organization lies on the business mission. On the other side of the organization, there are the stakeholders. It is important to emphasize that the organization sends messages not just to customers but also to the other stakeholders like investors, resellers, suppliers, employees, competitors, the media, the government and others to mention few. Duncan and Moriarty (1998) supported the statement by discussing the importance of identifying stakeholders as the target group for marketing and marketing communication. They added that the customers and other stakeholders have certain expectations that are the basis for them to decide whether they want to continue the dialogue with the organization once they have got a message from it. Kull (2007) also added that the Internet as a channel lies in the centre of the model, leading to the development of a relationship between the organization and the stakeholders. Apart from that the organization sends out different sorts of messages. It can mean building a web site, but also selling tourism product via the Internet. The stakeholders give their feedback to the organization, answering the web questionnaire, or even making a buy. Thus, on the basis of the feedback, the organization and its stakeholders develop a dialogue. The feedback must be constant, without ongoing feedback there will be no dialogue. The messages of the organization depend on the feedback to previous messages, so the message's feedback system is built as an integrated flow rather than separate attempts. The internet acts as a medium for messages and feedback, being two-way interactive one-to-one marketing and communication channel. The figure 1 below describes the Internet-based marketing communication model that developed, emphasizing the marketing orientation and reflecting the message feedback process the way it should be treated.

Figure 1: Internet-based Marketing Communications Model



Source: (Kull, 2007)

2.2.2 The Relationship between the Model and the Study

The model is relevant to the study because it is clearly marketing-focused, stating that the goal of all business processes is a profitable relationship also the important point of the model is the fact that it shows the message-feedback system as an integrated flow, current messages being dependant from the feedback of previously sent messages in internet marketing context as we can't speak of marketing without communication in any context

including internet. Not only that but also Chaffey *et al* (2001) said that the model insists that if internet marketing is to become integrated and fully established as strategic marketing management tool, the focus needs to move towards understanding its broader applications within the total marketing process rather than just using it for communication and selling. Fiske (1990) made a metaphorical statement: "A model is like a map. It represents selected features of its territory: no map or model can be comprehensive". This well expressed sentence hits the mark that all models highlight different features from the framework. The model helps to understand the marketing theory and communication model intersection and see the unique role of Internet in tourism marketing framework.

2.3 Relationship between the Literature and the Study

The literature showed how the information and communication technology is related to tourism and how the internet plays its role in development of tourism of tourism in general. The literature helped a researcher to obtain some of the required information on the topic such as the things contributed by internet, information and communication to tourism and tourism activities, also five segments of information and communication technology's menu in tourism marketing context.

2.4 Research Gap

As we live in era of intense competition especially within Tourism industry whereby the effect of use of the traditional marketing and promotional tools are sensible, known and understood, the criteria of measuring success of a destination will much depend on effectively creation of awareness, persuasion and informing the tourists on the existence of different tourism attractions.

Despite the vast range of the marketing studies, researches and surveying efforts which have been taken in academic and research centres around the world where most of them focused on the areas of internet and tourism in general including internet role to tourism by Batinić (2013), impact of internet on pricing strategies in tourism industry by Sahut and France (2009), internet usage and e-tourism towards the new tourism economy by Longhi (2008), e-tourism in past 20 years by Buhalis (2008), technology in tourism by UNWTO (2011), information systems and tourism marketing by Eraqi and Abd-alla (2008) and others to mention few, to some extent still there is lack of evidences about the role of internet as an effective destination marketing particularly in Tanzania's new and young destinations which are still developing like Mwanza City; in spite of this, research investigating the role of internet as a tool for marketing travel related services is in its infancy. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find out the roles of internet specifically in tourism marketing in Mwanza City.

3. Research Methodology

Research methodology is a way of systematically solve the research problem, it may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically (Kothari, 2004). This chapter includes general research approaches, research design, sampling, data collection techniques, data analysis strategies, data verification, data validation and reliability.

3.1 Research Approach

The study applied both qualitative and quantitative research approaches needed to know the role of internet in tourism marketing. Quantitative study refers to an inquiry into a social or human problem based on testing a theory composed of variables measured with the number and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalization of the theory holds true. Qualitative study deals with opinions concerning study from different people in a targeted population (Krishnaswami, 2003). The researcher decided to use both approaches because it is easy to use numbers and explanations to help readers to understand the results easily rather than using only one approach.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is the framework or plan for a study used as a guide in collection and analyzing data (Churchil, 2004). The researcher adapted the case study design as data were collected in Mwanza region to assess the role of internet in tourism marketing. This is due to the fact that the location helped the researcher to reduce costs and it is also flexible to various data collection techniques, also the researcher used in-depth study of websites and their marketing communication tools in different tourism companies and tourism organizations.

3.3 Types of Data Source

The source of data may be classified into primary and secondary sources (Krishnaswami, 2003). On the first hand, the primary sources are original from which the researcher directly collect data that have not been previously collected (Krishnaswami, 2003). The researcher got such data directly from different tourism companies and tourism organizations by interview and content analysis method of data collection. On the other

hand, secondary sources are the sources containing data which have been collected and compiled for another purpose (Krishnaswami, 2003). The researcher got data from tourism articles, journals and tourism report of 2010-2014 as well as from different writers through university library and surfing from the internet.

3.4 Sampling

3.4.1 Population

Methodologically speaking, a population is the aggregate of all cases that conform to some designated set of specification (Nehmias, C, 1996). The population of this study was the selected member of TTB as a MNRT marketing body which included specifically the official from marketing department and others few tourism companies' communication, public relation or marketing officials from in Mwanza City and according to the Tanzania Tourism Board (2016), Mwanza City has the population of 69 tourism organizations and companies which are the places where the sample size was drawn.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedures

The study used purposive sampling where by individual respondent won't have an equal and independent chance of being selected. The sample was chosen based on who researcher thought was appropriate for the study. In that case the researcher purposely selected the respondents from communication or public relation or marketing offices because they were the ones who have expertise in the study conducted.

