The Impact of E-commerce on Sierra Leone Tourism Industry

Bisolu Sylvanus Hotchinson Betts[*]

Harbin University of Commerce, 1Xuehai Street, Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province, Teaching Complex Building, 150028, +232 76709929/+8618845778790

Email: bettsb80@gmail.com

Abstract

The importance of electronic commerce is felt and greatly emphasized in the present business field. Today, all the industries have started adopting e-commerce concepts, where tourism is probably the most affected industry by e-commerce. The E-tourism and its utility provide a lot of information on Sierra Leone destination, hotels, facilities, price and tariff, geographical features and climate. More number of companies integrated all the services on their websites and provides a complete package with a competitive price to the required customers. E-tourism companies in Sierra Leone also provide mobile application facilities to the consumers. E-tourism companies need to follow certain procedures laid down by the Government. The objectives of the study is to identify the level of impact of e-commerce technology on tourism industry in Sierra Leone and the opportunities and challenges. A systematic research methodology is adopted, data has been collected from the tour operators through questionnaire and suitable statistical tools were applied. With the help of the collected data a detailed analysis was made, understand the impact of e- Commerce on Sierra Leone tourism industry identify the opportunities and challenges as well as the market trend.

Keywords: E-Commerce; Sierra Leone; Tourism Industry.

1. Introduction

Hospitality industry is a people and service oriented industry. It is made up of businesses and organizations belonging to various sectors.

----
* Corresponding author.

The tourism industry comprises hospitality (related to accommodation and dining), travel (transportation services through different modes), and various other businesses which offer services and products to tourists. Tourism is an information rich industry. The Sierra Leone tourism and hospitality industry has emerged as one of the key drivers of growth among the services sector in Sierra Leone. Tourism in Sierra Leone is a potential game changer. It is a sun rise industry, an employment generator, a significant source of foreign exchange for the country and an economic activity that helps local and host communities. For many developing and least developed countries, tourism provides a significant potential for economic growth development. Even in the rural and remote areas, community-based tourism (CBT) emerges as a mechanism for fostering locally based tourism operations, and catering the sensitivities and aspirations of the communities [1]. As the growth of e-commerce becomes one of the most important tools for business development, the impact of e-commerce in tourism industry is no less evident. Internet has become an important marketing and promotion tool for tourism industry. The tourism industry in Sierra Leone comprises hospitality (related to accommodation and dining), travel (transportation services through different modes), and various other businesses which offer services and products to tourists. Tourism is an information rich industry. Growth among the services sector in Sierra Leone. Tourism in Sierra Leone is a potential game changer. It is a sun rise industry, an employment generator, a significant source of foreign exchange for the country and an economic activity that helps local and host communities. As it is an era of information and communication technology (ICT), its tremendous growth has motivated hospitality industry to provide their services online. Internet and Information technology is the main reason behind the success of tourism and hospitality industry. After the advent of e-tourism, there was a chance for the industry to be noticed by many people and obtain the services globally better communication and information with minimum tariff. According to [2] Growth of tourism sector in 2015 (2.8%) outpaced that of the global economy (2.3%) [3]. In 2015 tourism industry contributed US $ 7.2 trillion to world GDP (representing9.8% of global GDP).tourism industry generated 284 million jobs, equivalent to 1 in 11 jobs in the globaleconomy.Travel and Tourism grew by 3.1% in 2015 showing 6TH consecutive year of positive Growth [4]. It has been forecast that the tourism industry's GDP contribution to grow by 3.3% in 2016.Tourism industry is expected to grow by 4% on average annually over next ten years. According to the Travel Industry Association of America, 30% of the U.S. adult population used the Internet to look for information about destination or to check prices and schedules. Online transactions in the travel and tourism industry are continuously increasing, and the tourism industry is witnessing an acceptance of e-commerce to the extent that the entire industry structure is changing. E-commerce for tourism is not only about transactional activities but also retention of customers. E-commerce offers opportunities for tourism organizations to expand customer base, build communication with customers and related partners in a more cost effective way. For customers, e-commerce helps them access more information of their tourist destinations and services, communicate with tourism organization, and make a booking at relatively low cost. Although given with many advantages of e-commerce on tourism industry, building e-commerce is never been easy, especially for tourism organizations in Sierra Leone. In this article I will research about e-tourism in Sierra Leone, their reception and obstacles in adopting e-commerce.

1.1.1   *What is E-commerce*?

