

T.C

ANTALYA BILIM UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

THESIS MASTER PROGRAM OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON DESTINATION
ATTRACTIVENESS AND TRAVEL INTENTION: THE CASE OF
DJIBOUTI**

DISSERTATION

PREPARED BY

HALIMA HASSAN OMAR

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PREFACE

The hereby master's dissertation of Business Administration covers and discusses the impact of social media marketing on destination attractiveness, subsequently on tourist intention to travel. Besides this, it assesses how social media marketing impacts significantly and stimulates the enhancement of the other variables included in the study.

Within the framework of this study, a literature review has been made and various studies regarding the topic have been analyzed. I would like to thank my dissertation advisor Dr. Abubakar Mohammed Abubakar for guiding me during the preparation of this study and the co-supervisor Dr. Sezer Karasakal who shared his thoughts and suggestions with me during various stages of the study. I am also grateful for the support received from friends and family.-----/-----/ 2021

Halima Hassan Omar

Signature:-----

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın çeşitli amaçları bulunmaktadır. İlk olarak, sosyal medya pazarlamasının destinasyon çekiciliği ve seyahat niyeti üzerindeki etkisini incelemektir. Ayrıca destinasyon çekiciliğinin seyahat niyeti üzerindeki rolünü belirlemek ve sosyal medya pazarlaması ile seyahat niyeti arasındaki ilişkide aracılık rolünü ortaya koymaktır. Yargısal örnekleme yöntemi kullanarak ve çevrimiçi anket aracılığı ile 400 geçerli anket toplanmıştır. Oluşturulan hipotezleri test etmek amacıyla SmartPLS programı kullanılmıştır. Bulgular, sosyal medya pazarlamasının destinasyon çekiciliğini ve seyahat niyetini önemli ölçüde etkilediğini ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, destinasyon çekiciliğinin, seyahat niyeti için önemli bir öncül olduğunu ve sosyal medya pazarlaması ve seyahat niyeti arasında aracılık etkisinin olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ek olarak, sosyal medya pazarlaması ve destinasyon çekiciliğinin turistlerin Cibuti'ye seyahat etmeye yönelik seyahat niyetleri üzerinde etkili olduğu, dolayısıyla değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler olumlu ve anlamlıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Destinasyon çekiciliği, Cibuti, Sosyal medya pazarlaması, Smart-PLS, Seyahat niyeti

ABSTRACT

The purpose of conducting this study is to examine the influence of social media marketing on destination attractiveness and travel intention, it is also aimed to identify the role of destination attractiveness impacting travel intention, and assess its mediating role. An online questionnaire was used to investigate tourists' responses using the judgmental sampling method, a total of 400 valid questionnaires were retrieved. A quantitative approach using confirmatory factor analysis was applied, and through SmartPLS software the data was assessed to test the hypothesis. The findings revealed that social media marketing significantly influences destination attractiveness and travel intention. Destination attractiveness has demonstrated that it is a significant antecedent for travel intention and its mediating effect has received empirical evidence. In addition, the results showed that social media marketing and destination attractiveness will stimulate the travel intention of tourists toward traveling to Djibouti hence their relationship was positive and significant.

Keywords:

Destination attractiveness, Djibouti, Social media marketing, SmartPLs, Travel intention

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

DA:	Destination Attractiveness
DMO:	Destination Marketing Organization
TI:	Travel Intention
ONTD:	Organization National De Tourism
SM:	Social Media
SMM:	Social Media Marketing

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The recent decade experienced an expansion of social media as it has become intensively accessible globally, reaching more than half of the world population (Correa et al., 2010; Spillecke & Perrey, 2012). This has produced a new era of communication methods for profit-oriented organizations hence acquiring them to look for interactive means attaining for their customer (Gallaughier et al., 2010; Kozinets et al., 2010). Social media (SM) delivers a range of opportunities for all types of organizations and brands to stimulate their growth through which SM marketing strategies are enhanced. SM enables companies to promote their activities efficiently and enhanced the interaction between the companies and the market niche focused on (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Subsequently, the tourism industry starts integrating social media marketing (SMM) within their marketing strategy as well to benefit from this phenomenon, as it can impact the way they function according to Xiang and Gretzel (2010). Besides this, as it globally becomes accessible hospitality industry can benefit from its application by increasing the performance of their databases to stimulate the consumers' travel inquiry (e.g. Fuchs et al., (2009); Sánchez-Franco & Rondan Cataluña, 2010). SM has been widely implemented by travelers for multiple purposes as they adopted it for searching for a destination to travel to, and share their travel experience through social media sites (eg., Facebook, RenRen, and TripAdvisor, Flickr, and YouTube), in form of blogs and microblogs. In addition, Wang and Fesenmaier (2004) demonstrated that SM is advantageous for handling client affairs through their distinctive ability to attract customers, enabling tourism organizations to engage with customers through social interactions and to retain consumers or tourists through affiliation.

Besides, Dellarocas (2003) similarly noted that SM provides tourism corporations extraordinary prospects to comprehend plus answer to consumer inclinations, by examining the feedbacks of tourists on the internet related to tourism such as TripAdvisor and Virtual tours. Ultimately the following study discusses the implementation of SMM by tourism sectors, and how through its usage they could promote their services and reach a large number of tourists. SMM is not the only important factor in tourism sector development; there are varieties of factors that hospitality industries, as well as destination marketers, should intensively invest in as they can impact their performance such as destination attractiveness (DA) and travel intention (TI).

DA is defined as the degree to which destinations meet the touristic prospects of their guests in terms of dimensions like leisure opportunities, food, accommodation, cultural fruitfulness, natural beauty, and various other amenities (Pearce, 1979). In addition, factors such as exchange rate, political risk, calamity vigilance, and infrastructure also contribute to DA formation (Ferrario, 1979). According to MacKay and Fesenmaier (1997), the desirability of a destination is resolved through the perceptual beliefs about tourists resulted from their overall traveling experience. Attractions establish the vitalizing power of the tourism systems using it encourages travelers to visit and spend time there which forms or stimulates the tourist loyalty toward the destination (Gunn, 1994). DA plays a dynamic role in determining destination effectiveness (Buhalis, 2000), also it is an important “pull factor” that produces tourists’ assortment of one destination above alternative (Lee, Ou, & Huang, 2009). In addition according to Hu and Ritchie (1993), DA delivers an insight joint comparative prominence of profits to tourists.

On the other hand, TI is defined as the willingness of tourists to visit the destination (Chen, Shang, & Li, 2014). The decision to visit a destination is understood as a lucid calculation that compromises the costs and benefits of a set of alternate destinations, which were derived from peripheral information sources (Chen et al., 2014). TI is a sort of behavioral intention, and it could be assumed in the same theoretical perspective, therefore, it is useful to recognize the behavioral intention based on the theories related to coherent action. One method illustrated by MacKay and Fesenmaier (1998), has delivered important evidence for such indulgence. Those investigators implemented practical stages of change model in social

or clinical psychology (DiClemente et al., 1991; Prochaska & DiClemente, 1998) in learning the intention to travel for dividing the breakout travel market. TI seizes consumers' mindsets more effectively than behavioral measures in terms of real preferences (Jang, Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2009). It rebounds the importance of considering travelers' intentions for marketers who aim to market the tourism destination with the services offered.

Several studies conducted in the tourism sector demonstrated the significance of SMM when it comes to benefits derived from its application, for instance, the research conducted by Nawaz and Mubarak (2015), illustrated the importance of adoption of SMM by tourism. Base on their findings they conclude that the adoption of SMM has been influential in retaining tourists and it enabled the development of solid relationships with them to ensure the enhancement of tourist loyalty toward their destination (Nawaz & Mubarak, 2015). On the other hand, another study was conducted in evaluating the effect of social media on tourism revealed that SMM affects tourism, particularly in the way travelers access and use tourism information (Xiang, Magnini, & Fesenmaier, 2015). Moreover, Reitsamer et al. (2016), investigated the mediating role of tourist attitude between DA and destination attachment. DA has proven to be a significant antecedent for destination attachment and tourists' attitude as their measurement has received empirical evidence and has been validated (Reitsamer et al., 2016).

In the other study conducted by Abubakar et al. (2015), online word of mouth (e-WOM) positively influenced destination trust and intention to travel. Also, DA significantly impacted the travel intention of tourists who assess DA from their understanding as well as emotional perspectives (Ma et al., 2017). Most of the studies mentioned above illustrated the importance of SMM, DA, and TI in the enhancement of the tourism sector, and it revealed that SMM plays a significant role in marketing destinations (Nawaz & Mubarak, 2015), and stimulating the tourist TI. Also, DA discovered to be a significant antecedent to TI (Ma et al., 2017). However, none of these studies has mutually joined the concepts of SMM, DA, and TI within a common study, and investigated the influence, of SMM on DA and TI. Therefore this study tries to fill the gap in the past researches by proposing research that merged the factors SMM, DA, and TI.

1.1. Context Of The Study

The Republic of Djibouti is a country located in the horn of Africa and bordered by Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. It is also located next to Bab-el-Mandeb, the passage that links the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea via the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and the Gulf of Aden, and has a total area of 23200 km². The country is characterized to have a harsh climate that can't support agriculture production, due to that more than 80 percent of the food requirement are imported from neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and some European countries. Djibouti has 1 million populations with 2 main ethnic groups inhabited which are Somali (60%) and Afar people are 35% of the main population, the remaining 5% are Arabs and other nationalities (Wikipedia, 2021). Djibouti has 5 main regions known as Tadjourah, Obock, Ali-Sabieh, Dikhil, and Arta, and the capital city is called Djibouti. The majority of the population are living in the capital because all the living facilities are found in the capital as it is hard living in the regions because of the climate and agriculture sector is not exploitable. Djiboutian culture is merely driven from its nomadic heritage, in which men most of the time wear Macawiis (a traditional sarong worn around the waist) and women dress Dirac (a long dress made of cotton), also jilbab and jellabiya Arabian dress are worn by Djiboutian because of its part of the religion, reported by Djibouti Office National de Tourism (ONTD, 2020).

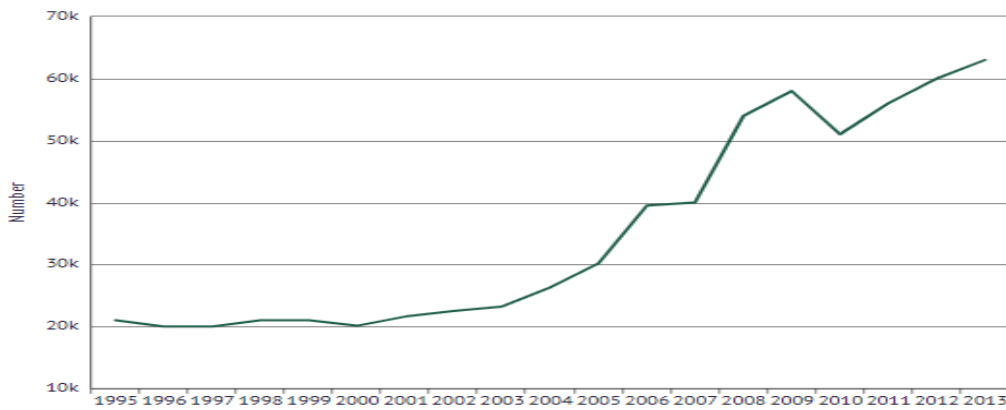
Djibouti's economy is driven merely by 3 sectors: the service sector, the industry sector, and the tourism sector. However, the main significant one is the service sector consisting of 80% of the country's GDP. The industrial sector revenue consists 15% of the GDP, and it is considered a growing sector in which the government focuses on enhancing its significance by creating more jobs and supporting small businesses to grow, to lower the unemployment level in the country. However, the tourism sector contributes only 3% of the country's GDP, and it is regulated by the Ministry of Commerce and Tourism and is considered as one of the growing economic sectors in Djibouti. The government report shows that 4500 jobs were created with the help of the tourism sector (Oxford Business Group, 2020).