3.3.3 Sample size

Mugenda (2003) defines Sample as a group selected carefully so as to represent a large population with similar characteristics. According to TTB (2016), there are 69 tourism companies and organizations which mark the total of the companies and organizations in Mwanza City (both registered and non-registered companies) from which the sample of the respondents was drawn where by 40 accommodation and food facilities and 11 travel agencies 15 tour operators, 2 airline companies and 1 tourism body (Tanzania Tourism Board). The researcher used a sample of 16 individual marketing or communication official of every registered Tourism company and organization which have websites whereby in every tourism organization or company selected to ensure accurate information, only 1 respondent drawn to match the number of the respondents and cover the number of the registered companies and organizations available with their related websites, whose 8 out of them were from tour operators' and travel agencies' marketing, communication or public relations offices, 2 out of them were from the airline companies' marketing, communication or public relations' offices, 5 out of them were from the accommodations marketing, communication or public relations' offices and 1 from TTB marketing, communication or public relation office. The reason for selecting the registered companies and organizations is that most of the companies other than the registered ones are operating blackly the fact which makes it even harder to get any information out of them because they may be reluctant in providing information fearing of being uncovered, unknown occurrence or unexpectedness even though all those may be none of the researcher's intentions. Also, due to the nature of sampling procedure chosen, researcher had the ability to manipulate the number of respondents depending with who fit for the purpose.

Table 1: The sample size distribution

Tourism companies and organizations	Number of respondents
Tourism operators and travel agencies	08
Airline companies	02
Tourism organization	01
Accommodation facilities	05
Total	16

Source: The Researcher, 2016.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

3.5.1 Interview

Rwegoshora (2006) defines interview as a technique of a field work which is used to watch the behaviour of an individual or individuals to record statements, to observe, to concrete results of social or group interaction as it usually involves between two persons. The researcher used semi-structured interview because it allows much greater freedom to ask in case of need supplementary questions or at times researcher may omit certain questions if the situation requires.

3.5.2 Content Analysis

Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created and presented, those scientific methods includes attention to objectivity-intersubjectivity, a priori design, reliability, validity, generalizability, replicability and hypothesis testing (Neuendorf, 2002). The researcher employed the content analysis to evaluate a number of Internet marketing issues relevant to the tourism industry

in web sites, blogs and social networks of Mwanza sampled tourism companies and organization (using a structured assessment sheet consisting of the main elements of successful web sites). The reason for using this method was to analyse text to determine likely meanings to and impact on audiences who are the tourists and to prove the sameness and clarification of the information given in the interview by the respondents.

3.6 Data Recording and Analysis

Data analysis is the term refers to the computation of certain measures along with searching for pattern of relationship that exist among data group (Kumar, 2008). In this study the data was analyzed by content analysis through Microsoft excel to retrieve appealing charts, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for easy analysis of data collected from the websites and thematic analysis in which, the data analyzed then classified and summarized into paragraphs then presented in narration form so that the readers can easily understand.

3.7 Data Verification

This involve comparing initial ideas and thoughts with the data and hence may involve simply a process of second thoughts as the data is analyzed through further research to replicate observed patterns in the data (Lancaster, 2005). The researcher needed to prove the model of internet-based marketing communications as it has been stated by writers in which the researcher needed to know how internet as a centre of model leading to the development of a relationship between the tourism and the stakeholders and to know the way internet acts as medium for messages and feedback, being *two-way interactive one-to-one marketing and communication channel* in its marketing strategies on tourism perspectives. Also how tourism organizations go about on adopting the same model to attract tourists with reference to Mwanza City as the case study.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

Kothari (2004) validity refers to how well the data collection and data analysis of the research captures the reality being studied. In other words, the researcher must obtain the reality of responses of those people who are under the test through comparing their responses with such truth that in deed is truth. Reliability is a measure of how consistent the results from a test are reliability entails consistency and freedom from measurement errors which is measured terms of the extent to which two or more independent observers agree in their rating of the same event (Krishnaswmi, 2003).

The researcher tested the validity by doing comparison with different writings with obtained data from marketing, communication or public relation departments of sampled Mwanza City's tourism companies and organizations and their websites through interview and content analysis stipulated to personnel of marketing, communication or public relations departments. The researcher ensured reliability of data by obtaining information from websites together with marketing, communication or public relation officials of sampled Mwanza City's tourism companies and organizations which will be relevant and can be relied on.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The respondents assured of the confidentiality of the answers they give in order to be more cooperative and sincere in giving out their answers. They assured that the reason of collecting the information is strictly for academic purposes only and that the work won't be used for any unethical reasons and the researcher discussed with participants about the intention of the study before the research study conducted. The researcher secured an introduction letter (Appendix III) to introduce himself and request support from the participants' when conducted the research study.

4. Research findings

4.1 Introduction

The findings are related to the study on the role of internet in tourism marketing in Mwanza City. Findings obtained through interview method of the 15 marketing or communication officials from registered companies and 1 tourism body and content analysis of the related companies and tourism body. The presentation and analysis of the findings is by narration, frequencies, percentages and charts based on the research objectives from the communication or marketing officials and websites.

4.2 Presentation of findings

The research intended to study 16 communication or marketing officials and their related websites. The interview was responded by all 16 communications or marketing officials and websites content analysis was done to verify the role of internet as an effective tourism marketing tool and how tourism companies do to attract more tourists through internet.

4.2.1 The status of tourism marketing through internet usage in Mwanza City

The researcher wanted to identify the status of tourism marketing through internet usage in Mwanza City

through tourism status in Mwanza City and internet usage situation in Mwanza and the researcher found the following based on the interview conducted;

4.2.1.1 The Tourism Current status in Mwanza City

Out of 16 marketing or communication officials interviewed, 11 of them said that tourism marketing status through the internet usage in Mwanza City is moderate. They said; *“Tourism status in Mwanza City is not that much higher neither lower but is in between in a sense that it can’t be compared with the other two known Cities in Tanzania; Arusha and Dar es Salaam but luckily, it is growing in a good way”*. The remained 5 marketing or communication officials said that the status of tourism marketing through the internet usage in Mwanza City is high. They said that; *“Tourism status in Mwanza City is very broad and beneficial because service providers can diversify the products they offer and get customers constantly”*.

4.2.1.2 Internet Usage Current Situation in Mwanza City

Out of 16 marketing or communication officials interviewed, 10 of them said that the internet usage situation in Mwanza is moderate in a way that it is still growing. One of these officials said that; *“The internet usage situation is still growing but in a moderate way about 55% to 60% because of its moderate speed thus it is still very early to measure its impact in Mwanza City”*. On the other hand, the remained 6 said internet usage situation in Mwanza City is high though it is risky.

4.2.2 To analyze the use of internet in marketing tourism in Mwanza City

The researcher wanted to examine the ways in which internet is used to market tourism, the internet platform (s) used to market tourism, the most effective internet platform (s) in marketing tourism and benefits of using internet in marketing tourism. Based on the interview conducted the researcher came up with the following results;

4.2.2.1 Internet Platforms Used in Marketing Tourism

Based on the 16 marketing or communication officials interviewed, the internet platforms used in marketing tourism include the emails, own company websites, blogs, face book pages, Search engine optimizations like Google Ad words, link in, trip advisor and Tanzania Newspapers web pages like Daily News, Google geography, Mtanzania, Raia Mwema, Raia Tanzania, Mwanahalisi and Jamii Forum.