There is no general definition of electronic commerce , but generally e-commerce is defined as E-commerce

(electronic commerce or EC) is the buying and selling of goods and services, or the transmitting of funds or data, over an electronic network, primarily the internet but also all other activities which are associated with any transaction such as:

- Delivery

- Payment facilitation,

- Supply chain and service management, can also be categorized or put under this section of economy. E-commerce increases the growth of online business. It can be categorized under

1- Online marketing
2- Online advertising
3- Online sales
4- Product delivery
5- Product service
6- Online billing
7- Online payments

Thus, electronic commerce deals with all the workloads related to internet. It also describes the exchange of data between the financing, billing and payment aspects of e-business transactions. Generally e-commerce and e-business are used interchangeably."

1.1.1.2 Different Types of E-Commerce

There are different types of e-commerce, the researcher will define five basic types of e-commerce in this research paper.

1- BUSINESS – TO-BUSINESS (B2B) – it comprises of all electronic transactions of good or services conducted between 2 companies. This type of e-commerce includes intra system and electronic markets.

2- BUSINESS TO CUSTOMER (B2C) - This transaction carried out in the retail trade with individual buyers. This typical buyer of any store on the site is a consumer or a buyer.

3- CUSTOMER TO CUSTOMER (C2C) - in this type of e-commerce consumer sells its product directly to consumer.

4- CUSTUMER TO BUISNESS (C2B) - In this category of e -commerce, individual consumer of goods or services sells their product to organization.

5- BUSINESS TO GOVERNMENT (B2G) – In this e-commerce section it compromises of commerce between companies and public sector and they are listed below. There are some unique features of E-commerce which thus helps firm to expand their business and thus earn profit, and thus helps in

achieving growth.

1.1.1.3 Some of the unique feature of E-commerce are

2 Ubiquity

3 Global reach

4 Universal standards

5 Richness

6 Interactivity

7 Information density

8 Personalization

1.1.1.4 Types of E-commerce Business Models

1- Drop shipping
2- Wholesaling and warehousing
3- White – labelling
4- Manufacturing
5- Subscription – based

1.1.1.5 Product Models for E-commerce

1- Single product
2- Single category
3- Multiple category
4- Affiliate
5- Hybrid

M-COMMERCE (mobile commerce) is the process of buying and selling of goods and services through wireless technology i.e. devices such as cellular telephones and personal digital assistants. Japan is seen as global leader of m-commerce. This is faster, secure and scalable. In the coming years the contribution will significantly increase in global market with more and more mobile penetration in the world. With Reference of M-Commerce in Sierra Leone.

1.2 Sierra Leone Tourism

The global spread of tourism has produced economic and employment benefits in many related sectors from

construction to agriculture & telecommunications. Sierra Leone hospitality industry offers most diverse products globally. The country's rich history, cultural heritage, beauty, diversity of religion and luxury travelers. Tourism in Sierra Leone has registered significant growth over the years. This has been led to growth in both leisure and business tourism. Rising incomes, increasing affordability, growing aspirations, increasing globalization, and a growing airline industry along with improvement in travel-related infrastructure have supported tourism industry growth. Tourism holds immense potential for the Sierra Leone economy. It can provide drive force to other industries through backward and forward linkages and can contribute significantly to GDP. Sierra Leone has excellent natural tourist potentials in terms of sites, histories, culture, market proximity and climate. Local labor is cheap but not well trained in services. The availability, skills, knowledge and service delivery of all tourism-related personnel are poor although this is improving with time. There is a public vocational school and few private training institutes offering related training, but both graduating students and local businesses agree that it is currently not providing the skills needed by the industry. Capable higher level management is very scarce, and typically imported. The University of Sierra Leone offers masters programs in management but not in tourism. Certainly not that is accredited internationally. Top hotels must send their employees abroad for training. Land is uniquely a problematic issue in Sierra Leone when it comes to tourism. There are severe policy issues in determining and interpreting land titles. First, Sierra Leone has never truly addressed the colonial legacies of two parallel land ownership systems, one that operated in Western Peninsula and the second elsewhere in the country. There are several ambiguities and misconceptions both among the government officials and land owners regarding the new policies issues on land use in potential tourist sites as well as conservation areas. FIAS is already commissioning a comprehensive study on land titles and transfer of property rights, and the findings of that study will be important in the tourism cluster development process. Business environment constraints: In essence, there is very little competition among the key firms because of the prevalence of strong monopolies especially in the transport business. Re inter-country air transport, Europe-Freetown is a captive air segment which is not large enough to sustain multiple carriers. The past 1.5 years saw two major private sectors restructuring in this segment whereby British Airways withdrew its London Freetown flights while the British Midland Airways (BMI) now operates through another English company Astraeus. The other intercontinental carrier Delta Airways exclusively targets the American market. For these reasons, intercontinental airfare for Sierra Leone is one of the highest in the world. The case of in-country transport is not very different. The costs of airport-town transfer in Sierra Leone are probably the highest in the world and it has been segmented into three modes of transport. The combination of ferry and bus takes between 4-8 hours and is not used by tourists. The second and third options are the hovercraft or the helicopter, both of which are monopolies who have set their prices at par. A new option has been added recently in the form of water taxis, which is currently monopolized by another private company because of the lack of public docks. While the geographic conditions compel Sierra Leone to continue all diversified forms of transport for airport-transfer, there is room for a strategy that would look into coordination among various modes and develop guidelines on concession and competition policies for entrepreneurs. However, the Government of Sierra Leone should take leadership in undertaking necessary consultations with the private sector entrepreneurs to test possibility of a cluster development program to develop a framework for strengthening the competitiveness of the tourism sector and achieving goals through inter-linkages with competing and supporting institutions. (Abstracted from NTB Tourism Strategy for Sierra Leon 2008) Service providers are now offering attractive price ranges for