In April 2018 the country was nominated and become the first African metropolis by the European council on tourism and trade (Oxford Business Group, 2020), this event has

enhanced the consideration of the international media of Djibouti as the destination for tourism, besides this, it enhanced the tourist arrivals. The tourist's arrival has increased from 73000 visitors in 2014 to 140000 visitors recently (ONTD, 2020), base on their statistics shows that around 48% of the visitor were from France, which is almost half of the visitors, while 21% are from other European countries. The third-largest group came from the Gulf States. Nevertheless visitors from African countries represented just 6% of the tourists, and the majority of them were from Ethiopia. Finally, the visitors from Asia and North America represented slight percentages at 5% and 3%, respectively. Also as stated by the Lonely Planet (2021) for travel monitoring, has ranked Djibouti among the top 10 countries to travel to in the year 2018, this has motivated or stimulated the awareness of the country as a tourist destination.

Djibouti benefits from its locality that enriches it with several niche attraction points, the main local attraction areas are volcanic fields (like Goubet el kharab situated at the end of the Gulf of Tadjourah), sandy beaches alongside the red sea which are (Siesta Beach, Red Sea, Khor Ambado beach, and sable blanc beach), the forest (like day forest), salt lakes (lake Abbe and Lake Assal), mountains (Goda mountain, Mabla, Arrei, and Garbi mountain) and several islands like (moucha island, maskali and seven brother island). In addition, there are some historical places such as a mosque known(korijib and Mahmoud Harbi), and the Loyada city that is surrounded by palm trees and a beach. Although one of the endangered whale sharks was found in Djibouti which has become one of the attraction points by tourists, actually all these mentioned destinations made Djibouti the best tourist destination, the analysis reported from the ONTD (2020).

Figure 1: Tourist Arrival from 1995-2013



Source: Knoema (2013)

1.2. Problem Statement

The tourism sector in Djibouti, despite having seen its progress in the latest years, for example, the total of tourists increased from 73000 to 140000 visitors according to the statistics reported in 2018 by the tourism organization of Djibouti (ONTD, 2020). However, the tourism sector is yet underdeveloped and facing a lot of obstacles preventing its development. Hence Djibouti location has strategic importance as it is situated next to the red sea, precisely Bab el-Mandeb which is considered one of the mandatory passages for the Suez canal where almost 30% of the world shipping passes through it. The country concentrates intensively on the development of the service sector since its revenue generated contributes more than 80% of the country's GDP. The country merely invests in the service sectors because of the opportunities obtained through it, neglecting some mandatory sectors that could be the back point of Djibouti's economy like the tourism sector, even though the country benefits from several touristic attraction points that are considered the most attractive destination for the tourist, the above mention information obtained from the World Bank Group (2021) discussing the Vision Djibouti for the year 2035.

As less investment is made in the tourism sector, the country is barely known by the world population as a touristic destination, due to the inadequacy of promoting tourism of the country. Besides this, the infrastructure and other touristic facilities required improvement to support the development of tourism. Consequently, the researcher within this study aims to

shed light on this phenomenon, by conducting the following study, as there is a need for the tourism sector in Djibouti to obtain some approaches that could enhance its performance. In addition as none of the previous researches (e.g. Nawaz & Mubarak, 2015; Reitsamer et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2017), combined the factors such as SMM, DA, and TI within a mutual study, to analyze the impact of SMM in stimulating the DA and TI. Therefore the current study aims to fill the gap of past literature, with a research model that comprehensively investigates the influence of SMM on DA, and TI. In addition, to enhance the awareness of Djiboutian DMO, as well as the tourism sectors concerning the importance of better employment of these factors (SMM, DA, and TI) that will lead to the development of the tourism sector.

1.3. Purpose and Objectives Of The Study

This study is designed to measure the impact of SMM on DA as well as TI. The findings that will be generated from the following study are expected to assist destination marketing organizations of Djibouti as well as the Djiboutian Ministry of Tourists in developing the tourism sector by enhancing their awareness concerning the influence of SMM while promoting attractive destinations of the country aiming to attract tourists toward the country.

The specific objectives aimed to achieve through this study are described below:

- Firstly to explore the relationship between SMM, DA, and TI constructs.
- Secondly to evaluate the influence of SMM on DA, and assess its significance as an antecedent of DA.
- Thirdly to examine the influence of DA on TI, besides, analyze how an attractive destination enhances the tourist's wiliness to travel to Djibouti.
- Fourthly analyze the influence of SMM on the TI construct, aiming to assess the impact of SMM stimulating tourist TI.
- Lastly to assess the mediating role of DA between SMM and TI, and provide evidence of the relationship.

1.4. Structure Of The Study

The following study consists of 5 main chapters, the first chapter is the introduction, the researcher provides a philosophy of the research and explains what the study is about. In addition, the introduction chapter includes the problem statement, the purpose of conducting the study, besides this, it provides a structure of the study that summarizes the role of each chapter included within the study.

Chapter 2 covers the literature review part and this chapter consists of 4 phases, the first phase discusses the concept of SMM, besides it elaborates deeply on all the topics related to the SMM. The second phase elaborates the concept of DA, whereas the third segment consists of deliberating the TI. The last segment is about hypothesis development and through it the discussion concerning the relationships of the variables also their impacts will be held.

The third chapter attempts to clarify the methodology applied in the research by illustrating the procedure used for conducting the studies, such as the sampling procedure, measurement, and data analysis. The fourth chapter shows the results of the measurement model implemented in the study. By illustrating the reliability and validity measurement of the various variables, as well as the measurement of the structural model, within which the hypothesis was evaluated through indirect effects as well as other measurements such as collinearity test. The last chapter attempt to present a discussion of the findings generated from the result section, besides this it includes the theoretical and practical implications of the study, as well as the limitations, encountered during the study and provides the future direction.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review chapter illustrates a theoretical fundamental of a thesis. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss several topics related to the study. Firstly, an overview discussion will be held concerning SMM. Within the discussion of SMM, several notions will be covered such as a concept of social media will be explained, then social media marketing will be explored, within this part business value of SMM and its application in the tourism sectors will be illustrated. Lastly, the dimensions of SMM will be covered. The second phase will be about discussing the factor of DA, whereas the third phase is about the factor TI. The last segment is about hypothesis development and through it the discussion concerning the relationships of the variables also their impacts will be seized.

2.1. The Concept of Social Media

The appearance of social media (SM) in the 21st century has changed drastically the mean of communication, and become the method of testimonial of this century. Permitting its users to express their belief, though concerning what matters to them creatively, as it gives them digital freedom of speech. SM has shaped and compelled companies, to pursue a method of communication to engage with their consumers. SM has also become a significant tool for businesses since it allows them to promote their products or services and interact with their clients around the globe (Gallagher & Ransbotham, 2010; Kozinets et al., 2010).

This rapidly growing marketing network, has grasped more than half of the world population of all internet users, and delivers absolute openings for companies, and contributes to reputation building (Correa et al., 2010; Spillecke & Perrey, 2012). Though Kaplan and Heinlein (2010), suggested that SM deliver new prospects and profits for trademark administration. However, one of the main challenges caused by SM regardless of emergent academic interest is the exertion of assessing the impact of SMM on brand success (Schultz & Block, 2012; Schultz & Pettier, 2013). SM is defined as a variety of internet technology

and software that emerged or built on the foundation of web 2.0 that permits its users the exchange of contents and opinions (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Specifically, SM has been vital to recent advances in interactive extrapolation about consumer preferences, different peer-to-peer and targeted marketing techniques (Aral & Walker, 2011), and demand prediction (Asur & Huberman, 2010; Bollen et al., 2011).

As matter of fact, the transformative power of SM encompasses further than marketing and features of consumer behavior. Progressively, SM is also altering the manner businesses relate to workers, permitting them to build flexible relationships with distant talent as claimed by Archak (2010), to crowdsource new concepts (Di Gangi & Wasko, 2009), or also to participate in micro outsourcing (Goldman et al., 2011; Paolacci et al., 2010). SM has converted the customers from passive receivers of the company's messages to active creators that effortlessly contribute their creations to the internet (Hays et al., 2013). As a consequence, SM strengthens the power of users by enabling them, and the authority of marketers and institutions decreases.

Inside organizations, SM has the potential to transform the exchange of knowledge and expertise (Benbya & Alstynne, 2010), thus accelerating innovation and the development of new products (Zwass, 2010). Hence SM is a two-way communication permitting brands not only to promote their business but also assists to interact with the customer, due to this companies should align their social media strategy with the global marketing strategy to find a particular group of individuals to whom which suppose to target. To avoid generalization which might cause an unwilling issue that could ruin the reputation of the brand due to unsatisfied customers (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012).

SM emanates in several forms or types, which are known as Blogs, Microblogs, Social Networks, Media-Sharing Sites, Social Bookmarking and selection sites, analysis sites, forums, and effective worlds. One of these forms will be explained in the following sections:

Firstly microblogging and blog is a type of blog in which the blog has a limited character allowing only to post a short type blog, Twitter is an example of microblogging as it only allows its users to post a post that contains only 140 characters. On the other hand, media

sharing sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram enable to upload of photos, videos, and audio, which is also accessible for anyone around the world.

Furthermore, social bookmarking is a procedure that allows the storage of files, also enables to classify and sharing. Social bookmarking is explained as an approach or technique that is interpreted in form of organizing, maintaining restoring of full bookmarks online. The application of this method has started in April 1996 after the website was lunch enabling its users the ability to bookmark online. It is a very significant way to ingress different lists of bookmarks from several computers, also several sites of bookmarking have employed a voting system that encourages users to vote for the bookmarks that they found more usable.

Review sites enable to provide reviews concerning the post that can be posted about people, these types of websites commonly use the Web 2.0 method to collect reviews from users' sites to employ on the topic related or useful for the site, also amazon and epinions.com are one of the review sites. There are also affiliate product review site which enables professionally design and it is merely implemented by e-commerce marketers. These affiliate review sites are founded in form of blog platforms like WordPress that ensure privacy for its user and facilitate the contact page for search engine optimization (SEO). Lastly, when it comes to social media networks, we observed several popular and merely used social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. These networks are drastically emerging and have more audience compared to other social networks, also they are one of the preferred tools for marketing purposes, all the above-mentioned types or forms of SM have been adopted from the study served for the exploration of SMM conducted by Saravanakumar and SuganthaLakshmi (2012).

Since the foundation of social media at the beginning of 1996, it has succeeded to penetrate half of the 7.7 billion people in the world. Social network platforms have nearly tripled their total user compared in the last decade, from 970 million total users in 2010 to more than 3.81 billion users in 2020 (Brian, 2021). By way of 2021, the number of individuals using social media is over 3.96 billion worldwide reaching in January 2021 to 4.20 billion, which is the highest ratio of 53.6% using social media users globally. The daily usage of SM platforms is 2 hours and 25 minutes per person, the most popular platform used by people from all around

the world is Facebook with 2,740 million active users. Whereas in Youtube 2,291 million, Whatsapp 2000 million people, Facebook messenger 1,300 people use, Instagram 1,221 people use. These mentioned social media platforms are highly used by users around the world, according to the statistic concerning the usage of social media (Brian, 2021; Dave, 2021).

Facebook is widely used and if it was a country it could have been among one of the populated countries as its users reached almost a billion. Facebook is considered an efficient marketing tool allowing companies to interact or engage with their market niche conveniently. When it comes to LinkedIn there are 64 million active users and on Twitter, 21 million individuals have an account reported from the study conducted by Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi (2012). To sum up social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Youtube have been the keystone of social media strategies in bigger companies, hence they are principally used social networks by the users, and through these networks, companies will be able to market their business at the same time keep up the interaction with its customers.