4.2.2.2 Internet Platforms which are more effective in Marketing Tourism

Based on the 16 marketing or communication officials interviewed, 9 of them said that the most effective internet platforms in marketing tourism include Google ad words, social media like face book and twitter, blogs, company website and emails. The remained 7 marketing or communication officials said that most effective internet platforms in marketing tourism include the instagram, trip advisor and what’s app because they are very cheap and they are easier to reach many people at par and even giving suggestions is easier.

4.2.1.3 Importance of Internet Usage in Marketing Tourism

Out of 16 marketing or communication officials, 10 of them said that using internet in marketing tourism helps tourism companies and tourism bodies to upload different tourism multimedia contents at par for the sake of their customers as well as to spread much information at once. Apart from that, they said it helps to build good sensation on the product they offer to their customers thus they feel the tourism experience before testing it. Also they said it is very good way to keep their customers close. The remained 6 marketing or communication officials said that using internet in marketing tourism helps the tourism companies and tourism bodies to advertise the services they offer, timely information delivery, easier to direct our attractions and create good image of our country and it is a cost saving way of marketing.

4.2.3 To identify the relationship between the tourism growth and the use of internet in Mwanza City.

The researcher wanted to know the relationship which exists between the tourism growth and the use of internet in Mwanza City. Based on the interview conducted, the researcher came up with the following results; Out of 16 marketing or communication officials interviewed, 7 of them said that tourism expansion is directly related with the internet usage. They said; *“Back then, before the invasion of internet people used printed media to market tourism but thanks to the internet, people have their own websites to where they can easily advertise products they offer and get close to their customers. Therefore, the more internet is used in making tourism known, the more tourism is growing.”*

The other 6 of them said that tourism expansion is positively related to internet usage. They said; *“Internet helps to give updated detailed information in a sense that due to softness of tourism industry any time being in need of existing, to be strengthened, advertised and inform the society about its existence, internet has presumed to be the only means to achieve this tourism ambition.”*

The remained 3 of them said that internet has positive influence to the creation and fulfilment of tourists’ demand. They said; *“For tourism activities to be widely conducted they need transport and mostly of tourists nowadays are digitally skilled and knowledgeable. They always want to communicate with their friends electronically while in tour trips. Thus for we service providers with the help of internet, to attract more customers to use our transport equipment, we have installed WIFI in our cars so that when customers in need to the cars with it then they can get them. Hence that way tourism grows because the installations of WIFI to the*

vehicles attract more customers to the destination.”

4.2.4 To identify the challenges facing the internet usage in marketing tourism in Mwanza City

The researcher wanted to identify faced when marketing tourism in internet and the ways to solve the difficulties to ensure that marketing tourism through internet becomes efficient and effective. Based on the interview conducted, the researcher came up with the following results;

4.2.4.1 Difficulties Faced when Using Internet to Market Tourism

Out of 16 marketing or communication officials interviewed, 7 of them said that using internet to market tourism is challenged by hackers, fraud, and system breakdown because of being new or system being unstable in terms of speed, technological and management changes and the officials not to be conversant. Also they added that Mwanza City has a lot of illiterate people in tourism perspectives and the culture of Mwanza people is somewhat holding back people not to be more of digital age thus it causes less response to internet tourism marketing.

The remained 4 of them insisted that using internet to market tourism is a great challenge in case of accessibility and awareness. They said; *“To market tourism domestically, Mwanza in particular is very difficult because there are very many laymen. Also internet doesn’t favour every customer, some doesn’t use social media nor do they have even a slightest idea of visiting the tourism related websites and this kind of people are very many that they can affect the internet marketing targeted motives.”* The other remained 5 of them added that they internet tourism marketing is even more difficult because of the slow internet speed the fact making most of the companies to delay some of their mainly and daily activities if they don’t have any alternatives to that. Furthermore, they commented that internet tourism marketing is far more difficult to conduct due to power fluctuation of our country system. They said; *“Due to unreliable source of power caused by our monopolistic electricity company (TANESCO), Mwanza City in particular has incurred many losses including internet tourism marketing conduction not to be done to the fullest unless you have automatic generator.”*

Moreover, they insisted that internet tourism marketing is very expensive because of the competitive environmental condition and the customers they serve. They said; *“Internet tourism marketing is too costly in a sense that because of the goals set by everyone in this industry in attaining many customers while earning profit constantly your company should be able to be seen easily when a person is searching where to get the service or product in the internet and the only way to ensure that you are being seen easily apart from using websites which is the most common way, is using Google Ad words that are marked in yellow (Search Engine Optimization) which are very expensive to use because you have to pay for every word which you want others as well as your customers to see.”*

4.2.4.2 Solution to the Difficulties Faced in Internet Tourism Marketing

Out of 16 marketing or communication officials interviewed, 5 of them said that they are trying to solve the mentioned difficulties by using direct marketing through phoning, fuelled generators, internet routers and education to the stakeholders through seminars, events and exhibitions. The other 7 of them said that they restructure the websites and they always consult the network personnel to solve the system problems. The remained 4 of them said that they do budget adjustment to overcome the crisis of marketing costs fluctuation.

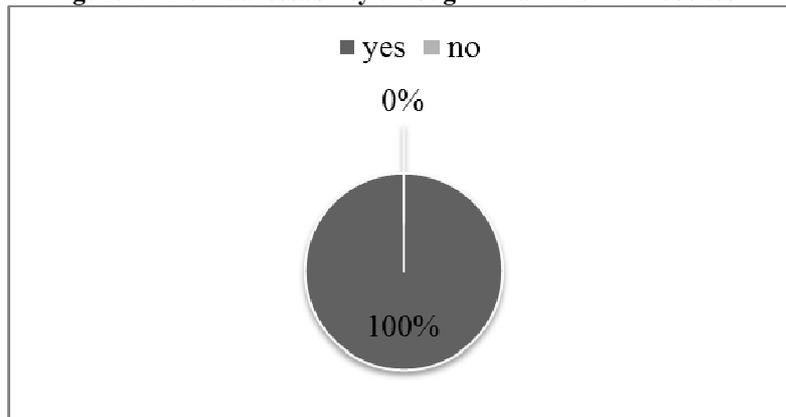
4.2.5 Content Analysis Results from the Websites

Since marketing or communication officials interviewed said that they all do have competent web designer (s) for designing quality sites, the researcher wanted to testify the presence of fundamental internet features of the platforms which facilitate the internet marketing to be successful and the only way to see them all was through the websites which act as the internet marketing centre due to the fact that when designed well all internet features can all be recognized well and internet marketing can deliver many positive outcomes. In analysing these websites which belong to the companies and one body that govern marketing in particular where the interviewed respondents came from, the researcher came up with the following results;

4.2.5.1 Addressability

All 16 websites which are equivalent to 100% appeared to have email addresses which facilitate narrowcasting or one to one marketing communication.