services on their websites; this has led to increase in online transactions. Consequently, the market size for travel agents has been narrowing. Given this change, travel agents and tour operators now need to diversify their business models with modern technology and adopt the role of a travel advisor according to latest development. Travel companies should also start offering valuable e-services to end customers for hassle-free travel. Online travel market sales are growing tremendously in the coming years by spontaneous travel and well-planned travel. E-commerce is never been easy, especially for tourism organizations in Sierra Leone.

1.3 objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are framed as follows.

- To study the impact of E-Commerce on tourism industry.
- To understand the opportunities prevailing in E- Tourism Industry.
- To determine the challenges in E- Tourism
- To investigate the market trend for E- Tourism

2. Methodology of the study

Sources and Collection of Data

2.1   Primary data

were obtained through a structured survey questionnaire. Self-administered Questionnaires were distributed to E-Tour operators who use E-Commerce application. Data have been collected in the form of observations, interviews and online survey.

2.2   Secondary data

were obtained from different sources. Data has been mostly extracted from the official publications of United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and Ministry of Tourism (MOSL). For the purposes of the research, data were collected through various secondary sources like books and periodicals, research articles, seminar reports, newspapers, study reports of expert committees, departmental publications, plan documents, unpublished dissertations, broachers, pamphlets, and advertisement.

2.3 Population and Sample Size

Registered members of The Sierra Leone Association of Tour Operators (SLATO) are 1000members recognized and approved by Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and the Government of Sierra Leone. Sample size is 2% of tour operators listed in (SLATO) that is 80 from listed tour operators.

2.4 Sampling Method

To study the impacts of E-Commerce on Sierra Leone Tourism Industry, the relevant data were collected by adopting a systematic random sampling technique.

2.5 Statistical Tools

Descriptive analysis has been adopted for this research work.