2.1.1. Web 2.0

Web 2.0 states to information technology, applications that permit its users to create and enable the allocation of web content (Howcroft et al., 2008), as it encourages content creation or sharing. Web 2.0 technology such as XML, Ajax, API, RSS, mash-ups, enable and facilitate the exchange of the data for the content creator. Therefore social web designates all the aspects related to technology, content, and it is defined or explained as a set of the web that brings together communities of the generator online to share their thought and knowledge concerning a topic of discussion (Safko & Brake, 2009). According to Cheon et al. (2010), Web 2.0 is illustrated as a recently developed and improved web-based social media platform that permits real-time conversations with the customers, it enables also the brand to allow either way of communication or discussion with their clients. The web enables the brand to listen and respond to its consumers (Fournier & Avery, 2011). The Similar, way consumers and organizations alike are progressively increasing the use of web 2.0 to share, discuss, and cooperate. In fact with the appearance of web 3.0, the way of communication has been

upgraded to 3 ways of communication, as within this social media the website speaks to the other websites and allows the visitors/members/clients to speak back to the website.

2.2. Social Media Marketing

2.2.1. Discussion of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) is more than an expression (Muske et al., 2009). SMM is defined as the usage of SM and its networks for marketing purposes, it enables companies, brands to find approaches to engage with current customers and reach out to new customers. Although SMM permits companies to promote their product, services, missions, and cultures efficiently (Adam, 2021). SMM is the implementation of social media platforms to connect with the audience to build a brand, also increase sales (Chitra & Kalaiselvi, 2021). According to Barefoot and Szabo (2010), this form of marketing is characterized as a division of online marketing activities. SMM has introduced an innovative term of exponential distribution and trust to mass communication and mass marketing to promise its users to range messages to personal contacts (Hafele, 2011). Through this approach of marketing, new tools, methods have been advanced and improved in turn for businesses. In addition, SM marketers have started doing better in their activities with the introduction of analytical applications found with the implementation of social networks (Hafele, 2021).

According to the study conducted by authors Chitra and Kalaiselvi, (2021) concerning SMM, they identify 5 pillars of SMM which are described below:

The first pillar is the strategy, companies before thinking of publishing on SM, the first step to do is to identify an SM strategy that best aligns with the company objective (Chitra & Kalaiselvi, 2021). The second pillar is Planning and Publishing, businesses or companies should portrait what their activities will look like in SM, accurately through which means they will engage with their audience, will it be through sharing video, photos, also to decide the timing in which this post will be shared in their platforms (Chitra & Kalaiselvi, 2021). The third one is listening and engagement, monitoring what customers or internet users shared content concerning the brands or any business assets will require companies to adopt

social media tools to avoid miss-communication also to maintain a positive brand image in the long run (Chitra & Kalaiselvi, 2021).

The fourth pillar of SM is analytics, analytics is part of being on SM which is about knowing how far the improvement is made, thus reports of engagement and reach are very important. The last pillar is known as advertising, advertisement through social media consider to be more authentic and effective, since half of the world's population use SM, it is easy for companies to reach for audience rapidly. This makes SM the best platform to advertise products, services and grasped the attention of customers. Ads can be displayed on SM platforms by purchasing them to promote and further brand development (Chitra & Kalaiselvi, 2021).

2.2.2. The Business Value of Social Media Marketing

The emergence of SMM has transformed information technology and improved the dynamics of the market, menacing the marketability of the corporation (Porter, 2001). As it enhanced consumer consumption habits by empowering them with a new aspect of assessing the goods or services they would like to purchase (Albors, Ramos, & Hervas, 2008). This improvement had transformed and affected the operation of marketers and impacted the marketing application regarding the strategies and techniques, this has also brought new challenges and difficult choices for marketers.

According to Stokes (2013), firms have progressively implemented SM in various marketing activities such as branding, market research, customer relationship management, service provision, and sales promotion. The fascinating growth of the smartphone or mobile market demonstrates how information technology plays an underlying role in the day to day life as it becomes available and accessible for anyone in the world. Moreover, SMM platforms enable firms to create a virtual existence through which they can interact or engage directly with their customers concerning their products or services, also enabling them to update consumers with new signs of progress (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2021). Companies by connecting with their audience through SM, are not only able to advertise their service but also serve to collect feedback from the customer so they can enhance their

services to build better customer satisfaction, also to expand their market share (Chan & Guillet, 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

2.2.3. The application of Social Media Marketing In Tourism

In the case of the tourism industry, SMM has a significant role for instance it enables tourism marketing and serves to promote the destination (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). The availability of the internet has profoundly transformed how travelers reach for information and shaped their experience sharing through SM platforms (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Senecal & Nantel, 2004; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). SMM websites, shorten customer-generated content and broadly have been used by virtual travelers' (Gretzel et al., 2006; White & White, 2007). Customer-generated content also reviews sites like Tripadvisor could even emasculate the authority of outdated (DMOs) or conservative commercials (Gretzel et al., 2006). SM has been adopted differently by travelers and the tourism sector. For instance, consumers acquire figures to help the excursion-planning course and to proceed with conversant choices about the trip planned in terms of expenses (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Ruzic & Bilos, 2010). As an outcome, travel establishments like the "Lonely Planet" established their virtual travel societies to interact with their clients in exchanges.

However, when it comes to the tourism industry more accurately tourism marketers implement SM to encourage dialogue, interaction, and appointment in ways that old marketing (Tuten, 2008). This type of participation can be dynamic in increasing customer loyalty, enhancing engendering remarkable content, and increasing their awareness (Parise et al., 2008). In addition, it allows tourism marketers to provide customized information for tourists that align with their preferences and address their requirements, this will prevent obstacle that will prevent destination marketing (Matloka & Buhalis, 2010).

Valls, Ouro, Freund, and Andrade (2013), recommended that the usage of SM will offer a different online marketing strategy for tourism corporations which is not only intended to encourage the transaction generated from tourists. Besides supports developing an interactive relationship with its client in particular for better customer engagement and enhance customer loyalty towards the hotels. Moreover, SM applications could contribute to tourism

knowledge creation, competency, and availability of the online network will positively affect information sharing, as well as knowledge creation for virtual communities (Chalkiti & Sigala, 2008).

2.2.4. Dimension and Attributes of Social Media Marketing

In fact, in this study, the researcher implemented SMM to analyze its influence or impact over other factors within the study which are destination attractiveness and travel intention. To measure SMM, the researcher has adopted the study that served to describe luxury brands from Kim and Ko (2012) which compromise SMM's into 5 dimensions (entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth). The following study scrutinizes and measures SMM efforts of influencing DA and TI, by applying the 5 perspectives of Kim and Ko (2012). These 5 perspectives will be elaborated as follow:

2.2.4.1. Entertainment

Social media platforms engender enjoyable activities that keep the user entertained and have fun (Agichtein et al., 2008). Besides this, Manthiou et al. (2013) stated that the luxurious viewpoint of SM users is a pleasure seeker who is looking for enjoyment and expecting to be amused using SM. For instance, tourism marketers' ability to engender entertaining activity through their SM website will significantly affect the tourist engagement online, which will enhance the tourist interaction as entertainment is proven to be one of the strongest purposes for applying social media (Kaye, 2007; Muntinga et al., 2011). Shao, (2009) notice that entertainment enables intense user-generated content. Also, entertainment is one of the major factors that keep participation in social networks (Park et al., 2009). On the other hand, Muntinga et al. (2011) realize that SM users are looking for entertaining or enjoyable content related to the brand. Amusement and relaxation are some of the motives seeking entertainment through social media content that is loaded within it (Courtois et al., 2009). Moreover, this study surveyed to analyze whether participants on social media pages known to “visit Djibouti”, are having fun and getting entertainment with the content shared on that page.

2.2.4.2. Interaction

The interaction through SM enables tourism marketers, destination marketers, as well as brands and customers to exchange communication concerning the service offered, besides this, it has changed or shaped the communication method among companies and their clients (Gallaughar & Ransbotham, 2010; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Interaction is one of the stimuli creating the content on SM. SMM enable generally its user to discuss and share their idea concerning what matters to them (Daugherty et al., 2008). In addition, social interaction contributes to brand-related platforms so they can find or engage with those who are similar in the way of thinking to discuss or share opinions about a specific brand of interest (Muntinga et al., 2011).

SM users are into two categories: profile-based and content-based and it varies upon the nature of the interaction. When it comes to profile-based content the main concentrated point is the user as SM supports the discussion of topics that is interesting to the users. However, content-based social media concentrate more on the content itself and evaluate the discussion held or the comment was written by the users related to the content posted (Zhu & Chen, 2015). As individuals fond more into the content they find interesting, companies or brands should be able to generate and post content that matches and align with their client's interest to promote interaction, to stimulate a positive relationship that can improve its credibility (Manthiou et al., 2013). This study described the interaction as a sort of opinion sharing.

2.2.4.3. Trendiness

Social media empowers its user and destination marketer with up-to-date broadcasts and held interesting discussions on topics that are majorly looked for on the search networks (Naaman, Becker, & Gravano, 2011). Muntinga et al. (2011), reclaim that trendy information is categorized in form of 4 sub-drives (surveillance, knowledge, pre-purchase information, and inspiration). Surveillance is defined as being updated about SM pages of interest, whereas knowledge is referred to as information related to the company from which customers obtain knowledge and expertise.

2.2.4.4. Customization

Customization is defined as the ability given to the customer to modify products of interest so they can align with their preference (Schmenner, 1986). In addition, Zhu and Chen (2015) stated that there are two forms of message related to customization which is described as customized message and broadcast. A customized message is expressed in form of pursuing specific individuals or small group of people and this can be observed in the post shared on Facebook, however, the broadcast includes a message that targets anyone interested in the post shared the example of the broadcast message can be found on Twitter tweets. To sum up, the following study's, customization is evaluated and interpreted as the degree to which social media afford its user the ability to customize the activities provided.

2.2.4.5. Word of mouth (WOM)

Word of mouth is described as a passage of information from a person to another, it can be explained when a customer recommends a product to his surrounding which he found interesting. This is an example of the type of marketing hence the individuals play the role of co-creator of the brand. WOM may enhance the sales as well as the brand image, which will expand the market share as it will increase the brand awareness between the customers (Muntinga et al., 2011). In the following study word of mouth is utilized to find out whether the individual participant is willing to share and transmit information shared concerning the service provided from the social media fan page cold “visit Djibouti”, in which the survey created has been shared.

2.3. Conceptualization of Destination Attractiveness

2.3.1. Definition of Destination

The destination is defined as a place to which people plan to visit as planned to end a journey (Merriam-Webster, 2021). However, from the tourism perspective, this definition is not convenient, that’s why some authors have presented different viewpoints of what constitutes a tourism destination. In fact, according to Buhalis (2000), the term destination is defined and explained as places that deal with a combination of tourism products and services, which are expended beneath the brand name of the destination. Buhalis (2000), argues that destination is better illustrated as geographical regions, assumed by visitors as unique units

with a core of six main supplies such as attractions, accessibility, available packages activities, and ancillary services.