Figure2: The Addressability through Email within Websites



Source: Researcher, 2016.

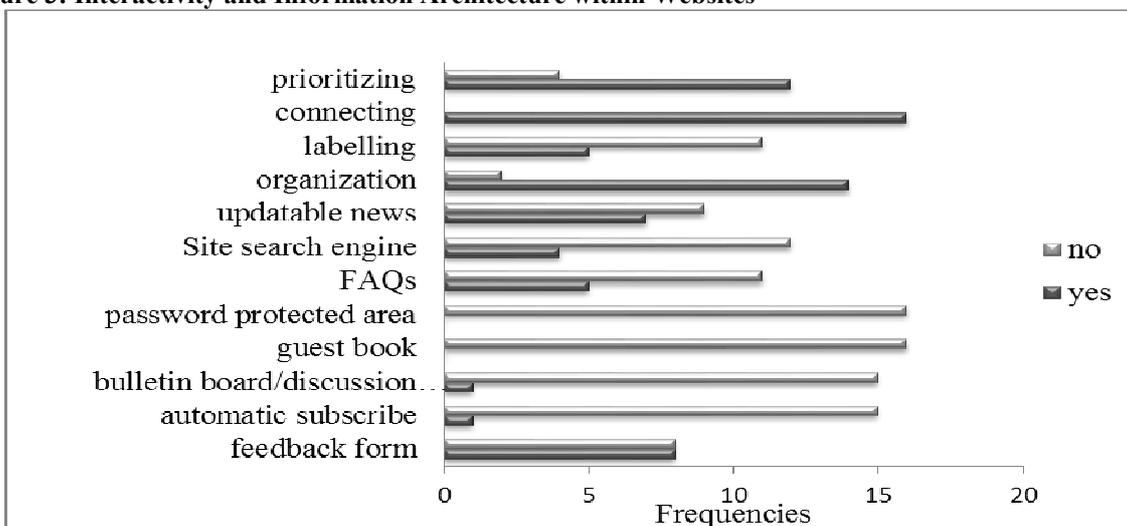
4.2.5.2 Interactivity and Information Architecture

The researcher wanted to investigate on whether or not the companies respond to the user inputs to facilitate relationship marketing and the websites are arranged to easily provide information to the websites' users. Thus the researcher checked on the presence or absence of interactivity and information architecture components;

On interactivity issue: Out of 16 websites investigated 8 of them which are equivalent to 50% appeared to have feedback forms to facilitate response to the user inputs and the remained 8 websites which are equivalent to 50% had not these forms. Also out of 16 websites investigated, 1 of them which is equivalent to 6.3% appeared to have automatic subscribe and the remained 15 websites which are equivalent to 93.7% had not them. Apart from that, out of 16 websites investigated, 1 of them which is equivalent to 6.3% appeared to have bulletin board or discussion forum and the remained 15 websites which are equivalent to 93.7% had not it. Also, all 16 websites investigated which are equivalent to 100% had no guestbook(s). Not only that but also, out of 16 websites investigated, 5 of them which are equivalent to 31.3% appeared to have Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs) and the remained 11 websites which are equivalent to 68.7% had not it. Also, out of 16 websites investigated, 4 of them which are equivalent to 25% appeared to have site search and the remained 12 websites which are equivalent to 75% had not at all. Lastly, out of 16 websites, 7 of them which are equivalent to 43.8% appeared to have updatable news or events and the remained 9 websites which are equivalent to 56.2% had no this component.

On the information architecture issue: Out of 16 websites, 14 of them which are equivalent to 87.5% appeared to be well organized and the remained 2 websites which are equivalent to 12.5% did not appear to be so. Also out of 16 websites investigated, 5 of them which is equivalent to 31.3% appeared to have labelling and the remained 11 websites which are equivalent to 68.7% did not have it. Apart from that, all 16 websites which are equivalent to 100% appeared to have connectivity component. Lastly, out of 16 websites, 12 of them which are equivalent to 75% appeared to prioritize the users of their websites and the remained 4 websites which are equivalent to 25% appeared not to.

Figure 3: Interactivity and Information Architecture within Websites

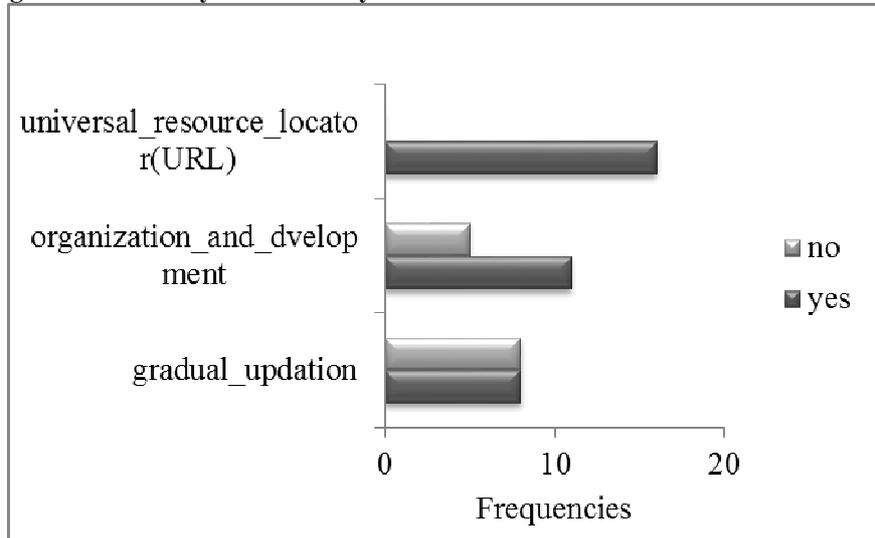


Source: Researcher, 2016

4.2.5.3 Flexibility and Usability

Out of 16 websites investigated, 8 of them which are equivalent to 50% appeared to be gradually updated and the remained 8 websites which are equivalent to 50% were not. Also out of 16 websites investigated, 11 of them which are equivalent to 68.8% appeared to be well developed and the remained 5 websites which are equivalent to 31.2% were not. Lastly all websites appeared to be user friendly.