3. Review literature

Reference [5] States that the Electronic commerce or business is more than just another way to sustain or. Rather E- commerce is a paradigm shift. It is a disruptive innovation that is radically changing the traditional way of doing business. E-commerce is showing tremendous business growth in our country. Increasing internet users have added to its growth. E-commerce has helped online travel industry in many ways and added and sales venue through online retail industry in our country. The present study has been undertaken to describe the present status and facilitators of E-Commerce in Sierra Leone, analyze the present trends of E- Commerce in Sierra Leone and examine the barriers of E-Commerce in Sierra Leone [6]. Presents the results of a survey conduct edit 2013 on a sample of 17 Tuscan hotels, this article analyzes the impact of e-commerce on hotel management. It focuses on turn over, profitability. The collected information suggests the share of OTA related sales has become undoubtedly significant to the point and investment choices. The level of commissions applied by the new travel intermediaries is excessive. According to hotels, which try to react by adopting directly Controlled online booking systems [7]. States that the purpose of this study is to know about demonstrate an integrative model of e-tailing system quality, e-satisfaction, and e-trus profitability of e-tailing. Perhaps, study variables have considerable importance one- tailersperformance. The data were collected from a sample of 383 students at universities in Sierra Leone during the first quarter of 2014. The researcher used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) to evaluate the hypotheses about the relationship among model constructs. Thus, all the hypotheses developed in the study were positively confirmed that system quality is positively associated with e-trust and e-satisfaction, similarly e-trust influences positively to both types of commitment. However, e- satisfaction has positive effect on affective commitment, but it has no significant positive connection with continuance commitment in our study. This study reveals interesting implications that are useful to both academicians and practitioners [8]. States that Online views (ORs) are continuing to foster are new spread of word-of-mouth in the travel industry. Travelers are increasingly using OR to inform them about accommodations and other tourism-related products. As such, it is important to adopt the elaboration. I measure the influence of six dimensions of information quality that are part of the central route and two dimensions that is associated with the peripheral route persuasion. The results of this study reveal that Product ranking, information accuracy, information value-added, information relevance, and information timelines are strong predictors of traveler's adoption of information from OR son accommodations. These result simply that high-involvement travelers adopt both central (information quality) and peripheral (product Rankin) routes when they process information from ORs. E- Commerce is a huge lap in travel and tourism industry moving from traditional way to technological way and there are various barriers for travel and tourism companies to adapt e-commerce in their business. As mentioned by [9], include 'limited knowledge of available technology,' 'lack of awareness,' 'cost of initial investment,' 'lack of confidence in the benefits of e-commerce,'

and 'cost of system maintenance.' These barriers also include 'shortage of skilled human resources,' and 'resistance to adoption of e-commerce.' Further he mentioned 'insufficient e-commerce infrastructure,' and 'small e-commerce market size' might be barrier factors depending upon the market size. Moving from traditional way to technological way is not easy so in order to adapt e-commerce huge investment on Information Technology (IT) have to be done along with staff's that have to be trained accordingly. It is not always possible for small and medium size companies to invest huge amount and get skill human resource people. Some countries have different rules and regulation for e-commerce business rather than traditional ways. Government rules and regulation also plays a vital role for adapting e-commerce. Further, websites and software must be rich in contents very easy to use, updated time to time. If these factors are ignored than these factors will be barrier of e-commerce in tourism. There are several challenges to adopt e-commerce in travel and tourism industry. As [10], the behavior of customers is changing and due to e-commerce they swap agency in few minutes if they are not happy with them. Customers expect the same service, same treatment as offered by travel agencies through their outlet or through the web. Different customers have different ways of surfing internet as per their level of internet knowledge as well user friendly website and website's rich contents. To adapt e-commerce by company, they have to focus on their detailed of services, product availability, special offers, personalized information which are important factors consumers search on web for the product. He further mentioned that "Individual e-commerce customers have been known to be demanding and unforgiving". As such, regular maintenance, upgrade of technologies and continuous improvement of customer service are the core factors for enhancing business and attracting more customers. Consumers these days are far more demanding and want convenience, speed and a seamless buying experience. Main challenges is to create awareness among customers about product, make them loyal. Due to drastic change in technology, Internet, mobile and handheld portals available, consumers access the Internet for travel planning and companies have to grasp these technologies and move as per the change in technology which of course is expensive and need skilled human resource manpower. Some countries have weak Information technology structure and people from these countries might have problems for using e-commerce. One of the main challenge was that adaptation of e-commerce in travel and tourism is to build trust of people in internet system so that they could choose e-commerce instead of tradition way. To build the trust among people, companies can try to capture a part of the traditional travel agent client market by focusing on different advertisement, emphasizing online agents' knowledge [11]. Have mentioned that companies can lure their customers via providing personalized service through email, web texts customized web sites that are built "on the fly" based on users' specific profiles and needs. The main theme of writers is to gain customer confidence and trust toward the website. "The challenge is determining how a web site can exude trust and good service". To build customer trust, Wolfe and his colleagues have suggested online travel agencies have to give telephone numbers or e-mail contact information. This phone numbers and email address can be useful for customers who want proper information about destination, services and some specific questions. An e-mail reply or telephone call allows companies to respond more inquiries with politeness in a professional way which of course provide sense of postal mail. In this way a browser may be transformed to buyer. Similarly, to attract more consumers, website should provide virtual tour of the destination. Virtual tour means description of the destination by through audio and visual mode by sharing videos, photo, destination details with pictures etc [12]. have mentioned that virtual tour attracts customers as it give the picture of the destination, hotel details where they are supposed to go ,stay and enjoy . Virtual tour enables tourists to become more confident about their trip,