The sightseeing destination itself is not sufficient, besides the significance judgment varies with the sentimental connotation of dissimilar divisions of the vacationer market (Davidoff, 1983). Reynolds (1965, p. 75) distinct that persons will have different images or perspectives of a similar product which means that the sum of individuals with a definite image is continuously considered as a proportion and does not present the whole population. This depiction is not just about a picture of a destination, however, it consists of the individual point of view or perception concerning the destination, and consequently, it is decently an individual notion (Gunn, 1972). As individuals' intuitions of a location are the veracities that stimulate them to travel, the real attraction contributions are not as important as the travelers' images of this destination (Blank, 1989). As matter of fact, Mayo (1973, p. 217) determined, that the tourist perception concerning the destination is more important than what can a destination has to provide to its visitor, what matter the most is the tourist's point of view about the particular destination. Besides this, a destination is tangled in the customer's mind to sentimental connotations, which could be perceived as positive, neutral, or negative feelings (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

2.3.2. Destination Attractiveness and Its Role in Tourism Development

Research conduct on destination attractiveness (DA) demonstrates that this notion is limited in that endeavor of measuring and assessing the attractiveness of tourism destinations (Formica, 2002). An attractive destination is perceived to be more appealing to tourists, also DA refers to tourists' opinions regarding the attractiveness of a place visited and perceived as being able to create satisfaction require for their needs. Mayo and Jarives (1981) have defined DA as an incitement applicable to tourists that afford the ability to create benefit and that enable the destination to deliver the benefit expected for the individuals. According to Hu and Ritchie (1993), DA is defined as an insight into the prominence of benefits to entities and the terminus's capability to carry these benefits. This explanation advocates that the further a destination can content tourists, the more attractive it will be perceived.

The ability of an attractive destination to provide benefit to its client has improved because of particular features that make a destination to be perceived as attractive such as attraction, infrastructure, or service provided. To attract more tourists toward a destination, it is really important considering developing facilities and quality of service given for better customer satisfaction. In fact, without DA tourism sector would not be existed and there would be no need for tourism facilities since the tourist's major focused point is how much the destination is attractive to travel to (Kim & Lee, 2002). As matter of fact, the notion of DA and its assessment has received a lot of attention equally from tourism research as well as policymakers, in the following decade (Formica & Uysal, 2006; Kim, 1998; Lee, Huang, & Huery-Ren, 2010).

The literature illustrates DA based on the physical feature of the destination that is considered as a source of tourism reserve (Formica & Uysal, 2006). DA has become a source that is appealing and accessible only found in specific destinations since destination has no longer been defined just as the natural environment (Buhalis, 2000). Hotels' ability to create a multifacet service that can generate an appealing and memorable destination experience (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2008; Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Formica and Uysal (2006) addressed DA on the way the tourist has perceived the particular destination. Therefore it is so important for the image formation of the hotels. Besides this, the higher is the capability of a destination to grasp tourist attention and attract them, the greater will be the consumption of products and services by the tourist will be. This will stimulate the development of the tourism industry as it will enhance their performance and impact significantly (Lerner & Haber, 2001; Molina-Azorin et al., 2010).

2.3.3. Dimension of Destination Attractiveness

A destination comprises a set of tourism facilities, that consists of several multi-destination features that jointly govern the allure of a destination to a certain tourist in a particular travel situation (Kim, 1998). Moreover, the appeal of a destination has a remarkable impact on defining an individual's destination of selection, which can be analyzed through the following factors that include potentials of satisfaction, intentions of

tourists to revisit that particular destination. Opinions generated from the benefits and motivations accumulated from the visit of that destination, also a positive insight that tourist has from visiting the destination. Besides this, the expenses spent while being in that specific destination as well as the duration of stay (Henkel et al., 2006). Hence tourists are drowned in a destination in which they perceive to be attractive that delivers them a sense of satisfaction, it is concluded that the more tourist perceive a destination to be attractive, the higher the probability of revisiting that destination will be.

Kozak and Rimmington (1999) identified that DA is merely classified into 2 major groups: primary and secondary. The primary category of DA includes nature, culture, technology as well as other aspects of the destination environment. However, the second category consisted of particular feature-specific features established for tourism such as hotels, transport, entertainment, etc. These two groups together contribute generally to the formation of tourist destination attractiveness. All these dimensions play a huge role in the development of DA and shape the tourist perception concerning the destination. Natural components of DA include structures like a site or facility, natural resources such as landforms, flora, and fauna, or physical conditions as the weather. When it comes to social components of DA, consists of the characteristic of the citizen of the country which is seen in terms of the friendliness of local people, the language articulated, family structures, occupations, urban layout, these aspects formed the environmental criteria of destination attractiveness (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999).

Also, the economic condition of the particular visited country has a significant impact on the DA factor as it affects the tourist experience and the destination. Owing to that, the investment carried in the development of the infrastructure sector will stimulate the attractiveness of a destination. Culture is another vital factor that shapes the tourists' perception, of a destination. A culture that is enriched with history, tradition stimulates the better experience of traveling toward a destination. The political dimension, which embraces political stability, foreign policy, human rights also affect the opinion of tourists and their behavior (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Government regulation monitoring the stability of a country by maintaining the security, also how the policy of a country toward tourist in term of visa application or the process contribute the approachability to tourism, the assertiveness

towards tourists as well impacts tourist perception (Murphy et al., 2000). In addition, the development of tourism services such as the enhancement of their quality has a significant impact on the assessment of a positive perception of tourists toward the destination.

2.3.4. Destination Attractiveness of Djibouti

DA has been defined as the observed capability of a destination to fulfill tourists' requirements (Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Medina-Muñoz & Medina-Muñoz, 2013). Correspondingly, Mayo and Jarvis (1981) reasoned that DA depends on its benefits for tourists and the perceived delivery of those benefits. According to de Ávila (2011), the development of certain tourism products, especially in entertainment centers will have everlasting power in the alike region by tourists. Furthermore, the desirability of a destination might be established through staff supervision to associate and paradigm skills and strategies that could magnificently persuade tourists (Lemes et al., 2014). Therefore, the appealing of a destination is understood to be in form of conveniences offered to enrich tourist satisfaction, it is presented in forms of refreshment resources (Hultman et al., 2015). Consequently, the allure of a destination is not resolved by its natural or human resources nevertheless the advancement and formation of the region will stimulate the attractiveness of that particular destination.

In this case, the researcher intended to illustrate the attractiveness of Djibouti's destinations and demonstrate how appealing are they to tourists. According to the information obtained through the Iexplore (2020), it is determined that Djibouti offers an extensive range of enjoyments to the itinerant traveler, particularly for those with a propensity for adventure. Its miscellaneous geography bounces way to exhilarating explorations while similarly offering up a quiet haven for those looking to enjoy a more relaxed holiday. To measure or to analyze the destination attractiveness of Djibouti, the following model compromises 4 dimensions such as amenities, access, local community, and scenery, which is adopted from the study which serves to measure the mediating role of tourist attitude (Reitsamer et al., 2016). These dimensions will be illustrated as follow:

2.3.4.1. Access

Accessibility is one of the major important factors affecting tourist perception of a destination. Considering developing it by making a barrier-free destination for tourists, enhancing the quality of transport, as well as high-quality services, besides this providing necessary information will increase the factor of access (Akso & Kiyici, 2011; Bajis, 2011; Bennett et al., 2005). Since the dimension access is explained as the extent to which something is approachable, in this study this dimension served for measuring how accessible is traveling to Djibouti, is there any difficulties faced in transportation to get around the country?

According to Wikitravel (2021), tourists can get to Djibouti through several ways of transportation such as by plane, car, boat, and train. For the international tourist, the plane could be the best option, they have many airlines options to get to Djibouti, as many airline companies such as Air France, Ethiopian Airline, the Emirates Airline, besides this Daalo airline could also fly to Dubai and the neighboring countries such as Somalia, Yemen, Eretria, and Ethiopia. To prevent problems with the local people the tourist should be recommended to have a tourist guide with whom they can discover the touristic area and explore more places, nonetheless, they could also get along by themselves in the country hence Djibouti is more secure and the country supports the well being of the international, also the police are found in most of the public areas so they can maintain the security and decrease the crimes (Wikitravel, 2021). In the study conducted by Reitsamer et al. 2016, access was assessed as one of the dimensions measuring destination attractiveness, within that study DA factors were estimated to have a positive impact on tourist attitude. Base on the findings generated from the measurement of these relationships, DA regarding access demonstrated to have a significant impact on tourist attitude toward a destination as its value was, thus the dimension access of DA has proven to have a positive influence on tourist attitude.

2.3.4.2. Amenities

Amenities are defined as all necessary services and facilities that are crucial for enhancing the comfortability of tourists in their travel (Merriam-Webster, 2021). Facilities provided by the hotel include accommodation, various types of entertainment, picnic, sites, recreation, information and communication, sightseeing opportunities. We observed two types of amenities: natural and manmade.

The natural aspects of amenities include these factors: seashores, sea bath, fishing, rock climbing, expedition, trekking, sightseeing, sunrise or sunset observation, cataract, river, close connection with hills. Whereas the Manmade amenities compromise different entertaining programs and facilities presented to the tourist for their pleasure and entertainment like dance, music, drama, cinema, documentary, cultural programs, feasts and festivals procession, swimming pool, sports materials and ground, newspapers internet, telephone. Since the dimension of amenities is well-defined as activities that provide comfort or amusement generated by hotels to enhance hotel promotion. This study surveyed to identify how tourists who participated in the study perceive the facilities, cuisine, and entertainment provided for tourists in Djibouti through sharing a survey link in the social media page known “ visit Djibouti”.

The previous study regarding the relationship between DA and destination attachment by assessing the mediation role of tourist attitude (Reitsamer et al., 2016). A hypothesis was constructed evaluating the impact of DA factors on tourist attitude toward a destination, within that study DA regarding amenities has positively influenced the tourist attitude, thus amenities have proven to be a significant antecedent for tourist attitude, hence the relationship regarding amenities is shown to be significant.

2.3.4.3. Local Community

Local communities are explained or described as a group of cooperating individuals living in a conjoint location, which shared the same value as they are living in a shared geographical location. It is also defined as an individual who is directly influenced in the community and responsible for building or developing a particular location. The following research applied local community items to assess destination attractiveness at the same time to check how tourists perceived the local people through the survey generated (Law Insider, n.d). The dimension of the local community was one of the antecedents of destination attractiveness measuring the relationship between DA and tourist attitude, regarding this study local community has been shown to have a positive influence on tourist attitude as its value demonstrated to be highly significant (Reitsamer et al., 2016). Therefore the hypothesized relationships among destination attractiveness and tourists' attitude regarding local community have shown to be significant thus it has been supported (Reitsamer et al., 2016).

2.3.4.4. Scenery

The scenery is described or viewed as varieties of natural phenomenon which a country possess and served as a tourist destination according to Merriam-Webster (2021). This study surveyed scenery to evaluate the perception of tourists concerning the country and how appealing is it to them. In the study conducted by Reitsamer et al. (2016), the scenery was evaluated as one of the dimensions measuring the construct DA, within that study, a hypothesis has been constructed assessing the influence of DA factors on tourist attitude. The result obtained from the assessment of this relationship, regarding scenery has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on tourist attitude (Reitsamer et al., 2016).

2.4. The Concept of Travel Intention

Particularly behavioral intention is generated from the ability of individuals of choosing and making decisions. According to Peter and Olson (1996), consumers base their actions on the

benefit that accompanies engaging in specific actions that can be interpreted as a process of purchasing a product or planning to visit a destination. This decision is referred to as the subjectivity of willingness to take part in that action. Although the result of the process of making a decision is incorporated to assess other components that could influence the decision making, though there is a probability that customer may change their mind visiting the destination of interest when the period of choosing a destination is long.

TI depends on the level of conviction resulting in traveling to the destination of interest, this causes modification of behavior as it stimulates the change of decision of tourists toward a destination (Moutinho, 1987). TI is defined or described as the personal choice of deciding whether to visit a destination or not engage in involving in actions associated with a tourist service. Also, the intention of wanting to visit by the customer is the possibility of traveling to the destination of interest within the precise duration of time (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994). According to the literature conducted in the field of tourism, TI is visualized and observed in the process of planning for a trip, which involves multifaceted behavior for making a decision (Decrop, 1999).

