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**ETOURISM'S PARADIGM SHIFT; A SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM TOOL FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION**

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ABSTRACT

ETOURISM'S PARADIGM SHIFT; A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TOOL FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

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The paradigm Shift that has taken over the tourism industry and its impact being felt all over with the introduction of ICTs is something that cannot be overlooked. The tourism industry has been touted as one of the industries steering the drive for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. However, with eTourism's Paradigm shift in the industry, which has affected many individuals and the traditional ways of doing things has prompted the need to understand how eTourism can contribute to the general well-being of all stakeholders, rather than it being seen as a threat to sustainable livelihoods.

It is said that many opportunities abound in the eTourism developments, but the question of what the exact new jobs, new opportunities and all that comes with them are, arises whenever eTourism is mentioned with little to no documentation on these new jobs, opportunities, etc., available to support arguments. Many pieces of literature have looked at poverty alleviation using tourism through the lenses of the community people themselves. However, this study sought to look at the issue through the lenses of the individuals and experts with first-hand knowledge the hospitality and tourism industry by surveying what their opinions are on the paradigm shift brought about by eTourism. The study aimed to identify how technological advancements in the hospitality and tourism sector can be leveraged as a sustainable tool for poverty alleviation. This thesis thus contributes to the body of literature by providing additional insights and a deeper understanding on the eTourism-poverty alleviation nexus discussion

keywords: e-Tourism, paradigm shift, poverty alleviation, sustainable tourism tool, wealth creation, virtual tourism and artificial intelligence, redesign, reinvent



ÖZ

ETURİZMİN PARADIGMA DEĞİŞİMİ; YOKSULLUĞUN AZALTILMASINDA SÜRDÜRÜLEBİLİR BİR TURİZM ARACI

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Turizm sektörünü ele geçiren paradigma değişimi ve bunun BİT'lerin kullanılmaya başlanmasıyla her yerde hissedilen etkisi göz ardı edilemez. Turizm endüstrisi, sosyo-ekonomik kalkınma ve yoksulluğun azaltılması çabalarına yön veren endüstrilerden biri olarak lanse edilmektedir. Ancak, eTurizm'in sektördeki paradigma değişikliğiyle birlikte birçok bireyi ve geleneksel iş yapma biçimlerini etkilemesi, eTurizm'in sürdürülebilir geçim kaynaklarına bir tehdit olarak görülmek yerine tüm paydaşların genel refahına nasıl katkıda bulunabileceğini anlama ihtiyacını doğurmuştur.

E-Turizm gelişmelerinde pek çok fırsat olduğu söylenmektedir, ancak ne zaman eTurizmden bahsedilse, argümanları desteklemek için bu yeni işler, fırsatlar vb. hakkında çok az veya hiç belge bulunmadığında, tam olarak yeni işlerin, yeni fırsatların ve bunlarla birlikte gelen her şeyin ne olduğu sorusu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Literatürdeki pek çok çalışma, turizmi kullanarak yoksulluğun azaltılması konusuna bizzat toplum bireylerinin gözünden bakmıştır. Ancak bu çalışma, eTurizm'in getirdiği paradigma değişimi hakkındaki görüşlerini araştırarak, konuya konaklama ve turizm endüstrisi hakkında ilk elden bilgi sahibi olan bireylerin ve uzmanların gözünden bakmayı amaçlamıştır. Çalışma, konaklama ve turizm sektöründeki teknolojik gelişmelerin yoksulluğun azaltılması için sürdürülebilir bir araç olarak nasıl kullanılabileceğini belirlemeyi amaçlamıştır. Dolayısıyla bu tez, eTurizm-yoksulluğun azaltılması bağlantısı tartışması hakkında ek bilgiler ve daha derin bir anlayış sağlayarak literatüre katkıda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: e-Turizm, paradigma deęiřimi, yoksulluęun azaltılması, sũrdũrũlebilir turizm aracı, zenginlik yaratma, sanal turizm ve yapay zeka, yeniden tasarlama, yeniden keřfetme.



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God bless us all.

THEOPHILUS ANYANE ASARE

İzmir, 2022

TEXT OF OATH

I declare and honestly confirm that my study, titled “eTourism’s Paradigm Shift; A Sustainable Tourism Tool for Poverty Alleviation” and presented as a Master’s Thesis, has been written without applying to any assistance inconsistent with scientific ethics and traditions. I declare, to the best of my knowledge and belief, that all content and ideas drawn directly or indirectly from external sources are indicated in the text and listed in the list of references.

THEOPHILUS ANYANE ASARE

2022



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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABBREVIATIONS:

UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
VNRs	Voluntary National Reviews
MAPS	Mainstream Acceleration and Policy Support
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDSs	Global Distribution Systems
eMediaries	Electronic tourism Intermediaries
RM	Revenue Management
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources
AR	Augmented Reality
VR	Virtual Reality
PPT	Pro Poor Tourism

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Objectives of Study

e-Tourism is booming and with its paradigm shift taking over the traditional ways of tourism. The broader aim to this research is the focus on one aspect of the paradigm shift relating to new jobs and new opportunities that the paradigm shift brings to individuals, employees, and other stakeholders. The study will seek to identify the new opportunities, jobs, and redesigned job functions or descriptions in the ICT-laden industry now and how all stakeholders can take advantage and benefit from them. It is thus important to clearly identify and understand where the potential lies for sustainable tourism, wealth creation and poverty alleviation.

Many opportunities abound, there is no doubt, but similarly many job descriptions have become obsolete, have been replaced by a different job function, are being done by a machine, or are redesigned completely and need different technical know-how to execute. What are the new opportunities and jobs? Which jobs have been redesigned, and exactly how can stakeholders, individuals and employees, benefit from e-Tourism's paradigm shift? How can this help in sustainable tourism development and in eradicating poverty? Finding out these will help those who have their direct or indirect incomes (which is a basic necessity for poverty alleviation) tied to the industry, and those seeking opportunities in the presently ICT-laden industry to be able to align their skills to meet the present needs of e-Tourism. The study will also explore and identify the exact present-day skills and or technicalities that are to be acquired and even taught by professionals. This will enable employees and individuals to know the avenues and opportunities to target in the e-Tourism set-up. They will be able to establish and position themselves to benefit, and in so doing earn a sustainable livelihood to support themselves and their families, which will propel the agenda of poverty alleviation.

Since e-Tourism presents far greater opportunities and provides better platforms for industry players of tourism, then these avenues for development need to be unveiled.

It will enable the industry to curb or debunk fears of mass redundancy, resistance to ICTs and fear of the industry not leading the employer of the masses charge anymore due to the adoption of ICTs. Rather, it will help establish or reestablish confidence in the industry. That is despite the massive paradigm shift, the industry has been positioned to rather create room to accommodate everyone and enhance operations of the industry, and not to take opportunities away as feared. This and more are what the research will aim to explore and help add to the cause of using tourism as a sustainable development and poverty alleviation tool. These are key elements to a broader question the study aims to establish and help provide recommendations to.

Explaining further to help better understand the underlying magnitude of the importance of this study, attention is drawn to the United Nation's sustainable development goals (SDGs). This aims to alleviate poverty using tourism as one of its main driving forces to curtail the global problem of poverty. The 64 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) and MAPS country reports upon analysis indicate policy makers recognizing tourism's immense contribution potential to the realization of UN's Sustainable development goals (SDGs). Of the 64 VNRs, tourism is mentioned in 41, mostly in relation to SDGs 8, 12 and 17 which emphasize *Decent work and Economic Growth, Responsible Consumption and Production, as well as Partnerships for the Goals* (World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2017). It must be noted that present estimates indicate every 1 in 11 jobs in the world today is provided by the tourism and hospitality sector (UNWTO) as opined in the discussion above. ICTs are a force that is taking over the industry, and there have been some concerns raised - some schools of thought are of the opinion that, this narrative of tourism being the world's majority employer and subsequently UNWTO's efforts to harness tourism's multiplier effect through integrated policies in the long run might be thwarted. So, the need for research and education on the potential for e-Tourism to serve the purpose of harnessing tourism's multiplier effect has to be established.

e-Tourism has come to stay and is enabling the industry to optimize its operations on different fronts and dimensions. However, research contributions to an aspect of the industry as important as the exact new jobs and new opportunities, job security, development, and well-being alongside the advancement of e-Tourism is lacking. If

this is not addressed, then there might be a bigger issue than at hand to deal with, sooner or later. For example, Travel agents had been at the heart of Tourism for a very long time but ICTs, have come to somewhat eliminate them or better put side-line them. Another group of people are those who used to work at information desks and or kiosks; the number of people working in these sections have reduced drastically since information search by the tourist has been made possible. Information search has been greatly optimized to be swift, efficient and effective, thanks to the emergence of e-Tourism solutions. This is very good for the tourist since it saves a great deal of time and very good for the employer, since having less staff means cutting down on cost. The question is, what happens to the employee whose services is no longer needed at an information desk? Another example is the emergence of staff less hotels and desks, coupled with other developments. These groups are just a couple of the numerous employees whose livelihoods are being “threatened” by the heightened use of ICTs in the industry today. Lest we forget, tourism’s aim at alleviating poverty mostly lingers on how the industry can create more jobs and opportunities, especially for the indigenes, for sustainable livelihoods through income.

Looking at the developments, it is an undeniable fact that, employers are cutting down on cost, tourists are saving time and energy, big businesses are earning their fair share, efficiency and effectiveness levels are affected positively, skills and training are made readily available, amongst a host of other things thanks to I.C.T. The argument here is that, under no circumstance should e-Tourism and all its accompaniments, be misconstrued to mean that any part of the industry will be lost and its beneficiaries with it, but rather improve and redesign these sectors for greater exploits in terms of service delivery and revenue generation. Back in the days for example, concierges had to memorize and take note of all their favourite customers' preferences to best serve them. Thanks to e-Tourism, now this practice is a thing of the past and all information needed by these concierges are only a few clicks away.

Scholarly articles and literature have been written on e-Tourism’s enormous advantages and the numerous avenues that can be harnessed with the introduction of ICT's and how it would not affect the work of those already in the system opined another school of thought. But then, very little is known of the impact this paradigm

shift can have on the many whose daily livelihoods depend on the Tourism industry. It is worth noting that, the slightest of shifts regardless, would have the greatest of impacts on these people. Being employed and wealth creation opportunities for individuals can help alleviate poverty, and so the exact new jobs and opportunities e-Tourism's paradigm shift brings, is something that needs not to be left undiscussed. It needs to be thoroughly researched and findings brought forth to contribute to the tourism industry which is a major world employer of the masses. Wealth creation and poverty alleviation is a process that needs continuity. Could e-Tourism's paradigm shift be exploited and used as a sustainable tourism tool that can help unravel the dynamite for the world in pursuit of financial freedom for the masses?

The study aims to look at all the above, pose the relevant questions and research how the enormous repository of advantages that come with ICTs could be utilized effectively to help alleviate one major problem of the world today – Poverty.

1.2 Thesis Statement

Tourism has long been at the heart of various moves to help create jobs and bring in income that will support sustainable livelihoods – poverty alleviation. With the inception of e-Tourism and its paradigm shift in the industry's operations, the question of whether the same could be said of tourism as a sustainable tool, to help alleviate poverty in these ICT studded times, is on the line. For example, what becomes of intermediaries, since customers can now purchase directly from producers? The main duty of an intermediary revolved around acting for a producer to market their products and services to end customers or other intermediaries, but now producers are trying to cut down dependency on all intermediaries. Do they lose their jobs? What about other airline workers? The now and future does not capture the opportunities for these groups and others more clearly, and that is where this study comes in. The study will be an eye opener and add to the already established literary works on the potential of the e-Tourism setup by identifying and categorically listing jobs that have become obsolete as a result of the emergence of ICTs and do same for new jobs and roles that have come to replace the obsolete jobs and thus require new skills. It will also outline the other opportunities created that we could benefit from. Less to none of these literary works have listed or spelt them out categorically, but this study will seek to establish

and document that.

What all stakeholders need to do, so they can position themselves in this paradigm shift to take advantage of the enormous opportunity that will help propel the agenda of sustainable livelihoods through wealth creation from tourism, rather than cause problems for the sector such as redundancy for employees, is something that has fallen short of the needed attention at the table of discussion. Literary works have been produced on the benefits e-Tourism brings to management organizations, the tourist, and so on, but little to none has been discussed on the issue of exactly what these new and newly redesigned jobs and roles are, which will address the concerns of some industry players especially the workers, by outlining exactly what the necessary skills and education needed to fit in are. This will bring some assurance to stakeholders that, the paradigm shift will not thwart efforts of using tourism as a major employer of the masses, an income generator for employees and other individuals. It can be agreed that organizational and structural changes are always met with opposing views and so education on the emerging trends and changes are of utmost relevance. Sensitizing government and destination management organizations of their roles in aiding a smooth transition of all parties involved into the 'new era' of tourism that will in turn facilitate the process of sustainable livelihoods, and subsequently poverty alleviation is all but a few of the facets research outputs are lacking. Hence the research topic, "e-Tourism's paradigm shift; a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation".

1.3 Research Questions

The paradigm shift because of ICTs and how fast it is taking over jobs in the industry has sparked the discussion of how best to take advantage of this shift and use it as a tool for sustainable development and poverty alleviation. This is puzzling and has led to the questions:

How has the paradigm shift affected the tourism industry, and how can we identify the new jobs, new roles and opportunities created by these ICTs for development and subsequently poverty alleviation?

The study will draw from the following:

What encompasses e-Tourism.

How e-Tourism can promote sustainable tourism.

How e-Tourism can aid in socio-economic developments.

How e-Tourism can be used as a tool for development, to aid poverty alleviation.

- Employment and wealth creation
 - a. The exact Jobs and Opportunities created by e-Tourism
 - b. Exact job skills and technicalities required in this e-Tourism era.

What the challenges for e-Tourism in this era are.

Recommendations for the advancement of the education on e-Tourism, its prospects and the roles of all parties.

2. Knowledge Foundation (Theoretical Basis) and Background

Technology or ICT in the tourism sector has brought about major changes to the traditional way of doing things in the industry. This has gone a long way to affect all the other disciplines that go hand in hand with the industry, referring to tourism's heterogeneous nature. The travel, accommodation, food and beverage, and all others providing services have been impacted in one way or the other. Technological advancement and tourism's dynamic evolvement have been on the parallel movement in each other's company for years (Poon, 1993; Sheldon, 1997) as cited by Buhalis et al (2011). Applications and solutions have thus been borne out of this swift onward global transformational movement of ICTs since the 1980's, which is often referred to as "e-Tourism" (Buhalis et al., 2011). The development of ICTs has seen the development and progress of mega projects in the example of Neom City, a tourist destination which will incorporate smart technologies to function. These developments change the game completely in terms of tourism and how it is pursued.

The paradigm shift I.C.T has brought about cannot go unnoticed since many underlying principles and concepts are being challenged now. The industry is evolving with so many concepts and shifts showing up every day to tackle different challenges. Still, one thing that remains to be looked at thoroughly in this e-Tourism times, is the industry's ability to live up to its pedigree of truly providing jobs and not just jobs but pathways that could help eradicate poverty. This concept of sustainable tourism and poverty alleviation through tourism is one that is also being challenged presently with the insurgency of I.C.T in the industry(e-Tourism). The industry has always been a

labour-intensive one that employs numbers, and this has been the basic approach in the industry's efforts at providing sustainable livelihoods to help alleviate poverty. This translates to the records which show that one (1) in every eleven (11) jobs in the world presently is in the tourism sector (the employer of masses). The future of these workers and others, however, seems to be on the line going forward, with the emergence of these new technologies expected to substitute manpower in the industry. The 2016 World Economic Forum's report concurs with the aforementioned issue. It reports the anticipation that robots, automation, as well as artificial intelligence will keep replacing tasks of more occupations or professions, with sophisticated, programmed and autonomous systems springing up in workplaces, of which the tourism industry setting is not an exception. The need for labour has dwindled down in these ICT times, with employers and businesses now selective more than ever, and thus in turn raises concerns as to where the future of these employees and other individuals lies.

Furthermore, similar to many other industries, the Tourism Industry is undergoing a metamorphosis that is being powered by the insurgence of technology. The paradigm shift caused by the induction of technology into the industry is causing waves and putting stakeholders on the edge to rethink various practices and theories surrounding the industry's operations. This technology has necessitated direct changes and indirect changes that are being heralded as the "new normal" that individuals and organizations alike in the industry need to adhere to or face the harsh consequences of missing out on a piece of the national cake. Porter (2001) as cited in Buhalis et al. (2011), posits that, without an iota of doubt, the tourism industry's structures and businesses have been changed. Several concepts and theories have emerged due to this paradigm shift, with emerging branches as smart tourism and smart destinations, virtual and artificial intelligence in tourism, but to mention a few. Buhalis et al (2011) share the opinion that tourism products, processes, businesses, as well as competition have all been transmogrified in recent times owing to the accelerated synergy interaction between technology and tourism.

Compounding the concerns raised above, the novel COVID-19 pandemic that sprung up has further rooted talks of the use of ICTs in the industry firmly in the ground, with scholars pointing to it as a perfect example as to why e-Tourism and things that come with it such as virtual tourism, should be greatly considered and practised as the new

norm to help ease pressure on destinations. They argue that this can help limit problems such as over-tourism and aid sustainable tourism practices. Some have suggested that we consider the crisis faced by the industry in the pandemic era as an opportunity that will help us prioritize the concept of 'we' over 'me' and to reinvent tourism in new ways in that the 'new traveller' post-COVID-19 would be positioned to appreciate the importance of the destinations they visit. The new traveller will thus see the need to lend a helping hand in the industry's pursuit of sustainable tourism practices being spearheaded by e-Tourism, which will benefit all stakeholders. The notion is that industry players such as governments, businesses, and academics, among others, will also put on their 'thinking caps' in lieu of the fact that, the industry needs to be steered in a different direction (technologically) to help revamp the sector.

All these ideologies and suggestions have raised several questions out of concerns that have gone unanswered or answered unsatisfactorily. One argument is that numerous workers and individuals who are most likely to be sidelined in the course of this paradigm shift have not been fully considered. There is little to nothing known about what can be done to help employees and individuals that would be greatly affected, considering that e-Tourism has come to stay. These new tourism concepts and practices brought about by e-Tourism are being pushed and the cause being championed. It is known that ICTs can handle jobs that would have required say three (3) people and then cutting down labor to say one (1), which in the eyes of the employer helps cut down labor cost and make more profit. On the other hand, the employee risks being affected by redundancy that could arise from the use of these ICTs. What then could be done? What options can be explored to help the employee maintain his or her job and bring sustainable income for development and wealth creation (poverty alleviation)?

A radical turn of events in efficiency and effectiveness of tourism organizations in carrying out their businesses on the market and consumer-organization interactivity is attributed to the use of ICTs posits Buhalis (2003). Now, if the swift change in the approach to tourism is putting stakeholders on the edge of rethinking, redesigning and reengineering, then is it not also necessary that the approach which has been enshrined in the build-up to making tourism the job hub for many, and subsequently help in sustainable development for poverty alleviation be looked at thoroughly? This is

posited off the back of the fact that, traditional intermediaries such as tour operators, tour guides among others all hang in the balance owing to e-Tourism's paradigm shift.

In spite of all the challenges, arguments and concerns raised above, there is only one truth to the matter which is e-Tourism has been relentless in its paradigm shift and onward march to being the new norm and maintaining it. In fact, it presents great potential for the creation of new avenues to enhance revenue generation possibilities for destinations and individuals alike. It presents these potentials that can also be used without jeopardizing the future generation's ability to utilize the same resources for their well-being, which is one of the primary aims of sustainable tourism. Stakeholders including employees should be sensitized on the fact that e-Tourism regardless of what the concerns are, is 'the now and the future'. It thus makes it a necessary sustainable tourism tool to help in achieving the set goal or target of poverty alleviation. Therefore, the earlier it is embraced, and its potential utilized, the better it would be in our quest to realizing sustainable tourism and subsequently sustainable livelihoods for all.

This has therefore necessitated the need for more scholarly research into the topic, specifically how "e-Tourism's paradigm shift could be used as a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation."

3. Theoretical Framework

Over the years, tourism research theories have been geared towards ascertaining whether tourism lives up to its name as a developmental tool and how. The likes of the UNWTO and other international organizations have been at the forefront, heralding and advocating the use of tourism, which is inarguably one of the leading employers of the masses. Of course, it was only natural that, most research by these organizations were initially geared towards exploring its potential for the development that we all seek, if it wields such power. However, it can be observed that, since time immemorial, the pertinent issues of development for the people through the use of tourism has not been anywhere near solved, and doubts have begun to set in as it is being said all through this study, on whether tourism is really living up to its name as the world's employer of the masses. e-Tourism's paradigm shift it should be added, to some extent has worsened or deepened these fears and doubts.

Chifon (2010) posited that, theories that had sprung up and were also used in tourism

in response to socio-economic development for the people included, ***the modernization theory***, which suggests that developing countries can forget about tradition, become “modern” by just following the lead of their developed counterparts in order to achieve development. Then came along ***the dependency theory*** which posited that, the organization of international tourism and the examination of the host economy is critical to understanding the tourism industry, as opposed to the ideals of the modernization theory. Chifon (2010) further states that there was the introduction of ***alternative development theory of tourism*** which focused on things like the involvement of the local communities in the decision-making process, the inclusion of indigenous-development tourism, women playing a role in tourism, local entrepreneurship etc. This theory was born alongside the sustainable tourism development concept. There was the ***sustainable livelihood approach for tourism*** and also the ***Rogerson’s tourism-poverty framework*** all coming in to contribute to demystifying and understanding the “tourism as sustainable tool for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation” idea.

The simple theoretical framework developed in Figure 1 below shows how the paradigm shift as a result of ICTs has brought new technologies, new jobs and new jobs that require new or special skills. The framework depicts how effective and efficient work, product and service delivery have become as a result of the emergence of ICTs in the industry. It also indicates how managerial skills have been improved with the emergence of systems like the decision-making support systems, and how the structural systems used by managers have developed far beyond what it used to be.

The relationship shows that the effectiveness and efficiency at work, together with the new structural development and managerial skills all lead to things like improved service delivery and customer satisfaction (Value). However, the only aspect that can truly transform the lives of the people and power them on to financial freedom and or daily livelihoods is knowledge of eTourism’s paradigm shift and how to truly take advantage of its enormous repository of opportunities as asserted previously. That is to say that it is the only aspect that can directly impact the lives of individuals. New technologies can help them improve their skills in order to stay competitive in their current jobs or identifying the new jobs that have been borne out in conjunction with the new technologies can empower these individuals to become their own bosses, own

online businesses, market their products and services and earn direct income which will in turn lead to socio-economic development as well as improved standard of living for these people. This will in the end help eradicate or alleviate poverty in our societies to some extent.

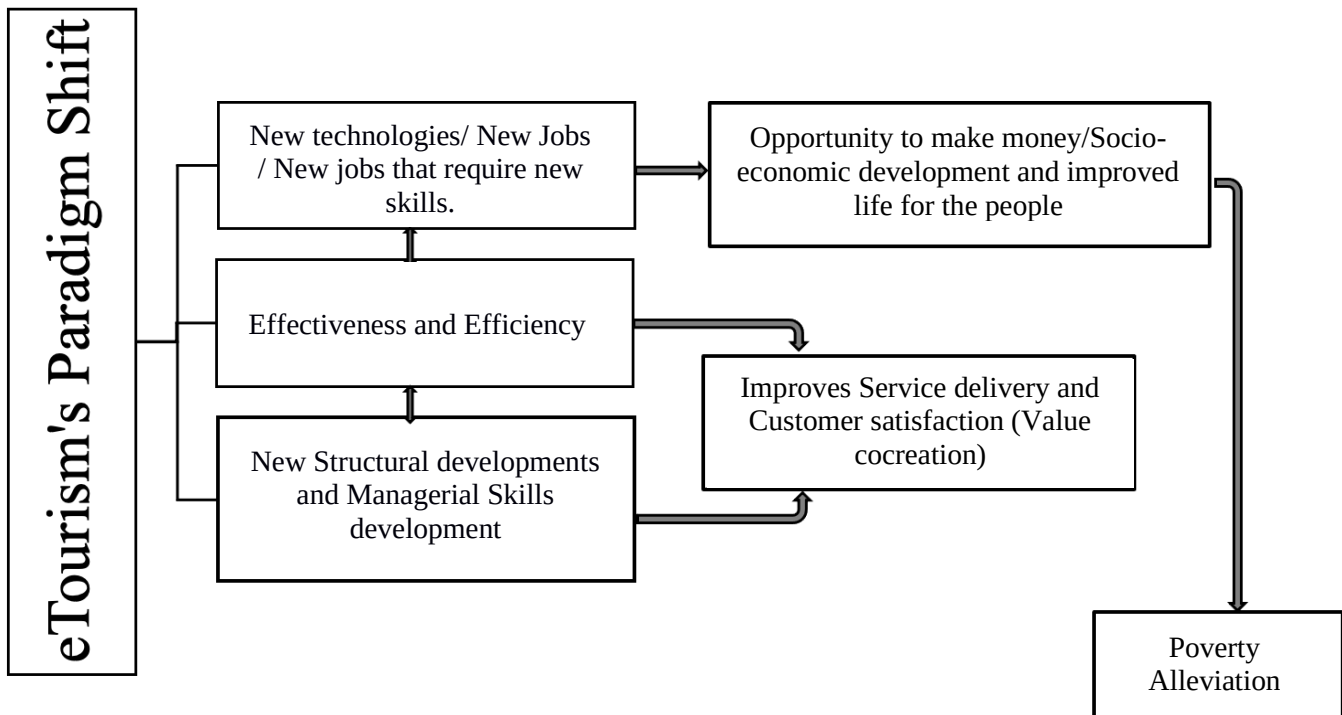


Figure 1: *e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift as a tool for poverty alleviation.*

4. Conceptualization and Definition of Keywords

The conceptualization or the theory developed here is the need to be able to identify and document categorically the new jobs, and job roles as well as new opportunities created by e-Tourism's paradigm shift of which individuals especially can take advantage of to help improve their standard of living. Only then can we realize true and direct socio-economic development for the people to help alleviate poverty. Keywords that have been used throughout the study are *e-Tourism*, *Paradigm shift*, *Sustainable tourism*, *Socio-economic development* and *Poverty Alleviation*.

e-Tourism is defined as the transformation of tourism globally through the creation of

applications and solutions, which has been around since the 1980's (Buhalis et al., 2011). The transformation or changes caused by the creation of these applications and solutions is the paradigm shift being discussed in this study. A paradigm shift could thus be said to be the major changes that generally occur as a result of the introduction of new technologies which affects traditional concepts and ways of doing things. In as much as huge changes have occurred and the industry is experiencing phenomenal structural and other developments, the need for sustainable tourism practices is eminent. Therefore, responsible tourism practices that aims to incorporate the present, as well as the future socio-economic and environmental needs of the host community, industry and visitors alike is what can be described as sustainable tourism. Consequently, sustainable tourism could lead to a steady socio-economic development for all the afore-mentioned stakeholders.