they can choose the destination which leads them more satisfaction rather than booking the product through tradition way. At least, they can picture destination, hotel, transportation system etc., about the destination before their travel date [13]. This paper aims to study the progress of research on Sustainable Tourism and to outline and identify the key disciplines, journals, articles and authors. This was carried out through a wide, in-depth, and structured examination of published scholarly papers. In recent decades, sustainable tourism has been one of the most significant subjects among academics and practitioners. In this paper, a classification scheme and a comprehensive literature review are presented in order to clarify, categories, and interpret the current research on sustainable tourism definitions and applications.

4. Data analysis and findings

Table 1: Impact of E - Commerce on E – Tourism

IMPACT	YES/NO	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
A, Increase Business	a, yes	68	85.00
	b, no	12	15.00
	Total	80	100
B, Reduce Transaction Time.	a, yes	49	61.25
	b, no	31	38.95
	Total	80	100
C, Generate Competitive	a, yes	37	46.25
	b, no	43	53.75
	Total	80	100
D, Reduce Cost Operation	a, yes	49	61.25
	b, no	31	38.75
	Total	80	100
E, Easy Marketing	a, yes	43	53.75
	b, no	37	46.25
	Total	80	100
E, Direct Contact with Tourist	a, yes	27	33.75
	b, no	53	66.25
	Total	80	100
F, Reach New Tourist	a, yes	53	66.25
	b, no	27	33.75
	Total	80	100
H, Global Level Expansion	a, yes	47	58.75
	b, no	33	41.25
	Total	80	100
I, Speed up Business Processes	a, yes	47	58.75
	b, no	33	41.25
	Total	80	100
J, Improve Quality Services	a, yes	48	60.00
	b,no	32	40.00
	Total	80	100

The above table shows that 55.00 % of the tour operators feel that high cost of infrastructure is one of the problems faced due to online operations on challenges of E-Tourism,65.00% feels Technological barriers one of the problems of E-Tourism, 65% feels that up gradation of information seems to be a challenge of E-Tourism, 67.50% says that online fraud and cyber security considered as challenges of E-Tourism, 75.00 % feels that

obsolescence as another challenges of E-Tourism,52.50% opined that market competition considered as important problem of E-Tourism, 55.00 % opined that online payment and settlement as challenges of E-Tourism, 67.25 % of the operation are saying that as Problem of stealing the information as another challenge of E-Tourism, 85.00 % of the respondents are opined that as absence of face to face interaction considered as an important challenge of E-Tourism and 53.75% of tour operators are saying that the Government norms and procedures considered another problem of E-Commerce. Majority of the tour operators (85.00%) opined that the absence of face to face interaction with customer as very important challenge of E-Tourism.

Table 2: Opportunities for E - Tour Operators

OPPORTUNITIES	YES/NO	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
a) Financial support	Yes	48	60.00
	No	32	40.00
	Total	80	100
b) Trade fair and exhibition	a)Yes	53	66.25
	b)No	27	33.75
	Total	**80**	**100**
c) Departmental advertisement	a)Yes	69	86.25
	b)No	11	13.75
	Total	**80**	**100**
d) Special schemes	a)Yes	54	67.50
	b)No	26	32.50
	Total	**80**	**100**
e)Public and private programme	a)Yes	54	67.50
	b)No	26	32.50
	Total	**80**	**100**
f) Market development	a)Yes	70	87.50
	b)No	10	12.50
	Total	**80**	**100**
g) Encouraging study tour program	a)Yes	43	53.75
F, Reach New Tourist	b)No	37	46.25
	Total	**80**	**100**
h) Development of circuit tour oper.	a)Yes	49	61.25
H, Global Level Expansion	b)No	31	38.75
	Total	**80**	**100**
i) Revenue generation programs	a)Yes	68	85.0
I, Speed up Business Processes	b)No	12	15.0
	Total	**80**	**100**

It is clear from the above table that 60.00% of the respondents receives financial support, 66.25% opined that the Trade fair and exhibition considered as an opportunity to E - Tour operators. 86.25% as useful for Departmental advertisement as opportunity to E -Tour operators, 67.50% feels that the Special schemes creates opportunity to E -Tour operators, 67.50% Public and private programme considered as opportunity to E -Tour operators, 87.50% accepted that Market development programme provides opportunity to E -Tour operators, 53.75% Encouraging study tour programmes creates an opportunity to E -Tour operators, 61.25% Development of systematic tour operations as opportunity to E -Tour operators , 85.00 % Revenue generation programs and proposal creates an opportunity to E -Tour operators and 71.25% Encourage through research and

development as opportunity to E -Tour operators. Majority of the Respondents (87.50%) are feeling that the Market development program provides better opportunity to E -Tour operators.