Numerous studies conducted in evaluating the intention to travel variable support these outcomes (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Chen & Tsai, 2007). Although these researches provide a suggestion that could influence, to enhance the probability of traveling towards the destination of interest and that is achieved through advertisement and promotional campaigns (Burke & Gitelson, 1990; Kim et al., 2019). To sum up, the construct of TI is determined by the willingness of individuals to travel to the destination (Chen et al., 2014). Basically in the current study, the researcher has integrated the construct of TI in the study to evaluate or measure the willingness of tourists to visit Djibouti in the future, through the survey created and shared on the social media page known to “visit Djibouti”.

2.5. Hypothesis Development

2.5.1. Social Media Marketing and Destination Attractiveness

SM has become one of the most dominant marketing methods for firms that want to enhance better communication with customers (Lianto, 2014). In particular, SM has an imperative role in the tourism sector as tourism is an information-intensive industry that powerfully

depends on electronic organisms (i.e., Internet), to allocate its produces in the market and communicate with customers (Gretzel et al., 2000; Wang et al., 2003). Therefore SM has proven to be a significant tool for promoting a destination as enabling it to enhance its attraction. Consequently, previous literature conducted displays the influence of SM on the tourist motivation to travel to a destination, as they consult it to decide about traveling to certain areas or not (Katsikari et al., 2020). On the other hand, as DA is appraised correlated to travelers' sensations has to turn into a fundamental aspect for DMO and tourism scholars (Pearce, 1997). Also, In the last decades, numerous studies demonstrated how tourist motivation toward traveling to a destination is influenced by how the destination image is formed in the social media platforms (e.g. Gartner, 1993; Uysal & Hagan, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kozak, 2002).

Gaffar et al. (2021) identified within their study that SMM had a positive and significant influence on destination image. Likewise, tourism information quality in SM influenced in creating a destination image (Kim et al., 2017). Similarly, another study was done by Shu and Scott (2014), explored how SM content could influence perceived DA in the decision-making of the travel process. Besides, the findings illustrate that SM content such as argument quality has a strong influence on perceived DA compared to a source of credibility as the destination is perceived more constructively when the SM content possesses greater argument quality (Shu & Scott, 2014). Accordingly, SMM could have a positive impact on DA, and the first hypothesis proposed in this study for the relationship between SMM and DA:

H 1: SMM will have a positive influence on DA in the context of Djibouti.

2.5.2. Destination Attractiveness and Travel Intention

The concept of DA and its dimension has acknowledged abundant attention from both tourism research and policymakers in current decades (Formica & Uysal, 2006; Kim, 1998; Lee, Huang, & Huery-Ren, 2010). DA denotes tourists' perceptions about a destination and its capability to satisfy their needs (Mayo & Jarvis, 1982; Vengesai, 2003). DA is instituted

by perceptible and imperceptible fundamentals, that revolved around the development of tourism destinations that compromise the enhancement of factors that augment tourist satisfaction (Kozak & Rimmington, 1998). Furthermore, Um, Chon, and Ro (2006) stated that DA is not the only crucial factor influencing tourist perception concerning a destination. Additional factor such as destination decision has an undeniable impact, besides this, the facilities provided by hotels such as the lodging, food served, attractions points affect and influence the tourist willingness to travel to the intended destination as it shaped their traveling intention (Zhang, Qu, & Ma, 2010). DA is an important draw effect because leads to tourists' assortment of destinations over another one (Lee, Ou, & Huang, 2009).

The event's desirability had improved tourists' contentment throughout joining a wedding expo (Kruger et al., 2014), which is ambiguous that DA could stimulate tourists' loyalty toward a destination (Vigolo, 2015). Likewise, TI is contingent on the level of persuasion resulted traveling to the destination of interest, this may cause variation of behavior as it stimulates the change of decision of tourists toward a destination (Moutinho, 1987). TI can be explained as a personal choice of determining whether to visit a destination or not engage in relating in actions related to a tourist service, also TI might be believed as the originator of tourist comportment. DA had a remarkably significant influence on the revisit intention in the case of ecotourism (Chien, 2017). DA can ominously impact TI (Ma et al., 2017), who estimate DA from expressional and narrative viewpoints. Similarly, DA has positively influenced the revisit intention (Yin et al., 2020). Accordingly, base on the studies integrated and on those foundations, the current hypothesis discusses the relationship between destination attractiveness and travel intention has been proposed:

H2: Destination attractiveness will have a positive impact on tourist travel intention in the case of Djibouti.

2.5.3. Social Media Marketing and Travel Intention.

The investigation of the literature ascertains a gap in measuring the relationship between SMM and TI. Thus the goal of SMM implementation in tourism is to generate a penetrating bond between the hotel and tourists (Han & Hyun, 2013; Pavlou et al., 2007). SMM is the best means for marketing the destination as well as reaching tourists around the world (Chan & Guillet, 2021; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Marketing a country could be challenging lacking

a vibrant indulgence of how a tourist destination is apparent by travelers, thus SMM can progress or weaken as of a firm's or destination's reputation (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006; Sparks & Browning, 2011), hence proven the importance of managing SMM effectively to improve destination reputation by tourist. On the other hand, TI accurately accentuates one's commitment to travel and it is a product of a mental progression that pointers to action and alters enthusiasm into performance.

Previous studies have found that SM channels on websites have a certain stimulus on visitors' behavior (Aluri et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2015; Koo et al., 2016; Leung, 2019). Unambiguously, the perceived enjoyment of SM entrenched channels on hotel websites was set up to have a positive influence on purchase intentions (Aluri et al., 2016). Subsequently, the functional quality of SM could surge the awareness that, in the end, will raise the intention to visit a destination (Chang et al., 2015). Moreover, Leung (2019) labeled how the TI augmented after SM operators tracked a destination's Facebook page. This outcome was in path with the study of Koo et al. (2016), which specified that SM involvement could have an affirmative effect on tourists' traveling aspiration, and according to their findings media experienced in SM has proven to have a positive influence on the desire to travel or more precisely TI.

In addition, SMM has proven to have a significant and positive influence on tourist travel intention, (Gaffar et al., 2021), as the results, they obtained measuring the relationship between SMM and TI demonstrated significance. On the other hand, Narangajavana et al. (2017) investigated how SMM stimulates enhancing customer expectation toward the destination, thus in the findings of her study, it is reported that SMM positively influences tourist expectation. Similarly, online WOM had positively influenced the intention to travel in the case of Med tourism (Abubakar et al., 2016). From the studies mentioned above, it can be suggested that SMM and online WOM were important stimulators of travel intention, as it has proven to be significant antecedents for TI. Likewise, SMM could be a significant antecedent for TI in the context of Djibouti. Base on the studies integrated and on those foundations, the third hypothesis can be stated to check the influence of SMM over the TI in the context of Djibouti. To analyze this relationship or measure the significance, the following hypothesis has been proposed.

H3: Social media marketing will have a positive impact on intention to travel in the context of Djibouti.

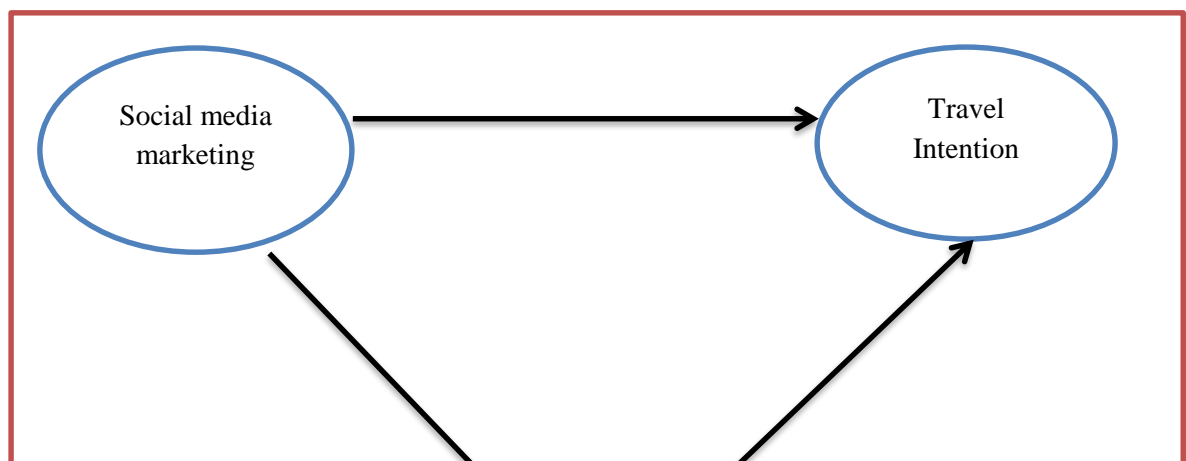
2.5.4 Mediation Role Of Destination Attractiveness

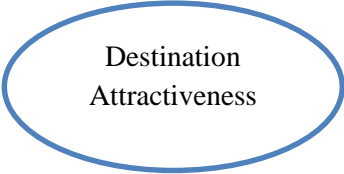
SMM triggers the performance of the hotel as it provides them with all the aspects needed to enhance their performance (Katsikari et al., 2020). On the other hand, DA is considered to be the expressive and reasoning reflection of the organism and is associated with tourist emotion that is intended to have control over their willingness to visit a destination, which has a direct effect on the hotel image and performance (Ferrario 1979). However, TI is observed as the behavior reaction of the entity. Earlier studies have revealed the prominent correlation between the inclusive attractiveness of a destination and the revisit intention (Teksoz et al., 2012). Accordingly in the study of Gaffar et al. (2021), it has been identified that SMM had a significant influence on visit intention, and destination image.

Earlier studies have revealed that DA has positively impacted TI (Ma et al., 2017). In addition perceived DA has mediated between crowding perceptions and satisfaction (Li et al., 2017). Similarly, DA has also mediated between physical crowding and revisit intention, as the finding demonstrated significance. Therefore, DA may consequently play a mediating role between SMM and TI in the context of Djibouti. Accordingly, the following hypothesis that describes the mediation role of DA has been constructed and proposed:

H4: Destination attractiveness will meditate the relationship between social media marketing and intention to travel variable in the context of Djibouti.

Figure 2: A Conceptual Model





Destination
Attractiveness

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The methodology's chapter's main objective is to narrate the steps followed to perform the study; it gives an insight analysis concerning the methods implemented during the study that served for the data collection. In this chapter, the researcher will be discussing and explaining the procedure used for conducting the studies, such as the research procedure, the sampling method, the data collection, the structure of the questionnaire, the measurement method, and the study of the demographical data.

3.1. Sampling and Data Collection

In the following study, a judgmental sampling technique was implemented to select the participant for the study. Judgmental sampling also known as purposive sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling approach, in which the researcher of the study defines the unit of the study based on their knowledge or the judgment of the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). With the implementation of the judgmental sampling technique, the sample for this study has been selected. The targeted population for this study consisted of foreign travelers who had traveled to Djibouti in the past 3 years and are a member of Facebook and Instagram fan pages known as “visit Djibouti”.

The data for this study was accumulated from December 2020 to March 2021, through an electronic questionnaire which was created using the Google form approach. The link was generated and shared on Facebook as well as on Instagram on the same page known to “visit Djibouti”, asking participants of these 2 main social networks to participate in the study. The tourist following these social media pages where the unit of the study, as through those data was collected and generated. Using electronic questionnaires is efficient and less time-consuming. As it doesn't take time for building it and it can be shared easily on the desired website, also it is convenient for the participant to fill the questionnaire and submit it once they fill the questionnaire. However, the participants were less engaging with the questionnaire shared, due to that after every 2 weeks the same link of the questionnaire used to be shared on the Facebook and Instagram page known “visit Djibouti”, requesting and reminding them to participate and fill the questionnaire. Overall after the fourth month, 400 questionnaires were received and generated. The collected sample served for the data analysis and from it, the variables were assessed and validated.