Figure 4: Flexibility and Usability within Websites

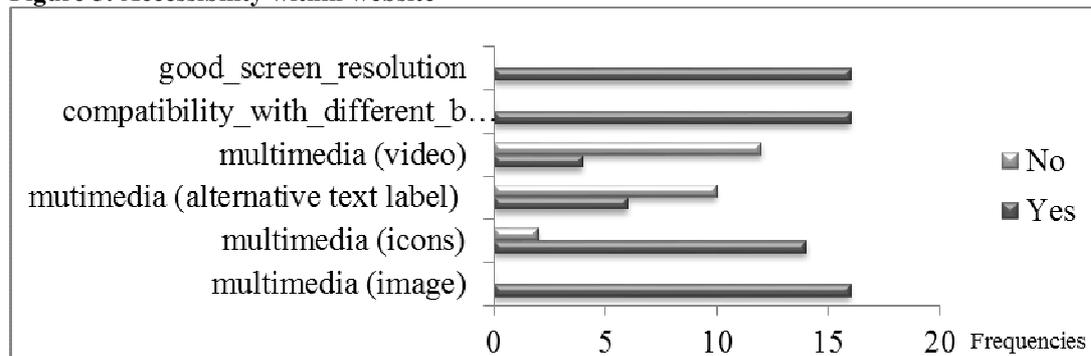


Source: Researcher, 2016

4.2.5.4 Accessibility

All 16 websites investigated which are equivalent to 100% appeared to have images as one of the multimedia features. Out of 16 websites investigated, 14 of them which are equivalent to 87.5% appeared to have icons as one of their multimedia features and the remained 2 websites which are equivalent to 12.5% had not this feature. Apart from that, out of 16 websites investigated, 4 of them which are equivalent to 25% appeared to have video as one of their multimedia features and the remained 12 websites which are equivalent to 75% had not. Also out of 16 websites investigated, 6 of them which are equivalent to 37.5% appeared to have alternative text label and the remained 10 websites which are equivalent to 62.5%. Also all 16 websites investigated which are equivalent to 100% appeared to be compatible with different browsers and having good screen resolution.

Figure 5: Accessibility within website

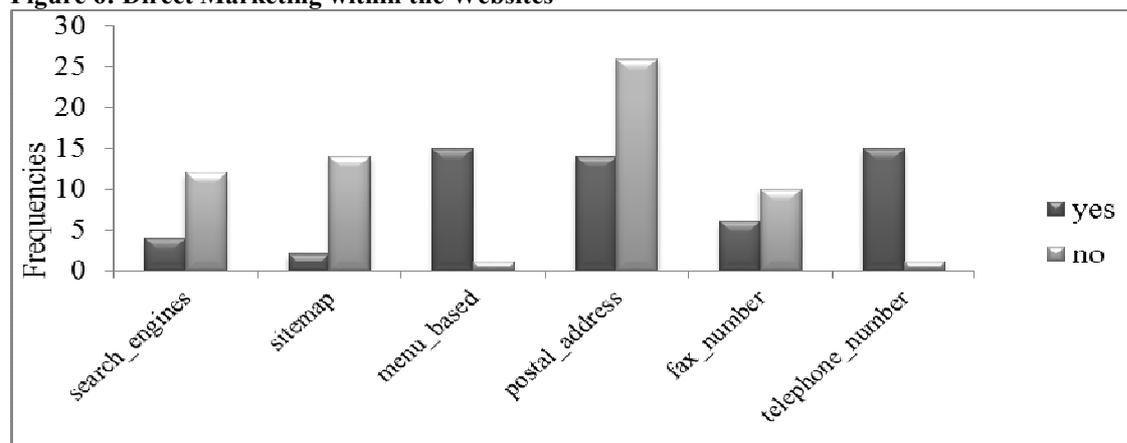


Source: Researcher, 2016

4.2.5.5 Direct Marketing

Out of 16 websites investigated, 2 of them which is equivalent to 12.5% appeared to have sitemap as their easy navigation tool and the remained 14 websites which are equivalent to 87.5% had not. Also out of 16 website investigated, 15 of them which are equivalent to 93.8% appeared to be menu based and the remained 1 website which is equivalent to 6.3% was not. Apart from that, out of 16 websites investigated, 14 of them which are equivalent to 87.5% appeared to have postal addresses and the remained 2 websites which are equivalent to 12.5% had not. Furthermore, out of 16 websites investigated, 6 of them which are equivalent 37.5% had fax number and the remained 10 websites which are equivalent to 62.5% had not. Lastly, out of 16 websites investigated, 15 of them which is equivalent to 93.8% had telephone number and the remained 1 website which is equivalent to 6.3% had not.

Figure 6: Direct Marketing within the Websites



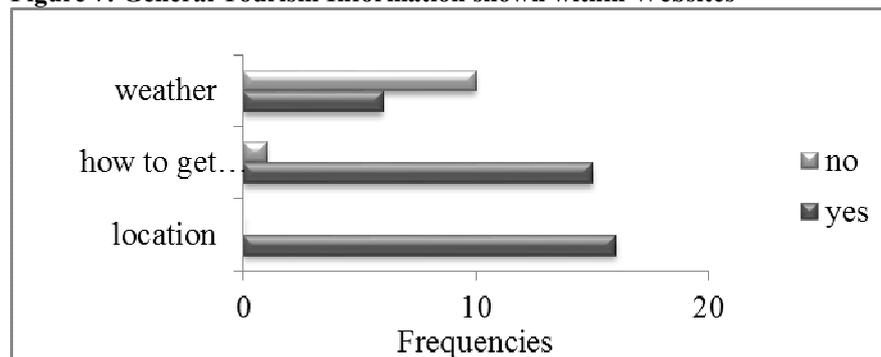
Source: Researcher, 2016

4.2.5.6 Content Quality and Quantity

4.2.5.6.1 Tourism (general information)

All 16 websites investigated which are equivalent to 100% had location information indicated. Also out of 16 websites investigated, 15 of them which are equivalent to 93.8% had information on how to get to the company and the remained 1 website which is equivalent to 6.3 % had not. Lastly, out of 16 websites investigated, 6 of them which are equivalent to 37.5% had information on destination weather and the remained 10 websites which are equivalent to 62.5% had not.