Table 3: Challenges of E- Tourism

OPPORTUNITIES	YES/NO	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
a) Cost of infrastructure	a)Yes	44	55.00
	b)No	36	45.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
b) Technological barrier	a)Yes	52	65.00
	b)No	38	35.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
c) Upgrading of Information	a)Yes	52	65.00
	b)No	38	35.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
d) Risk of online fraud & cyber security	a)Yes	54	67.50
	b)No	26	32.50
	Total	**80**	**100**
e)Problem of obsolescence	a)Yes	60	75.00
	b)No	20	25.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
f) Market competition	a)Yes	42	52.50
	b)No	38	47.50
	Total	**80**	**100**
g) Problem of online payment	a)Yes	44	55.00
F, Reach New Tourist	b)No	36	45.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
h) Problem of stealing Information	a)Yes	54	67.50
H, Global Level Expansion	b)No	26	32.50
	Total	**80**	**100**
i) Absence of face to face contact	a)Yes	68	85.00
I, Speed up Business Processes	b)No	12	15.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
j)Govt. norms and procedures	a)Yes	43	53.75
	b)No	37	46.25
	Total	**80**	**100**

The above table shows that 55.00 % of the tour operators feel that high cost of infrastructure is one of the problem faced due to online operations on challenges of E- Tourism, 65.00% feels Technological barriers one of the problems of E-Tourism , 65% feels that up gradation of information seems to be a challenges of E-Tourism, 67.50% says that online fraud and cyber security considered as challenges of E-Tourism, 75.00 % feels that obsolescence as another challenges of E-Tourism,52.50% opined that market competition considered as important problem of E-Tourism , 55.00 % opined that online payment and settlement as challenges of E-Tourism, 67.25 % of the operation are saying that as Problem of stealing the information as another challenge of E-Tourism, 85.00 % of the respondents are opined that as absence of face to face interaction considered as an   important challenge of E-Tourism and 53.75% of tour operators are saying that the Government norms and procedures considered another problem of E-Commerce.

Majority of the tour operators (85.00%) opined that the absence of face to face interaction with customer as very important challenge of E-Tourism.

Table 4: Market Trend for E- Tourism

MARKET TRENDS	YES/NO	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
a. User friendly websites	a)Yes	48	60.00
	b)No	32	40.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
b. Simple and perfect layout	a)Yes	43	53.75
	b)No	37	46.25
	Total	**80**	**100**
c. Easy to navigate	a)Yes	58	72.50
	b)No	22	27.50
	Total	**80**	**100**
d. Attractive Subject content	a)Yes	641	80.00
	b)No	16	20.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
e. Show case in eye catchy	a)Yes	52	65.00
	b)No	28	35.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
f. Services and facilities	a)Yes	59	73.75
	b)No	21	26.25
	Total	**80**	**100**
g. Useful links updating	a)Yes	59	73.75
F, Reach New Tourist	b)No	21	26.25
	Total	**80**	**100**
h. Pricing aspects	a)Yes	43	53.75
H, Global Level Expansion	b)No	37	46.25
	Total	**80**	**100**
i. Online booking facility	a)Yes	59	73.75
	b)No	21	26.25
	Total	**80**	**100**
j. Marketing with promotional efficiency	a)Yes	64	80.00
	b)No	16	20.00
	Total	**80**	**100**
k. overloading photos and videos	a)Yes	33	41.25
	b)No	47	58.75
	Total	**80**	**100**
L. Social media networking	a)Yes	49	61.25
	b)No	31	38.75
	Total	**80**	**100**

It is clear from that above table that 60.00 % of the tour operators feel creating User friendly websites as a challenge on market trend for E-Tourism. 53.75 % as Simple and perfect layout as market trend for E-Tourism, 72.50% as Easy to navigate as market trend for E- Tourism, 80.00 % Attractive Subject content as market trend for E-Tourism, 65.00 % as Show case eye catchy method for market trend for E-Tourism, 73.75 % of the respondents are feel that adequate Services and facilities for E-Tourism, 73.75 % opined that Useful links updating market trend for E-Tourism, 53.75 % Pricing aspects for market trend on E- Tourism, 73.75% Online booking facility creates better market trend for E-Tourism, 80.00 % of the tour

operations are opined that Marketing with promotional efficiency as market trend for E- Tourism, 58.75 % feels that no over loading photos and videos update for market trend for E- Tourism and 61.25 % considered that Social media networking is another tool which creates expanding market trend.