Socio-economic Development in simple language could be defined as the process of improving or advancing the social and economic wellbeing of a particular group of people. For the purposes of our study, these groups of people are those at destinations and or in host communities where tourism takes place. By improving the social and economic wellbeing of the people, the people are able to have a reliable and steady source of income that will impact generations and help eliminate poverty. The lack of financial resources to live a minimum standard of life, is what is termed as poverty. Poverty alleviation, therefore, encompasses efforts that are aimed at providing opportunities to improve access to financial resources, that can help people to be able to afford a minimum standard of living.

4.1 Benefits/Contributions of The Study (Beneficiaries)

The study will mainly address issues of e-Tourism as a main catalyst for sustainable livelihoods or wealth creation for all in the sector, especially employees and other individuals amid the rise of technology - they will be the major beneficiaries. Identifying the various job avenues, and revenue-generation channels found in e-Tourism's paradigm shift for sustainable livelihoods, which can help alleviate poverty is one thing that will also benefit them. The other beneficiaries will be governments and business owners alike, of whom the study will also enlighten on what can done from their end to improve efficiency and effectiveness, redesign and reengineer their operations models and thus also help them cut down costs and amass revenue, that will

not mean to make redundancy the order of day in order to achieve their set targets. Rather we will look at sustainable job pathways, that can benefit both employer and employee or stakeholders. Their role in heralding the smooth transition of all under their wings to the new era will also be highlighted.

Governments and destination management organizations will be enlightened on how to successfully implement planning, policy and developmental changes that align with e-Tourism's paradigm shift and add to their efforts at using the industry to rake in even more revenue that will supplement GDP and per capita income of their respective economies. Employees will understand the need to upgrade and equip themselves skills-wise in new ways that will complement their existing experience in the industry to serve at the level and in completely different roles that have been and will be created by the paradigm shift e-Tourism comes with.

Academics or trainers of the professionals of the industry will also benefit from the study, as it will especially help spell out clearly the new job skills and technicalities required to handle jobs in the e-Tourism setup. This will help them structure their curriculum for training to meet the ever-growing demands of the industry.

4.2 Organization of the Study

This is a five – chapter thesis that will be categorized and introduced as follows.

The study begins with the introductory chapter – Chapter 1. Chapter one introduces the study by giving the purpose and objectives of the study, thesis statement or statement of the issue and then go ahead to present the research questions that will be looked at. The chapter then continues with theoretical foundation (theoretical basis) and background, while also looking at the theoretical framework, conceptualization and brief definitions of the keywords that will be used throughout the study. The benefits and Contributions of this study is highlighted and ends with how the whole thesis is organized.

Chapter two incorporates the literature review which begins with an introduction and then runs into understanding e-Tourism and understanding sustainable tourism. The chapter also delves into the relationship between these two afore-mentioned areas and then proceeds to summarize the chapter.

The next chapter, which is chapter three encompasses e-Tourism, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. The chapter is opened with an introduction to the subtopic and then steers into understanding what poverty means. It then goes on to look at the role e-Tourism plays in socio-economic development, e-Tourism as the future for development and poverty alleviation and then concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Chapter four introduces the research approach, method, framework and design used for the study. It also highlights the sample and data collection tools that was employed whether it is survey questionnaire or semi-structured interview, secondary data sources if they were used and then looks at the data analysis. The chapter then closes with the results from the study shared.

The final part of the thesis is the chapter five which embodies the discussions and conclusions drawn on the results of the study. The summary findings are given and then some recommendations as well as the theoretical and managerial implications of the findings. The chapter then concludes by looking at limitations and future research to the study and then gives conclusions and final comments.

CHAPTER 1

E-TOURISM AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1.1 Introduction

e-tourism has been on the swift upward movement, advancing to heights and changing the scope of many aspects of the tourism industry we see and know today. Every aspect of the industry is basically involved with ICT whether we like it or not. This chapter will try to look at what e-tourism is and what has been established regarding that by discussing the various works that have been done up until now. It will also seek to give an understanding to what sustainable tourism is and the relationship that exists or can be struck between the terms e-tourism and sustainable tourism in simple terms before drawing a conclusion by examining and pointing to related literature.

1.2 Understanding e-Tourism

Applications and solutions that have been borne out of the swift onward global transformational movement of ICTs since the 1980's in the tourism industry, is what is often referred to as "e-tourism" according to Buhalis (2003). If the industry has been experiencing the emphasis on technology for the past 20 years, then it must be undoubtedly true that a truly transformational effect of ICTs and the internet in particular, is what we have been witnessing since the year 2000. In fact, this radical transformational change has had an effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of tourism organizations, the marketplace and how businesses are conducted in the market space, including consumer-organization interaction opined Buhalis (2003).

Crossing the new information threshold and the ubiquitous access to communication it has brought is significant, bringing the tourism industry in its entirety to new levels of interactivity. That is, carrying capacity and the speed of networks have all had an influence in the number of travelers the world over, that undertake their planning and travel experience using technology owing to the developments in search engines, posits Buhalis (2003). These developments and revelations go on to show that, the

whole edifice of the industry with regards to how it operates, and functions has changed tremendously. The travel and tourism industry is a clear demonstration of how technology, the internet and its associated aspects as e-commerce may change an industry to the core by creating new business opportunities and further developments, (Kabir et al., 2012) concurs. Buhalis & Licata (2002) posit that, traditional outgoing travel agents, tour operators and incoming travel agencies with the support of computer reservation systems, Global Distribution Systems (GDSs) or tour operators' videotext systems (or leisure travel networks) used to assume the role of travel distribution, with traditional electronic tourism intermediaries (e-Mediaries), particularly GDSs, progressively consolidating their position. However, the emergence of the internet and its swift advancement gave room for the emergence of new e-Mediaries, based on three e-Platforms, namely the Internet, interactive digital television and mobile devices, including a wide range of organizations, suppliers not left out (e.g., airlines, hotels etc.), to sell directly to customers and reach prospective customers through a direct access to their systems on the internet. Competition has thus become fierce and so, e-Mediaries who wish to stay competitive and in business must reengineer their business processes (Buhalis & Licata, 2002).

The industry boasts of an array of avenues that can accommodate the swift technological advancements and its use cases that can enhance and optimize business, transactions, service delivery but to mention a few. It is now the embodiment of everything technological, with none of the various facets of the tourism industry left out, thanks to ICTs. Condratov (2013) mentions that, the growing influence of the internet on the customer behavior and management, plays a role in today's or tomorrow's marketing models, as majority of society accepts this fact. That is to say that people have come to accept the fact which is, ICTs have become an integral part of our lives and plays a significant role in our day-to-day dealings. This in turn means, to manage customers well and meet them at the point of their need, there is the need for managers and marketers to immerse the industry's activities in technology to match the technology savvy customer of today and tomorrow boot for boot. The possibility to identify, personalize and purchase touristic products are but a few of the things ICTs offer, since they also offer support for the tourism industry's globalization, and the offering of efficient instruments that presents tourism agents with the opportunity for

the development and distribution of their product and offers globally (Condratov, 2013).

Egger & Buhalis (2011, p. 6) indicates that, while the primary aims of ICTs in the tourism sector as opined by the tourism providers themselves have focused mainly on business operations and how to increase efficiency in that sense, cost savings and also the expansion in sales, an enormous array of tourism product offers available in the marketplace lead to increased product and transparency in price, coupled with service quality improvement for tourists. But e-tourism with its dynamism and the swift advancement, topped up with possibilities also means new skills as a prerequisite, which presents providers and consumers with a challenge, (Egger & Buhalis, 2011, p. 6) continues. The advent rise and advancement of ICTs have put practitioners and specialists alike on the verge of thinking and to reflect on the use of the numerous tools that have been provided through the insurgence of these ICTs for the purposes of supporting socio-economic development and that, it is clear ICTs and the digital media could have a key role to play in the accomplishment of the Millennium Development Goals (Inversini, 2016; Inversini et al., 2020). It should be noted that, these Millennium Development Goals has **Poverty Alleviation** enshrined in it as one of the set goals to be met.

There is no doubt that, e-tourism and ICTs for that matter have a significant role to play in the advancement of the industry, as it is evident today. The help comes in different forms, shapes and spheres all across the business operations of the industry. One such area that ICTs have become very useful is the area of revenue management and is something that González-Serrano & Talón-Ballesterro (2020) agree on, stating that a management philosophy that is based on systematic information analysis that aims at maximizing profit through effective price and inventory management is what can be termed as Revenue Management (RM). Businesses with fixed capacities, such as airlines, hotels, spas, but to mention a few are entities that apply the revenue management philosophy. Supported not only by scientific (statistics, mathematics, marketing) and technological advances but also by a radical change in traditional management theory, RM represents an analytical vision of management that affects the entire organization and its operations. The authors continue by outlining that, opportunities for more sophisticated discrimination and customer-based knowledge

leading to a customer-centred vision which allows for lasting customer relationships and personalized pricing will be presented by big data-based methods.

Also, Pierdicca et al. (2019) posit that the ability to collect user-generated data, and a platform that has been presented to the industry to monitor usage statistics and performance, are all contributions ICTs have made to the tourism management process of destination management organizations. They further state that the value lies with the ability of ICTs to convey information or data such as tourist's needs, habits and preferences seamlessly to administrators for their day-to-day analysis and management while delivering updated content to users.

Navío-Marco et al. (2018) agree that the work done by Buhalis & Law (2008) ten years before their writing and thirteen years at the time of this study has proven to be an indispensable piece of work for reference, should any academic wish to look at the progress of e-tourism over the years. In their analysis of the progress of e-tourism over the years. Navío-Marco et al. (2018) conclude their review of the literature by stating that the strategic and operational aspects of an organization will be engulfed in key questions of security, the entry of new participants in the market, partnerships and merger with other organizations, customer loyalty, and data integrity or reputation to address. The authors continue by outlining that, the undisputed pivot, that is the consumer, around whom the tourism business revolves, keeps evolving, devising and putting on new behavioral patterns that are dynamic in the wake of the emergence of new digital natives, central characters to the 21st century tourism; however, the swift technological changes being witnessed, in order to effect a clear and widespread change in the tourism sector requires a period of adaptation.

That said, all stakeholders in the tourism service ecosystems have been assembled under one umbrella through the technological innovations e-tourism has come with it, in the paradigm shift Buhalis (2019). The empowerment given to the traveler to co-create value and experience in all spheres of their travel, from planning, to destination but to mention a few are all structures and facets of the industry where the presence of a range of disruptive technologies can be felt, as interpreted from Buhalis (2019).

Over the years, research has been intense in the area of e-tourism, regarding some facets of the use of technologies to progress the industry and its activities, with its

acceptance and adoption inclusive. Though there are many aspects of the industry that could be explored, the focus has largely been on the areas like the benefits that could be derived in terms of sales, profits, management amongst others, with areas like, employment and job loss etc., are left out like I have stated in my introductory pages. That said, there are broader aspects that are even outside the main traditional approaches we use that could be explored. Pourfakhimi et al. (2020) assert that, research in this area have been primarily and largely carried out based on a few cognitivist models with narrow theoretical frameworks per meta-analyses. That over time and with their evolvement, these models have been able to subdue some limitations ascribed to them, such as those connected to the role of affect and habit on consumer behaviour. However, the reliability, validity and relevance of such research is called into question consequently because of eTourism research's overreliance on such narrow theoretical frameworks. Rather than exploring the cognitive antecedents with regards to the behavioral intentions to use technologies, these research risks overlooking other significant aspects of the acceptance of technology, the authors add.

Pourfakhimi et al. (2019), prior to their publication on the acceptance and adoption of e-tourism technologies in 2020, put out a criticism. This criticism postulate that in order to understand users' behaviour, conformity to current knowledge, coupled with insight from a vast array of academic fields including but not limited to philosophy, neuroscience, social psychology, sociology, anthropology and business is required. However, the overreliance of eTourism technology acceptance research based on a few of the fields outlined above, has birthed a limited number of cognitivist theories which represents a narrow theoretical school of thought as put forth by the authors after the review of 74 articles. Thus, eTourism technology acceptance research being voluminous, yet a theoretically shallow area of research is the risk that research in this field faces, and so a broader research scope to encompass a lot of the aspects outlined above is recommended by the authors.

1.3 Understanding Sustainable tourism

Sustainable tourism delves into the aspect of tourism which is concerned with the current and future safeguarding of tourism in terms of the environment, economic aspects and the socio-cultural aspects while tending to the needs of visitors, the

industry and host communities. The United Nations' World Tourism Organization (*Sustainable Development* | UNWTO) on their webpage states that,

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.

It looks at how the current generation can make the most of and benefit from the resources available to us in tourism, while preserving these resources for the wellbeing and benefit of future generations to come as well. Tourism, with its rapid development has been tagged with and is known for the unfortunate incidences concerned with environmental degradation due to infrastructural and superstructural development, as well as destruction of the environment due to practices like mass tourism and over tourism. The industry has also been known as a massive contributor to carbon emissions and air pollution, amongst a host of other social, environmental and cultural practices that if not curtailed will spell the doom for us. That is why sustainable tourism has become an area of utmost importance to the industry, to help safeguard the future of the industry's resources for the future generations, while society benefit off it presently as well.

By the late 1980's, the buzzword sustainable development had been established generally in development studies and particularly in tourism studies and research posits (Liu, 2003). The author further states that, environmentalism and its rise to prominence in the 1970's is what the concept of sustainability owes its origin to and that the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in its *World Conservation Strategy* as seen in (IUCN, 1980) first highlighted the explicit idea of sustainable development.

According to Guo et al. (2019), at the time of the publication on the review of sustainable tourism policy literature to analyze and ascertain the development and progress of sustainable tourism policy, it emerged that nearly half of the documents used were published within the last five years at the time. This is only indicative of the fact that, scholars' attention are being drawn to the issues of sustainable tourism policy and its study in recent times, and the fact that an effective response to the environmental and sustainable development challenges is the development and

implementation of sustainable tourism policy, continues (Guo et al., 2019). The study of sustainable tourism in recent years has skyrocketed mainly due to the concerns of the depletion of resources and its accompaniments attributed to the activities within the industry of tourism in terms of infrastructural and superstructural developments, the irresponsible behaviors of travelers, stakeholders etc., to the detriment the environment and resources associated to tourism.

Sr (2019) posits that, there is the “philosophic approach to sustainable tourism” which sometimes suggests that, in order to maintain and protect the natural environment of a local area, travelers had better visit destinations that are “less traveled by”. The diversity of changes taking place in sustainable tourism development has been described using phrases and concepts, new words and expressions since 2016, and notable among them is a word like “overtourism” which was first talked about in 2012 but formally introduced in 2016 by the CEO and founder of the Skift company to describe tourism and its potential negative impacts on Iceland, Sr (2019) continued to opine.

As time go by, the general populace is becoming aware of the dangers our activities the world over poses to the environment, culture, livelihoods but to mention a few. People have thus demanded accountability and the fair treatment of these elements especially the tourism consumer circles heavily involved. The consumers of tourism in recent times demand that they get quality for their money, amid having a clean environment, nature and adventure tourism experiences, culture, heritage and history etc., agreed Sr (2019). The need for responsible tourism that will thus provide the tourism consumer with all the above stated elements while maintaining and protecting these resources have become a challenge to all tourism stakeholders, the tourist inclusive. Sensitization of all involved, to do their part in realizing the sustainable tourism practices enshrined in various documentations has thus become the responsibility of all.

Like stated in the introductory pages, debates on the issues of sustainability have been on the rise in recent times with different factions of the industry’s academics and stakeholders on other sides of the road to recovery and the way forward post COVID-19. The recent COVID-19 has been a breeding ground and major platform on which

part of academics have stood to confront the issue of environmental degradation coupled with other issues attributed to tourism. In fact, some school of thought believe that, the novel COVID-19 has presented mother earth with the opportunity (ban on travel etc.) to heal from the damages caused it by human activities which includes tourism. Those who believe strongly in the ICT regime have advocated the use of innovations like virtual tourism to curtail the issue of over tourism caused by mass tourism for example, with others believing it eliminates the “real experience” factor that comes with tourism. According to Higgins-Desbiolles (2021) in agreement with some portion of the assertion of this thesis says that, COVID-19 has been a challenge or even a game-changer as others will call it to the travel and tourism industry, with these views even sparking a debate in the “tourism academy”. Higgins-Desbiolles (2021) further states that, academic Jim Butcher in announcing his work titled “the war on tourism” in which he described a body of tourism work as being hostile to the industry by using COVID-19 as a camouflage to undermine and attack the industry, fueled a debate on the recovery of the industry post COVID-19. Higgins-Desbiolles further argues that, this has had a huge impact and even harmed the tourism business, affected tourism workers as well as the ordinary tourist. The author thus states that,

“This analysis explains how advocates of the industry’s rapid recovery stand opposed to the wider efforts to reform tourism to be more ethical, responsible and sustainable. The struggle concerns both the proper role of tourism and tourism academics. Outcomes from this debate have repercussions for the development of the discipline, the education of tourism students and the future of tourism practices”.

1.4 e-Tourism and Sustainable tourism

Sustainability is a delicate issue that has been and is still being discussed in the academic world of tourism and beyond. In that, tourism practices should be approached, bearing in mind the locals of the community and considering the direct or indirect immense benefits they can derive from tourism. Their welfare, well-being, development and sustainable livelihoods for them and those who come to the community to work now and the subsequent years ahead and for future generations to come are all to be considered. Sustainable tourism provides the mechanism for efficient and effective use of resources, which maximizes the potential for

development and wealth creation – this makes e-tourism the perfect candidate to help realize sustainable tourism. With the tourism sector and all its activities going digital thanks to e-tourism, it is only prudent that these issues be looked at, and possible ways to meet the escalating changes be of outmost importance and be discussed. It is only then that all stakeholders can benefit from the extensive depth of opportunities the industry is exploring, which will aid in wealth creation and value co-creation for sustainable development.

For a long time coming since the inception of e-tourism, industry experts have known and predicted it to be the new face and tool for the sustainable tourism development agenda. The industry revolves around ICTs now and so undoubtedly sustainable tourism development goals and efforts are also hooked to the paradigm shift. Otherwise, then these efforts may not reach the desired goal or set target. It is therefore important for all stakeholders to understand and bear in mind that, ICTs have become indispensable assets or tools that anyone in pursuit of sustainable practices in the industry should employ.

1.4.1 The Relationship Between e-Tourism and Sustainable Tourism

e-Tourism and sustainable tourism are interrelated or linked to each other. That is to say that the introduction of ICTs into the activities of sustainable tourism development, could help advance efforts and enhance the efficacy and potency of methods employed in the field of sustainable tourism. ICTs can be deployed to any aspect of the underlying principles and concepts guiding sustainable tourism and development - that is, the deployment and application of ICTs to the **triple-bottom line approach**, which serves as the cornerstone for sustainable tourism. ICTs could be employed in the buildup to achieving development in the sector with respect to the environmental, economic and socio-cultural pillars needed for the said development.

With their holistic approach to looking at the ICT and sustainable tourism relationship, Ali & Frew (2014) through the conceptualization of this relationship from the perspective of destinations, consumers and business, derived a collection of ICT-based tools that can be used in pursuit of sustainable tourism. Below is a tabular representation of some of the various ICT-based tools adapted from the original table and their significance to the sustainable tourism agenda as presented by the authors through their conceptualization.

Table 1: Summary of Some ICT-based tools and uses for sustainable tourism development

ICT-based tools	Definition	Uses for sustainable tourism
Carbon calculator	Used to determine carbon emissions based on the type and amount of energy consumed	Emission monitoring for cleaner environment benefit for visitors and local community. Destinations may be able to attract the environmentally- conscious traveller leading to economic benefits.
Community informatics	Focuses on the design and delivery of online electronic media to enhance community engagement	Facilitates increased community participation in the decision making, empowers individuals, strengthens community identity and creates economic development opportunities
Computer simulation	A simulation of real-world settings where models are designed to depict how systems operate over time	Issues too complex for direct observation, manipulation or mathematical analysis are simulated to investigate the effectiveness of alternative management practices. This leads to better decisions on impacts on the economic, natural and socio-cultural environments with realistic scenarios available to engage all stakeholders including tourists, planners and the local community.
Destination management system	A system that consolidates and distributes a comprehensive range of tourism information and products through a variety of channels and platforms	Facilitates the establishment of platforms for promoting economic benefits for the local communities, reducing socio-cultural tensions and negative impacts and can highlight fragile eco-systems at destinations. DMS may also enhance tourist engagement and satisfaction levels through relevant readily accessible destination information
Economic impact analysis software	Software used to monitor the economic impacts of tourism by providing information on the type and amount of spending	Information can be used to determine financial feasibility, choose among alternatives, increase the level of economic activity and lobby public support for tourism development
Environment management information systems	Computer systems which integrate disparate environmental information sources in order to facilitate organizational management	Environmental data such as tracking, waste monitoring, emissions and cost/ benefit assessment are analyzed for better economic, natural and socio- cultural decision-making
Intelligent transport system	Telematic systems, which provide detailed information on traffic, information from independent locations, traffic guidance and dynamic routing	Improved ground transport systems allow tourists to be more aware of their travelling options at the destination leading to wider usage of public transport which also benefits the local community by reducing traffic congestion at the destination and host-tourist antagonism may also decrease
Location based services	Collects and delivers information to and from a mobile device depending on the automatic location of the user. Targeted information is provided to the user based on his/her geographic location	Location-sensitive information can be sent to the tourists to raise awareness and familiarize them with e.g., the culture, heritage and customs of a destination and enhance the likelihood of making sustainable in-trip choices. Additionally, information can be provided on promotions, places to visit, accommodation and other general information such as safety and security and weather. This may raise tourist spend and overall has a positive impact through print reduction
Tourism information system	Data warehouses that manage business critical information in order to provide quality information on hand to assist in decision making by serving as a decision support system for destination managers	More high-quality information is on hand to assist in decision making by serving as a decision support system for destination managers
Virtual tourism	Based on the Internet anyone can experience the culture, history and other points of tourist interests in a visual and interactive manner without actually visiting the destination	Virtual tours may act as a full or partial substitute for destinations that have exceeded their carrying capacity or are fragile in some way e.g., through substituting for activities may be regarded as socially unacceptable, reducing traffic impacts etc.

Source: Ali & Frew, 2014

Ali & Frew (2014) prior to the development of the above table to conceptualize the use of ICTs for sustainable tourism made it known and referenced to the effect that, other researchers have done works from different perspectives to theirs. These other perspectives explored included the conceptual approach to understanding how ICT capacity can be used in sustainable urban tourism with the development of a sustainable tourism indicator, something to aid in sustainable destination development - a knowledge based destination management information system, the development of blogs and forums to facilitate stakeholder engagement and participation in the sustainable cultural tourism process, works from the safety and security perspective with the use of ICTs as a tool to achieve that, but to mention a few.

The above discussion and table provided, only goes to prove the point that, there is some level of relationship between e-tourism and its applications with sustainable tourism development. And that, to maximize and enhance efforts and the efficacy levels of the set goal of sustainable tourism, ICTs that are present in the tourism industry today, cannot be overlooked.

1.5 Summary of the Chapter

The Chapter in its entirety has presented, looked at, and tried to expatiate on some literary works that have been done, to help us understand the concept of e-tourism and the various aspects of the industry that have been affected by this paradigm shift in the tourism industry. In a similar manner, it sought to define and help us understand what sustainable tourism stands for and its development while trying to strike a balance and identify the relationship that exists between the two terms e-tourism and sustainable tourism. The chapter then went ahead in its concluding face to establish the fact that, ICTs can help enhance and advance works of sustainable tourism development by looking at a table of ICT-based tools and which areas for sustainable tourism development they can be or are being applied as presented by Ali & Frew (2014), hence the notion that, e-tourism and sustainable tourism have some level of relationship.

CHAPTER 2

E-TOURISM, SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

2.1. Introduction

This part of the study introduces the topic of e-Tourism as a socio-economic development tool that can aid poverty alleviation. It delves into the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus which has been the subject of tourism academic scholarship over the years. Tourism over the years has become synonymous to the poverty alleviation discourse to the point where tourism can almost not be mentioned without the subject of poverty alleviation coming up for discussion as well. This is only so because, like it has been outlined in previous chapters, the tourism industry has been the epitome of revenue generation for many countries over the years. Tourism also commandeers the employment generation sector as one of the best if not the best employment hubs in terms of numbers in many countries. The discussion of the industry also as a socio-economic development tool for poverty alleviation is thus eminent especially considering the paradigm shift brought about by ICTs which directly affects one of the strongholds of the industry – employment.

The UNWTO as an institution has championed the cause over the years to use tourism as a socio-economic development hub that will help propel the agenda of poverty alleviation as it is assumed that the industry has certain advantages owing to its ability to create employment and generate revenue. Many approaches like the Pro-Poor tourism, the trickle-down theory but to mention a few have all been rolled-out to help expatiate the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus and help tackle the issue. However, the question of whether tourism in itself is sufficient to tackle the poverty alleviation cause or that certain behavioral and attitudinal changes on the parts of individuals such as laziness, resistance to change, unwillingness to develop oneself amongst a host of others needs to be critically examined, lingers on. Tourism as an industry has evolved

and major shifts that have occurred such as that of the e-Tourism era have necessitated changes to the basic approach to poverty alleviation which normally included organizations and corporations just employing people. In fact, there has been a steep decline in the need for manpower by organizations and corporations the world over which includes the hospitality and tourism sector since the technological or automation era. Therefore, it is argued in this study that, in order for the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus to see the light of the day, basic approaches to things like employment, causes of poverty as well as behavioral and attitudinal change needs to be examined as part of the rapid technological change brought about by e-Tourism. It is thus also important that the multidimensional complexity and nature of poverty, the role e-Tourism plays in socio-economic development as well as the future for development and poverty alleviation in light of the e-Tourism's paradigm shift discourse be examined and understood in relevant literature.

2.2. Understanding Poverty

As indicated earlier in the introductory paragraphs, the topic of poverty is a multi-faceted one and thus needs to be examined in its complex nature. However, the study will be looking at poverty in general for the purpose of the study and delve into the basic aspects of poverty in particular, such as employment, income and attitudinal change to make a case.