3.2. Research Instruments and Measurement

The measurement section illustrates the scale of the measurement and the question utilized and implemented in the questionnaire created for the data analysis. Stern and Feldman (2004: p.4) recommend beginning the discussion first with the independent variable, then the dependent variable, mediating, and finally the moderating variable, which means that the

order of the measurement should be aligned with the structure of the questionnaire used. The research model of this study consists of 3 constructs, which are SMM, DA, and TI.

SMM was operationalized with an 11-item construct with five sub-dimensions: entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and word of mouth used by prior researchers (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016). Items were rated on a five-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. SMM was initially assessed as a reflective-reflective higher-order construct, however, due to several problems encountered with discriminant validity and reliability, the data collected from the participant was not suitable for analyzing second higher-order constructs. This issue has been solved by following the instruction given by Bove et al. (2009), which suggests solving the problem of discriminant validity by combining constructs into an overall single construct. As SMM was measured through several dimensions at the beginning of the analysis, to overcome the insufficiency of discriminant validity, the dimensions of SMM have been merged and considered SMM as a 1 overall construct more accurately it was assessed as a single construct.

DA was operationalized with an 11-item construct with four sub-dimensions: access, amenities, local community, and scenery used by prior researchers Reitsamer et al. (2016). Items were rated on a five-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. DA was also assessed as a second higher-order construct and supposed to be a reflective-formative type. Nevertheless while assessing the measurement same issues observed in the discussion of SMM has been identified as DA discriminant validity was insufficient as well; to solve these issues, the dimensions of DA have been merged. DA was evaluated or assessed as a single construct, following the guideline (Bove et al., 2009). After merging its sub dimension, the results of combat alpha, discriminate validity were above the threshold. In the measurement of DA construct, items were not removed as their loading was acceptable.

The TI construct was operationalized with a 3-item construct (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). The construct measures traveler's intention to visit Djibouti. Items were rated on a five-point scale with 1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. In the case of the travel intention construct,

no items have been deleted as their factor loading was above the threshold and the reliability was significant. To sum up, in the current study, a questionnaire was created and shared to collect data consisting of 25 questions, for the measurement of the 3 variables (SMM, DA, and TI). With the modifications that occurred, the constructs SMM, DA are no longer considered second higher-order constructs, as at the present moment these 2 constructs are measured and assessed as a single construct.

3.3. Data Analysis

In the following research, the researcher implemented a quantitative approach with a confirmatory factor analysis approach by using secondary data adopted from recognized scale items that have served for the measurement of SMM, DA, and TI. The reason for which, the study has implemented a quantitative approach is that it deals with all the variety of variables, numbers, and statistical values (Brannen, 2017). Since this study was constructed and driven from previous researches precisely from the articles used for hypothesis and theory development, a quantitative approach was the most suitable one. Besides this, a deductive approach has been integrated within the study as its best aligns with the quantitative approach used, also deductive strategy states analysis from general to explicit which implies the study with the prevailing hypothesis or existing theory (Saunders et al., 2012). Base on this investigation, this study adopted a quantitative and deductive approach within the analysis.

In the subsequent study, Partial least squares-based structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was implemented to examine the theoretical background of the analysis and to evaluate or examine the research hypothesis and confirmatory factor analysis has been conducted in the study as well. This study implies CFA since there is no modifications occurred in the scale item adopted for the study, and the scales were intended to measure exactly like the previous research from which the theory and hypothesis were built. The software used for this study is SmartPLS3.3, the latest updated version, and through this software, the analysis for the study had been carried. As the analysis requires greater interpretation due to the complexity of the process which can not be assessed by covariance-based structural equation modeling. PLS-SEM is suggested to implement for exploratory research through secondary data as its

offers the flexibility desired to assess the relationship between theory and data (Nitzl, 2016). Moreover, the present study seeks to examine and test the theoretical background from an analytical perspective, with a four hundred sample size and involves several constructs. This made PLS-SEM the ideal tool for numerical analysis aimed at the present thesis. In this study, the PLS algorithm and bootstrapping sampling (5000 – resample) were applied to determine factor loadings, path co-efficient, and their significance level. For the demographical variable, the measurement has been done through SPSS software to report the frequency analysis and to assess the respondent profile.

CHAPTER 4:

DATA AND RESULTS

The data analysis and result chapter sum up the data investigation assessed for the study in a form of descriptive statistics and it serves for reporting the measurement conducted for hypothesis testing. To grab the attention of the reader it is necessary to discuss and present the chapter in an organized manner, providing a detailed report of the topic implemented during the study. Overall the following chapter is divided into 3 segments: The first phase consists of the demographic data, where the respondent profile will be illustrated. The second part is about the measurement model included that has served for the measurement of reliability and validity. In the last part, structural modeling will be evaluated and through this measurement, the hypothesis will be tested and approved.

4.1. The Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographical variable provides the respondent's social demographical profile. Table 1 demonstrates an analytic version of the participant demographic profile. In this research a sample of 400 tourists has participated in this study, 42.4% of the participants were female, 44.6% were male participants and the rest preferred not to mention their gender identity.

Out of the sample in which the study was conducted, 51.6% of the participants were employees, 21.9% were not employed, 17.6% were a student and the remaining percent of the participant choose to not specify their occupation. Moreover, a majority of the participants of 23.2% were from France, 21.4% from United-kingdom, 22.4% from the Middle East, 18.4% were from Turkey and finally, the remaining 14.5% of the participant were from other countries. 400 of the respondents aged from 18 to above 56 years, 20.5% of the participant aged between 18-25, around 31.4% of them fell between 26-35, 28.6% aged between 36-45, 15.4% aged fell between 46-55, and the rest of the participant age was between 56 and above. Base on this finding we can conclude that most of the participants were male, the majority of the respondent had a job and was employed, around half of the respondents were from France, and finally, the majority of the respondents' age fell between 26 to 35 year.

Table 1: Demographical variable:

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	185	44.6
	Female	157	42.4
	Prefer not to say	58	13
Age	18-25	81	20.5%
	26-35	126	31.4%
	36-45	116	28.6%

	46-55	57	15.4%
	56 and older	20	4.1%
Employment statute	Employed	211	51.6%
	Unemployed	91	21.9%
	Student	65	17.6%
	Prefer not to say	8.9	33
Residence	France	116	23.2%
	UK	79	21.4%
	Middle-east	83	22.4%
	Turkey	68	18.4%
	Others	54	14.5%

4.2. Measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model within this study has been carried (Hair et al., 2017). The researcher started with the assessment of the indicator loading as well as the t-statistic to analyze the significance of the constructs. As shown in table 2 and figure 4, the indicator loading of most of the variables was above the acceptable value of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2011), except for item of destination attractiveness and SMM with the indicator loading of between 0,5 and 0,6, nevertheless, 1 item of interaction has been deleted from the study as

its value was below 0,4 (Hulland, 1999). However the t-value of all the indicators was above (1,96), thus indicating statistical significance (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Since the Alpha and the validity outcomes were not affected, the indicator's reliability has been confirmed and the reliability of the construct was provided. Subsequently, the constructs' reliability has been assessed through calculating Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) of the constructs. Table 2 illustrate that all the constructs exhibited values of Cronbach's alpha and CR above 0.70, therefore meeting the condition of construct reliability which means the internal consistency has been supported.

Furthermore, convergent validity has been assessed through the average variance extracted (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) test to assess the internal consistency of the construct. Fornell & Larcker 1981, Barclay et al. (1995), and Hair et al. (2011) indicated that AVE value should be higher than 0.5 which means that at least 50% of extent variance is apprehended by the latent variables. Nevertheless in this analysis, the construct SMM and DA average variance extracted were below 0.5 whereas the AVE of TI was greater than 0,5. Despite obtaining an AVE value below the threshold (0,5) for SMM, and DA, the researcher within this study was able to carry on the analysis with the help of a previous study conducted by Fornell and Larker (1981). Besides, if the AVE value is less than 0,5 at the same time composite reliability value is above the threshold (0,7), thus the researchers or academicians could conclude evidence of convergent validity (Fornell & Larker, 1981). Table 2 illustrates the results of convergent validity and construct reliability.

Finally, Tables 3, and 4 show that most of the variables attained discriminant validity according to both the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait monitor ratio of correlations (HTMT). The Fornell-Larcker criterion results are figured in table 3 and base on the results obtained it can be concluded that the square root of AVEs, was greater than the variables' correlations. The HTMT criterion has been also achieved and its result is shown in table 4, hence the shared variance between constructs was inferior to the cutoff values of 0.90, therefore indicating the particularity of the constructs (Hair et al., 2020, p.104). To sum up, in the following study, analysis has been carried to measure the reliability and validity of the constructs. According to the results achieved from reliability measurement, both CR and Cronbach alpha has exceeded 0.7. AVE value has been accepted following the instructions

(Fornell & Larcker, 1981), also the analysis of discriminant validity demonstrates significant attainment of discriminant validity. According to all this evaluation, the following study has been able to achieve all the criteria since reliability and validity of the measurement of the construct have been achieved

Table 2: Measurement model

Constructs	Items	Mean	SD	Factor loading	t-statistic
Destination attractiveness	DA-ACC1	4.125	1.133	0.602	16.13
	DA-ACC2	4.155	1.114	0.67	19.049
	DA-ACC3	4.197	1.067	0.678	19.352
	DA-AMM1	4.112	1.116	0.733	25.507
	DA-AMM2	3.160	1.334	0.585	13.113
	DA-AMM3	3.500	1.482	0.6	13.411
	DA-LC1	3.993	1.156	0.549	12.673
	DA-LC2	3.127	1.400	0.696	21.97
	DA-SA1	3.735	1.210	0.562	10.758
	DA-SA2	3.022	1.228	0.523	11.711
	DA-SA3	3.542	1.142	0.604	13.512
SMM	SMM-E1	3,89	1.071	0.552	9.438
	SMM-E2	4.015	1.077	0.565	10.59

	SMM-IN1	3.632	1.087	(*)	(*)
	SMM-IN2	3.757	1.144	0.6	12.461
	SMM-IN3	3.810	1.200	0.619	13.238
	SMM-TR1	4.275	1.058	0.641	14.099
	SMM-TR2	4.330	1.023	0.612	11.856
	SMM-CUS1	4.455	0.937	0.65	17.701
	SMM-CUS2	4.425	0.916	0.707	21.762
	SMM-WOM1	4.263	1.014	0.689	23.392
	SMM-WOM2	3.808	1.166	0.769	32.998
Travel intention	TIN1	3.643	1.160	0.621	11.832
	TIN2	3.560	1.373	0.904	62.545
	TIN3	3.933	1.026	0.911	63.192

Table 3: internal consistency, reliability, and convergent validity

Constructs	AVE	Cronbach alpha	CR	R Square
Destination attractiveness	0.386	0.839	0.872	0.353

SMM	0.413	0.843	0.875	
Travel intention	0.678	0.746	0.86	0.393

Table 4: The Fornell-Larcker criterion

Constructs	Destination attractiveness	Social media marketing	Travel intention
Destination attractiveness	0.621		
Social media marketing	0.594	0.643	
Travel intention	0.600	0.503	0.823