5.1 Recommendations

- Based on the study made by the researcher, it is suggested that the e-tour operators need to approach the respected government department (Ministry of tourism and the national tourist board) to develop certain developmental programs, in turn it will increase the contribution to our national GDP.

- Infrastructure like roads, air ports and sea ports need to be concentrated more and facelift with latest technological equipment's. For example, the lungi international airport with artificial intelligence and technology where human interference is negligible.

- Still there is a need for FDI in the tourism industry, more investments are expected so that, the start- ups can have bright opportunities in order to meet the government policy as Stand up Sierra Leone.

- The digital Sierra Leone concept should encourages the e-tour operators and ensure transparency between them, which will attract more tourist as output into their business.

- The stakeholders should strive to have a positive impact on e-tourism, the e-tour operators are suggested to have better customer relationship. Because the human resource management takes very important role for the better and successful market trend.

- The organizations should convert their websites into a marketing tool by employing online and offline website promotional techniques to break into the highly competitive international tourism market.

5.2 Summary

E-commerce in the tourism industry has grown and become an important issue. We found several papers studying about the importance and adoption of e-commerce in tourism industry. One of them is E-Commerce and Tourism [14]. This paper described that tourism is an information-based business, which e-commerce has already been playing a significant role by allowing information flow through the Internet on a worldwide basis with virtually no entry barriers. The Web is not only providing information, but it is changing the needs of consumers, who are increasingly less loyal, take more frequent vacations of shorter duration, and take less time between choosing and consuming a tourism product. The tourism product in particular has to do with emotional experiences, so it's not just business. Travel agent should take a consideration with travelers, so it mentioned some features about the industry and how they use e-commerce to satisfy the need of consumers. The last and important point is that e-commerce can change the structure and create opportunities of travel and tourism. Some papers study about tourism in less developed countries. These countries can benefit from great wealth in wildlife and unique resorts. In E-commerce Adoption of Travel and Tourism Organizations in South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda[15] the authors carried out surveys on four popular tourist destinations in

Africa- South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda which are particularly well known for the transitional Africa tourist attraction. The purpose of this survey is to identify if the Sierra Leone tourist organizations are falling behind their European and American counterparts in their use of e-commerce to support their businesses and to identify what the Africa organizations must do to "catch up". E-commerce in Tourism Industry [16] few of the African organizations are embracing e-commerce and the majority had room for considerable improvements. The African websites were found to be generally informative but lacked interactive facilities for online transactions. So these African organizations should evolve their websites into marketing tools to capitalize on the potential Internet market. As continuation of this research, the author wrote another paper titled Recommendations for E-Commerce Systems in the Tourism Industry of Sub-Saharan Africa) [17]. This paper explains how the tourism organizations in Sierra Leone evolve their websites into marketing tools and how they can overcome the difficulties in e-commerce adoption and usage. The author examined some number of websites of various tourism organizations within the country to determine what e-commerce features are available on the Sierra Leone websites, examine the content accessibility and the usability of the websites. Questionnaires were then administered to E-Tour operators who use E-commerce application to find out what efforts are being made by the tourism organizations to adopt e-commerce and to determine how receptive these organizations are to these internet technologies. The results showed that many of these organizations are not taking advantage of internet technologies to fully embrace e-commerce. But they were aware of the E-commerce in Tourism Industry [18] 5 capabilities and potential of e-commerce, are planning to fully embrace e-commerce if and when they manage to overcome the barriers to e-commerce implementation. As a result of this study, the author compiled some recommendations on how tourism organizations could enhance and promote their website and overcome the barriers to e-commerce. Tourism organizations should evolve their website from being a simple information-only website to fully-fledged e-commerce site.