Over the years, the topic of poverty and its alleviation has been a delicate and sensitive issue that garners a lot of attention whenever and wherever it is mentioned. One such avenues that has attracted a lot of attention and debate, especially when it has been dubbed and affirmed as one of the greatest employers of the masses and one that might help in the mitigation against one of the world's biggest problems-poverty is the tourism industry. A clear understanding of poverty to its core is thus inevitable to any tourism-poverty alleviation or socio-economic development nexus discussion. For many years, poverty has been defined and identified with economic deprivation where the poor person is the one lacking sufficient purchasing power (Akindola, 2009).

Krishna (2003) posits that, at any given period in time, the net change in poverty is as a result of these two trends. That, some people who were previously poor manage to

escape from poverty whereas some people who were previously not poor manage to find themselves in poverty. This indicates that, at any point in time there is this vicious cycle of falling and escaping from poverty, and there are several reasons that account for these. What causes poverty and how people manage to fall in it or escape from it can be attributed to several factors. Amsden (2012) argues that, for example, the logical flaw in policies implemented, like remedies for poverty alleviation that do not tackle the causes of the poverty is to be blamed for Sub-Sahara Africa's failure to arrest poverty over the years. The author further states that, there is poverty which arises as a result of unemployment and which in turn can be traced to the scarcity of jobs that pay the bare minimum for subsistence, but then poverty alleviation measures are geared towards making the job seeker more capable (healthy, educated, mobile) whereas there are no jobs. The inability to provide for oneself in order to have a decent standard of living is what can be termed as poverty. The inability to easily provide for one's basic necessities like food, shelter, clothing, but to mention a few or the lack thereof have all been linked to what poverty is and come in different forms.

Classification based on simple metrics which include demographics or income levels are not all there is to poverty since poverty is multifaceted, and may occur as a result of other factors such as deprivation, hunger, exclusion, lack of access to opportunities like healthcare etc., (Blocker et al., 2013). Akindola (2009) concurs and put forth that, defining poverty surpasses the traditional ascription of the discrepancy in income levels. That, this is a clear demonstration of the multidimensionality of poverty and so to better understand and be successful at attempts to alleviate poverty, the understanding of these dimensions as well as the active participation of the poor people through all the stages of developing that understanding is key. The monetary measurement approach is invoked whenever poverty is only defined as low income whereas the multidimensional approach is employed not only to focus on income levels but also on parameters like the quality of life for the measurement of poverty (Akindola, 2009).

The Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative has developed a Global Multidimensional Poverty Index covering over a hundred (100) developing countries to complement the traditional monetary poverty measures. It takes into account the acute deprivations in health, education and living standards faced by an individual

simultaneously. It encompasses ten (10) indicators namely; nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing and assets. This Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) which was developed in conjunction with the UN Development Program (UNDP) for inclusion in the UNDP's flagship program for Human Development Report in 2010 which has since been published annually shows the picture of who is poor and how they are poor. Figure 3.1 and table 3.1. gives a visual representation of what Oxford's Global MPI stands for.

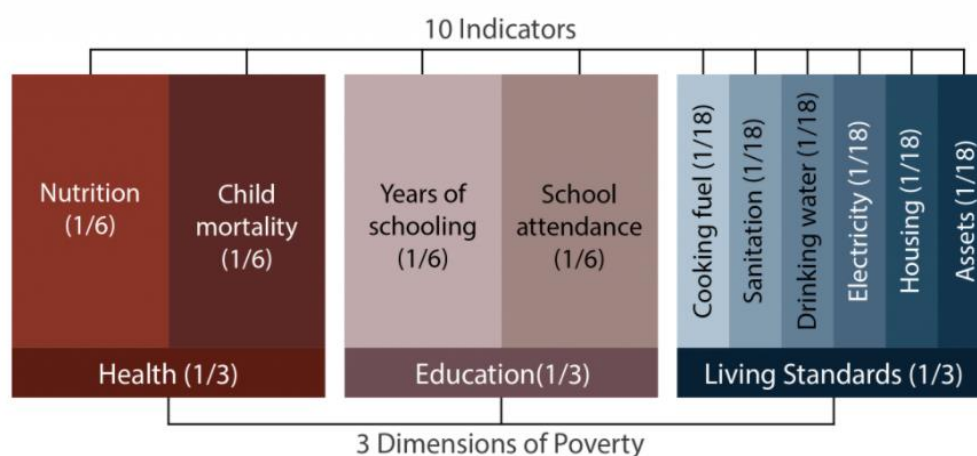


Figure 2.1: OPHI's Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018

Source: OPHI (2018). *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2018: The Most Detailed Picture to Date of the World's Poorest People*. Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, University of Oxford.

Table 2.1: Global MPI 2020 – Dimensions, Indicators, Deprivation Cutoffs, and Weights

DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY	INDICATOR	DEPRIVED IF LIVING IN A HOUSEHOLD WHERE...	WEIGHT	SDG AREA
Health (1/3)	Nutrition	Any person under 70 years of age for whom there is nutritional information is undernourished .	1/6	SDG 2: Zero Hunger
	Child mortality	A child under 18 has died in the household in the five-year period preceding the survey.	1/6	SDG 3: Health and Well-being
Education (1/3)	Years of schooling	No eligible household member has completed six years of schooling .	1/6	SDG 4: Quality Education
	School attendance	Any school-aged child is not attending school up to the age at which he/she would complete class 8 .	1/6	SDG 4: Quality Education
Living Standards (1/3)	Cooking fuel	A household cooks using solid fuel , such as dung, agricultural crop, shrubs, wood, charcoal, or coal.	1/18	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
	Sanitation	The household has unimproved or no sanitation facility or it is improved but shared with other households.	1/18	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
	Drinking water	The household's source of drinking water is not safe or safe drinking water is a 30-minute or longer walk from home, roundtrip.	1/18	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
	Electricity	The household has no electricity .	1/18	SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
	Housing	The household has inadequate housing materials in any of the three components: floor, roof, or walls .	1/18	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
	Assets	The household does not own more than one of these assets : radio, TV, telephone, computer, animal cart, bicycle, motorbike, or refrigerator, and does not own a car or truck.	1/18	SDG 1: No Poverty

As shown in *table 3.1*, the MPI assesses poverty at the individual level in light of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 11. A person is identified as poor by the MPI if they are deprived in a third or more of the ten (10) weighted indicators (*Global Multidimensional Poverty Index | OPHI*).

The World Bank defines poverty as hunger, the lack of shelter, the state of being sick but not being able to access healthcare, not having access to education, joblessness and fear of the future, living one day at a time, deaths of children caused by unclean water, powerlessness, the lack of representation and freedom. Poverty is basically the lack of all the basic necessities in life, including physical, moral and psychological needs that support the survival of an individual or a group of people.

Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2001) posit that, poverty also arises as a result of the inefficient use of resources which may be an extension from weak policy environment,

inadequate infrastructure, weak access to technology, credit but to mention a few. The authors further argue that poverty may also occur when certain groups employ certain mechanisms and systems with the aim to exclude certain groups labelled as “problem groups” from their participation in economic development matters, even the democratic process. So, poverty in its entirety goes deeper than meets the eye. It is an amalgamation of a string of issues and factors that come together and so to tackle it, a clearer comprehension of all these factors needs to be established, though all these factors may be inter-related and so, solving one issue may have a ripple effect on the other factors.

Poverty can be structural (chronic) or transient, where structural poverty thrives on the persistent or permanent socio-economic deprivations encompassing factors such as lack of skills for gainful employment, limited productive resources, endemic socio-political and cultural factors, gender, etc. In contrast to structural, transient poverty is associated with natural or man-made disasters and may be transitory or temporary (Ajakaiye & Adeyeye, 2001). Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2001) further add that, the conceptualization and any approach adopted thereof to annul the efficacy of poverty must be a mixed strategy considering the multifaceted nature of poverty, scope and dimension-wise. The existence of poverty is one that has been around for some time now in a large number of countries, continues to exist in some even till today and so targeting poverty alleviation is of importance to many countries, but how to quantify the extent of poverty is something that has been a natural question whenever the issue of poverty appears (Bourguignon & Chakravarty, 2003). Consequently, Ajakaiye & Adeyeye (2001) further state that in order not to lose sight of the scope and various dimensions, it must be noted that poverty measurement is undertaken to; determine a yardstick for measuring standard of living, choose a cut-off poverty line which separates the poor from the non-poor (indication of how many people are poor), take account of the distribution of standard of living among the poor, compare poverty over time among individuals, group or nations, and guide policy on poverty alleviation. Also, there are certain desirable properties of the measure of poverty which includes monotonicity axiom (i.e., measure of poverty should increase when the income of the poor household decreases), the transfer axiom i.e., poverty of household should increase when income is transferred from a poor to a less poor household, demonstrate the distribution of living standard among the poor.

Due to the multifaceted nature of poverty, it is difficult to near impossible to pinpoint one particular cause of poverty. Rather, the cause of poverty is a string of several factors complex in scope and dimension. Ajakaiye and Adeyeye (2001) outlined the following as the causes of poverty; low or negative economic growth, inappropriate macroeconomic policies, labour market deficiencies causing stunted job growth, the informal sector crippled with low productivity and low wages, redundancy amongst others.

Overall, poverty and its causes thereof are a complex thing and need to be tackled as such. Having the right insight and knowledge of these complexities may serve as a huge apparatus to the tourism, socio-economic and poverty alleviation nexus discourse.

2.3. E-Tourism and its Role in Socio-Economic Development

Socio-economic development may be defined as the evolvement or growth in the social and economic aspects of an individual or group of people's lives. These social aspects may include but are not limited to the quality of social interactions that occur in person or online with family, friends, our environs and even strangers. Economic development on the other hand is seen as the progress in the economic status of an individual or that of a group of people. It encompasses creation and growth of wealth, finances, an investment in growing an economy, promote prosperity and enhance the quality of life of an individual or group of people.

eTourism racing onto the tourism scene has been touted as a potential tool that can help in the realization of the goals associated with socio-economic development for many individuals and nations, which will ultimately mitigate against poverty. The insurgence of ICTs and its potential to create avenues and promote socio-economic development is one that is not in a doubt at all. In the right hands, and with the implementation of a tool of such magnitude in terms of its power to basically advance anything, ICTs, have a huge role to play in socio-economic developments if the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus' aim is to be realized. Some part of the argument in this study is that e-Tourism (ICTs) must play a huge role if the socio-economic freedom goal that is set and needed for poverty alleviation is to be reached.

Inversini and Rega (2016) argue that, tourism has always been described as a driving

force (economically) that rural and emerging economies can use for their development. However, tourism's contribution in development in terms of the social aspects has been a bone of contention for debate in academia. They further argue that tourism's socio-economic contribution to development may be enhanced by ICTs through the promotion of community-based independent marketing and sales dis-intermediation. Predominantly, the gross national product and employments created has been used as the measurement tools for tourism's impact, meanwhile the overall impact of tourism by its effect on the economy has been examined by looking at expenditures (direct, indirect and induced spending through the multiplier effect approach), and things like increase in international arrivals, length of stay, bed occupancy but to mention a few are the parameters used to associate with growth (Jamieson et al., 2004). Jamieson et al., (2004) further postulate that, tourism development's stance as a means to effect economic development change regarding any region or country has been traditionally so in general terms with focus on economic modernization and growth, and that the assumption had been the argument which says that, eventually through the "trickle-down theory", tourism's development will be one that favours the poor. However, despite tourism's developmental efforts at employing those in lower social and economic classes, a huge piling up of evidence points to the fact that, rather than benefiting the "actual poor", tourism's socio-economic developments rather enrich the local elites, as well as international and expatriate companies, while only providing low paying and low status employment, the authors continue. This goes a long way to cement and provide proof in support of one of the arguments this study has established. This argument, which is documented in the conceptual framework indicates that, tourism's efforts at poverty alleviation could only be realized if the real power to tap into opportunities and create wealth that will improve standard of living is given to the individual (actual poor). That, e-Tourism's paradigm shift using ICTs may prove to pave the way for this provision of power and opportunity for socio-economic development and subsequently, poverty alleviation.

ICTs' or technology's prowess or ability to elevate and advance any sector is an immeasurable one, and so industries which seek to lead the socio-economic development charge need to harness and use it as a tool for their agenda. Inversini et al., (2020) state that, despite the huge endorsement of tourism especially by the UNWTO in 2017 (the year of sustainable tourism for development) as a socio-

economic driver, there is a part of the narrative that is lacking, and that part is the significant role of digital technologies in the tourism-socio-economic development nexus discussion. The authors further state that, the impact of e-Tourism can be felt if used appropriately in the actual travel product design, development, as well as roll out. That the impact can also be realized on the local socio-economic development scene of the local communities. Tourism's impact on development should be seen in light of its ability to unlock endless opportunities for the poor rather than the traditional way of looking at it from the perspective of just expansion in size or growth Inversini et al., (2020) as cited in (Ashley & Roe, 2002). In agreement with Ashley and Roe's assertions, Akama (2000) states that, tourism's performance as a tool for socio-economic development should also be examined based on integration into local and regional economies including how tourism benefits the local communities at the grassroot level. The author further adds that, tourism policy and institutional mechanisms promoting the local's involvement and or participation in tourism project designs, coupled with involvement in implementation and management is the way to go to realize long-term sustainable socio-economic development. This simply implies that, to realize true socio-economic development, the involvement of the actual people who are to benefit cannot be overlooked, but rather, these people should be empowered in the buildup to socio-economic development sought by all.

One major approach that keeps appearing in the tourism-socio-economic development and eventually poverty alleviation discussion is that of the Pro-poor tourism. Ashley et al. (2001) describe pro-poor tourism as not a specific aspect or product of tourism, but as a whole approach. Tourism providing net benefit for the poor is what the authors define as Pro-poor tourism. That is to say that it is an approach which focuses on the socio-economic gains that are geared towards making sure it is the "actual poor" and vulnerable in society who benefit off the potential tourism has to alleviate poverty. "Pro-poor growth" is required for the cause for poverty alleviation, and while tourism is very significant in most poor countries, certain characteristics enhances its pro-poor potential. The tourism industry being labour intensive, carved out to include women as well as the informal sector, the sector being natural and cultural asset-based, its suitability for poor areas amongst others are what enhances its pro-poor potential. Capitalizing on these features mentioned, while reducing its negative impact is what 'harnessing tourism for pro-poor growth' is all about (Ashley et al., 2001). Realizing

that the Pro-poor tourism approach envisions creating endless opportunities for the actual poor to benefit from tourism, this study argues that, then what better tool is there to use for the realization of this goal than e-Tourism? e-Tourism's paradigm shift has provided the industry with ICT-based tools and solutions designed and adapted to specifically suit and serve the purpose of the tourism industry. e-Tourism can enhance the potential for growth resulting from governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as individual's interest in the promotion of sustainable tourism that will provide and benefit all especially the poor.

Ashley and Godwin (2007) put forth that, tourism and new tourism policies embodying commitments that aim to harness tourism for poverty alleviation and not just the foreign exchange generation have been the focus of recent poverty reduction strategies, and that robust approaches with proven results to show should be the counter tourism practitioners give to this new opportunity. On the other hand, Harrison (2008) in his pro-poor tourism critique concluded that, pro-poor tourism as it is seen is not distinctive and that, while many hail the approach, he argues that it is far more easier to expatiate and discuss what pro-poor tourism is not than what it is. It is worth noting that, an approach such as pro-poor tourism is one that will not have it on a silver platter with receiving its fair share of critique, especially when it touches on one of the world's greatest problem and sensitive issue at the discussion table. However, this study argues that, the prospects of the pro-poor tourism approach to better the socio-economic lives of the poor could be far more enhanced by taking advantage of e-Tourism's paradigm shift and massively adopting and including ICTs in pursuant of its goals.

2.4. E-Tourism: The Future for Development and Poverty Alleviation?

Having discussed and looked at the relevance of the role of e-Tourism in socio-economic development in relevant literature, the question of whether e-Tourism is the way to go for the realization of development and poverty alleviation lingers on. This study asserts that, indeed the use of ICTs in the industry to advance its efforts at socio-economic development is something that is eminent. In fact, the efficacy of ICTs and its potential for the realization of the tourism-socio-economic-poverty alleviation nexus discussion goals cannot be underrated. It is thus very important also to acknowledge the progress of ICTs or technology and its evolution over time in the hospitality and tourism industry even in the face of several crises such as the Covid-

19 turmoil the industry faces today and the power of resilience for innovative measures granted by ICTs to move the industry forward through to the future for development. ICTs (e-Tourism) have proven to be the future yet again in this instance. Shown in the following link and attached in the appendix 2 of this thesis is a tabular representation (Visual history of Hospitality and Tourism Technology), which is a detailed graphical representation of the evolution of hospitality and tourism technologies over time as illustrated by the Shiji Team and Techtalk.travel (2021). (<https://insights.shijigroup.com/visual-history-of-travel-technology/>)

Pauna (2017) asserts that, multiple opportunity avenues are created under the umbrella of e-Tourism and coupled with the opportunity of access, low cost, while no special but simple equipment is required, multimedia abilities and e-Tourism's global reach, small tourism business enterprises run by individuals can take advantage of it. The author further adds that, this potential is widely accepted and officially recognized by the tourism sector, and that ICTs will be the key leading factor in the future of the industry, which subsequently means only businesses and individuals that harness the potential of ICTs stand a chance of survival. It has thus become clear and evident that the significance of e-Tourism's paradigm shift is growing now more than ever with every passing day and it is the now and the future for socio-economic development leading to poverty alleviation.

Szopinsski and Staniewski (2016) in their analysis project that, ICTs and their application in the tourism sector amongst member states of the European Union, for example, may develop further in the forthcoming years. The authors postulate that the use of ICTs (e-Tourism) and its frequency in usage may rise owing to the use of the internet and or e-Tourism is becoming widespread now more than ever amongst social groups (labour market workers, students and pensioners). These developments only point to one direction, and that is, e-Tourism, its paradigm shift and all that comes with it, is the future for any socio-economic developmental agenda. Progress regarding this agenda means overcoming certain barriers and concerns such as the digital divide. Since e-Tourism thrives on ICTs, the issue of the digital divide which in simple terms means the gulf between those that have access to ICTs and their accompaniments and those who do not have access have become an area of concern. Harris (2002) however stated that the digital divide discussion goes beyond just access to ICTs and is

expressed in different multiple dimensions. They further argue that implementation of further provisions needs to be rolled out by societies to tackle the issues in the dimensions of the digital divide if they truly claim to wish to share the benefits of access to technology. However, the authors add that the real issue is not about the digital divide, a word which many deem to be problematic, but the real culprit which should raise concern is the information and knowledge gap. Harris (2002) presented the table below on a summary of some of the digital divide dimensions that need to be looked at in order to address it.

Table 2.2: Dimensions of the Digital Divide

Dimensions of the Digital Divide	
Service availability	The services made available through the use of ICTs should be freely available to all who might wish to make use of them.
Awareness	Everyone is aware of how they might be able to use ICTs for their own benefit.
Opportunity to learn and use new media	Everyone has the opportunity to attain computer literacy.
Mastery of technologies	Everyone understands which tools are best suited for which tasks.
Experience	Everyone is able to accumulate sufficient experience with the use of ICTs to enable them to fully exploit their potential.
Skills	Everyone has the right skills for performing ICT related tasks.
Support	Everyone has access to appropriate assistance when they need it to help them make good use of ICTs.
Attitudes (motivation)	Everyone is encouraged to participate in the sharing of benefits available from equal access to ICTs.
Content	Sufficient content is available to enable everyone to gain benefit from ICTs
Cultural	The other dimensions are adapted as required to the cultures of all potential users.
Disability	The other dimensions are adapted as required so that disability is not a barrier to equal enjoyment of the benefits of ICTs.
Linguistic	The other dimensions are adapted as required so that language is not a barrier to equal enjoyment of the benefits of ICTs.
Gender	The other dimensions are adapted as required so that gender is not a barrier to equal enjoyment of the benefits of ICTs.
Empowerment of civil society	Structural, political, and governance factors do not impede equal enjoyment of the benefits of ICTs.

Source: Harrison et al., (2002).

The discussion above goes a long way to prove that sharing has another side that has to do with accepting what has been presented to you. It is thus inherent to say that, though ICTs in the tourism industry is still fresh and as some would say is still in its “childhood stage” compared to many other industries, the adoption and acceptance of eTourism as the new developmental order is the way to go moving into the future if

the industry is to reach its full potential. A synthesized and summarized account of progress on research in the field of e-Tourism technology acceptance and adoption was provided by Pourfakhimi et al., (2020). The authors in their 2018 and 2019 research identified cognitive, normative, behavioral control, affective, and personality-related determinants as the five categories of major consumer-related antecedents of the adoption and usage of e-Tourism technologies. While a range of analytical beliefs of the consumer regarding the functionality and utilization of technological artefacts is what the cognitive aspect embodies, the normative capitalizes on and is about the beliefs that are socially constructed and involve social norms and expectations that bases on others' use of technology. On the other hand, the authors continue by outlining that, users' perception of their own ability in the usage of technology which is orchestrated by a series of beliefs that affect this perception is what can be termed as behavioural control. Regarding the affective and personality-related antecedents, constructs such as emotional involvement, traveller's enjoyment on the adoption and use of technologies, certain individual as well as demographic traits such as habits, involvement, experience among others come to play.

E-Tourism being the future for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation is undoubtedly true. The use of ICTs to make the hospitality and tourism sector better and improve the standard of work and living is inevitable. Big data and the internet of things cannot be handled using traditional ways in the industry with the increase in data and information now more than ever. In fact, things are shifting automatically towards the use and adoption of e-Tourism technologies and in no time, without ICTs, the industry will not function. Cooperation between all aspects of the industry, providers of services and individuals alike who can benefit from this paradigm shift is paramount and their stance in the technology distribution and rollout avenues need to be established in order to fully comprehend and act accordingly for full benefits to be realized. Knowledge of where every entity stands and where individuals can identify and position themselves for an opportunity to benefit can prove to be very helpful in the realization of socio-economic freedom and poverty alleviation through e-Tourism in the near future.

During the inquiry for this study, one thing that caught eye and was intriguing was the Shiji Distribution Team's hospitality distribution chart which uses the hotel as the centre for the technology distribution landscape of the hospitality and tourism industry.

The authors Shiji Distribution Team (2021) describe the hospitality and tourism technology industry as broad, complex and constantly evolving and so any attempt to make sense of the landscape could be intimidating which only goes to prove the limitless and seamless opportunities that abound in this technological era in the industry. The authors proceed by outlining the fact that, transformations have occurred on all fronts in the industry probably permanently, considering massive transformations regarding technological capabilities and adoption, service providers' strategies and operations, as well as individuals and users' requirements having changed especially during the Covid-19 period. The team has provided a chart to help visualize the broad and complex technological landscape in the hospitality industry identifying various distribution and opportunity avenues, ranging from online, through to travel agencies, operators as well as meetings and events as exemplified in Appendix 1 for the breakdown of the chart.

Drawing from the chart, it confirms, and it is thus only prudent to say that ICTs, its adoption and acceptance has come to stay and is a driver for the present and future sustainable socio-economic development and poverty alleviation efforts. Various avenues highlighted in the chart that individuals especially can take advantage of include but are not limited to the use of social media outlets like Instagram, Facebook and Twitter for individual business promotion for example, while also looking out for opportunities in aspects such as Airbnb and online tour operators, but to mention a few.

2.5 Summary of Chapter

The chapter begins with an introduction of a well-known idea, which is tourism being almost synonymous with poverty alleviation. The study then looks at how UNWTO as an international organization has championed the tourism-socio-economic development and poverty alleviation nexus discussion and inquiry by enshrining it in most of the organization's developmental agenda. Understanding the topic of poverty to the core is also discussed where the question of whether e-Tourism in itself can turn around socio-economic fortunes for poverty alleviation or certain attitudinal and behavioural changes have to effected in order to get results is also looked at. OPHI's multi-dimensional poverty index is introduced to help better understand the topic of poverty. This part of the study examined the role e-Tourism can play in socio-

economic development for communities and individuals by looking at the various avenues and opportunities as presented by e-Tourism for the benefit of all and sundry. The study further discusses the prospects of e-Tourism as the future for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. In the course of the discussion, a visual representation of hospitality and tourism technologies over the years and how they have progressed is presented to better understand the notion that, technology in the industry though still very young compared to other industries, has come to stay and is the present and future. While discussions progressed, some major challenges like the digital divide came up, for which ways to help bridge the gap between the fortunate and the less privileged herein called the “actual poor” were identified. Finally, this part of the study presented the hospitality and tourism technology distribution chart. The chart gives insight into the broad, complex and somewhat intimidating to make sense of nature of the hospitality and tourism technology arena. The chart explores, identifies and indicates various technological avenues and opportunities created within the industry using the hotel as the central point to view the whole technological landscape. This is an indication of where the industry has been and is headed technology-wise. It is thus inherent to say that e-Tourism can definitely improve the socio-economic development and poverty alleviation efforts and that, if any organization or individual has ideas of using tourism as a tool for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation, then e-Tourism cannot be overlooked.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach and methodology are an integral part of any study undertaken and as such expatiation on the basis for which results were obtained is in essence very instrumental in arriving at a conclusion. This part of the study thus briefly reiterates the aims and hypothesis of the study and looks at the methods employed in gathering data and/or information and the sampling techniques.

The study aims to identify how technological advancements in the hospitality and tourism sector can be leveraged as a sustainable tool for poverty alleviation. That is to say, it looks at identifying the skills that are needed by individuals or people to thrive and benefit from ICTs in these present-day ICT-studded times while underlying some behavioural or attitudinal factors that prohibit poverty alleviation. The study also seeks to document some jobs that have or will become obsolete and the new ones that have replaced them or completely new ones that have been established by e-Tourism (ICTs).

To arrive at the aforementioned goal, the survey method was used to get the opinion of tourism industry workers. The study approach that is employed to get quantitative data on certain groups of people that are representative of a larger group of people who are of interest to the researcher is termed Surveying. A Survey is defined as a way of obtaining information about a phenomenon under investigation from all or a subset of the universe's respondents (Kothari, 2004, p. 36). Subsequently, Scheuren (2004, p. 9), indicates that the word survey is most typically used to denote a process of acquiring information from a sample of individuals.

Wimmer and Dominick (2013, p. 191) on the other hand, stressed the usage of a survey, noting that it simply concentrates on a specific person or persons with the goal of determining their entire qualities or attributes, identifying and describing an individual. The authors buttress their stance by inferring that, the purpose of the survey

is often to describe and explain why certain conditions and happenings prevail. The study of two or more variables is characteristic of this approach in getting to the bottom of research issues or testing the research hypotheses. The researcher gains insight using this technique to arrive at findings which facilitate the investigation and determination of the interrelationships between variables and aid the researcher in drawing explanatory acumen to the issue at hand.