Figure 7: General Tourism Information shown within Websites

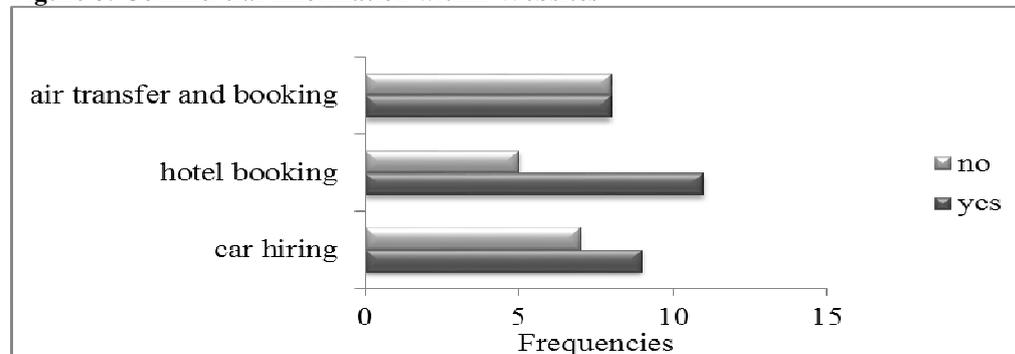


Source: Researcher, 2016

4.2.5.6.2 Commercial Tourism Information

Out of 16 websites investigated, 9 of them which are equivalent to 56.3% car hiring information indicated and the remained 7 websites which are equivalent to 43.7% had not. Also out of 16 websites investigated, 11 of them which are equivalent to 68.8% had hotel booking information and the remained 5 websites which are equivalent to 31.3% had not. Lastly, out of 16 websites investigated, half of them which are equivalent 50% had air transfer and booking information and the remained half of the websites which are equivalent to 50% had not.

Figure 8: Commercial Information within Websites



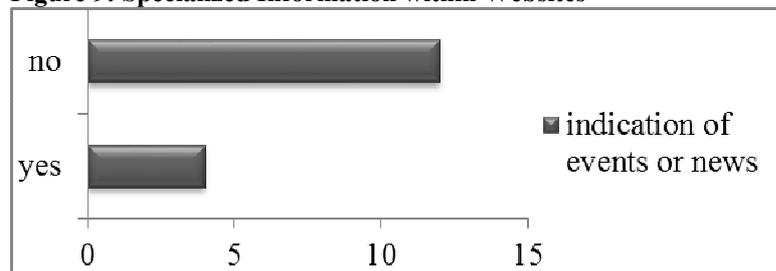
Source: Researcher, 2016

4.2.5.6.3 Specific Tourism Information

Out of 16 websites investigated, 4 of them which are equivalent to 25% indicated news or events and the

remained 12 which are equivalent to 75% did not. The news indicated are the promotional information, compliments press releases and the events indicated include conferences and festivals.

Figure 9: Specialized Information within Websites

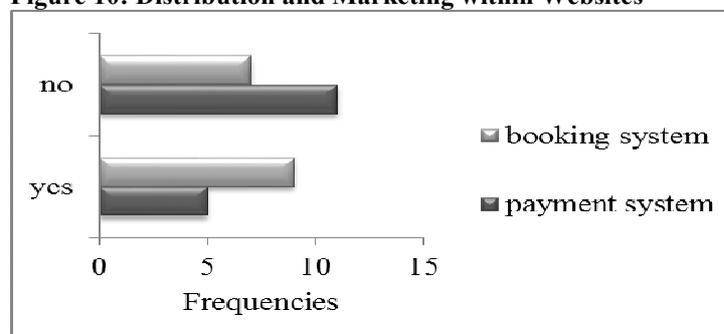


Source: Researcher, 2016

4.1.5.7 Distribution and Marketing

Out of 16 websites investigated, 5 of them which are equivalent to 31.3% had payment system installed and the remained 11 websites which are equivalent to 68.7% had not. Also, out of 16 websites investigated, 9 of them which are equivalent to 56.3% had booking system installed and the remained 7 which are equivalent to 43.7% had not.

Figure 10: Distribution and Marketing within Websites



Source: Researcher, 2016.

5.0 Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion

The discussion of this study is drawn based on findings of each the specific research objective. Through interview to marketing or communication officials, the researcher observed the following;

5.1.1 The Status of Tourism Marketing through Internet Usage in Mwanza City

According to the research findings, most of marketing or communication officials interviewed said that the status of tourism in Mwanza City nowadays is moderate and they added that luckily it is growing in a convincing way. Also most of them, said that the internet usage situation in Mwanza City recently is moderate as well. As the research findings suggested, the status of tourism marketing through the internet usage is moderate in a ground that the tourism companies and bodies seem that they are not using internet much as they would in marketing tourism in Mwanza City that is why even the tourism status is moderate.

5.1.2 The Use of Internet in Marketing Tourism in Mwanza City

Based on the research findings, most of marketing or communication officials interviewed said that they mostly use offices' computers and occasionally use the hand phones (smart phones) when there are power cuts to market tourism. Also they added that internet platforms used in marketing tourism in Mwanza City include the emails, own company websites, blogs, face book pages, Search engine optimizations like Google Ad words, link in, trip advisor and Tanzania Newspapers web pages like Daily News, Google geography, Mtanzania, Raia Mwema, Raia Tanzania, Mwanahalisi and Jamii Forum and the most effective internet platforms in marketing tourism include Google ad words, social media like face book and twitter, blogs, company website and emails. However, this is in contrast with the findings from China where the effective internet platforms in marketing tourism are only the social media in recent years (Baggio *et al*, 2014). Bennett (2012) added and clarified that travel and tourism industry heavily depends on word-of-mouth and the spread of opinions and the only means or platform to do that is through social media which is considered to be the most driving and powerful force to travel planning today and if not adopted, the result can be fatal.

Most of marketing or communication officials said that using internet in marketing tourism helps tourism companies and tourism bodies to upload different tourism multimedia contents at par for the sake of their customers as well as to spread much information at once. This is supported by Liu (2000) who confirmed

that with the ability of the website to unify text, pictures, sounds and video clips into multimedia documents played the key role in popularising the Internet beyond its traditionally scholarly boundaries and become an effective communication means in business and everyday life. Also Batinic (2013) added that internet provides a better access to several sources of information worldwide as well as direct communication with the all users in a sense that it is a collection of computer networks system with many users who share all kinds of information numbers, texts, sounds and images.

Also they said it is very good way to keep their customers close. This is well explained by Mihălcescu and Sion (2011) that the distinctiveness of the Internet as a distribution means is given by the fact that the websites allow producers to have direct relations with consumers at low costs and therefore fosters the possibility to give up intermediaries as well. Furthermore, they said that using internet in marketing tourism helps the tourism companies and tourism bodies to advertise the services they offer, this is also supported by McKean (2016) internet tourism industry marketing can help you connect with your potential customers, show them the visual appeal of your destination, service or products your offer, and probably get more exposure than you would with traditional print advertising.