5.3 conclusion

It is concluded that the SLATO (Sierra Leone Association of Tour Operators) are very active and encouraging particularly, after the introduction of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in their business field. Most of the (85%) e-tour operators opined that there is a positive impact of e-commerce technology on e-tour operations. It is also clearly understood that there are plenty of opportunities for e-tour business; it is the base for new start-ups and budding entrepreneurs. The study also highlighted certain challenges like absences of face to face business relationship, technology up gradation, safety and security. That can be managed properly by understanding the problem along with Government support. That will ensure the healthy market trend for e-tour operators in order to attain sustainable development.

5.4   Acknowledgement

national and international E-tour operators for contributing their experience and data in this research, the ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs for their guidance in analyzing the benefits of E-Commerce management in the hotel/tourism industry in Sierra Leone various staff of some hotels for the provision of information on their relationship with management. Finally to my wife and children for their motivational and moral support.

References

[1].   FCU e-Paper (2008-2009) as the growth of e-commerce becomes one of the most important tools for business development, the impact of e-commerce in tourism industry is no less evident.

[2].   WTTC (According to World travel and Tourism Council Report 2016); Growth of tourism sector in 2015 (2.8%) outpaced that of the global economy (2.3%).

[3].   WTTC (2015) the tourism industry contributed US $ 7.2 trillion to world GDP (representing 9.8% of global GDP).

[4].   In (2016) it has been forecast that the tourism industry's GDP contribution to grow by 3.3%.

[5].   Abhijit Mitraetal, (2013) states that the Electronic commerce or business is more than Just another way to sustain or. Rather E- commerce is a paradigm shift.

[6].   Marco Ginanneschi (2014) presents the results of a survey conduct edit 2013 on a Sample of 17 Tuscan hotels, this article analyzes the impact of e-commerce on hotel Management.

[7].   Ziaullah, Muhammadetal. (2014) States that the purpose of this study is to know about demonstrate an integrative model of e-tailing system quality, e-satisfaction, and e-trust. Profitability of e-tailing.

[8].   Raffaele Filieriand Fraser Mc Leay., (2015) states that Online views (ORs) are continuing to foster are new spread of word-of-mouth in the travel industry.

[9].   As mentioned by Kim (2004), include 'limited knowledge of available technology,' 'lack of awareness,' 'cost of initial investment,' 'lack of confidence in the benefits of e-commerce,' and 'cost of system maintenance.

[10]. As per Mamaghani (2009), the behavior of customers is changing and due to e-commerce they swap agency in few minutes if they are not happy with them.

[11]. Wolf et al (2004). Have mentioned that companies can lure their customers via providing personalized service through email, web texts customized web sites that are built "on the fly" based on users' specific profiles and needs.

[12]. Ch. et al (2002). Have mentioned that virtual tour attracts customers as it give the picture of the destination, hotel details where they are supposed to go, stay and enjoy.

[13]. Sarfaraz Hashemkhani Zolfani, Maedeh Sedaghat, Reza Maknoon Edmundas Kazimieras Zavadskas (2015) in the paper aims to study the progress of research on Sustainable Tourism and to outline and identify the key disciplines, journals, articles and authors. This is carried out through a wide, in-depth, and structured examination of published scholarly papers.

[14]. Werthner H., Ricci F(2004).This paper described that tourism is an information-based business, which e-commerce has already been playing a significant role by allowing information flow through the Internet on a worldwide basis with virtually no entry barriers

[15]. Maswera T, Dawson R, Edwards J. (2006) the authors carried out surveys on four popular tourist

destinations in Africa- South Africa, Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda which are particularly well known for the transitional Africa tourist attraction.

[16]. E-commerce in Tourism Industry FCU e-Paper (2008-2009) 5 capabilities and potential of e-commerce, are planning to fully embrace e-commerce if and when they manage to overcome the barriers to e-commerce implementation.

[17]. E-commerce in Tourism Industry FCU e-Paper (2008-2009). Few of the African organizations are embracing e-commerce and the majority had room for considerable improvements. The African websites were found to be generally informative but lacked interactive facilities for online transactions.

[18]. Maswera T., Edwards J., Dawson R., 2007). This paper explains how the tourism organizations in Sierra Leone evolve their websites into marketing tools and how they can overcome the difficulties in e-commerce adoption and usage.

[19]. E-commerce in Tourism Industry FCU e-Paper (2008-2009) 5 capabilities and potential of e-commerce, are planning to fully embrace e-commerce if and when they manage to overcome the barriers to e-commerce implementation.

[20]. Books, Publications, Journals, Articles and Websites.

[21]. www.globalbizressearch.org