3.1.1 Research Framework and Design

A research framework and design involve the research methods and techniques employed by a researcher and for that matter are suitable for their course of study in order to attain success.

Since this study sought to identify and establish how technological advancements in the hospitality and tourism sector can be leveraged as a sustainable tool for poverty alleviation, the survey research approach was used as indicated earlier. This approach was deemed one of the appropriate approaches because, a survey is used when a researcher wants to gather and assess thoughts, ideas, and opinions on a matter that will be tantamount to a fair random representation of a population under study.

The survey of tourism industry workers' opinion was conducted solely online through emails, social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook groups for professionals in the hospitality and tourism industry, and panels with hospitality and tourism industry backgrounds on survey platforms to get both qualitative and quantitative views. The research and for that matter, the survey were designed and executed within the framework and scope of the various terminologies used throughout this study. The bases were e-Tourism which basically refers to the introduction of ICTs and or digitization in the tourism industry and how it has changed the entire scope of operations (Paradigm Shift) of the industry. The framework and design were instituted to help examine the extent of the paradigm shift. The framework and design also encompass and took into consideration how the local people, who can be defined as the people originally from the place or base of operations for tourism activities, and workers can leverage these technological advancements (e-Tourism) to enjoy the benefits accrued from the tourism operations and activities of these tourism destinations (country, region, district, city, town or village). In so doing, and to be able

to attain these heights, sustainable tourism efforts, which involve tourism which addresses the needs of the visitor, the tourism industry, the environment and host communities without compromising or undermining both the current and future economic, socio-cultural and environmental constructs of tourism resources (natural and artificial attractions, services available, infrastructure, conditions etc. of a destination) was greatly considered in the buildup to the preparation of the questionnaire for the survey and the research as a whole. Being able to hold up to all the above-mentioned elements, the framework and design were set to help arriving at tangible and appropriate courses of action for the movement for poverty alleviation. Poverty alleviation can be defined as the processes involved in improving the lives and living conditions of individuals by the provision and the ability to afford basic necessities such as housing, health care, food and water, clothing, better education and even more.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

Simple Random Sampling was used in this study, with the population which can be described as an aggregation of all survey elements being the universe of hospitality and tourism industry workers for this study being consulted. A sample refers to the subset of the population deemed representative of the entire population a researcher is surveying. The data collection method was employed with invitations sent to as many random email addresses of academics, managers, business owners, workers, as well as Master's and PhD graduate students as possible. The survey questionnaire with the invitation was also posted and advertised on social media pages like those of hospitality and tourism professionals on Facebook, and LinkedIn, where the participation of people with expertise in the hospitality and tourism industry in the survey was solicited. Survey panels were also used in reaching a wider range of participants from the hospitality and tourism industry who have experience in the hospitality and tourism industry to share their opinion on the issue at hand.

3.3 Survey Questionnaire and Data Collection Instrument

A Questionnaire and a scale were adopted from Dao Truong (2014) and tailored to suit the purpose of this study. Whereas this study sought to document the

interrelationship between eTourism, sustainable tourism, poverty alleviation and the paradigm shift as a result of the introduction of ICTs while bringing to bare the exact jobs, opportunities and avenues that can be pursued to help in the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus, Dao Truong (2014) looked at the involvement of Social Marketing as an approach for poverty alleviation in the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus through the mixed approach of interviews, surveys and observations. The author suggests that social marketing principles can be used as an effective tool in the tourism-poverty alleviation efforts while contributing to the conservation of natural resources. Dao Truong (2014) studies the use of Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) projects and activities toward the attainment of poverty alleviation from the perspective of the local poor people for whom these projects have been designed.

A 46-item questionnaire was designed and tested with 25 participants at the beginning to ensure clarity in the questions. A questionnaire can simply be defined as a data collection instrument comprising of a set of a series of questions aimed at acquiring relevant information. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. In the first section, opinions of respondent were taken on the general issues of tourism and poverty. The section sought opinions on general issues such as income sources, causes of poverty, barriers to poverty alleviation, use of tourism resources as well as attitudes and behaviours of the local people or individuals.

In the second section, opinions were sought on e-Tourism's paradigm shift and its relationship to sustainability, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation for the locals or individuals. This section also took opinions on the exact jobs and opportunities created by the emergence of ICTs, which jobs have become obsolete and which ones require new skills and technical know-how as stipulated in the aims and objectives of this study.

In the third and final section, opinions were sought on e-Tourism's paradigm shift and its possible contributions to society, individuals and to the cause of poverty alleviation. Respondents were asked to rate statements depending on their agreement with the statement based on the contribution of e-Tourism's paradigm shift by circling an appropriate scale.

In developing the questionnaire, the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3 was used as the basis for formulating the questions. The UNWTO's resolve to end poverty and promote sustainable tourism and social-economic development for the people, especially for those at tourism destinations, the global multidimensional poverty index, coupled with gaining insight from the literature on technological advancement in the tourism industry (e-Tourism) since it started to date and the WTO's report on how automation is replacing jobs in several industries, among others, all informed and contributed to the formulation of relevant questions that were forwarded to these industry stakeholders for their insight based on their rich experiences.

3.4 Data Analyses and Results

Of all the possible participants reached through all the mediums mentioned above, to respond to the questionnaire, about 391 responses were received. Of this number, 323 valid responses were gathered. Respondents were from all over the world working in different sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry with different backgrounds, which makes the surveyed opinions for this study fairly varied. Most of the respondents making up 64.1% of the responses were from the U.S.A representing 207 of the total responses. The British followed with 11.1% equating to 36 of the total valid responses, while Indians made up 6.2% with 20 respondents. The Brazilians were represented with 9 respondents amounting to 2.8% and the Turkish making the top 5 respondents with 2.2% and 7 respondents of the total valid responses received.

The top 5 work residences of the respondents were The United States of America (213, 65.9%), the United Kingdom (21, 6.5%), India (13, 4.0%) and Wales (11, 3.4%). The interesting thing is, for some reason unbeknownst, all the respondents residing in Wales did not report it as residing in the United Kingdom but specifically in Wales. France (9, 2.8%) made up the top 5 destinations respondents resided and worked from.

The age of the respondents as depicted in the table is also varied with the age range 70+ being the only age range without a respondent. The majority of the respondents were aged between 29-39 and probably in their prime at what they do and preferably to say their best in the labour market. They make up 41.5% representing 134 of the total respondents. Age 18-28 (88, 27.2%) followed, with age 40-49 (68, 21.1%)

following, age 50-59 (21, 6.5%) and age group 60-69 (12, 3.7) following in that order. Of the 323 respondents, 178 of them representing 55.1% had attained a bachelor's degree, with 94 representing 29.1% having attained a Master's degree, 28 representing 8.7% had some college or associate degree, 15 representing 4.6% possessed a Doctorate degree, with 7 representing 2.2% in the high school or less category and 1 respondent representing 0.3% had some kind of Diploma at the time of the survey.

In terms of Gender, of the 323 respondents, the study received responses from 168 males representing 52.0% of the total responses, whereas their female counterparts made up 47.7% of the total responses with 153 responses. 2 respondents representing 0.6% did not want to provide their gender.

3.4.1 RESPONDENTS CHARACTERISTICS

Table 3.1: Demographic Data of Survey Respondents

DESCRIPTION	RESPONDENTS (N=323)	PERCENTAGE (%)
NATIONALITY		
American	207	64.1%
British	36	11.1%
Indian	20	6.2%
Brazilian	9	2.8%
Turkish	7	2.2%
Italian	6	1.9%
French	4	1.2%
German	4	1.2%
Polish	4	1.2%
Ghanaian	3	0.9%
Chinese	3	0.9%
Spanish	2	0.6%
Belgian	2	0.6%
Romanian	2	0.6%
Fijian and New Zealand	1	0.3%
Dutch	1	0.3%
Russian	1	0.3%
Icelandic	1	0.3%
Jamaican	1	0.3%
Swedish	1	0.3%
Malaysian	1	0.3%

Iraqi	1	0.3%
Japanese	1	0.3%
Bangladeshi	1	0.3%
Vietnamese	1	0.3%
Mexican	1	0.3%
Algerian	1	0.3%
Cameroonian	1	0.3%

**COUNTRY OF
RESIDENCE**

United States of America	213	65.9%
United Kingdom	38	11.8%
India	13	4.0%
France	9	2.8%
Brazil	8	2.5%
Turkey	7	2.2%
Italy	5	1.5%
Germany	4	1.2%
Canada	4	1.2%
Ghana	3	0.9%
Spain	3	0.9%
Poland	3	0.9%
China	1	0.3%
Portugal	1	0.3%
Fiji	1	0.3%
The Netherlands	1	0.3%
Iceland	1	0.3%
Australia	1	0.3%
Jamaica	1	0.3%
Romania	1	0.3%
Malaysia	1	0.3%
Iraq	1	0.3%
Bangladesh	1	0.3%
Algeria	1	0.3%
Belgium	1	0.3%

AGE BRACKET

29-39	134	41.5%
18-28	88	27.2%
40-49	68	21.1%
50-59	21	6.5%
60-69	12	3.7%

**EDUCATIONAL
BACKGROUND**

Bachelor (<i>College Degree</i>)	178	55.1%
Post Graduate (<i>Master</i>)	94	29.1%
Some College or Associate Degree	28	8.7%
Post Graduate (<i>Doctoral</i>)	15	4.6%
High School or less	7	2.2%
Diploma	1	0.3%

GENDER

Male	168	52.0%
Female	153	47.4%
Does not matter	2	0.6%

**MARITAL
STATUS**

Married	216	66.9%
Single	92	28.5%
Does not matter	8	2.5%
Divorced/Separated	7	2.2%

SECTOR

Tour Guidance	191	30.2%
Travel and Transportation	80	12.6%
Hotel Business (<i>Accommodation, Lodging</i>)	75	11.8%
Academia (<i>University</i>)	52	8.2%
Tourism Marketing and Promotion	46	7.3%
Catering Industry (<i>Restaurant Business, Food and Beverage</i>)	37	5.8%
Travel Intermediary (Agency etc.)	36	5.7%
Public Sector (<i>Tourism Ministry</i>)	32	5.1%
Travel Consultancy	24	3.8%
Meeting Industry (MICE)	22	3.5%
Marine Tourism	11	1.7%
Cruise Business	10	1.6%
Souvenir Producer and Seller	7	1.1%

Graduate Student	3	0.5%
Information Technology	3	0.5%
Cabin Crew	2	0.3%
Photography	1	0.2%
Health and Safety	1	0.2%
TOTAL	633(*)	

(*) Multiple Responses are Combined

POSITION

Worker	225	64.5%
Freelance	39	11.2%
Owner	38	10.9%
Consultant	34	9.7%
Educator	13	3.7%
TOTAL	349	

***Multiple Responses are Calculated**

No. OF YEARS

5-10 years	135	41.8%
less than 5 years	104	32.2%
11-15 years	47	14.6%
16-20 years	20	6.2%
21 years +	17	5.3%
TOTAL	323	

The respondents for this study comprised of the married (216, 66.9%), single (92, 28.5%), “Does not matter” (8, 2.5%) and the Divorced or Separated (7, 2.2%).

Participants from different sectors of the hospitality and tourism industry, which makes the respondent groups very diverse, responded to the questionnaire. Participants had the option to do multiple selection of all the sectors they work in at the moment. As a result, though 323 valid responses were derived from the survey, responses for this section amounted to 633. Of these numbers, 30.2% of the participants which accounted for 191 of the total responses worked as Tour Guides, and the Travel and Transportation sector had 12.6% of the total representing 80 responses. Responses from the Hotel Business (Accommodation, Lodging) was 11.8% of the total responses which amounts to 75 responses, whereas those from Academia (University) and Tourism Marketing and Promotion make up for 8.2% with 52 responses and 7.3% with

46 responses from the total respectively. These sectors make up for the top 5 sectors that this study received responses from. Other sectors are Catering Industry (Restaurant Business, Food and Beverage), Travel Intermediary (Agency etc.), Public Sector (Tourism Ministry), Travel Consultancy, Meeting Industry (MICE), Marine Tourism, Cruise Business, Souvenir Producer and Seller, Graduate Students, Information Technology, Cabin Crew, Photography, and Health and Safety.

The respondents had different positions in their place or line of works as well. Workers were 64.5% (225) of the total respondents, with Freelancers making up 11.2% (39), Owners of businesses were 10.9% (38) of the respondents, whereas Consultant (9.7%, 34) and Educators (3.7%, 13) completed the positions list for this study.

Of the diverse groups of respondents in different sectors and positions, 41.8% (135) had worked in their sector and or position for 5-10 years. 32.2% representing 104 of total responses had had their position or had been in their sector for 5 or less than 5 years, while 14.6% (47) had been in their sector and or position for 11-15 years. Those in the 16-20 years category were 20 in number representing 6.2% of the total responses received. 17 (5.3%) were the figures for those who responded in the 21+ years category in the industry.

3.4.2 INCOME SOURCES OF LOCAL PEOPLE AT A TOURISM DESTINATION

Respondents were asked, as shown in *Table 4.2*, to select and were also given the option to provide in writing what in their opinion were the income sources of the local people at tourism destinations since the study sought to underline the importance of tourism and how we can leverage the technological advancements to help bring socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. This also probably represents what in the opinion of these industry players are the important sources of income for local people that tourism provides in the general sense. The top five responses were Food services (Restaurant and other catering services) with 154 (16.1%) responses; Transport and touring services (Local transportation, boat tours, yachting etc.) pulling 149 (15.6%) responses; Tour guidance amassing 148 (15.5%) responses; Accommodation services (Hotels and other lodgings) with 134 (14.0%) and Travel

agency owner/agent business getting 116 (12.1%) responses. Other income sources that were selected and or mentioned outside the top five included Employment in tourism establishments, Souvenir selling, Retail sales to traveling people and Locally grown products (agricultural and/or dairy products etc.)

Table 3.2: Income Sources of Local People at A Tourism Destination

INCOME SOURCES OF LOCAL PEOPLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Food services (<i>Restaurant and other catering services</i>)	154	16.1%
Transport and touring services (<i>Local transportation, boat tours, yachting etc.</i>)	149	15.6%
Tour guidance	148	15.5%
Accommodation services (<i>Hotels and other lodgings</i>)	134	14.0%
Travel agency owner/agent business	116	12.1%
Employment in tourism establishments	90	9.4%
Souvenir selling	69	7.2%
Retail sales to traveling people	55	5.8%
Locally grown products (<i>agricultural and/or dairy products etc.</i>)	41	4.3%
TOTAL	956 (*)	100.0%

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

3.4.3 POTENTIAL CAUSES OF POVERTY IN TOURISM DESTINATIONS

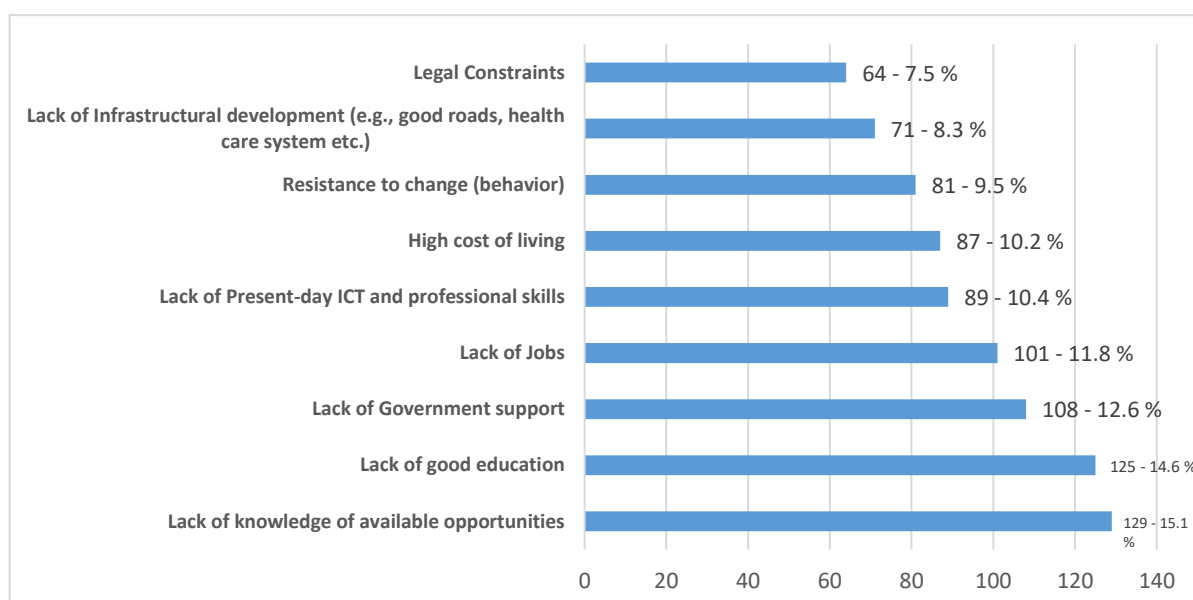


Figure 3.1: Potential Causes of Poverty at Tourism Destinations

**of 323 Respondents – *Multiple Responses are Calculated (Total 855 – 100 %)*

Respondents were also asked of their opinion on what they perceived were the causes of poverty at various tourism destinations for the people in spite of all the income sources they have mentioned above. Discussion and arguments in the opening chapters of this study had suggested that some causes such as lack of knowledge of the available opportunities, lack of education, and resistance to change among a few other causes were to blame for the poverty situation at most tourism destinations. The results as depicted in Figure 4.1 above, buttresses and confirms these assumptions, seeing as most the respondents selected and or mentioned lack of knowledge of available opportunities (129, 15.1%), lack of good education (125, 14.6%), Lack of government support (108, 12.6%), lack of jobs (101, 11.8%) and lack of present-day ICT professional skills as the top 5 causes of poverty at tourism destinations.

Other causes were the high cost of living, resistance to change (behaviour), lack of infrastructural development and legal constraints.

3.4.4 ICTs IN MITIGATING THE OVERUSE OF TOURISM RESOURCES

Most often than not, people and organizations tend to rely on the use of tourism resources in the quest to generate sources of income and livelihood. This has led to the overuse and overreliance on the tourism resources at these destinations, which is detrimental to the very core of what provides daily livelihoods and income. This has been a canker that has injured many destinations without a way to combat it. This study suggested that, if the agenda of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation can be realized, then e-Tourism (ICTs) may come in handy in apprehending one of the major concerns to sustainability – the overuse of tourism resources. Respondents were thus asked to select and or provide how in their opinion, ICTs can help mitigate the overuse of tourism resources. *Figure 3.2* below depicts the results.

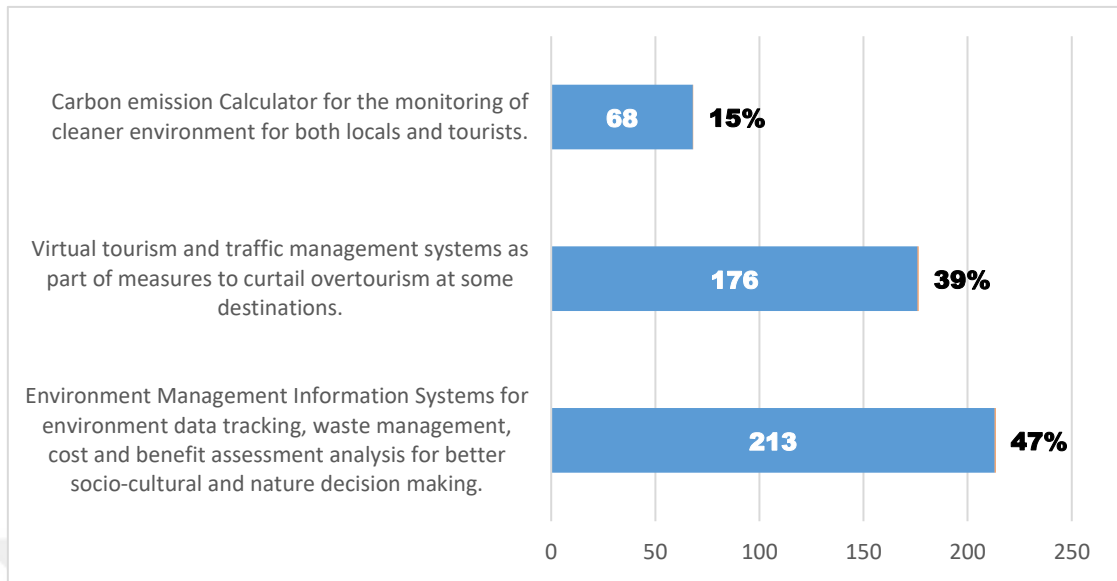


Figure 3.2: ICTs in Mitigating the Overuse of Tourism Resources

*Total Responses (Frequency of answers) = 457: *Multiple Responses are Calculated*

ICTs for “Environment Management Information Systems for environment data tracking, waste management, cost and benefit assessment analysis for better socio-cultural and nature decision making” accrued 47% (213) of the total responses, with “Virtual tourism and traffic management systems as part of measures to curtail overtourism at some destinations” amassing 39% (176), whereas “Carbon emission Calculator for the monitoring of cleaner environment for both locals and tourists” pulled 15% (68) of the total responses.

3.4.5 MAIN BARRIERS TO POVERTY ALLEVIATION

What the main barriers to poverty alleviation are, was the next question respondents were asked to share their opinion on by selecting and or providing their own answer. In this section, lack of government support was the most selected or provided response with 20.2% (146), followed by lack of knowledge of available opportunities with 19.7% (142), and then lack of jobs 19.0% (137). Lack of present-day ICT and professional skills 15.7% (113) completed the top 5 most selected or provided response. The other responses included legal constraints and 1 other response. *Figure 4.3* below shows the results.

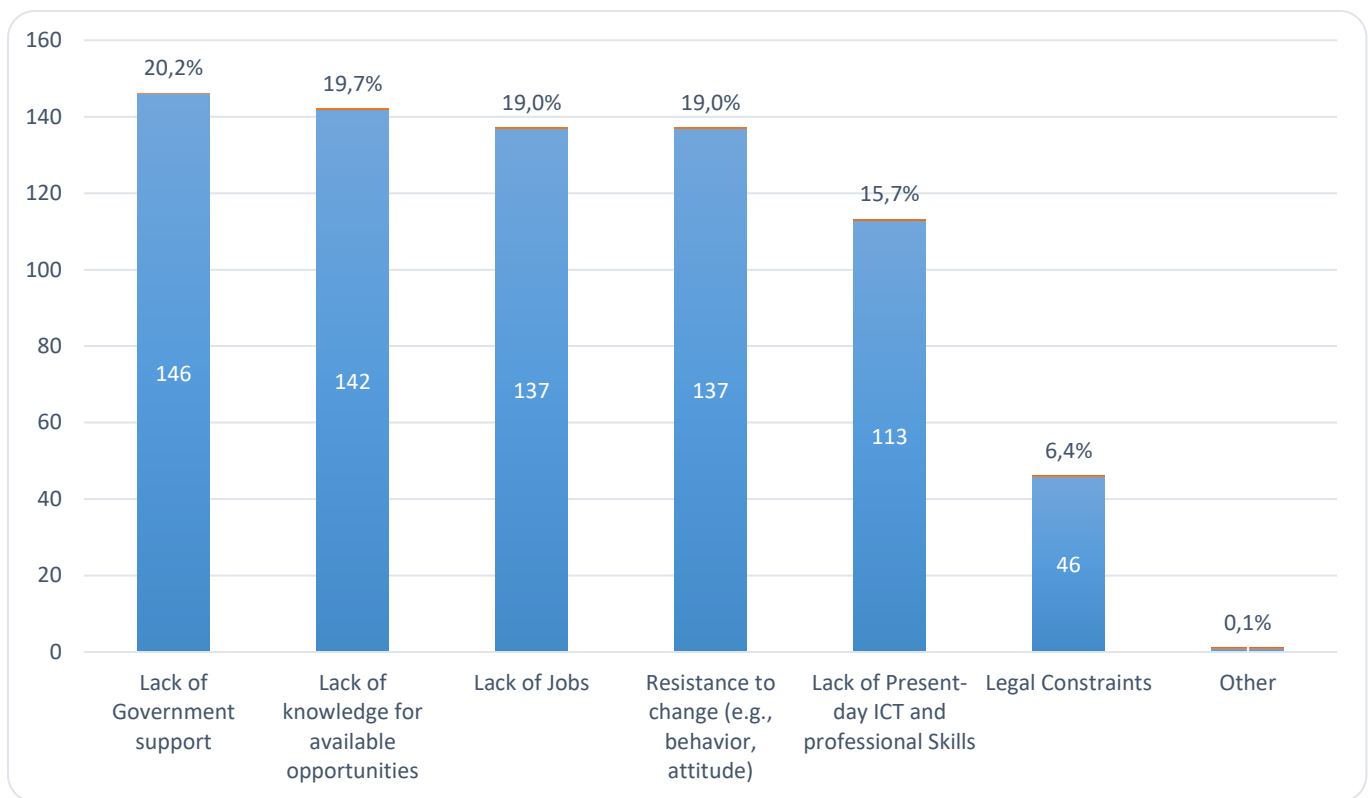


Figure 3.3: Main Barriers to Poverty Alleviation

Other: *The uneven distribution of wealth and education*

***Multiple Responses are Calculated**

3.4.6 ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS OF LOCAL PEOPLE AFFECTING THEIR POVERTY STATE

This study had underlined one major aspect of the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus discussion that is often overlooked. This study argued that, in order for the realization of using e-Tourism as a sustainable tourism tool for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation to materialize, it is important that certain ways of life of the people are also eliminated to pave way for the required changes. This was in reference to particularly attitudinal and behavioural changes of the people in the industry and at tourism destinations. Respondents were thus asked which attitudes or behaviours of the people they presume affect their poverty state and thus need to be changed. Of the responses received, lack of effort or laziness topped the chart with 167 responses representing 36.8%, while no attempt to improve oneself attracted 162 responses, a representation of 35.7% of the total responses. Resistance to change as an attitudinal

and or behavioural element affecting people's poverty state, the respondents' perception was at 27.3% of the total responses, that 124, whereas there was 1 “other” response with 0.2%. Results can be consulted in *Figure 4.4* below.