Apart from that, it ensures timely information delivery whereby Liu (2000) said that through immediate confirmation of information on vast choices of products (service or goods) by an internet user (customer or the client) the time of delivery is reduced where the web-based distribution systems are conducted and worst scenarios in delivery is escaped instantly. Furthermore, it is a cost saving way of marketing and this is more clarified by Tang-Taye and Boyer (2014) internet has helped in reducing costs which could have been incurred by traditional marketing and improving service to customers within the travel and tourism sector. Also McGaughey and Mason (1998) added that internet is potential providing quickly access to relevant information, save customers' time, effort and money. Moreover, through internet, it is easier to direct our attractions and create good image of the destination by building good sensation on the product they offer to the customers thus they feel the tourism experience before testing it.

5.1.3 The Relationship between Tourism Growth and the Use of Internet in Mwanza City

Based on the research findings, most of marketing or communication officials interviewed, there were different views about this objective. Some said that tourism expansion is directly related with the internet usage due to the fact that internet usage in Mwanza City has facilitated tourism to be easily known through website creation where tourism and tourism related businesses are easily advertised and more customers are building closely relationship with their service providers. This is also supported by Liu (2000) that site can present existing and potential tourists with up to date information, from a variety of sources, about the destination, property, services or attraction in all aspects of tourism and an Oxford Economic Company (2013) added that at the same time they provide customers with the contacts information for further information if any, the fact which create closeness between the two whereby Nadiri and Avci (2000) clarified more that internet contributes for businesses in satisfying relationship marketing activities which focus on achieving customers loyalty.

Others said that tourism expansion is positively related to internet usage in a sense that internet helps on provision of updated and detailed information as the matter of fact that tourism industry is soft in nature thus to keep it in existence it should have a continuous advertisement programs in place. This is clarified by Bojnec and Kribel (2005) that, internet provides tourists with the means to gain immediate access to relevant information of greater variety and in-depth than has been available previously, about destinations throughout the world. Liu (2000) added that the internet based on web can not only provide more up to date information but also provide it from a much wider range of sources; while in the past, tourists were solely dependent upon representations and descriptions by the travel trade.

On the other hand, others said that internet has positive influence to the creation and fulfilment of tourists' demand whereby this is clearly explained by Nadiri and Avci (2000) that the internet provides appropriate utilization of time, place and form by giving customers the opportunity to decide what they want, where and when which acts as favour to marketers.

5.1.4 The Challenges Facing the Internet Usage in Marketing Tourism in Mwanza City

Based on the research findings, most of marketing or communication officials interviewed, there were different views about this objective. Most of marketing or communication officials interviewed said that using internet to market tourism is challenged by hackers and fraud whereby the idea is supported by Buhalis (2009) who insisted that privacy issues and cyber-crimes like as auction fraud, vacation fraud, gaming fraud, spamming, and identity theft are threats to the organization mostly in electronic commerce thus, he suggested that the organizations have to pay attention not to get loses and to protect its customers, even though it is difficult to prevent or detect these malicious acts by law enforcements alone. Also Rayport and Jaworski (2003) confirmed that privacy on customers' information is now one of the fiery issues of the Internet. It commonly revolves around security and privacy of confidential customer information related to online sales and transactions, the collection and use of customer data and statistics, as well as the protection of a customer's right to privacy.

Apart from that, the other challenge stipulated by many was system breakdown because of being new or

system being unstable in terms of speed, technological and management changes and the officials not to be conversant. Also they added that Mwanza City has a lot of illiterate people in tourism perspectives and the culture of Mwanza people is somewhat holding back people not to be more of digital age thus it causes less response to internet tourism marketing.

Others said that internet to market tourism is a great challenge in case of accessibility and awareness due to having many layman, also internet doesn't favour every customer, some doesn't use social media neither do they have even a slightest idea of visiting the tourism related websites and this kind of people are very many that they can affect the internet marketing targeted motives. This is supported by Belch and Belch (2004) saying that though there is an even increase in internet users its reach is still outlying the traditional media like radio. To ensure that there is reach and awareness to all of targets, many business organizations have bowed to traditional media to support internet communications for the fulfilment of the business goals. On the other hand, others added that they internet tourism marketing is even more difficult because of the slow internet speed the fact making most of the companies to delay some of their mainly and daily activities if they do not have any alternatives to that. Furthermore, they commented that internet tourism marketing is far more difficult to conduct due to power fluctuation of our country system. Moreover, they insisted that internet tourism marketing is very expensive because of the competitive environmental condition and the customers they serve. This is confirmed by Nothnagel (2006) that because a firm's Web site has to compete with millions of other sites, there is intense competition in an Internet environment for the reason that all of businesses are trying to attract and retain people. To ensure that the above difficulties are being solved by reducing its rate, the marketing or communication officials interviewed confirmed that they are using direct marketing through phoning, fuelled generators, internet routers and education to the stakeholders through seminars, events and exhibitions. On the other hand, others said that they are restructuring or reconstructing the websites and always consulting the network personnel to solve the system problems while others said that budget adjustment to overcome the crisis of marketing costs fluctuation. Also Belch and Belch (2004) supported the solution proposed by concluding that, to ensure that there is reach and awareness to all of targets including those who do not have access to internet, many business organizations have bowed to traditional media to support Internet communications for the fulfilment of the business goals.

5.1.5 Content Analysis Results Discussion

According to the model of internet-based marketing communication (Kull, 2007) which insists that marketing process has a goal of developing a profitable relationship between the customer and organization and the basis of the business process for organization lies on the business mission. On the other side of the organization, there are stakeholders thus it is important to emphasize that the organization sends messages not just to customers but also to other stakeholders to develop relationship between the organization and stakeholders. Lastly feedback must be constant, because without it there will be no dialogue. Findings show that internet as a centre of a model leading to the development of a relationship between the tourism and the stakeholders and the way internet acts as medium for messages and feedback, being two-way interactive one-to-one marketing and communication channel in its marketing strategies on tourism perspectives is through websites. The tourism organizations adopt this model to attract tourists in Mwanza City through different internet features on websites with the conventional Medias relevant to marketing for efficient and effective communication means. Even though according to these same findings, some of the tourism organization and companies' websites had all the features with facilitative means elements (conventional Medias) for internet marketing but others lacked them and others had very features means elements (conventional Medias) to facilitate internet marketing to the fullest. The following are the internet features and their marketing communication tools as observed;

5.1.5.1 Addressability

All websites analysed had emails as their way to facilitate narrowcasting or one to one marketing communication. Despite of having some challenges like dependency on the respondent(s) consent and some problems like being easily to be ignored or to be misled as spam messages, it is considered to be the most effective online marketing technique with high response rate and low costs (Bostanshirin, 2014). Also Raad *et al* (2010) supported the idea by saying that using emails as promotional messages has been well thought-out to be the most effective means of online marketing.