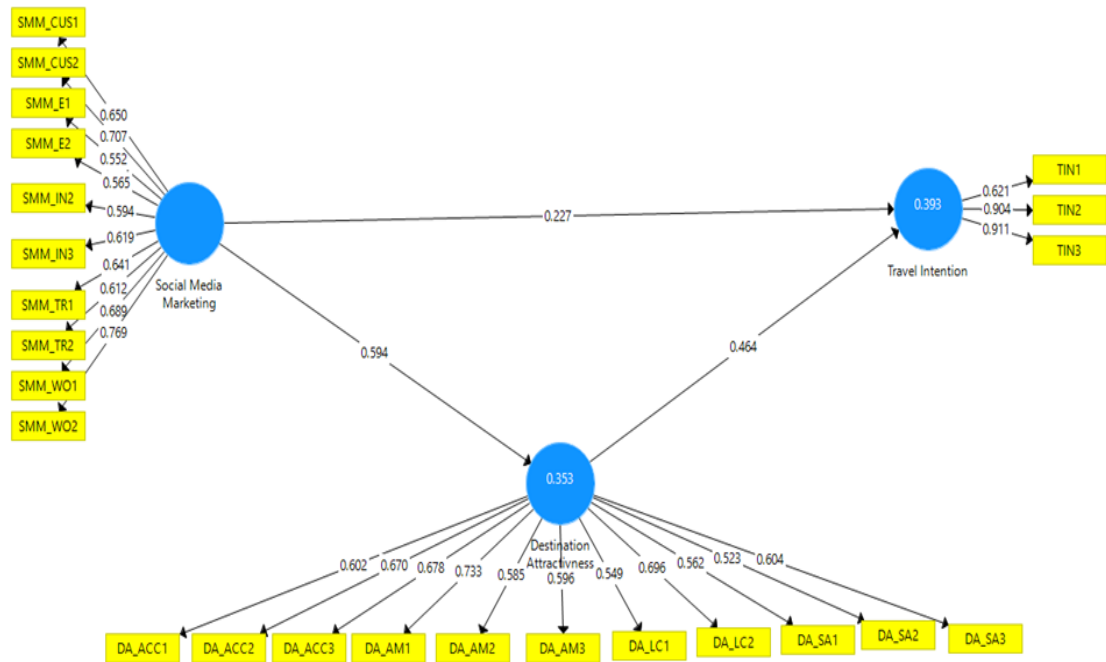
AVE: average variance extracted. Note: Bold values refer to AVE square root

Table 5: HTMT ratio of constructs

Constructs	Destination attractiveness	Social media marketing	Travel intention
Destination attractiveness			
Social media marketing	0.666		
Travel intention	0.757	0.621	

HTMT: heterotrait–monotr

Figure 3: Measurement Model With Factor Loading



4.3. Structural Model

As the reliability and validity of the measurement model have been achieved, thus the assessment or evaluation of the structural model has been subsequently carried on (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2017). A structural model was implemented to validate the correlation between latent variables, the evaluation of the structural model within this study has been done through an explained variance analysis also known as the coefficient of determination (R^2) (Chin, 2001) and the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2011).

The R^2 measures the variance explained in every one of the endogenous constructs, it is also referred to as in-sample predictive power (Rigdon, 2012) and its value should range from 0 to 1 to indicate significance besides this to indicate the greater explanatory power (Henseler et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2011). Table 6 displays all the values of the R square of the constructs, base on the result obtained, the R square of DA was 0,3543, and for the TI was 0,393. This value shows significance as it ranges between 0 and 1 thus indicating significance (Henseler

et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2011), also this indicates adequate explanatory power (Hair et al., 2016). Referring to the results generated from the R square, the construct destination attractiveness is approximately 35% of variance explained by SMM, and travel intention model variance of 39% was explained by SMM and DA constructs. As the quality measurement has been conducted and concluded that the following study R² value was moderate, therefore the assessment of hypothesis testing has been carried on. Bootstrapping (using t-tests with 5000 samples) was conducted to test the statistical significance of each path coefficient (Goh et al., 2014). Hence the current study integrated 4 hypotheses, the hypothesis evaluation will be explained in the following section:

The first hypothesis claimed that SMM has a positive effect on DA, this relationship has been evaluated through the coefficient estimate, t statistic, and p-value, and based on the calculation obtained which is shown in Table 6 that (β : 0,576, t: 14.452, $p < 0.000$), this estimate that SMM influences positively DA thus hypothesis 1 is supported. When it comes to the second hypothesis which is about analyzing the influence of DA and intention to travel, the following result has been obtained (β : 0,426, t: 7.881, $p < 0.000$) and according to this outcome generated, it's verified that destination attractiveness influence positively the travel intention constructs, thus H2 is also supported which means that the result agreed with the study of (Ma et al., 2017). The third hypothesis claim that the constructs SMM have a constructive influence on TI (β : 0,371, t: 8.468, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that social media marketing is a significant antecedent for travel intention as outcomes generated from the analysis revealed significance. Therefore it can be concluded that H3 received empirical support.

Mediation analysis

As matter of fact in the present study, only one mediation has been developed which is hypothesis 4, and according to this hypothesis, the construct DA mediates between SMM and TI construct. A mediating variable diffuses the effect of an independent variable (IV) on a dependent variable (DV) (Makinkon et al., 2007, p.593). Constructing a mediator hypothesis required previous research to support the literature. Perhaps there are 2 approaches for assessing the mediator which are known as the Bootstrapping method (Preacher & Hayes,

2008) and the Sobel test method. In bootstrapping approach, each mediator for the mediation process is verified through bootstrapping as suggested by Preacher & Hayes, (2008). Bootstrapping is a nonparametric resampling procedure that does not impose the assumption of normality of the sampling distribution. It is a computationally intensive method that involves repeatedly sampling from the data set and estimating the indirect effect in each resampled data set (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). On the other hand, the Sobel test is a particular t-test that offers a method that enables to decide whether the decline in the result of the independent variable, after comprising the mediator in the model.

However, in this study, a bootstrapping approach has been implemented for hypothesis testing because of its dominance over SOBEL'S method (Rucker et al., 2011). The mediator analysis has proceeded through bootstrapping, to carry on the test for indirect effect in the model using a simulation sample of 5000 with a 97.5% confidence interval.

Hence the hypothesis 4 suggested that DA will mediate the relationship between SMM and TI, results have been assessed to verify it and the following outcomes were generated. The results demonstrate a presence of mediating effect as ($\beta = .245$, t-value of 6.905 and $p < .001$), and the bias correlated results are as follow ($p=.000$, 97.5% confidence interval: .177-.316). Based on the result obtained it can be concluded that the outcomes illustrate the presence of a mediation effect, thus hypothesis 4 received empirical support.

To summarize, in terms of significance, the hypothesis build and implemented within this study received empirical evidence and they have been all accepted. The results revealed that SMM is a significant antecedent for both DA and TI, as it positively influences them hence the outcomes generated from their measurement attained significance. Besides this, the construct DA was revealed to have a significant impact on TI. Also, the mediating effect of DA between SMM and TI proved to be significant. As a result, in this study, most of the hypothesis has been selected and table 6 and 7, illustrate all the measurement include in the evaluation of hypothesis testing. Moreover, for the mediation analysis, the specific indirect effect method has been implemented and its result is shown in table 7.

Table 6: structural model statistics and hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path	t-statistic	p-value	Result
Social media marketing → Destination attractiveness	0.594	12.657	0.00	Confirmed
Destination attractiveness → Travel intention	0.464	7.159	0.00	Confirmed
Social media marketing → travel intention	0.227	3.173	0.002	Confirmed
Social media marketing → Destination attractiveness → intention to travel	0.276	6.843	0.00	Confirmed

Table 7: Mediation(Indirect) effect test analysis

No	Hypothesis	B	t-statistics	P-value	Result
H4	Social media marketing → Destination attractiveness → intention to travel	0.276	6.815	0.000	Confirmed

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

The discussion chapter is considered to be the merely important section in a thesis as it is the last part of the study, providing summarized detailed information for the reader concerning the whole study due to that it might have a crucial impact on the study.

This chapter is composed of 3 phases in which the researcher will be elaborating on it in the following section. The first phase of the chapter is related to the summary of the findings, the second phase includes the theoretical implications and the third phase includes the practical implications of the study. Whereas the last phase is related to the discussion of limitations encountered during conducting the study, besides this, it provides recommendations for future researchers to prevent the obstacles faced.

5.1. Summary Of Findings

The current study focused on the application of SMM in the tourism sector since the major objective of the study is to investigate the impact of SMM on DA and TI. Most of the studies illustrated the importance of SMM, DA, and TI in the enhancement of the tourism sector. For instance, the study achieved by Nawaz and Mubarak (2015) revealed that SMM plays a significant role in marketing destinations and stimulating tourist travel intention. Similarly, Gaffar et al. (2021), demonstrated within their study that SMM has proven to have a significant and positive influence on tourist travel intention, and destination image, which his study was consistent with Kim et al. (2017) as they conclude that SM content positively impacted destination image. Correspondingly, SM content has positively influenced the perceived DA (Shu & Scott, 2014). On the other hand, Ma et al. (2017) highlighted in their study that DA significantly influenced travel intention as its measurement indicates that DA is considered a significant antecedent to travel intention. Likewise, DA has also considerably impacted the revisit intention (Yin et al., 2020).

Nevertheless, none of the research combined and evaluated the influence of SMM on DA and TI within a joint research study. Thus this study aimed to fulfill this gap by introducing and proposing research that merged the factors SMM, DA, and TI, which is served to investigate the influence of SMM on DA and TI in the context of Djibouti. The researcher has hypothesized that SMM will have a positive impact on DA, and TI. Similarly hypothesized that DA will be a significant antecedent for TI, besides assessing the mediation effect of DA, while mediating between SMM, and TI. The summarized results achieved while testing the 4 hypotheses built is as follow:

First, the result achieved for assessing the relationship between SMM, and DA received empirical support and shows that the SMM has a significant impact on DA as it had positively influenced. The results have been consistent with the study of Gaffar et al. (2021), and Kim et al. (2017). Secondly, our study findings reveal that DA does impact positively the factor TI and has proven to be a significant antecedent, the result has been in agreement with Ma et al. (2017) and Yin et al. (2020). On the other hand, the H3 has also received empirical support hence it is demonstrated that SMM does have a significant impact on the factor travel intention, therefore our result agreed with the study of Gaffar et al. (2021) as within their

study they obtained that destination image has significantly impacted the tourist travel intention. Lastly, the finding generated for the H4 demonstrates significance thus DA has proven to mediate between SMM and TI. This study finding was consistent with the study of Yin et al. (2020) and Li et al. (2017).

To summarize the findings generated, in the current study all 4 hypotheses were able to receive empirical support. The observed results offer significant theoretical and practical comprehensions for DMO and tourism researchers, more precisely for the Djiboutian tourism sector to better implement SMM for stimulating the DA as well TI.

5.2. Theoretical Implications

The study has some theoretical implications. First, the researcher has advanced the literature on the relationship between SMM and DA in enhancing the development of the tourism sector. Previous studies have found out that SMM could efficiently construct the appearance of the tourist destination through several measures, also SMM had an affirmative stimulus on destination image (Gaffar et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2017). In addition, Koo et al. (2016) found that SM disclosure to the educational content of a vacation industry destination played an imperative role as an advertising implement in enhancing the TI of tourists to travel a destination. Besides, Leung's research tempted that augmenting the number of fans on their Facebook pages was dynamic to progress interest in tourism destinations (Leung, 2019). The finding achieved from the assessment of the relationship of SMM and DA demonstrates that SMM had positively impacted the construct DA and it has been consistent with the study of Gaffar et al. (2021), and Kim et al. (2017) as within their study they realized that SMM influenced the destination image. Besides the finding has been agreed with the study achieved by Shu and Scott (2014), also within their study SM content in terms of argumentative quality has proven to be a significant stimulator of perceived destination attractiveness as their results indicate that the destination is apparent more satisfactorily when the SM content have higher argument quality.