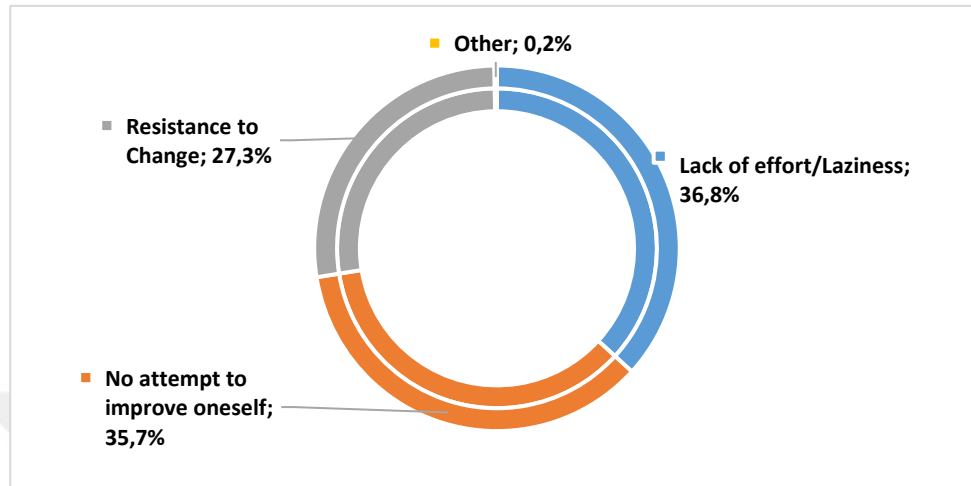


Figure 3.4: Attitudes and Behaviors of Local People Affecting Their Poverty State

TOTAL RESPONSES (Multiple Responses are Calculated)		
	454	100.0%
Lack of effort/Laziness	167	36.8%
No attempt to improve oneself	162	35.7%
Resistance to Change	124	27.3%
Other	1	0.2%

Other: *“These people are often unaware of how to generate opportunities, how to generate business and attract people. With so many changes and digital transformation, it becomes even more difficult for those who do not have technical skills to follow the context. Before blaming the local population, destination management also has a responsibility to stimulate change.”*

3.4.7 THE EXTENT TO WHICH e-TOURISM HAS CAUSED A PARADIGM SHIFT

Respondents after sharing their opinions on general questions related to tourism and poverty alleviation above were presented with the question of the extent to which they believe e-Tourism (ICTs) has caused a paradigm shift in the tourism industry. This was to test the assumption made in this study that, indeed e-Tourism (ICTs) have caused a paradigm shift and so in order to leverage it for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation, new approaches and thinking to do things in the industry are

of the essence. As seen in *Figure 4.5* below, of the 323 respondents, 122 representing 38% of the total responses received were of the view that, to a large extent, yes the industry has undergone some metamorphosis and it is not like it used to be. 79 (24%) of the respondents believe that the paradigm shift brought about as a result of e-Tourism is to a very large extent, whereas 63 respondents representing 20% believe the shift is to some extent. Unlike the three preceding opinions, 59 (18%) respondents said they were not sure about the extent of the paradigm shift ICTs have brought.

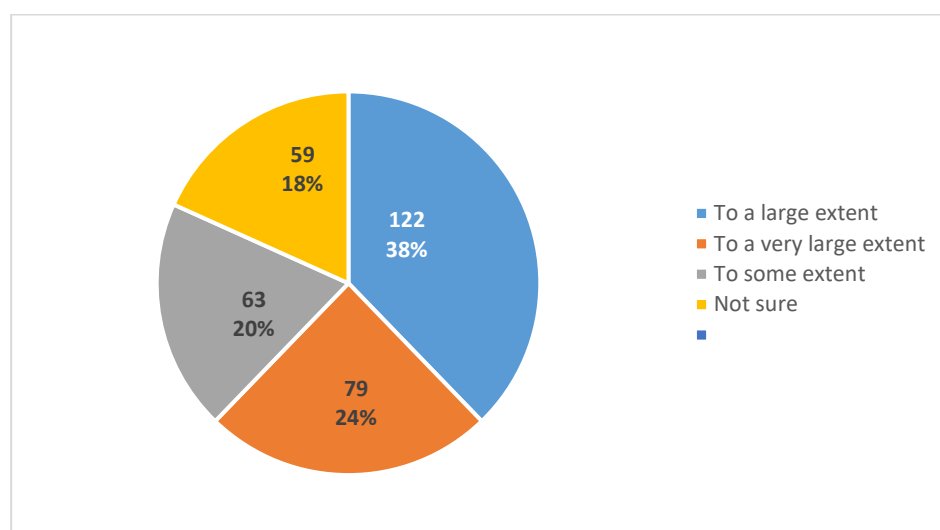


Figure 3.5: The Extent to Which e-Tourism Has Caused a Paradigm Shift

	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
TOTAL	323	100.0%

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

3.4.8 e-TOURISM AS A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TOOL

Coming off the back of the question of the extent to which e-Tourism has caused a paradigm shift, the question of what aspects e-Tourism can be leveraged as a sustainable tourism tool in the pursuit of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation was asked. Respondents could select and or produce multiple answers of their own. *Figure 3.6* below is the representation of the results.

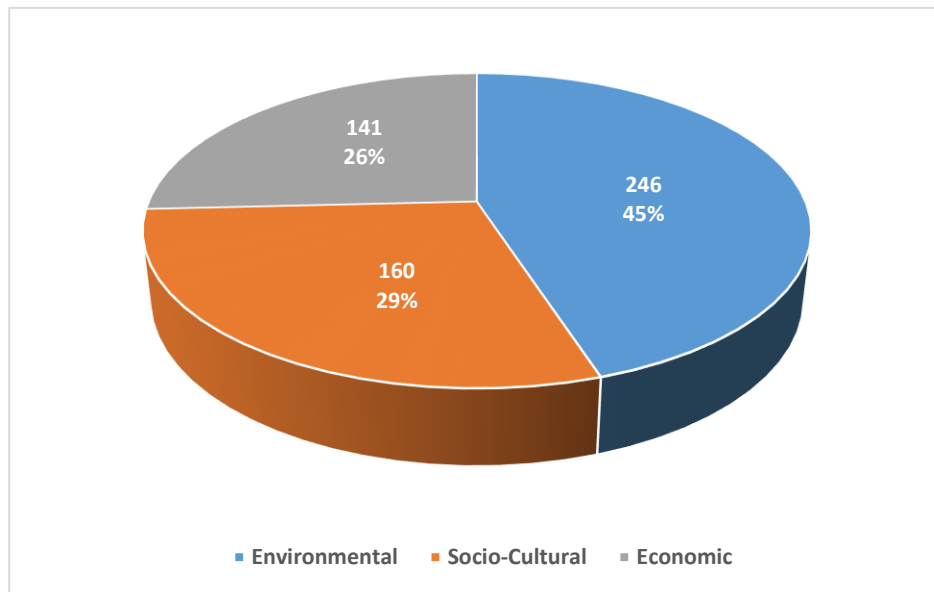


Figure 3.6: e-Tourism as a Sustainable Tourism Tool

TOTAL RESPONSES	547	100.0%
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**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

Of the 547 responses received from the 323 respondents, 246 (45%) identified the environmental aspect of sustainable tourism in terms of frequency, 160 representing 29% pointed to socio-cultural aspects of sustainable tourism, whereas 141 (26%) presented the economic aspect as the one aspect they deemed vital to leveraging the technological advancements to maintain.

This comes off the back of the argument that, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation efforts can only be built on sustainable tourism practices and efforts.

3.4.9 e-TOURISM AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

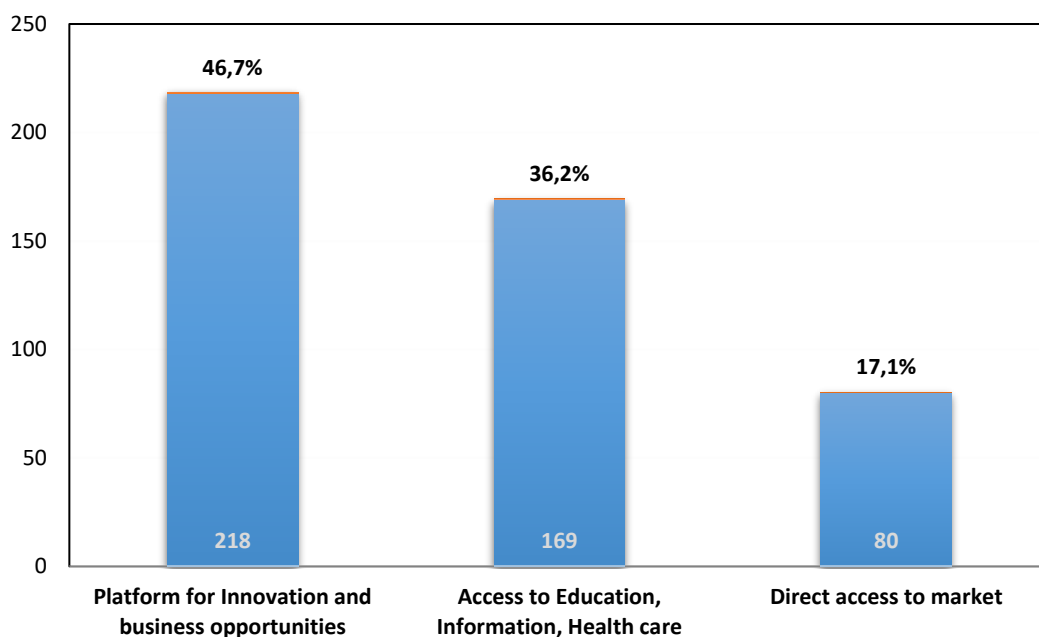


Figure 3.7: e-Tourism As An Effective Tool for Socio-Economic Development and Poverty Alleviation

TOTAL 467 100.0%

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

Participants of the survey for this study were asked to respond to the question based on an assumption in this study with regard to how e-Tourism can serve as an effective means for socio-economic development and or poverty alleviation. Multiple answer selections and or provisions were allowed for this question also. Most of the responses that were received in terms of frequency, that is 216 of the total responses of 467 representing 46.7% were in favour of e-Tourism serving as the platform for innovation and business opportunities. 169 of the responses representing 36.2% were in favour of Access to education, Information and Health care. The aspect which received the least of responses in terms of frequency was Direct access to the market, which pulled 80 responses representing 17.1% of the total responses received, as depicted in *Figure 4.7* above.

3.5 ASPECTS OF POVERTY e-TOURISM CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ALLEVIATE

On this question, respondents were asked to submit answers by multiple selection and or provision as well, on which specific aspects of the poverty discussion that has been going on they think e-Tourism can contribute to alleviating. The *Figure 4.8* below provides us with the data received in that regard.

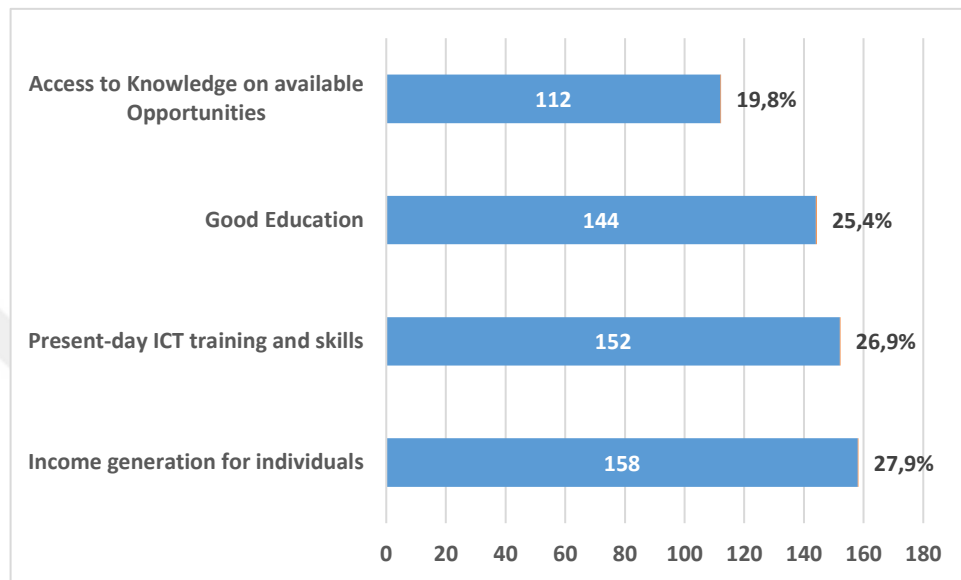


Figure 3.8: Aspects of Poverty e-Tourism Can Contribute to Alleviate

TOTAL 566 100.0%

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

The interesting thing about the responses received for this question is the fact that the figures follow each other closely, which presumes that respondents considered all these areas as equally important. Income generation for individuals was the most selected answer with regard to this question with 158 responses which represents 27.9%, closely followed by Present-day ICT training and skills with 152 responses (26.9). Good education as a specific aspect of poverty e-Tourism can contribute to came in next with 144 responses, that is 25.4% whereas Access to Knowledge on available Opportunities received 122 (19.8%) responses. These answers confirm the assumption made in this study that, lack of income, present-day ICT training and skills, lack of good education as well as lack of access to knowledge on available opportunities are partly to blame for the predicament of poor individuals. The argument suggested that all these shortfalls with the help of e-Tourism can be alleviated and help the cause for socio-economic development and poverty alleviate

3.5.1 ASPECTS OF POVERTY e-TOURISM CANNOT CONTRIBUTE TO ALLEVIATE

In this study in the preceding chapters just like discussing the aspects of poverty e-Tourism can help alleviate, the discussion of certain aspects pertaining mostly to attitudinal or behavioural that e-Tourism regardless of its promise, cannot alleviate was also discussed. Among these aspects, lack of efforts of laziness on the part of individuals, no attempt to improve oneself and refusing to accept that there has been a paradigm shift and hence change came up.

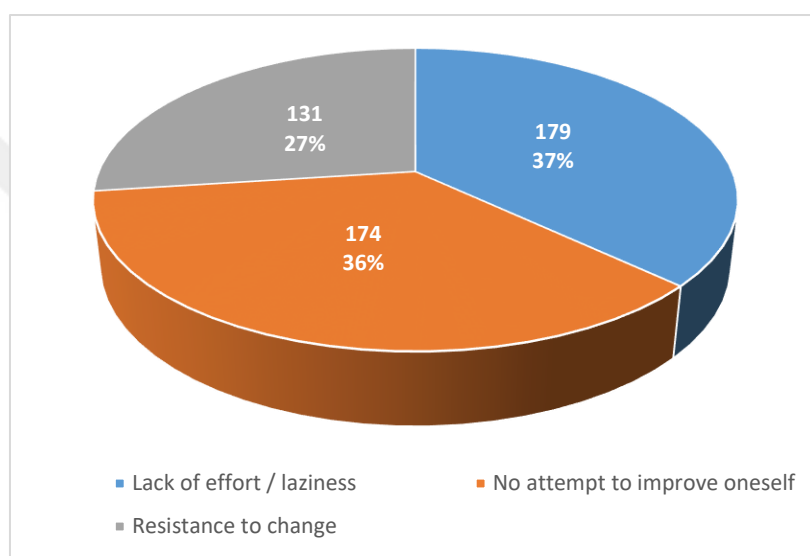


Figure 3.9: Aspects of Poverty e-Tourism Cannot Contribute to Alleviate

TOTAL RESPONSES 484 100.0%

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

Subsequently, respondents were also asked to share their opinion by answering the question of which aspects of poverty. As seen from *Figure 4.9* above, lack of effort or laziness topped the chart in terms of frequency of selection with 179 (37%) out of the 484 total valid responses received. No attempt to improve oneself closely followed with 174 (36%) responses while resistance to change pulled 131 responses representing 27% of the total responses that were received. All these numbers back the assumptions made in the discussions in this study in the preceding chapters.

3.5.2 e-TOURISM AS A POTENTIAL RELATIONSHIP TOOL FOR COMMUNITIES AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

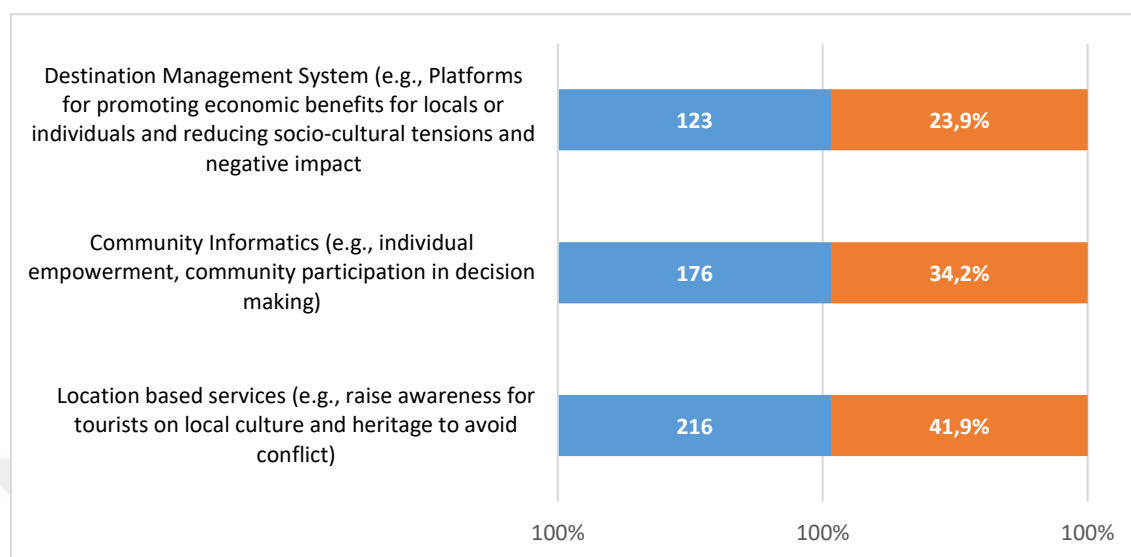


Figure 3.10: e-Tourism as a Potential Relationship Tool for Communities and Other Stakeholders for Poverty Alleviation

TOTAL 515 100.0%

One of the revelations made in the discussions in this study was the fact that for tourism in general to thrive, community engagement and involvement in decision making for example along with other tourism stakeholders is essential. This study posited that e-Tourism (ICTs) could be the missing link that helps restore balance and make it easy for these engagements to take place and remove problematic encounters that can lead to issues such as anti-tourism, where the people of the communities in which destinations are situated are not happy with tourism activities and decide to strike back. Things like community development agendas can also be easily communicated to the indigenes and their voices regarding what they believe works for them to also benefit from tourism can also be heard through the same medium.

As presented in *Figure 4.10 above*, respondents when asked what ways e-Tourism can be used as a relationship tool for communities and other tourism stakeholders in lieu of efforts to combat poverty alleviation, selected and or presented location-based services (e.g., raise awareness for tourists on local culture and heritage to avoid conflict) the most with 216 (41.9%). Community Informatics (e.g., individual

empowerment, community participation in decision making), pulled 176 (34.2%) responses out of the total 515, while Destination Management System (e.g., Platforms for promoting economic benefits for locals or individuals and reducing socio-cultural tensions and negative impact), pulled 123 (23.9%) of the total response in that order.

3.5.3 MAIN BENEFICIARIES OF e-TOURISM

Table 3.3: Main Beneficiaries of e-Tourism

MAIN BENEFICIARIES OF e-TOURISM (ICTs)	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Tourism businesses	206	31.3%
Tourists	149	22.6%
Governments	136	20.6%
Development agencies	85	12.9%
Poor Individuals	83	12.6%
TOTAL	659	100.0%

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

There had been a point made in the discussion of this study in prior chapters where the bone of contention was how e-Tourism has brought a paradigm shift, but the poor individuals are yet to benefit from the enormous repository of benefits that come with the inception of ICTs in the tourism industry. It was further argued that in order for tourism to be able to truly serve its purpose for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation, the “poor individual” and their communities should be the central focus, especially in the tourism benefit distribution chain. Tourism benefit distribution involves the act of making sure that all stakeholders enjoy the tangible and mostly intangible benefits that are accrued from tourism. Snyman and Bricker (2019) posit that being able to address the challenges and promote a more positive approach to sustainable benefit-sharing requires active institutional structures and support, instituted on good governance practices and policies, which outline clear benefit distribution plans and elements like community engagement, empowerment, promoting more extensive value chains, and increasing indirect and direct impacts are thus essential.

Owing to these pronouncements, respondents were asked who they believe are the main beneficiaries of e-Tourism (ICTs) as it stands now. As shown in *Table 4.3* above,

of the 659 total valid responses received from 323 participants, respondents identified Tourism businesses as the main beneficiaries of e-Tourism with the most selection by amassing 206 (31.3%) of the responses. Tourists were selected next as the main beneficiaries gaining 149 (22.6%) of the total valid responses, while governments of destinations were cited next in line with 136 responses representing 20.6% of the total valid responses. Furthermore, the fourth most selected entity as the main beneficiary of e-Tourism were the development agencies with 85 (12.9%) responses coming their way, and last on the table were poor individuals. Poor individuals whom this study has been advocating for to be the center of focus received 83 responses which amount to 12.6% of the total responses. These results confirm the assumptions in this study that, poor individuals are not benefiting from tourism in general and e-Tourism in particular yet. And that, in order for the goal of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation to be reached, the poor individual should be the focal point and agent of transformation in these ICT-studded times.

3.5.4 e-TOURISM'S EFFECTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING THE LIVING STANDARDS OF INDIVIDUALS

Respondents were further asked to share their opinion on how they think e-Tourism (ICTs) has contributed effectively to improving the living standards of individuals, since its inception which has brought about a paradigm shift in the tourism industry.

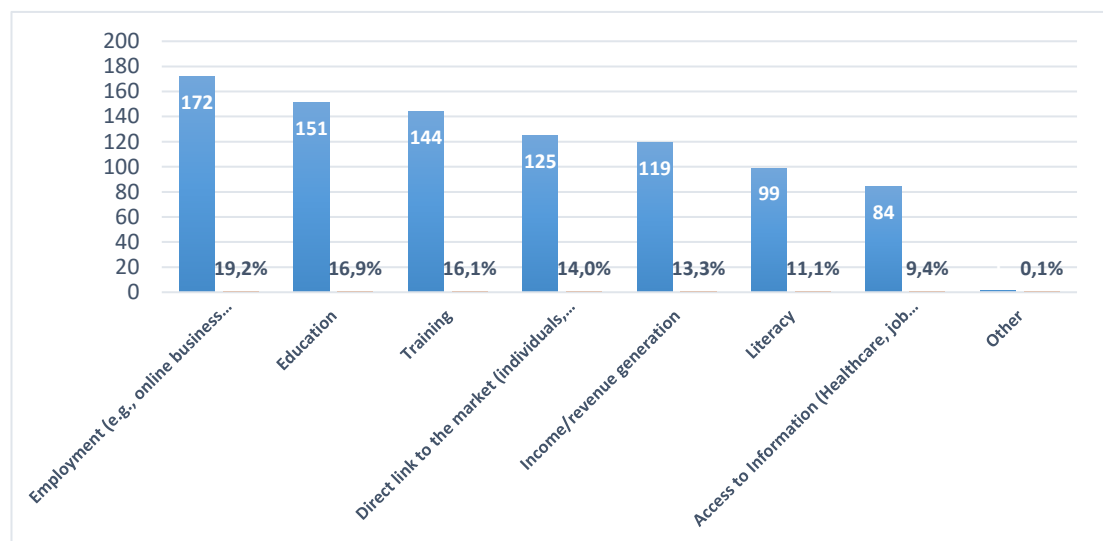


Figure 3.11: e-Tourism's Effective Contribution to Improving the Living Standards of Individuals

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

Other: *I believe this process is still at the beginning. Many of the small entrepreneurs and governments still do not know how to benefit from the possible advantages.*

As seen from Figure 4.11 above, Employment (e.g., online business owners) was perceived as one of the areas in which e-Tourism has been very effective in contributing to improving the living standards of individuals. This area received 172 responses representing 19.2% of the total valid responses received. Education was an area that was mentioned next as an aspect e-Tourism has been or can be effective in contributing to the improvement in the living conditions of individuals with 151 (16.9%) of the total responses. Training received 144 (16.1%) regarding the area e-Tourism has contributed effectively in terms of improving living standards of individuals. Direct link to the market (individuals, small businesses) and income or revenue generation completing the top five responses. The former received 125 (14.0%) responses while the latter accrued 119 (13.3%) of the total responses. Literacy and access to health information (Health care, job opportunities) were the other areas mentioned that did not make the top five (please refer to the figure above for corresponding values). There was a comment in the other section which has also been provided below the figure.

3.5.5 e-TOURISM'S CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVING BOTH LIVING CONDITIONS AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

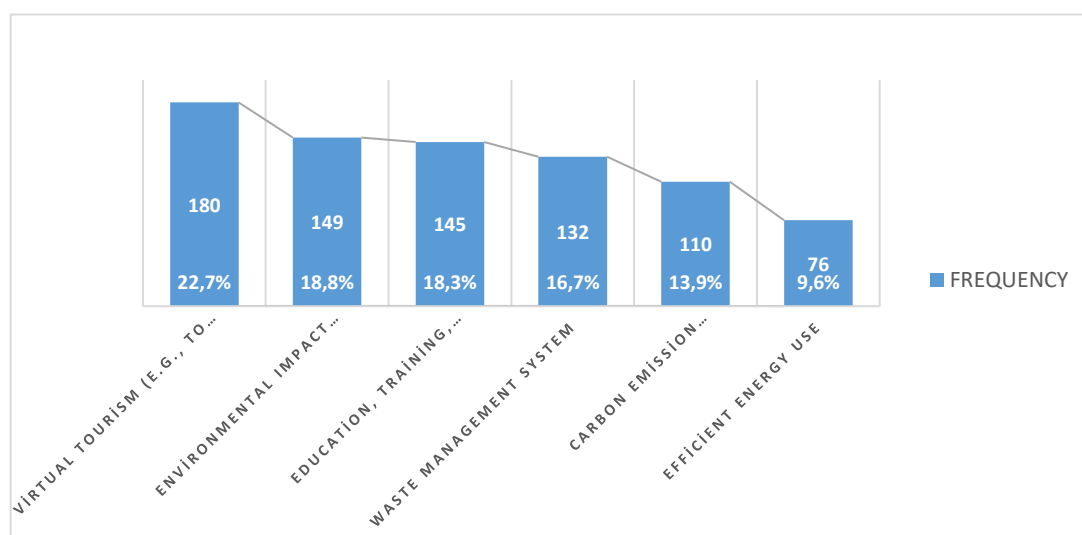


Figure 3.12: e-Tourism's Contribution to Improving Both Living Conditions and Protecting the Environment

TOTAL 792 **100.0%**

**Multiple Responses are Combined*

One pressing matter that came up in the buildup to the questionnaire in the preceding chapters was the issue of how tourism resources can be used judiciously to the benefit of all while also protecting these resources for future use. So, while the benefits of e-Tourism were being discussed as to how it can improve the living conditions of the people, the study also looked at the counter measures that can be derived from the use of ICTs to mitigate the deterioration of tourism resources, especially the environment. In light of these discussions, things like taking advantage of environmental impact assessors that are available now to help us keep track of our travel activities while we enjoy ourselves in order to have a tourism resource to come back to in the future were raised.