5.1.5.2 Interactivity and Information Architecture

On interactive features, most of the websites about analysed about half of them had feedback forms as their facilitation means to the users' inputs. Other features like automatic subscribe, bulletin board or discussion forum, guestbook(s), Frequent Asked Questions (FAQs), site search and updatable news or events appeared to be used at a very minimal level at an average of 18.8%. This shows that the websites are not interactive enough since most of the features are not there. On information architectural, most of the website analysed, all of them had connectivity and 87.5% were well organized. Other features like labelling seemed not to be observed during websites design to most of the websites because most of them had not.

5.1.5.3 Flexibility and Usability

Most of the website analysed about 50% seemed to be updated gradually, 68.8% of them appeared to be well developed and all websites appeared to be user friendly. This proves that the websites are somehow flexible whereby Belch and Belch (2001) added that it will ensure that consumers are kept constantly informed of the companies' new product offerings, latest price changes and sales promotion initiatives.

5.1.5.4 Accessibility

Most of the websites analysed had images, 87.5% of them had icons as their multimedia features, and also all were compatible to different browsers and had good screen resolution. Thus this confirms that the websites are easily accessed. It is also supported by Liu (2000) when proved that "the web not only provides virtually unlimited access for hundreds of million users but also delivers unlimited amount of information on the Web as there is practically no restrictions in terms of the space of advertisement - the number of pages a web site can accommodate or the "bytes" of data an online database can hold".

5.1.5.5 Direct Marketing

Based on websites analysed, most of them were menu based about 93.8%, also 87.5% of them had postal addresses and 93.8% had telephone numbers. Other direct marketing features like sitemap as easy navigation tool and fax numbers seemed to be used at a minimal level at an average of 25%.

5.1.5.6 Content Quality and Quantity

Based on the websites analysis findings, all websites had location information indicated; also some of the websites about 93.8% had information on how to get to the company however most of websites about 62.5% had no information on destination weather or locality weather. Based on the websites analysis findings, most of the websites had car hiring information indicated, also had hotel booking information and only half of the websites analysed had air transfer and booking information indicated. Thus this indicates that these websites didn't take great advantage of the internet to promote air travel services like any other. Based on the websites analysis findings, most of the websites analysed about 75% had not any news or events indicated. This shows that visitors' information on what to do and how to do it in Mwanza City is not effectively delivered. However, this is in contrast to the findings from South Africa whereby most of the websites analysed about 95% indicated that the news was not shown and about 90% of the websites analysed did not show events either (Nothnagel, 2006).

5.1.5.7 Distribution and Marketing

Based on websites analysis findings, most of the websites had booking systems installed but payment system seemed to be installed at a minimal level about 31.3%. Thus the customers' needs are lowly satisfied on the base on the information comparability. This is also supported by Liu (2000) when said apart from accuracy and relevancy of tourism information, tourists' satisfaction is solely depending with the promptness of customers' requests response.

5.2 Conclusion

This study was to assess the role of internet as an effective tourism marketing tool in Mwanza City as a young and rapid growing tourism destination. The results of this study showed that internet as the intermediaries' facilitator does not play well its role in marketing tourism as it should have done so far in a sense that most of the tourism companies seemed to be not yet to exploit well the internet because it lacked so many features which could have been the motivator to the users of the websites that act as the centre or the major tool of internet marketing and information quality reflection as the result the current status of tourism marketing in Mwanza is just moderate even though the respondents admitted that the internet has direct influence to tourism growth despite the challenges faced by internet users (both the customers and the products (goods and services) providers). According to TTB, the tourism industry is highly dependent on constant, massive flows of information and the success of sales and production depends on a considerable extent on the quality of information (2016). But due to the poor websites which are used as disseminating tools, most of the tourism companies are suffering customers' loss and poor earnings, even others have reached a point of blaming the Tanzania Tourists Board to do marketing does not serve its purpose. In reality, these blames are invalid as it is well known TTB is there to market tourism in general at a large scale and it is not its primary duty to market these companies thus the companies have to take that responsibility.

Also, the researcher had realized that not only the harmonization lacks in the business physical environment among the stakeholders (both public entities and private companies) but also in the electronic environment. The main agents for this disharmony were unreliable electricity and competition. It showed that most of the companies focused more on competition rather than cooperation as the result even the related services could not be collaborated to reduce inconveniences to tourists. Not only that, but also the researcher found that most of the tourism companies were highly sales oriented rather than marketing oriented in a sense that only things which seemed to bring profit to them were the ones displayed in their websites, the fact which mark the inconsideration of needs to their visitors on their websites they possess.

However, Tanzania Tourism Board has launched The Destination Tourism Portal for e-marketing on June 17, 2016 which emphasizes and harmonizes every service provider of tourism related businesses in their

individual boundaries in terms of products and services modernity. It will be easily installed in smart phones and other gadgets and be used in offline mode; the idea behind it is that the service can be processed instantly and immediately. It will serve as a directly access for tourist markets by the service providers and as a move which will avoid leakages of revenue and enable local tourism agents to benefit more.

5.3 Recommendation

According to the results obtained in this study, the researcher recommends the following to the internet tourism marketing in Mwanza City. Because the findings indicate that most of tourism companies haven't made good use of internet in marketing tourism and no harmonization between and among stakeholders then time is now for them to redesign their websites in a way that all internet features for internet marketing for tourism will be easily recognized and used and not to rely only on the portal launched by the government body, TTB. In a sense that both the government and the tourism related businesses should play their parts according to each and every one responsibility and depending on what and who they serve in tourism market.

Also due to the fact that, Mwanza City like any other destination in Tanzania is immensely depending on TANESCO for electricity service provision as the only cost effective way in doing businesses to operate most of machinery activities including tourism technical and systemic services like those for e-marketing then the government should find a way on how to ensure that the electricity service is reliable because now the information has become one of human basic needs and to put more clearer it is a life blood or cement which holds together the tourism industry stakeholders especially for its prosperity, But without cost effective electricity to be ensured then our industry will never be in harmony no matter how it may try, because if company has to incur more cost in alternative electricity equipment's acquiring and installation then other area (s) of its operation have to be forgone according to the opportunity cost rule of economy for unlimited wants when resources are scarce. Hence you can imagine how many companies can afford in that incompatible situation to do marketing with unreliable source of power. Also, because all companies are serving different segments, cooperation is the best way to build up different ideas for the sake of both the tourists and the companies.

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