The finding of the current study is considered to be distinctive since it is preliminary that momentous alterations in the relationships between SMM and DA have been discovered by collecting the feedbacks of participants on the "Visit Djibouti" social media page. SM is valued by tourists for the affluence of material they provide in an advantageous manner that

is easy to understand and enjoy (Ayeh et al., 2013; Koltringer & Dickinger, 2015). Consequently, DMOs have to simplify content conception in their SM pages. Besides SM, also been demonstrated that the image linked by tourists through their photos also suggests other topics of concern that are not frequently replicated in the images created by the DMO itself (Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013). Moreover, the outcomes of this study suggest that SMM is effective in stimulating the attractiveness of Djibouti's destination, thus the hospitality industry and DMO of Djibouti could market the attractive destination within the country by constructing facilities or improving it for retaining or stimulating the growth of the service provided. Besides this to continue engaging the service provided in social media to enhance the interaction among the international tourist, to improve the country's awareness as a touristic destination.

Second, DA had a significantly positive effect on TI indicating that the tourists are more drawn by appealing destinations to travel to. This advocates that if visitors sense the desirability of destinations, they would visit the destination. The finding of our result is constant with the preceding finding of a progressive influence of foreseeing DA depending on TI and revisit intention (Chien, 2017; Ma et al., 2017; Yin et al., 2020). Besides, the result achieved from the assessment of the relationship between DA, and TI has also agreed with Kruger et al. (2014) as they have concluded within their study that event's attractiveness would stimulate the visitor's satisfaction which had resulted in joining a wedding expo. Also according to the study achieved by Gaffar et al. (2021), the destination image had positively influenced TI. Their finding was also on track with prior studies (Hallmann et al., 2015; Molinillo et al., 2018). The finding of our results and the previous researches investigation (Chien, 2017; Ma et al., 2017; Yin et al., 2020; Gaffar et al., 2021) claim that the further the destination is appealing, the more loyal the tourists are and willing to visit (Vigolo, 2015). In addition based on the investigations resulting from the assessment done, it can be advised that to DMO as well as tourism researchers to take into consideration the fact of constructing more touristic facilities such as improving the mean of transportation, constructing luxurious hotels with enhanced quality service offered for the tourist that will build or stimulate DA, to ensure the tourists travel intention or the probability of tourist to visit Djibouti's destination.

Third, SMM had significantly impacted TI as our findings reveal that SMM is a significant antecedent for TI. Prior studies have found that SM and its channels are perceived to have a positive influence on purchase intentions more accurately on tourist travel intention (Aluri et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2015). Besides Leung (2019), explored the effect of SM on users' willingness to visit a destination through Facebook, thus revealing that SM has positively influenced their travel intention. Likewise, their findings have been constant with Koo et al. (2016), as they identified that SM experience had a positive effect on tourists' traveling desire. Correspondingly the study achieved by Gaffar et al. (2021) and Narangajavana et al. (2017) has also discovered that SMM has proven to have a significant and positive influence on tourist travel intention and claimed that SMM encourages enhancing tourist expectation toward the destination. Therefore the result of this study has been consistent with most of the previous researches (Aluri et al., 2016; Chang et al., 2015; Gaffar et al., 2021; Narangajavana et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the current study similarly validated that DA mediates between SMM and TI because SMM not simply openly affects TI but also affects TI through DA. This outcome magnifies the mediating role of DA apart that DA has been conveyed to mediate between facilities and visit intention (Vigolo, 2015). The finding of the result was also constant with the study conducted by Yin et al. (2020) as within their study they concluded that DA mediated between physical crowding and revisit intention. Besides, the study result has agreed with Li et al. (2017) hence perceived DA has also mediated between crowding perception and satisfaction. Therefore the mediation effect of DA demonstrates the significance of refining the number of perceptive opinions and affecting impressions, which is alleged to advance influence the TI (Gaffar et al., 2021).

5.3. Practical Implication

The findings of the current study further deliver the foundation for imperative managerial implications. First, this study recommends that DA and SMM are some of the fundamental aspects that need to be taken into concern by marketers while stimulating a destination appeal. Perspicacious the exceptional attractiveness features of a destination can aid to distinguish the destination from

opponents, and help employment of suitable marketing strategies. Scrutinizing the perception of international tourists who participated in the study has helped to identify how SMM and DA affect their travel intention. According to the result achieved it can be concluded that the more tourists comprehend the information related to their trip or destination the more the likelihood of traveling toward that destination is. Accordingly the tourism researchers, DMO more specifically the Djiboutian tourism researcher have to consider employing effectively SMM strategy. Furthermore, enhance the efficiency of their social media pages by engaging efficiently the information with tourists to enhance their understanding which will probably affect positively their perception regarding their destination. This strategy will provoke better outcomes regarding the relationship between tourists and hotels which will boost the interaction with the tourists that will augment their travel intention. Besides, it has been identified that SMM, DA are crucial factors that lead to the enhancement of tourist travel intention toward Djibouti. The verdicts of this study can support the DMO, and tourism researchers to accomplish an enhanced indulgence of this vital market fragment. The current study also supports tourism sectors and DMO in Djibouti to have an improved considerate of the actual sensitivities of tourists about how they perceive Djibouti's destinations. The tourism social media pages regarding the facilities offered to assist the tourist's requirement concerning the necessary information related to the policy and travel. Djibouti ought to also be presented as ideal for tourists with enough money to devote to basic needs. It is advised that DMO as well as the tourism researchers to take note in understanding the preference of tourists by enabling them to rate their experience and give feedback regarding the services offered through social media. This will improve the tourist's inquiries which will enable the hotel managers as well as tourism researchers to engage better with tourists, which will lead to the enhancement of the tourist's perception concerning the destination. It can be concluded that the better destination is advertised through SM, the more will be appealing to tourists which will enhance the probability of visiting the destination of interest.

The Djiboutian tourism industry would have to introduce reasonable tours or rise special offers to tourists for stimulating their travel experiences, by way of these cost-effective stratagems would attract mainly tourists who view Djibouti as one the most expensive African countries in terms of living expenses. Furthermore, the study finding could inspire destination administrators and marketers developing sort of tourism produces to quarter

strains from a divergent group of individuals. The satisfactory and reliable focus of Djiboutian DMOs on destination attractiveness and social media marketing to stimulate tourist appeal will lead to an increase in the probability of their travel intention, to stimulate the destination of the country as one of the most favored destinations.

5.4. Limitations and Future Research Direction

Regardless of the importance delivered from conducting this study by coming up with a research model that emphasizes the relationship of the constructs included in the study, which has served for measuring the influence of SMM, on other components of the study particularly on DA and TI. Though while conducting the current study, the researcher has encountered several limitations. The first limitation was related to the data collected from the participant, from which the measurement has been assessed through. This research was intended to have a higher-order construct, as the construct included in the research (SMM, and DA) were supposed to be assessed as a second higher-order construct. However, while assessing the result, several issues were confronted. Hence all the values generated from evaluating reliability, as well as validity, were all below the threshold, despite deleting some items with low factor loadings. Due to this with the supervision of the supervisor, the researcher has come up with a model that is assessed as a single higher construct by merging the antecedent of SMM, also DA, and considered it only as a simple model or single construct.

The source of this restriction was due to the implementation of a non-probabilistic sampling approach specifically a judgmental sampling method that does not enable to collect from a larger sample size. Besides this, the researcher limited the data collection to a single social media page known to “visit Djibouti”, asking the participant of that group to participate in the study, due to that it was not possible to realize a larger sample as a generalization could

not occur. Future researches should take into account this issue by preventing it, by using another sampling approach that enables generalization that also generates a larger sample size to measure effectively the construct as intended. Besides, it is recommended to not limit the data collection on a single aspect, as it will stimulate this issue, perhaps while generalizing the context of the study a better outcome will be created. The second limitation is related to the measurement of convergent validity, hence the AVE value of SMM, DA was below the cut-off point (0,5), even though some items with low factor loadings were deleted from the study. This issue is recommended for further investigation to provide a solution for it. Lastly, the other constraint was that the participant was not engaging with the questionnaire link shared in the group, due to that the data collection took more than 2 months, and this affected the data analysis negatively as it was not possible to measure or assess the data as soon as possible like estimated, this issue could be managed by adopting paper type questionnaire as well.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms the relationship between SMM, DA, and TI, as well as the mediating effect of DA. The results suggest that SMM has a significant impact on destination attractiveness and intention to travel. The findings from structural modeling shown that destination attractiveness reinforces the relationship between SMM and intention to travel by increasing the probability of tourists' intention to travel. Additionally, DA has a significant impact on TI, and findings assessing the mediation role of DA have received empirical evidence, thus proving that DA mediates the relationship between SMM and TI. Therefore in this study, all the hypotheses have been selected and received empirical evidence. Thus this study provides evidence of significant implementation of SMM by the tourism industry to stimulate the attractiveness of Djibouti's destination which will augment the probability of travel intention.

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APPENDIX

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Title: impact of social media marketing on destination attractiveness and travel intention: the case of Djibouti.

Dear respondent,

This research is aimed to better understand the impact of social media marketing on destination attractiveness and travel intention in the case of Djibouti.

You are kindly requested to fill out this questionnaire to help achieve research objectives.

The information you provide will be kept strictly private. I appreciate your time and participation in this research.

Thank you for your support.

Researcher: Halima Hassan Omar

Address: Institute of Post Graduate Education (Antalya Bilim University, Antalya – Turkey)

Survey Questionnaire

Survey link

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdQc5YUv1bRH91rcbBpyknuL0QwMCoOB5F49NfLj3kwp2eWRQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Scale items

S.NO	Scale items	Variables	Authors
	Social media marketing	SMM	(Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016).
		Constructs	
A	Entertainment	entertainment	
1	Using "visit Djibouti's social media fan page" is fun		
2	Contents shown in "visit Djibouti's social media fan page" Seem interesting.		
B.	Interaction	interaction	
3	"Visit Djibouti's social media fan page" enables information sharing with others.		
4	Conversation or opinion exchange with others is possible through "visit Djibouti's social media fan page".		
C	Trendiness	trendiness	
4	Contents shown in "visit Djibouti's social media fan page" is the newest information.		
5	Using "visit Djibouti's social media fan page" is very trendy.		
D	Customization	customization	
6	"Visit Djibouti's social media fan page" offers customized information search.		
7	"Visit Djibouti's social media fan page" provides customized service.		
E	Word-of-mouth	WOM	
8	I would like to pass along information on brand, product, or services from "Visit Djibouti's social media fan page" to my friends.		

9 I would like to/often share content from "Visit Djibouti's social media fan page".

Destination Attractiveness

DA

(Reitsamer et al., 2016).

Constructs

A. Access

Access

10 There are many alternative ways to get to Djibouti.

11 There are many convenient ways to get to Djibouti.

12 There are many convenient transportation possibilities to get around in Djibouti.

B. Amenities

Amenities

13 Djibouti has excellent local cuisine.

14 There are high-quality hotels in Djibouti.

15 There are good social and entertainment amenities in Djibouti.

C. Local community

Local community

16 I have good impressions of the local people in Djibouti.

17 Local people were friendly.

D. Scenery

Scenery

18 Djibouti has a pleasant climate.

19 Djibouti has attractive scenery.

20 The natural beauty of Djibouti city attracts me.

Travel Intention

TI

(Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016).

21 I predict I will visit Djibouti in the future.

22 I would visit Djibouti rather than any other destination in East Africa.

23 If everything goes as I think, I will plan to visit Djibouti in the futu

Demographic Data

What is your gender?

Male Female Prefer not to say

How old are you?

18-25 26-35 36-45 46-55 Over 55

Where is your current place of residence?

France UK Middle-East Turkey Other

What is your employment status?

Employed Unemployed Student prefer not to say

Link of social media page known” visit Djibouti”, where the link of the questionnaire has been shared.

Visit Djibouti - Ana Sayfa | Facebook.

https://l.instagram.com/?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.visitdjibouti.dj%2F&e=ATPCxTqC2BhdWYigGa7bCALtk6E_6hvpDgCbz-V454LI1ml95YqM6a8YdLIERxgfO12i20BfMMPoA9gQ5pG8tA&s=1