Respondents were thus asked as seen in *Figure 4.12* above, how e-Tourism can contribute to improving both living conditions and protecting the environment at the same time. 180 responses representing 22.7% of the total valid responses of 792 underlined the need for virtual tourism which can help reduce overtourism at some destinations. 149 (18.8%) presented environmental impact assessor as one way in which e-Tourism can contribute to improving both living conditions and protecting the environment. Education, training, and literacy came next with 145 (18.3%) responses of the total responses. While people are educated and trained on how to leverage on the technological advancements to their benefits, they are also educated and trained to be aware of their surroundings and how to maximize the potential of e-Tourism while protecting what is the source of daily bread (environment-tourism resources) for them and future generations to come. Waste management system accrued 132 (16.7%) responses, with carbon emission calculator and efficient energy use receiving 110 (13.9%) and 76 (9.6%) respectively. All the latter responses are in relation to the fact that, when waste is managed properly for example, the health conditions of the people are taken care of while the community continues to receive tourists. Carbon emission calculator helps keep track of air pollution activities as a result of tourism activities so that tourists and individuals alike can be guided on how to travel and move around responsibly. This can also be traced to efficient energy use, where e-Tourism (ICTs) has afforded accommodation providers and tourists alike the opportunity to have automation with the use of energy. For example, at the press of a button, or motion sensors, lights in a particular area may be put off automatically while not in use. This is just one of the numerous examples of things that can be pointed to efficient energy use.

3.5.6 THE EXACT JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY e-TOURISM

Table 3.4: The Exact Jobs and Opportunities Created by e-Tourism

THE EXACT JOBS AND OPPORTUNITIES CREATED BY e-TOURISM	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Marketing Specialist (Online)	161	16.2%
Accommodation Provider (e.g., Airbnb, Homestays)	150	15.1%
Transport Services Provider (e.g., Uber, Lift)	134	13.5%
Brand Influencers	125	12.6%
Reputation Manager	117	11.8%
Food Service Provider (e.g., Homemade food)	114	11.5%
Content Curator (e.g., for virtual museums)	105	10.6%
Tourism Consultant (Remote)	88	8.9%
TOTAL	994	100.0%

**Multiple Responses are Calculated*

One of the most highlighted areas of this study has been to identify and document the exact job and opportunities that have been created by e-Tourism (ICTs) in the industry that individuals can benefit from or help them improve their standards of living. Respondents based on their rich experience were asked to help in that regard by selecting and or providing the exact jobs and opportunities. In total 994 responses were received, with marketing specialists (online) topping the list of jobs and opportunities created by e-Tourism (ICTs) with 161 responses which correspond to 16.2% of the total responses. Accommodation providers (e.g., Airbnb, Homestays) received 150 (15.1%) as the job and opportunity most identified by respondents. 134 respondents representing 13.5% of the total valid responses pointed to Transport Service Provider as another job and or opportunity that has been created e-Tourism's paradigms shift. In recent times, people can use even their private cars to provide transportation services for example and earn a living from it in the industry. A couple of years back before the inception of e-Tourism and its development to its current state, these were not possible.

Brand Influencer was also mentioned with 125 (12.6%) responses, with almost anyone with a large following on social media being given the opportunity to make a living off the industry. Reputation manager followed the list with 117 (11.8%) responses, with public relations work now being executed very well than ever before.

Organizations now have full time positions for social media managers who manage the reputation of these organizations online. Food service provider (e.g., Homemade food sellers) followed with 114 responses which correlate to 11.5% of the total responses, whereas Content Curators (e.g., for virtual museums) amassed 105 (10.6%) of the total responses as one of the jobs and or opportunity created by e-Tourism. Tourism Consultant (Remote) completed the list of jobs and or opportunities created by e-Tourism that had been identified by respondents with 88 responses representing 8.9% of the total valid responses.

3.5.7 JOBS THAT HAVE BECOME OR WILL BECOME OBSOLETE BECAUSE OF ICTs IN TOURISM

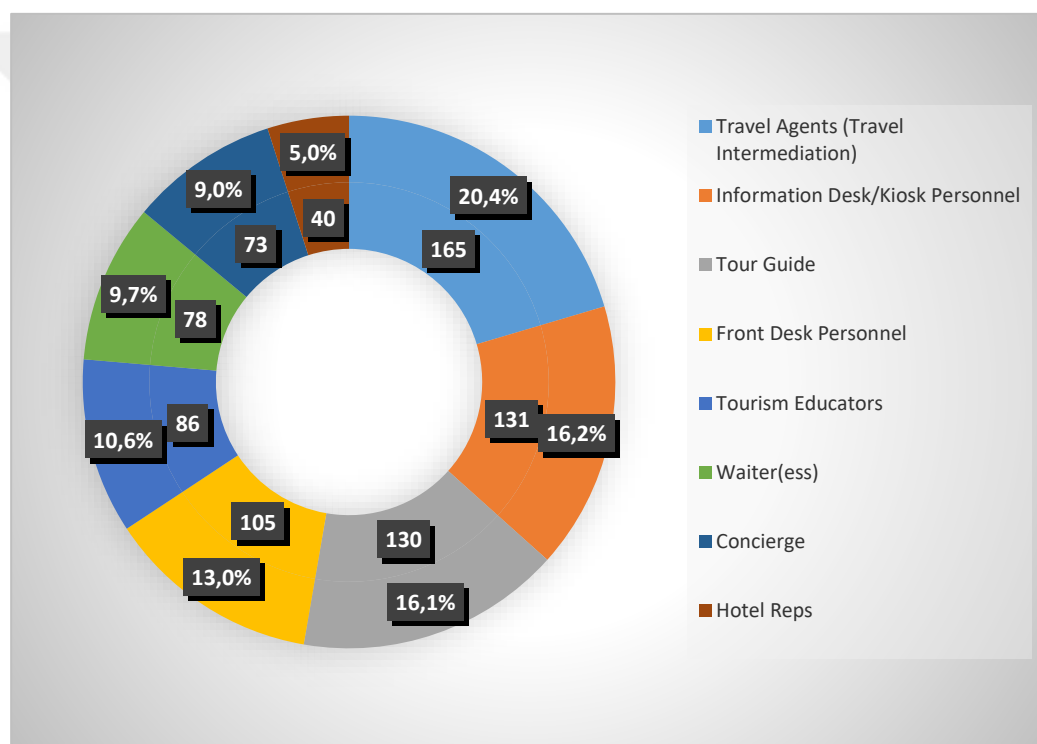


Figure 3.13: Jobs That Have Become or Will Become Obsolete Because of ICTs in Tourism

TOTAL RESPONSES: 808 - 100%

**Multiple Responses are Combined*

On this question, respondents were asked to select which jobs have become obsolete or will become obsolete in the near future due to information and communication technologies (ICTs). This question allowed for multiple answer choices. Among the responses received, Travel Agents (Travel Intermediation) had the largest share of 20.4% with 165 responses. They were followed by Information Desk/Kiosk Personnel

and Tour Guide, with the figures of 16.2% and 16.1% respectively with each receiving 131 and 130 responses. Next, Front Desk Personnel had 13.0% of the 808 responses, receiving 105 responses. On the other hand, 10.5% (86) of the respondents believe that travel educators will also be an obsolete or soon-to-be obsolete profession. The notion for the selection of this particular profession in the top responses comes in a bit as a shocker and leaves one to wonder what the rationale for that selection is. Perhaps respondents are of the opinion that information search and self-education have never been easier and the same for materials and so the need for educators in general and tourism educators, in particular, will dwindle down in the near future.

Subsequently, less than 10% of respondents identified Waiter/ess (9.7%), Concierge (9.0%), and Hotel Reps (5.0%) as three occupations that are being impacted or will be impacted. They received responses of 78, 73 and 40 of the total valid responses. This shows that more respondents have the same opinion on the three professions Travel Agents (Travel Intermediation), Information Desk/Kiosk Personnel and Tour Guide. They believe these are the three jobs that are most likely to be disappearing or about to disappear due to ICTs. It is easy to see that with the development of ICTs, some jobs will gradually be replaced by technology. As information becomes more open, transparent and available, people will no longer need a third-party medium to provide them with the necessary information, which will evolve into an iterative turnover and change in the structure of the tourism industry.

3.5.8 TOURISM JOBS WHICH REQUIRE NEW SKILLS BECAUSE OF ICTs

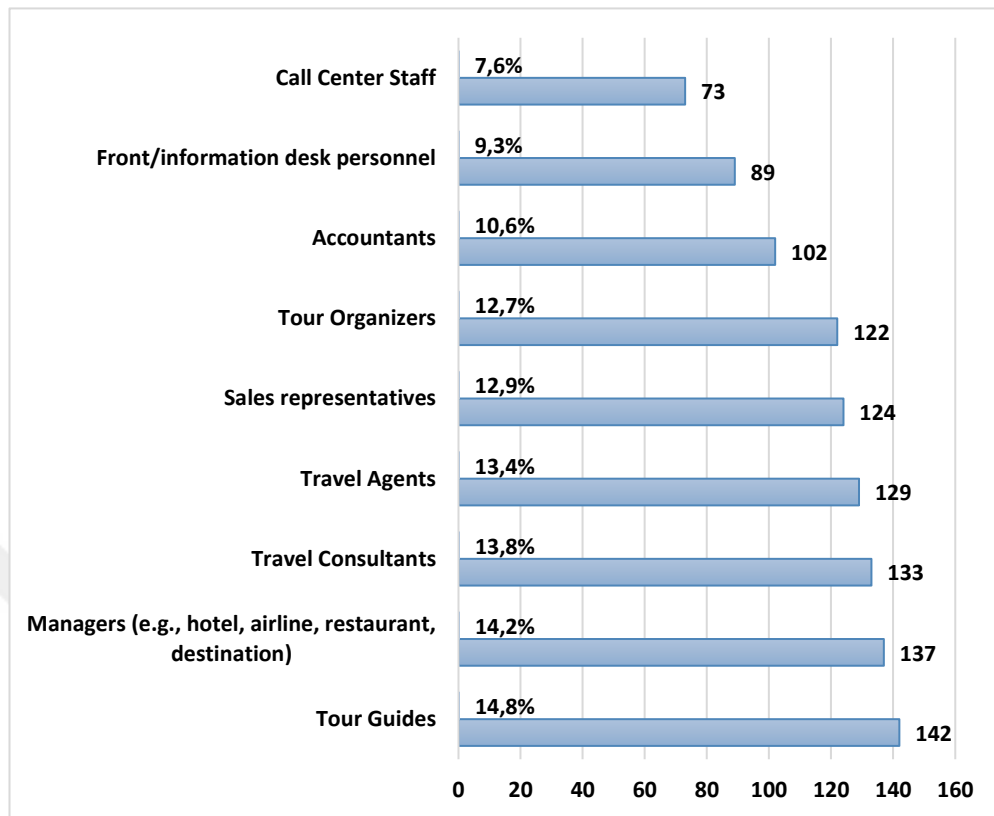


Figure 3.14: Tourism Jobs Which Require New Skills Because of ICTs

TOTAL RESPONSES: 1095 - 100%

**Multiple Responses are Combined*

Owing to the preceding question of jobs that have become obsolete or will be obsolete, the study in its preceding chapters advocated for individuals to acquire new skills or better still update their knowledge or acquire a new set of skills that will meet the needs of their jobs. It was argued that, since the paradigm shift, the old approach to business and things in the industry has also changed along with the jobs. As such, people should acquire the necessary skills that will help them stay relevant in their jobs in these ICT-studded times in the industry.

The question of what tourism jobs require new skills due to ICTs was posed with respondents having the opportunity to select and or provide the jobs that require new skills in their opinion. Tour Guide is the job that received the most responses, with 14.8% (142) responses pointing to it as one that requires new skills in order to thrive in this e-Tourism era. Nearly on the same level are Managers (e.g., hotel, airline,

restaurant...), with that job receiving 137 responses (14.2%), with respondents of the view that this occupation also requires new skills to meet the ever-changing demands and dynamics of the tourism industry. Subsequent to this, Travel Consultants, Travel Agents, Sales representatives and Tour Organizers accumulated responses that closely follow each other. With 133 (13.8%), 129 (13.4%), 124 (12.9%) and 122 (12.7%) responses received for these answers respectively, respondents believe these occupations are also being impacted by ICTs and thus require new skills. Completing the list of jobs that require new skills are Accountants with 102 (10.6%) responses, Front or information desk personnel with 89 (9.3%) responses and Call center staff with 73 (7.6%) responses out of the 1095 total valid responses received.

3.5.9 JOB SKILLS AND TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW REQUIRED IN THIS e-TOURISM ERA

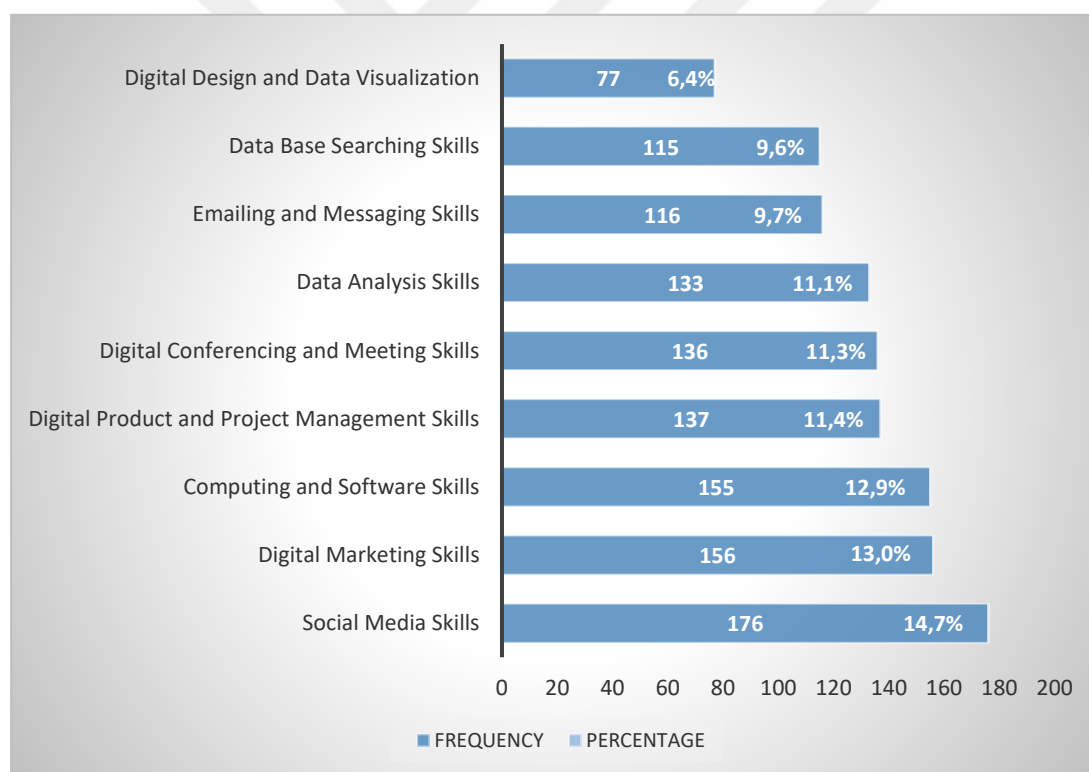


Figure 3.15: Job Skills and Technical Know-How Required in This e-Tourism Era

TOTAL RESPONSES: 1201 100%

**Multiple Responses are Combined*

On the question of job skills and technical knowledge needed in the era of e-tourism, 176 responses agreed that Social Media Skills is the most desired skill, at 14.7%. Digital Marketing Skills and Computing and Software Skills are tied for second in terms of skills and technical awareness considered necessary, receiving 156 (13.0%) and 155 (12.9%) responses, respectively. They are followed on the third rung by Digital Product and Project Management Skills, Digital Conferencing and Meeting Skills, and Data Analysis Skills, with 11.4%, 11.3%, and 11.1% of people Agree that these three skills are equally important. Emailing and Messaging Skills, Data Base Searching Skills, and Digital Design and Data Visualization accounted for less than 10% of job skills, compared to about 100 or fewer responses that said these skills are less important. Digital Design and Data Visualization is the answer that received the fewest responses (77), and it was generally felt that this work was somehow relevant in the e-Tourism era.

These results indicate that social media skills are becoming more and more relevant with the growing influence of social networks. Among all the answers listed in the questionnaire, it was ranked as the number one most required job skill. Digital marketing skills and the ability to use computers and software are also essential. In the era of e-tourism, all activities that used to take place offline are rapidly moving online, so work skills in electronic technology are in demand. People working in the tourism industry should improve these skills in response to the development of the electronic age in order to improve industry services and provide higher quality and more modern work.

3.6 MAJOR CHALLENGES IN E-TOURISM ERA

It is no doubt that with every change comes some challenges along with it. In this study, it had been suggested that, though e-Tourism has brought about a paradigm shift that has taken the industry by storm, and as such change is imminent, old systems would not go down without a fight. New challenges may be encountered too in the implementation of new strategies and approaches that will help the industry to achieve its goal. Subject to answering all the above questions, respondents were thus asked for their opinion on what major challenges they foresee or have seen to be accompanying e-Tourism and its implementation as we see it today.

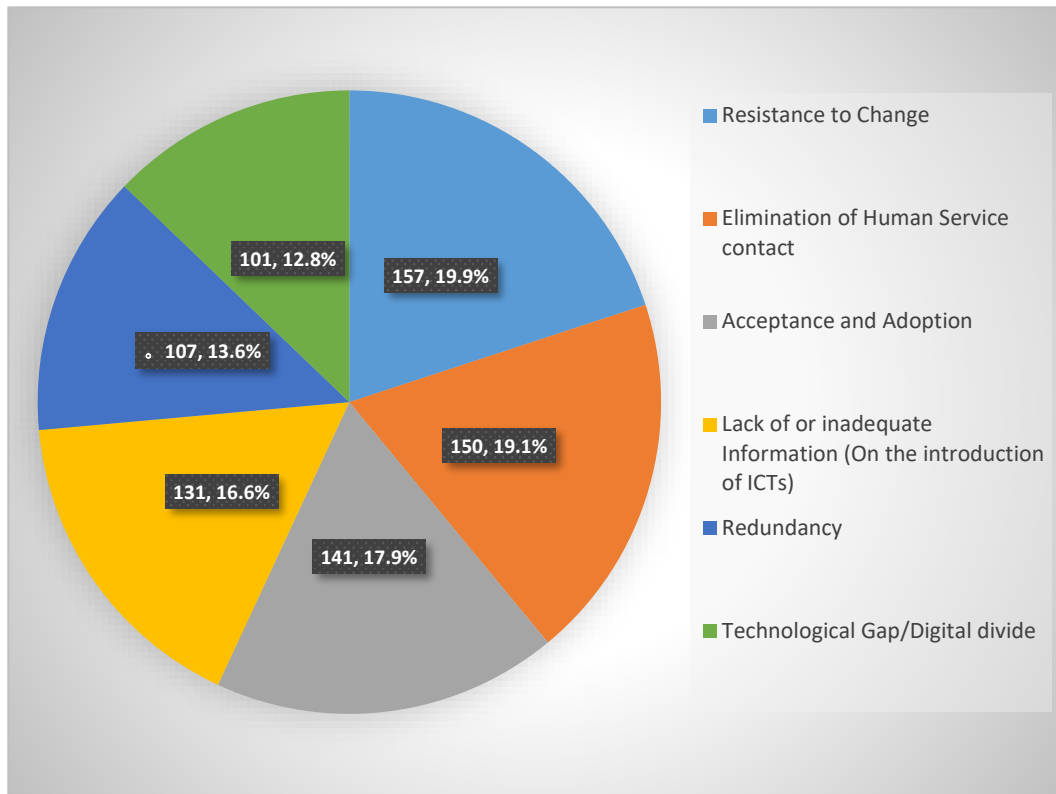


Figure 3.16: Major Challenges in e-Tourism Era

TOTAL RESPONSES: 787 - 100%

**Multiple Responses are Combined*

Respondents cited resistance to change as the first major challenge for the industry in this e-Tourism era with 157 representing 19.9% of the total responses received. The challenge which received the second-highest responses was “elimination of human service contact” which amassed 150 responses which representing (19.1%) of the total valid responses. The challenges of Acceptance and Adoption, lack of or inadequate information (on the introduction of ICTs), Redundancy and Technological gap/divide make up the other major challenges that were cited by respondents. They received 141 (17.9%), 131 (16.6%), 107 (13.6%) and 101(12.8%) respectively in that order.

This confirms what this study had anticipated, that with any new change comes resistance as many in the industry are already accustomed to what they know. Others are afraid of the unknown and what awaits them and so acceptance and adoption are hard to do, especially with all the uncertainties surrounding which job functions might

be affected by the inception of ICTs in the industry among a host of other reasons that automatically lead to resistance instead of embracing it. Also, another assumption made in this study is that the introduction of robots and other technological gadgets in the high human contact service-based industry such as that of the tourism industry is a fear monger in itself in terms of people losing their jobs for example is confirmed. The digital divide or gap which places one destination far ahead of the other in terms of technological advancement and access to technology itself is also a major challenge that has to be overcome as it had been argued in the preceding chapters of this study. Without the proper awareness and a clear definition and documentation of what jobs or opportunities, and or new training and skills are required to stay relevant in these times without losing one's daily source of livelihood will thus be grounds for manipulation with fear of redundancy instead of opportunities.

3.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CURTAIL THE CHALLENGES

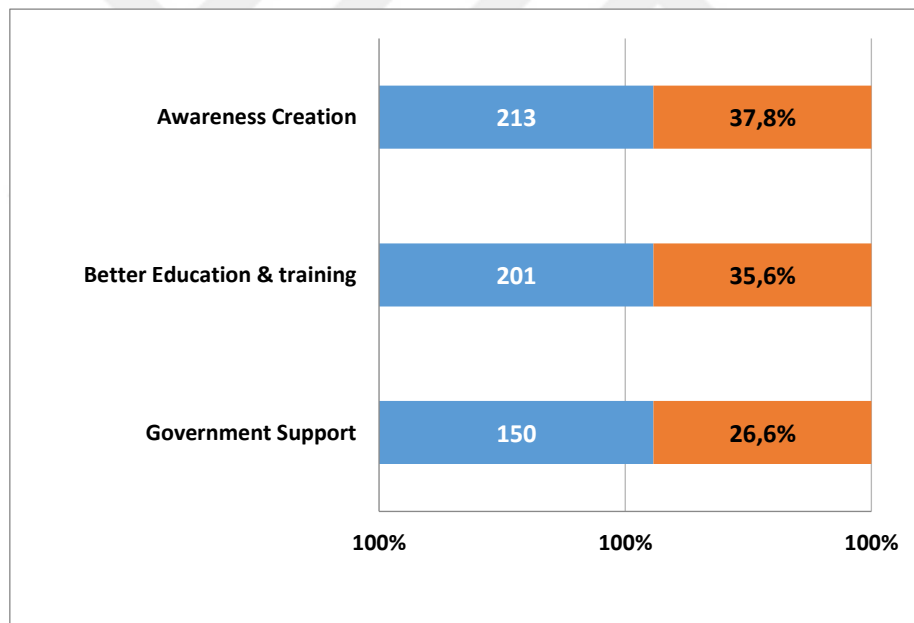


Figure 3.17: Recommendations to Curtail the Challenges

TOTAL RESPONSES: 564 - 100%

**Multiple Responses are Combined*

As seen from the figure above, respondents after being asked to outline what they perceive as the major challenges that are pertinent and need to be looked at in this e-Tourism era, they were further asked to share their opinion by selecting and or providing answers of their own on recommendations that will help curtail these

challenges that stand in the way and hence block people from seeing and utilizing the full potential of e-Tourism which can, in turn, facilitate the agenda for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation.

Awareness creation was recommended and was at the top of the list with 213 responses which make up 37.8% of the total valid responses received. Better Education and Training was the second-best recommendation with 201 (35.6%), while Government support rounded up the list of recommendations with 150 responses representing 26.6% of the total valid responses for recommendations to help curtail the challenges received. The results are indicative and support the stance that has been heralded in this study for a lot of awareness to be created since a lot of people do not even know the magnitude of the repository of jobs and or opportunities that come with e-Tourism's paradigm shift. It is only in identifying these opportunities, coupled with the necessary training that will equip and position people for the full benefits of e-Tourism and governmental support that the goal of using e-Tourism's paradigm shift as a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation can be achieved.

3.6.2 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF e-TOURISM'S PARADIGM SHIFT

A 16-item Likert-scaled questionnaire was developed in this part as indicated in **Table 4.5 below**. The opinions or perceptions of the industry players were surveyed regarding their agreement with the notion and assumptions in this study indicating that, e-Tourism has caused a substantial paradigm shift and that it can contribute immensely to the agenda of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation as a sustainable tourism tool if propagated correctly, in order to quench fears of issues like redundancy as a result of ICTs. The Statements were presented in two parts that sought perceptions on the possible contributions of e-Tourism to socio-economic development and poverty alleviation in general and the contributions towards society and individuals specifically. This was to help quantify what their opinions were on the issue under discussion.

Of the **323** responses that were received, all the statements but for three received a mean score of a little over **4** as depicted in the table. Those three statements received a mean score of **3.94**, **3.98** and **3.99**. Garnering an overall mean score of **4.07** for all

the responses received on these statements, the results suggest that most of the respondents agree with the all the statements per the ranges set out.

In the section regarding possible contributions of e-Tourism's paradigm shift in general for society, the statement underlying the importance of the correlation between e-Tourism, and the protection of biodiversity and tourism resources was posed. This was to get the opinion of these players in the industry since this study had argued that, in order for tourism to thrive and people of the society enjoy the generational income and possibly economic freedom, e-Tourism's contribution to protecting these resources is fundamental. The statement pulled a mean of **4.22** which is the highest of all the means gathered. This goes on to reinforce the said argument.

On the other hand, one other argument that had been raised pointed to the fact that traditional culture, which had been the cornerstone for many destinations to thrive, had been diluted and to that effect beginning to dwindle down. If this happens, the society loses a great deal and loss of its culture which could have in turn been used to attract and generate income for the society as a whole. The argument and discussions pointed out that, e-Tourism can be used as a sustainable tool to help revitalize all these cultures in societies that have been affected, for example, to help showcase how rich the traditional culture is and for greater reach. To that effect, the statement "e-Tourism has the ability to help revitalize traditional culture" was posed and perceptions of these players in the industry regarding their agreement with the statement sought or surveyed. This statement produced a mean score of **4.01**, with a percentage score of **35%** and **36%** making up the "*agree*" and "*strongly-agree*" options respectively. The mean score of **4.01** for this statement suggests that the majority of the 323 respondents agree with the statement and in essence buttresses the assumptions made in that regard in this study. In a similar statement made for the individuals' section, the statement pulled a mean of **4.02**, which is not far from the mean received in the general sense. Respondents thus also "*agree*" based on the range set.

Table 3.5: Perception on Possible Contributions of e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift Towards Socio-Economic Development and Poverty Alleviation

STATEMENTS	RANGE	Strongly Disagree (1) (1.00-1.80)	%	Disagree (2) (1.90- 2.60)	%	Neutral (3) (2.70- 3.40)	%	Agree (4) (3.50- 4.20)	%	Strongly Agree (5) (4.30- 5.00)	%	MEAN (Out of 5)	Std. Deviation
→													
Possible Contributions of e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift in General													
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Help Protect Biodiversity and Tourism Resources		0	0%	5	2%	44	14%	150	46%	124	38%	4.22	.733
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Help Revitalize Traditional Culture		1	0%	20	6%	72	22%	113	35%	117	36%	4.01	.929
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Help Improve Community Living Conditions		2	1%	9	3%	61	19%	131	41%	120	37%	4.11	.847
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Create More Jobs and Opportunities		2	1%	10	3%	56	17%	126	39%	129	40%	4.15	.856
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Benefit Individuals Economically		3	1%	16	5%	56	17%	116	36%	132	41%	4.11	.924
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Help Enhance Individual's Knowledge and Awareness		1	0%	17	5%	64	20%	113	35%	128	40%	4.08	.910
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Help Build Capacity and Give Training Skills to People		3	1%	13	4%	57	18%	121	37%	129	40%	4.11	.900
e-Tourism Has the Ability to Help Improve Cooperation Among Tourism Stakeholders		1	0%	10	3%	55	17%	132	41%	125	39%	4.15	.831
Possible Contributions for Society and Individuals													
e-Tourism Can Develop People in a Society Economically		1	0%	15	5%	58	18%	130	40%	119	37%	4.09	.870
e-Tourism Can Contribute to Protecting Traditional Culture of a Society		2	1%	19	6%	63	20%	126	39%	113	35%	4.02	.916
e-Tourism Can Contribute to Raising Standard of Living in A Society		6	2%	18	6%	73	23%	117	36%	109	34%	3.94	.976
e-Tourism (ICTs) Can Enhance Knowledge, Skills and Build Capacity		1	0%	14	4%	69	21%	120	37%	119	37%	4.06	.884
e-Tourism Can Primarily Benefit the Poor and Other Individuals in Society		6	2%	18	6%	71	22%	111	34%	117	36%	3.98	.987
e-Tourism Has Brought About More Positive Benefits than Negative Effects		2	1%	9	3%	81	25%	129	40%	102	32%	3.99	.858
e-Tourism Has Caused A Substantial Paradigm Shift in the Industry		3	1%	11	3%	69	21%	139	43%	101	31%	4.00	.865
Overall, I Support e-Tourism as a Sustainable Tourism Tool for Socio-Economic Development and Poverty Alleviation		3	1%	11	3%	62	19%	115	36%	132	41%	4.12	.899
TOTAL No. OF RESPONDENTS (N)=323											OVERALL MEAN	4.07	

On the statement as to e-Tourism's ability to contribute to improving the general living conditions of the communities in which tourism activities take place, the responses produced a mean score of **4.11**. This result pulled 41% in the “*agree*” option 37% in the “*strongly agree*” option, 19% in the “*neutral*” option, while pulling 3% and 1% in the “*disagree*” and “*strongly disagree*” option respectively. The mean score of 4.11 which is one of the highest scores indicates and supports the view that communities, in general, can use the shift e-Tourism has brought to their advantage and improve the living conditions of the people in the society and impact it positively. This is also evident in a similar statement in the second part on “*e-Tourism contributing to raising standards of living*” for individuals and the mean score came out as **3.94**. Though this score is slightly below the 4-mean score, it is still in the “*agree*” range, thus the respondents agree with the statement. Seeing as it has a mean score of **3.94** contrary to its accompanying statement in the general category, it could be interpreted to mean that respondents were a bit hesitant in agreeing to that particular statement.

The study also posed the statement “*e-Tourism has the ability to create more jobs and opportunities*” for people in society. This was in line with the part of this study which is one of the most stressed aspects and vital to this study which posited that e-Tourism should rather help create more jobs and opportunities in societies if we are to continue the agenda of using tourism as a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation as opposed to taking jobs away from the people. The study argued that most jobs in these ICT-studded times of the tourism industry have become or will become obsolete, to which a question was asked on it and corresponding opinions shared above in the table. The mean score for this statement was **4.15** which is also one of the highest, indicating that most of the respondents agree with the statement, which in turn translates into the acceptance that, e-Tourism can indeed create more jobs and opportunities for people in society in general. Following up on the preceding statement, there was a statement which indicated e-Tourism benefits individuals economically in the societies in which they live in the first part as indicated on the table and a similar statement posed as to whether e-Tourism can develop people in a society economically. Experts were asked of their perception in terms of their level of agreement with those statements. The first statement produced a mean score of **4.11**, with the statement in the second half garnering a mean score of **4.09**, which means that the experts surveyed, agree with the statement that in general terms and also for individuals, e-Tourism comes across as a

tool for socio-economic development, which supports the stance taken and made in early assumptions in this study.

It is said that knowledge is power. As such one of the key areas that this study has been stressing has to do with enhancing the general knowledge about the potential that abounds for their destination and the prospects of tourism for them while also having awareness in equal measure. Awareness in terms of things like the consciousness of utilizing tourism resources sustainably and the conservation of natural resources, but to mention a few. If tourism is to thrive and serve its purpose in the wake of the paradigm shift caused by e-Tourism in the industry, then awareness in the aforementioned areas is necessary. A statement was thus posed to solicit the perception or opinions in that regard on e-Tourism's ability to institute enhanced knowledge of available opportunities while helping create awareness for people in general. The statement amassed a mean score of **4.08 (agree)** with the majority of respondents representing 40% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing. Following that statement, another statement was posed for respondents stating that "e-Tourism in general terms can help build capacity and give training skills to people" and a similar statement indicating that "e-Tourism can enhance knowledge, skills and build capacity" for individuals was posted on the other section. The general statement which is the first one pulled a mean score of **4.11**, while the latter statement which is not far from the score in the general category which in turn shows the correlation between the two pulled a mean score of **4.06**. The mean scores according to the range indicate that most of the respondents "agree" according to the range with the statements on both ends for general and the opportunity e-Tourism for individuals to build their capacities and amass a great wealth of training skills that will position them for success in this e-Tourism era and in essence socio-economic development and subsequently poverty alleviation.

The last part of the general statements looked at e-Tourism's capacity in helping institute cooperation among tourism stakeholders. As has been discussed in previous chapters of this study, the agenda to help utilize tourism in general and e-Tourism in particular in these times cannot be achieved by only one faction of the tourism industry. It requires a collective effort and involvement of every stakeholder, especially the involvement of communities in which all these magnificent destinations

the industry can boast of are situated in. It was suggested in this study that, e-Tourism with its ICTs can help bridge that gap and afford communities and individuals more opportunities for their voices to be heard and contribute to how they want tourism to progress and be developed in their societies. This way, indigens and communities will not feel left out but have the sense of contributing immensely to the development of tourism in a way that benefits them and help liberate them economically, and in effect, impact efforts being made at alleviating poverty in these areas. To this end, the statement “*e-Tourism has the ability to help improve cooperation among tourism stakeholders*” was presented. The means score for that statement stood at **4.15**, one of the second highest in the results with 40% *strongly agreeing* and 37% *agreeing*. This in turn represents “*agree*” for the majority of the respondents, which goes a long way to portray a strong stance from respondents and the value they place on the involvement of individuals and societies in the decision-making and cooperation in tourism development decisions, since it affects them directly, to which this study concurs.

Based on all the statements posed for respondents to indicate their agreement based on their experience as experts in the industry, the statement “*e-Tourism can primarily benefit the poor and other individuals in society*” was presented to respondents. The aim was to explore what their opinion or perception is on e-Tourism’s ability to particularly benefit the poor and other individuals in society after providing answers and opinions on all the other questions and statements, and what they thought even after encountering all the other aspects of e-Tourism and putting it in a holistic view. The statement which happens to correspond to the backbone of this study and thus answers from this statement very instrumental to the discourse on the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus garnered a mean score of **3.98**, with 36% of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement while 34% agreed. The mean score though in the agree range depicts that, more will have to be done to attain the goal of tourism truly benefiting the poor and individuals in spite of all the opportunities that come with e-Tourism’s paradigm shift. This comes off the back of the fact as has been discussed previously in this study that most people are pessimistic as to whether tourism can truly benefit the poor, owing to previous and ongoing attempts, and thus respondents though see some light at the tunnel, are a bit hesitant to go in fully or strongly. The same is evident and can be seen in the responses that were received from the statement “*e-Tourism has*

brought about more positive benefits than negative effects”, as 32% of the respondents strongly agreed, 40% agreed and a whopping 25% stayed neutral in response to the statement. This produced a mean score of **3.99**.

Finally, respondents were asked to give their level of agreement with the statements “*e-Tourism has caused a substantial paradigm shift in the industry*” and “*overall, I support e-tourism as a sustainable tourism tool for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation*”. The aim was for respondents to give their holistic views in light of all the questions, statements and answers they had provided. Their views were sought along with their experience and the paradigm shift the tourism industry is facing right now and its correlation to the agenda of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. With regard to the statement and their agreement concerning e-Tourism causing a substantial paradigm shift, 31% strongly agreed, while 43% agreed, with 21% staying neutral, 3% disagreeing and 1% on the strongly disagree side. This pulled a mean score of **4.00**, which purports that the majority of the respondents agree to the fact that as has been argued in preceding chapters of this study that e-Tourism has indeed caused a paradigm shift, and thus things are to be approached differently if tourism is to be used as a sustainable socio-economic development tool for poverty alleviation. Regarding the latter of the statements on garnering respondents’ overall support for e-Tourism as a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation, the statement accrued a mean score of **4.12**, with 41% strongly agreed responses and 36% agreed responses as opposed to the 19%, 3% and 1% in the neutral, disagree and strongly disagree in that order respectively. Appropriate standard deviations (refer to table 4.5 above) were calculated for all the responses received for the individual items used. This was to depict how far individual responses provided to all the questions are from the mean, and represents how concentrated responses are in relation to the mean; whether they are spread around the mean or disseminated far and wide.

3.6.3 RELIABILITY

Measurements that are carried out for internal consistency of constructs of a study is what can be referred to as Reliability. Hair et al., (2013) posit that an Alpha (α) value of .70 of a construct is deemed reliable. This study employed Cronbach’s Alpha for the assessment, reliability and validity of the constructs used.

From the table 4.6 below, the results for reliability concerning responses for the

Possible Contributions of e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift Towards Socio-Economic Development and Poverty Alleviation, which had 16 item scale constructs is ($\alpha = .934$). All the items appeared to be worthy of retention, as there was none that could result in an increase of the Alpha value if deleted. Therefore, all items were retained.

As indicated above, when constructs produce an Alpha (α) value of .70, it is considered reliable, which makes the constructs for this study reliable. The reliability results are summarized in the table below.

RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Table 3.6: Reliability Analysis

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.934	16

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
<i>Possible Contributions of e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift in General</i>				
e-Tourism's Ability to Help Protect Biodiversity and Tourism Resources	60.91	92.113	.653	.931
e-Tourism's Ability to Help Revitalize Traditional Culture	61.12	90.653	.583	.932
e-Tourism's Ability to Help Improve Community Living Conditions	61.02	90.229	.676	.930
e-Tourism's Ability to Create More Jobs and Opportunities	60.98	90.770	.633	.931
e-Tourism Benefiting Individuals Economically	61.02	88.552	.714	.929
e-Tourism's Ability to Help Enhance Individual's Knowledge and Awareness	61.04	89.160	.689	.930
e-Tourism's Ability to Help Build Capacity and Give Training Skills to People	61.01	90.143	.637	.931
e-Tourism's Ability to Help Improve Cooperation Among Tourism Stakeholders	60.98	90.490	.674	.930
<i>Possible Contributions For Society and Individuals</i>				
e-Tourism Can Develop People in a Society Economically	61.04	89.523	.702	.929
e-Tourism Can Contribute to Protecting Traditional Culture of a Society	61.11	89.892	.639	.931
e-Tourism Can Contribute to Raising Standard of Living in A Society	61.18	87.939	.707	.929
e-Tourism (ICTs) Can Enhance Knowledge, Skills and Build Capacity	61.07	89.380	.698	.929
e-Tourism Can Primarily Benefit the Poor and Other Individuals In Society	61.15	88.738	.652	.931
e-Tourism Has Brought About More Positive Benefits Than Negative Effects	61.14	90.832	.628	.931
e-Tourism Has Caused a Substantial Paradigm Shift in The Industry	61.12	90.351	.653	.931
Overall Support For e-Tourism as a Sustainable Tourism Tool for Socio-Economic Development and Poverty	61.01	89.509	.677	.930

3.6.4 CONFIRMATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Table 3.7: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor Loadings						
Factor	Indicator	Estimate	SE	Z	p	Stand. Estimate
<i>Possible Contributions of e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift in General</i>	eTourism's Ability To Help Protect Biodiversity And Tourism Resources	0.499	0.0368	13.6	< .001	0.683
	eTourism's Ability To Help Revitalize Traditional Culture	0.567	0.0482	11.8	< .001	0.612
	eTourism's Ability To Help Improve Community Living Conditions	0.604	0.0420	14.4	< .001	0.714
	eTourism's Ability To Create More Jobs And Opportunities	0.565	0.0436	13.0	< .001	0.661
	eTourism Benefiting Individuals Economically	0.690	0.0450	15.3	< .001	0.748
	eTourism's Ability To Help Enhance Individual's Knowledge And Awareness	0.654	0.0449	14.6	< .001	0.720
	eTourism's Ability To Help Build Capacity And Give Training Skills To People	0.607	0.0455	13.4	< .001	0.676
	eTourism's Ability To Help Improve Cooperation Among Tourism Stakeholders	0.589	0.0413	14.3	< .001	0.710
<i>Possible Contributions For Society and Individuals</i>	eTourism Can Develop People In A Society Economically	0.641	0.0425	15.1	< .001	0.738
	eTourism Can Contribute To Protecting Traditional Culture Of A Society	0.611	0.0464	13.2	< .001	0.668
	eTourism Can Contribute To Raising Standard Of Living In A Society	0.734	0.0475	15.5	< .001	0.753
	eTourism (ICTs) Can Enhance Knowledge, Skills And Build Capacit	0.633	0.0438	14.5	< .001	0.717
	eTourism Can Primarily Benefit The Poor And Other Individuals	0.681	0.0495	13.7	< .001	0.690
	eTourism Has Brought About More Positive Benefits Than Negative	0.561	0.0437	12.8	< .001	0.655
	eTourism Has Caused A Substantial Paradigm Shift In The Industry	0.595	0.0434	13.7	< .001	0.689
	Overall Support For eTourism As A Sustainable Tourism Tool For Socio-Economic Development And Poverty	0.633	0.0447	14.2	< .001	0.705

Factor Estimates

Factor Covariances

		Estimate	SE	Z	p	Stand. Estimate
Possible Contributions of e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift in General	Possible Contributions of e-Tourism's Paradigm Shift in General	1.000 ^a				
	Possible Contributions For Society and Individuals	0.954	0.0146	65.4	< .001	0.954
Possible Contributions For Society and Individuals	Possible Contributions For Society and Individuals	1.000 ^a				

^a fixed parameter

Model Fit

Test for Exact Fit

χ^2	df	p
235	103	< .001

Fit Measures

CFI	TLI	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI	
			Lower	Upper
0.949	0.941	0.0629	0.0523	0.0736

Confirmatory Factor Analysis can be defined as a well-known statistical approach used in efforts to support construct and provide evidence for construct validation (Association et al., 1999; Thompson & Daniel, 1996) as cited in (DiStefano & Hess, 2005). In light of this, the 16-item Likert scale responses were subjected to Confirmatory Factor Analysis aside from the reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha values as seen above, to establish evidence of validity.

The Confirmatory factor analysis in terms of the values for the factor loadings in the table above positions the outcome as very significant ones statistically. The values are seen to be ranging from .612 minimum to .753 maximum on the standard estimate for factor loadings. These values are above the minimum acceptable values of .5 or .6 as these numbers are debatable.

The analysis in general proved to provide a good fit according to fit indices as seen in the confirmatory factor analysis tables above. According to Ozturk (2011), Sun (2005) posits that Standardized Root Means Square Residual (SRMR), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) also known as Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI), McDonald's Centrality Index (MC), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) are recommended for the purposes of construct validity in terms of stand-alone evaluation of the model fit. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis performed for a good fit, and as evidenced in the tables above is presented as follows; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.0629, with the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) also known as Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI) = 0.94, whereas the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was = 0.949. These results were within the lower and upper values established for CFA and reiterated by Kim et al. (2016), and thus validating the results as acceptable.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

1.1 Summary of the Findings

This part of the study elaborates on the research findings established after surveying the opinions of tourism industry workers on eTourism's paradigm shift and how it can be leveraged as a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation. This part of the study summarizes some of the highlights of the analyses from the results collated as seen in chapter four (4). As indicated earlier, this study sought to establish whether indeed, there has been a paradigm shift in the industry due to eTourism and how we can leverage technological advancement for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. The study sought to establish eTourism as a tool which can help the cause of using tourism for poverty alleviation from the perspective of the tourism industry's personnel.

The research established that the perception of industry players working in the tourism industry, coming from diverse backgrounds, and occupying positions identified the main source of income for local people at tourism destinations as **food services**. That is, it has been established that in general terms, local people can generate some income through the running of restaurants, and other catering services that provide food and beverage services to tourists. Other areas of importance that have been identified as sources of income for the local people include but are not limited to, Transport and touring services (Local transportation, boat tours, yachting etc.), Tour guidance, Accommodation services (Hotels and other lodgings, Travel agency owner/agent business, Employment in tourism establishments, Souvenir selling, Retail sales to travelling people, and Locally grown products (agricultural and/or dairy products etc.). Despite all these instances through which local people could make income through tourism in general, it was discussed in the preceding chapters 2 and 3 that, poverty still abounds. This research discovered through the industry players who were surveyed that, the main cause of poverty at tourism destinations for the local people that takes the leading role in spite of these avenues for income is a **lack of knowledge of available opportunities** on the part of these locals. It had been discussed earlier in this study that, the absence of or the sheer ignorance of the potential that can be

harnessed from tourism, especially in these times is something that causes a lot of people to miss out on the developmental and income opportunities that are available. That is to say that the traditional forms of earning that come from say selling souvenirs, or just earning from the salary one is given, is not enough in these ICT studded times. In fact, more and more people stand the risk of losing their source of income if completely new revenue streams are not explored in the industry right now. Lack of good education, lack of government support, lack of jobs, lack of present-day ICT and professional skills among a host of others have all been identified as causes of poverty. In light of all the above-mentioned income sources and causes of poverty, it has also been established that some barriers to poverty alleviation exist, which is making it near to impossible or an overly enormous feat to attain. Identified among these barriers are lack of government support, lack of knowledge of available opportunities, lack of jobs and lack of present-day ICT and professional skills. That is, as much as people would like to alleviate poverty from their lives especially in communities at tourism destination sites, if the government does not back them and lead efforts as such, it is almost unlikely for poverty alleviation to be a reality. The creation of jobs and the skills thereof that are needed to participate in the running and involvement in these jobs are all things that are lacking and thus avert efforts at poverty alleviation.

Furthermore, the study found that in as much as there are barriers that are physical and mostly beyond the doings of individuals or communities for that matter, there is the attitudinal and behavioural aspect of people which in turn affects their poverty state regardless of the efforts made at alleviating poverty. Lack of effort or laziness, no attempt to improve oneself and resistance to change have been instituted as some of the attitudinal and or behavioural elements that influence people's poverty state. It can therefore be said that efforts geared towards attitudinal and behavioural changes, leaning in on the zeal to earn a living, improve the standard of life and living are thus essential on the parts of individuals mostly if we are to win the argument for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation.

The study also concluded that, to a large extent eTourism has caused a paradigm shift and that, in order to arrive at the destination of poverty alleviation, eTourism can be used as a sustainable tourism tool that will cater for the preservation of the environment, the socio-cultural elements of the communities and individuals while

benefiting all stakeholders economically. In efforts to counteract the effects of poverty by creating avenues for generating income, destination management organizations and individuals alike have been overly dependent on the tourism resources available to them, hence causing overuse of these resources. In order to curb these, the use of ICTs in vital areas of the operations of tourism and its activities has been identified. The use of ICTs in these areas will in essence help mitigate the overuse of tourism resources or better still help manage and curtail the effects of the overuse of these resources. Key among these areas is the advocacy for the use ICTs in Environment Management Information Systems for environment data tracking, waste management, cost and benefit assessment analysis for better socio-cultural and nature decision making as evident in the responses received for this study in that regard. The use of virtual tourism and traffic management systems as part of measures to curtail overtourism at some destinations and the Carbon emission Calculator for the monitoring of a cleaner environment for both locals and tourists have all been identified as potential solutions that eTourism brings on board in ensuring and safeguarding the use of tourism resources. One of the substantial and sensitive topics in the tourism industry today has been issues of the environment and how tourism is contributing to the deterioration of the environment in so many aspects due to the exploitation and so to say the overuse of these tourism resources. eTourism has been identified as a potential solution, which can help serve both the tourist and the environment. Thanks to ICTs, areas that are being affected through the use of tourism resources and the influx of tourists can easily be identified, and waste disposal, as well as waste left behind as a result of tourism activities, can easily be monitored and dealt with to help maintain a cleaner environment devoid of pollution, which is in essence also a contribution in itself to calls for environmental protection and climate change goals. The flow of traffic to tourism areas and tourism carrying capacity can now also be easily monitored and actions thus taken, to curtail the issue of over-tourism, with the strong implementation of virtual tourism, for monitoring and control. The use of virtual tourism for example can help those who have been asked to wait for their turn to visit a particular destination in response to measures to control overtourism for example or those who may not be able to visit for any reason to use VRs and ARs to experience the destination. What is more, in the current trend of the metaverse, destination management organizations can even offer tourists an experience in the metaverse, which in turn might help slow down the number of people who visit the over-populated

tourist destinations and buy time for these destinations for recovery for example.

Overall, eTourism has been established as an effective tool for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation, in that, eTourism can be designated as a platform for innovation and business opportunities, an avenue through which people can access education, information and Health care, as well as the direct access to the hospitality, travel and tourism market. In light of these establishments, it has been determined that there are some aspects of poverty that eTourism as a sustainable tourism tool can contribute to alleviating, whereas there are other aspects that require some sort of effort on the part of individuals who want to benefit from the enormous repository of opportunities which eTourism presents. The lack of income generation streams for individuals, present-day ICT training and skills, good education and access to knowledge on available opportunities have all been pinpointed as aspects that eTourism as it has been introduced to the tourism industry today and caused a paradigm shift can contribute to alleviating. On the other hand, lack of effort or laziness, no attempt to improve oneself and resistance to change have been identified as aspects that eTourism cannot contribute to improving in order to facilitate efforts at poverty alleviation. These are more attitudinal and behavioural related and require internal resolve on the part of the individual.

To add to the discussion, while tourism businesses have been identified as the main entity which has benefited most from eTourism through this study, it has also been established that eTourism can be effective in contributing to improving the living standards of individuals mainly through Employment (e.g., online business owners). The exact employment avenues and opportunities that have been documented to have been created by eTourism's paradigm shift that people can take advantage of include but are not limited to marketing specialists (online), accommodation providers (e.g., Airbnb, Homestays), and transport Service Provider (Uber, Taxi, Lift, Taxify, Blablacar in Europe) etc. Owing to these developments and the paradigm shift orchestrated as a result of eTourism also means the end or near end of some jobs belonging to the "old era". These jobs have been identified as travel agents (Travel Intermediation), information desk/kiosk personnel, tour guide, front desk personnel and travel educators. Waiter/ess, concierge, and hotel reps have also been established as part of the group of professions that have or will become obsolete in the near future.

The notion of the selection of travel educators as a profession in the top responses comes as a bit of a shocker and leaves one to wonder what the rationale for that selection is. Perhaps respondents are of the opinion that information search and self-education have never been easier and the same for materials and so the need for educators in general and tourism educators, in particular, will dwindle down in the near future.

During the study, it has been purported that, almost all jobs and or professions in the tourism industry under this paradigm shift require new skills, training and or technical know-how in order for employees and individuals alike to thrive. Jobs and or professions that have been identified and documented as top of the list which require new skills because of ICTs, though almost all jobs and professions that require new skills are, tour guides, managers (e.g., hotel, airline, restaurant), travel consultants, travel agents, sales representatives and tour organizers, accountants, front office or information desk personnel, and call centre staff. If these jobs mentioned and others in this eTourism era require new job skills and or technical know-how, then the question of what some of these specific skills are can be posed, and rightly so. The study found that some of the most sought-after and increasingly relevant job skills and technical-know how required to succeed and be relevant so as to earn a decent living that can provide basic needs tantamount to creating the avenue to improve the socio-economic situation of most people with interest in the tourism industry are as follows; *Social Media Skills, Digital Marketing Skills and Computing and Software Skills, Digital Product and Project Management Skills, Digital Conferencing and Meeting Skills, Data Analysis Skills, Emailing and Messaging Skills, Data Base Searching Skills, and Digital Design and Data Visualization* in this order of relevance, though it might greatly depend on where, when, how and who wants it.

To conclude, it is inherent to say that the eTourism era is not one that is devoid of challenges. With every paradigm shift comes some challenges that need to be overcome in order for the full potential of the change to be manifested and realized. It has been identified that *resistance to change, elimination of human service contact, acceptance and adoption, lack of or inadequate information (on the introduction of ICTs), Redundancy and Technological gap/divide* as major challenges which confront the eTourism era and in essence any efforts at the utilization of the prowess of ICTs

and taking advantage to elevate individuals, means of sustenance and socio-economic development in the tourism industry. For example, the tourism industry is a high human contact service industry often referred to as the “people business” (Ivanov & Webster, 2019), where human contact is often at times part of the service rendered. Now, with the introduction of things like the hotels without workforce run by robots, there are concerns that soon, there will be no humans to man affairs in the tourism industry. These challenges notwithstanding, awareness creation, better education and training and government support have been identified as the three main or broad categories of recommendations that can help keep these challenges in check.

1.2 Implications and Recommendations

Aside from the recommendations made in the analysis and the summary of research findings sections, there are theoretical and managerial implications from this study as well as a few other recommendations that are worth mentioning along with the implications.

1.2.1 Theoretical Implications/Recommendations

Theoretically, this study contributes to closing the knowledge gap in the use of tourism as a sustainable tool for poverty alleviation. In the face of technological advancement in the tourism industry today, this study contributes by explaining what eTourism is, how and where it started by giving some insight regarding the emergence and development of technology in the hospitality and tourism sector while looking at the nature of these developments and areas where it is being applied currently and the potential as well as benefits it brings. The study contributes to the body of knowledge of eTourism by helping document jobs, opportunity avenues and income streams that are available in this technological era that contribute to the efforts of people earning income and improving their standard of living and hence aid in poverty alleviation. As Ivanov (2020) puts it, many jobs in the hospitality industry, for example, will change in nature. Other key areas this study has contributed to providing information on and documentation on are jobs that have been created, relevant job skills and training needed and jobs that have or will become obsolete with the advancement of technology in the tourism industry, including which jobs require new skills and technical know-how in this era. The contribution is in response to the open knowledge that there is a high employee turnover in the hospitality and tourism sector with the introduction of

ICTs and AI's taking over tasks that require repetitive actions and such positions in nature (Li et al., 2019). Yet, little in terms of what the exact actions and avenues are for people in the industry and local communities who are gravely affected by these developments have been documented in tourism and hospitality literature. This study thus contributes in that regard.

1.2.2 Managerial Implications/Recommendations

Through this study, Destination management organizations, governments and international organizations have all been made aware of issues on the ground through documentation, which will help efforts at using tourism as a poverty alleviation tool. The attention of these DMOs, governments and international organizations has been drawn to the fact that, as they enjoy seamless operations thanks to the emergence of ICTs, it is important that the locals from the areas in which they operate and generate revenue (including other benefits) and employees are not left behind. The study has outlined areas of improvement that could be very helpful in the efforts aimed at community involvement and inclusion in decision making and the running of the day-to-day activities of tourism activities. Through the study, it has been presented that, governmental support, infrastructural development and the provision of jobs are all instrumental in helping the locals help themselves out of poverty through the opportunities created by ICTs. Governments and DMOs through this study have also been made aware of the fact that, if indeed they support the cause of poverty alleviation through tourism, then efforts should be made on their part in ensuring the establishment of proper institutions that will oversee tourism benefit distribution. This will ensure equity, making sure that every individual benefits accordingly. This way, those who need technical know-how, job skills and training that will equip them for these eTourism studded times and position them to cater for themselves and their families, for example, will have their fair share, which is not necessarily giving out monies to them. Like one of our respondents had said, in relation to what attitudes and or behaviours the respondents perceive affect the poverty state of the locals, this is what the respondent had to say;

“These people (locals and or individuals) are often unaware of how to generate opportunities, how to generate business and attract people. With so many changes and digital transformation, it becomes even more difficult for those who do not have

technical skills to follow the context. Before blaming the local population, destination management organizations also have a responsibility to stimulate change.”

Simply put and buttressing the point made earlier, DMOs, governments, international and local level organizations have been made aware through this study that they owe their communities the responsibility to be agents of transformation for the people if we are to gear toward the global aim of using eTourism to aid poverty alleviation. It can be noted and seen across board from the study that, one of the pertinent issues raised are issues related to awareness and lack of information on the available opportunities, jobs and or skills. This is a major issue as most people are not aware of the enormous possibilities with the eTourism era and those who are aware just do not know what exactly these opportunities are and how to approach and benefit from them.

One other respondent also had this to say;

“I believe this process is still at the beginning. Many of the small entrepreneurs and governments still do not know how to benefit from the possible advantages.”

This goes to prove how unaware a lot of people in the tourism industry space are of the magnanimous advantages that underline embracing eTourism and the technological advancement that come with it. People are not aware of the opportunities and how to tap into them. Therefore, awareness creation and assurances that come with letting people in this space know that there is nothing to be worried about and that, embracing eTourism will rather open these doors, and point them to these opportunities and jobs, and or skills that they need or will need in these times to continue earning and being able to cater for themselves and their dependents is essential, is very crucial.

The **UNWTO** as part of their training and education towards the SDG goals can focus on ICTs and highlight which areas are gaining traction since they are a bigger organization with the resources to keep track of the changes or perceived changes coming the way of the tourism industry in these times so that individuals will be armed and positioned accordingly to benefit from eTourism’s paradigm shift.

Seeing as today's traveller is environmentally conscious, DMOs must be considerate in these terms regarding their operations or risk losing significant portion of visitors to their destination. Tourists are more conscious than ever of their surroundings and what goes into providing them the services and tourism offer they are presented with. It is thus important that, in the face of increasing demand which can potentially lead to the overuse of tourism resources and or deteriorating the environment, DMOs and governments take action and embrace eTourism which has been identified as a solution.

1.3 Limitations and Future Research

The tourism-poverty alleviation nexus discussion is a broad one, and as such a single study is not enough to fully dissect and comprehend issues of poverty and poverty alleviation to the core. Though this study has tried to contribute to the knowledge body on a greater scale by touching on several aspects and pieces of the tourism-poverty alleviation discussion, a more in-depth examination on several fronts involving say what poverty means to people coming from different areas on the globe, how technology has developed in those regions and as to whether the people in those regions have access to basic technological apparatuses to orchestrate and match the change that is happening in the industry, among others are all areas that can be looked at and improved with studies contributing on that front. Issues of socio-economic development and poverty alleviation could be diverse and thus a more concise approach to arriving at some of the findings in this study could be beneficial as opposed to the general approach as different people coming from different backgrounds, even on grounds of the technological divide or gap could understand and interpret the contributions of eTourism to the tourism-poverty alleviation nexus discussion differently.

Another limitation encountered was that of time and funding. The duration to put together everything and start soliciting responses was very limited as data had to be collected in one semester without funding. Though the data-gathering technique employed yielded results, more time and funding could have allowed the researcher to employ other robust means of gathering data, which means reaching perhaps more qualified personnel in the tourism industry, which could have in turn given more insight and contribution to the body of knowledge on tourism-poverty alleviation.

Future research could look at employing other robust techniques or a combination of techniques to examine the same or similar topic to gain more insight. Time constraints also because, reaching and being able to get a valid number of respondents for a study such as this is very difficult as most researchers would agree. Mostly, it is difficult to reach an audience who is willing to provide valuable information in response to a questionnaire, and thus often required several reminders. Future research could give ample time for data collection in order to allow for greater participation in numbers of all respondents contacted.



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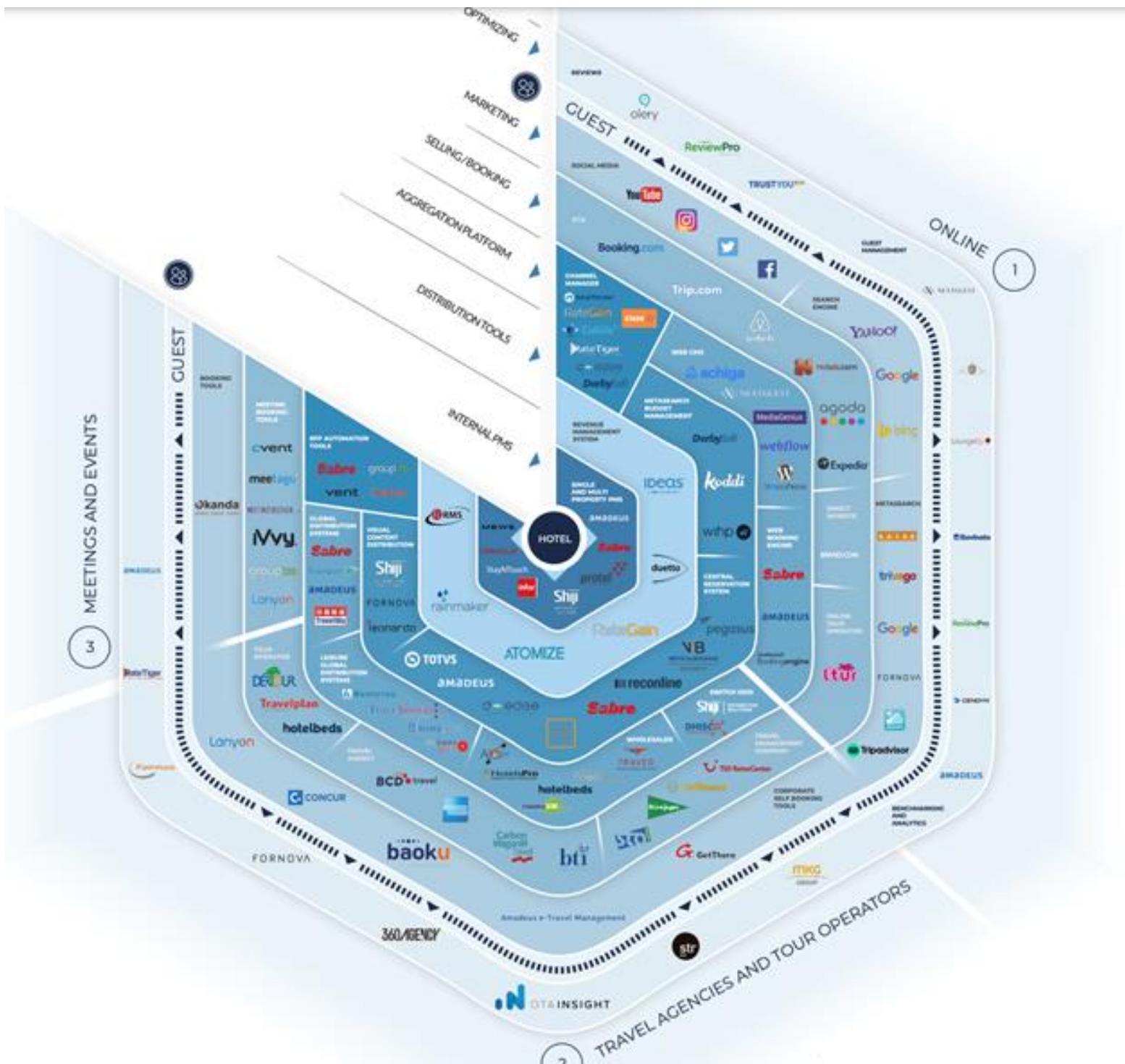
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APPENDIX 1

Figure 3.3: Hospitality Technology distribution chart



Source: Shiji Distribution Team of the Shiji Group (2021)

APPENDIX 2

Figure 3.2: History and Milestones of Hospitality and Tourism Technology

Dates / Years	World Events	Global Impact	Changes in technology	Industry Education	Hospitality Industry Technology	Hotel Market	Hotel Commercial Ecosystem
1760 - 1840	Industrial Revolution	Population Growth Economy Rise Urbanization					
1810			First Shower (The English Regency Shower) - 1810		First Hotel Indoor Plumbing for Guests (Tremont Hotel Boston)		
1831			Invention of Electricity				
1841						First Travel Agency opened in Porto	
1849						IHRA - (International Hotel & restaurant Association) founded	
1855			Steam Central Heating				
1857			First Safe Passenger Elevator installed				
1876			Invention of telephone				
1880					The Sagamore Hotel on Lake George NY was the first hotel to provide electricity to all guestrooms		
1886						Michelin Guide was founded	
1889					The Savoy London was the first luxury hotel in Britain offered electric light, electric lifts, hot water in bathrooms		The Savoy London opened
1890			First electric vacuum cleaner	First Hotel School (Lausanne Switzerland)			
1894					The Nederland Hotel NY introduces the first in room telephone		

1901			First electric vacuum cleaner		Installation of steam central heating(Le Grand Hotel Paris)		
1903			Wright Brothers fly first plane				
1904			Vacuum tube is invented				
1905			Hot Water				
1906			Willis Carrier pioneers the air conditioner			The Ritz London opened	
1907			Invention of electric clothes washer(Alva Fisher)			Hotel Adlon Berlin opened	
1908			Henry Ford launches T-Model Ford			The Statler Hotel Company	
1910					Electricity becomes widely available in hotels Goring Hotel, London, first hotel to offer en-suite bathrooms	The American Hotel Protective Association was founded	
1912	Titanic sinks						
1914			First mass production of automobiles				
1916						BOEING Founded	
1917						American Hotel Association created	
1919						Conrad HILTON opened first hotel in Texas	
1920			First primitive optical character recognition (OCR) scanning systems				
1922				Cornell Hotell Schollo Program			
1925						The first motel opened in San Luis Obispo, California	
1926					Introduction of USALI		
1927			Invention of first electronic television		In room radios become available at Hotel Statler, Boston. (Boston Park Plaza Hotel)	Marriott International was founded HSMaI founded (US)	
1928		PAN-AM First airline to start international flights. Between US & Central / South America	The electric refrigerator is invented				
1929	The Disney brothers reincorporated under the name Walt Disney Productions			Hotel school The Hague founded			

1930				Waldorf Astoria introduces Room Service		
1931			Peter Goldmark pioneers color television		**ASTA **(American Society of Travel Agents) founded	
1938			Principle of photocopying (xerography) invented (Chester Carlson)			
1939			Igor Sikorsky builds the first truly practical helicopter			
1945					IATA founded	
1946			Credit Cards invented (John Baggins) Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer (ENIAC) was built	Westin Hotels debuts first guest credit card		
1947		Growth of commercial aviation		The Roosevelt Hotel NYC, first hotel in the world to install TV's		
1949			Invention of barcodes			
1950				First hotel credit card – Diners Club Card		
1952					Construction of the first casino hotels First Holiday Inn National Association of Hotel Accountants (NAHA) founded (later HFTP)	
1954					Holiday Inn Franchising started	
1955			Eugene Polley invented the TV Remote Control	The Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, first hotel in the world to offer Air-Conditioning		
1957				HILTON -First to introduce direct dial telephone service	Hyatt Hotels Founded	
1958	VISA founded		Boeing 707 Launched	First automated electronic reservation system introduced by Sheraton		
1960	SABRE founded as the first online reservations system by American Airlines		IBM introduced "Shoebox" (Voice Recognition Tech)		ITT (Sheraton) buys St Regis New York to build its Luxury Division	
1961			TWA Introduces regularly scheduled in-flight movies			
1962			Douglas Engelbart develops computer Mouse LED (light emitting diode)		Hospitality/Motel 6 founded	
1963				First Integrated Mini Bar introduced by Madison Hotel, Washington DC		
1964			Shinkansen trains launched(Japan)			

1965			Hypertext invented(Ted Nelson)			
1966	Southwest Airlines was founded					
1967			First ATM (Barclays Bank, London) IBM Creates first Floppy Disk		Accor Hotels founded	
1969	Beoing 747 First Flight		ARPANet was established (California, USA) First solar power station (France)			
1970	HSMA Germany founded					
1971			First Email sent First computer virus (Crepper virus)		Shangri-La group founded	
1972	HITEC founded	Start of modern airport and airline security				
1973			James Dyson invents the bagless, cyclonic vacuum cleaner. Martin Cooper develops the first handheld cellphone	Sheraton Anaheim, first hotel to offer free in-room movies		
1974			Sørnes invented the VingCard, the world's first recordable key card door lock.			
1975	Microsoft founded		First digital camera DEC PDP-11, developed		Foundation of the World Tourism Organisation(WTO)	
1976				Westin first to support use of major credit cards for reservations & check-out		
1977			First laser printer by Xerox			
1979	Texas International Airlines created the first frequent-flyer program using mileage tracking to give 'rewards' to its passengers	Compact Discs widely accepted	Sony Walkman launched			
1981	First space shuttle launched		IBM introduced first personal computer Launch of CSNET (by NSF, USA)			
1983			VingCard invents the optical electronic key card Domain Name System(DNS) invented(Paul Mockapetris)		The Ritz Carlton founded First Boutique Hotel opens in NY(Ian Schrager&Steve Rubell)	
1984			Apple releases the Macintosh Computer			
1985	American Airlines debuts their Dynamic Inventory and Maintenance Optimizer system (DINAMO) Ryanair founded First Eco Label in Tourism(Blue Flag)		Windows 1.0 was launched			

1986			Disposal camera First sensor-flushing toilets(Japan)	First telephones for hotel rooms (Teledex Corp.)		
1987	Amadeus founded to act as a neutral global distribution system (GDS) by Air France, Iberia, Lufthansa & SAS		Debit card introduced			
1990	Worldspan formed by Delta, Northwest&TWA Airlines		Introduction of the World Wide Web(Tim Berners-Lee)			
1991	HEDNA founded		First Webpage created Creation of Wavelan(Wifi) by NCR and AT&T			
1992			First text message sent IBM Simon Personal Communicator '1st Smartphone'			
1993			Introduction of Mosaic Global Network Navigator(GNN) launched(Tim O'Reilly)		MGM Grand Las Vegas opens	
1994			VoIP inbented Yahoo founded First Mobile Phone(IBM Simon) released Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation consoles Amazon founded	Debut of the first online hotel catalog (Travelweb.com) First hotel website launched (Hyatt and Promus Hotel Corporation)		
1995	eBay founded			Choice and Holiday Inn are first to introduce online booking capability Choice Hotels International and Promus, first to offer guests real-time access to central reservations The first Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) is listed on the internet (Aurora, Colorado) Internet Travel Network (ITN) oversees the first airline ticket booking made over the web		
1996	Cheapflights(later Momondo) launched					
1997	HFTP founded(Formerly NAHA)	Wi-Fi Protocols becomes public	AOL Instant Messenger launched Netflix(only video on demand) launches			
1998	Shiji Founded PayPal founded Google founded Launch of Lastminute.com					

1999	First version of the PayPal electronic payments system was launched Alibaba.com launches Ctrip launched Cvent founded Alibaba founded TripAdvisor launched						
2000	Google launches AdWords Launch of Baidu	Mass adoption of broadband internet across the developed world					
2001	Wikipedia online encyclopedia is founded First Space Tourist (Dennis Tito)						
2002	HTNG founded						
2004	Facebook founded Kayak Metasearch launched						
2005	Trivago founded Amazon launches Amazon Rime Launch of Youtube Launch of Wi-Fi Reddit launches Launch of Google Maps						
2006	First Adblock launched Amazon Web Services Twitter launches						
2007	Mobile apps founded Netflix starts offering video streaming AmazonFresh launches(Seattle)		Amazon.com launches Kindle electronic e-book Apple launches iPhone			HOTREC founded	
2008	ReviewPro founded Groupon founded				First in-room iPad(The Plaza Hotel NYC)	Airbnb founded	
2009	Bitcoin launches		Virgin Airlines airline to offer in-flight wifi Kayak first to offer mobile travel booking via iOS app		Together with Intelity, Choice Hotels are first to introduce the mobile hotel app Hyatt offer customer service through social media platforms including Private Messaging		
2010	Delta Airlines launches social media ticket sales Pinterest launches Instagram launches Microsoft released Microsoft Azure	3D TV starts to become more widely available	Apple launches iPad Skype offers HD video conferencing				

2011	Stripe launches Snapchat launches Google+ launches Apple launched Siri WeChat launched by Tencent					
2012	Facebook acquires Instagram for \$1 billion Tinder launches Google Voice Search launched Airbnb launched "Neighborhoods" K.L.M. Royal Dutch Airlines starts Meet & Seat, a way to select seats based on the social profiles (LinkedIn or Facebook) of fellow passengers			Conrad Hotels & Resorts launch first service enabled brand app		
2013	Expedia acquires 62% of trivago Priceline acquires Kayak(\$1.8 bn) Vine launches Google Hangouts launches		Oracle announces Oracle Cloud			
2014	Apple Pay launched Amazon Alexa released			Guest Room Keyless Entry		
2015	Expedia acquires Travelocity Facebook launches Messenger Platform VR technology Google launches Android Pay			Hyatt uses Messenger to interact with guests		
2016	Google Home Release Starwood Marriott Merger Chinese HNA Tourism Group acquires Carlson Hospitality Group AccorHotels Group acquires FRHI Hotels & Resorts and its Fairmont, Raffles and Swissôtel brands			First Robot hotel opens in Japan (Henn-na Hotel)		
2017	Amadeus acquires TravelClick TikTok launches				Shiji Group acquired ReviewPro Hyatt Hotels Corp. acquires Miraval Group AccorHotels acquires Mövenpick Hotels & Resorts Minor International purchases of 94.1% of Spain's NH Hotels	
2018	Shiji Group receives \$486 million investment from Alibaba Group					
2019	Google+ shuts down Thomas Cook Bankruptcy IHG acquires Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas from Pegasus Capital Advisors for \$300 million.				Best Western acquired WorldHotels Huazhu Group acquires Deutsche Hospitality	
2020	Airbnb's internal validation lowered from \$31bn to \$26bn Airbnb filed for IPO Mews acquires Base7booking (formerly trivago)		Rise of contactless technologies			

Source: *Shiji Team and Techtalk.Travel. (Visual History of Travel Technology)*

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

E -TOURISM'S PARADIGM SHIFT; A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM TOOL FOR POVERTY ALLEVIATION

The aim of this study is to investigate the interrelationships between eTourism and Sustainable Tourism, as well as how the paradigm shift as a result of eTourism has affected the tourism industry, and how we can identify the new jobs, new roles and opportunities created by these ICTs for development and subsequently poverty alleviation.

The study will draw questions from the following to acquire information:

1. How e-Tourism can promote sustainable tourism.
2. How e-Tourism can aid in socio-economic developments.
3. How e-Tourism can be used as a tool for development, to aid poverty alleviation.
4. What the challenges for e-Tourism in this era are.
5. Recommendations for the advancement of the education on e-Tourism, its prospects and the roles of all parties.

THE ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS IN THIS STUDY

Should a participant decide to partake in this study, he or she is being invited to do the following.

- ✓ Provide answers to a questionnaire based on your opinion or perspective as an industry expert on eTourism's paradigm shift as a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation.
- ✓ Based on main questionnaire results, I may ask you to kindly answer a follow-up questionnaire.
- ✓ Permit me to use the results of the study for public publications such as master's thesis, journal publications or conference presentations.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHT TO WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY

Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any implications of any kind to themselves.

MATERIAL COLLECTED AND USE

The data or information that will be collected will be highly confidential. Names of participants will be confidential, and codes as opposed to real names will be used should the need arise in the data analysis for all publications in order to ultimately report on findings from this study.

Participant will have the opportunity to review their answers to the questionnaire and will be able to request feedback on the overall results of the study.



INVITATION LETTER

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Theophilus Anyane Asare, a master's degree student supervised by Prof. Orhan Icoz of the Department of Tourism Management, Graduate School of Yasar University - Turkey. My thesis is on eTourism's paradigm shift as a sustainable tourism tool for poverty alleviation. The study aims to develop an understanding of eTourism's paradigm shift and its relationship to sustainable tourism development and whether it could be used as a long-term tool for poverty alleviation.

As an expert and experienced personnel in the industry, I would be honored if you could accept an invitation to be part of this study. This study encompasses a structured interview in a questionnaire, mainly about eTourism (ICTs) paradigm shift, sustainable tourism and poverty alleviation. You reserve the right to participate and withdraw from participating in this study at any time. The information provided by you will be kept strictly confidential, and your name will be treated as confidential and will not be shared with other individuals or organizations. Aliases and codes will be used for the purposes of the data analysis in all publications. Please be informed that, a master's thesis document is a public document identifiable by the Yasar University library database.

This study is conducted solely for academic purposes and a copy of the final report will be sent to you should you wish to receive it. By responding to this letter, the questionnaire will be sent to you dependent on your acceptance to participate in the study. Regarding any questions about this study, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail

Thank you in advance and I look forward to your participation

in this study. Yours sincerely,
Theophilus Anyane Asare

1. Would you like to participate to this survey?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes (If you tick this option please continue to next section)
- ☐ No (If you tick this option, you can quit the questionnaire at this step)

Profile of Participants

2. I. In which sector of the tourism industry do you work?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Academia (University)
- ☐ Hotel Business (Accommodation, Lodging)
- ☐ Travel & Transportation
- ☐ Meeting Industry (MICE)
- ☐ Public Sector (Tourism Ministry)
- ☐ Travel Intermediary (Agency etc.)
- ☐ Catering Industry (Restaurant Business, Food & Beverage)
- ☐ Cruise Business
- ☐ Tour Guidance
- ☐ Tourism Marketing & Promotion Travel
- ☐ Consultancy
- ☐ Marine Tourism
- ☐ Souvenir Producer & Seller
- ☐ Other:

3. II. How many years have you been working in this industry?

Select One.

	Less than 5 years	5-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	21 years+
No. of Years	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. III. Your position in the sector (your occupation or line of work). Please describe what you actually do.

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Owner

- ☐ Worker
- ☐ Freelance
- ☐ Consultant
- ☐ Educator
- ☐ Other:

5. IV. Where do you live and work (residency – as destination)? Please Specify.

6. V. Education (Graduation)

Select One.

- ☐ High School or less
- ☐ Some College or Associate Degree
- ☐ Bachelor (College Degree)
- ☐ Postgraduate - Master
- ☐ Postgraduate - Doctoral
- ☐ Other

7. VI. Gender

Select One.

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Does not matter

8. VII. Marital Status

Select One.

- ☐ Married
- ☐ Single
- ☐ Divorced/Separated
- ☐ Does not matter

9. VIII. Nationality - Please Specify.

10. IX. Please select your age category by checking the appropriate box.

Select One.

	18-28	29-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70 or older
Category	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Questions related to Tourism and Poverty (Briefly answer the following questions according to your opinion)

In this section, your opinion will be taken on the general issues of tourism and poverty. This section will seek your opinion on general issues such as income sources, causes of poverty, barriers to poverty alleviation, use of tourism resources as well as attitudes and behaviours of the local people or individuals.

11. I. To you, what are the main income sources of local people at a tourism destination in general? (Select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Souvenir selling
- ☐ Travel agency owner/agent business
- ☐ Transport and touring services (Local transportation, boat tours, yachting etc.)
- ☐ Tour guidance
- ☐ Accommodation services (Hotels and other lodgings)
- ☐ Food services (Restaurant and other catering services)
- ☐ Employment in tourism establishments
- ☐ Retail sales to traveling people
- ☐ Locally grown products (agricultural and/or dairy products etc.)
- Other

12. II. What, in your opinion, are the main causes of poverty at a tourism destination in general?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Lack of knowledge of available opportunities
- ☐ Lack of jobs
- ☐ Lack of good education
- ☐ Resistance to change (behavior)
- ☐ Lack of Government support
- ☐ Lack of Present-day ICT and professional skills
- ☐ Legal Constraints
- ☐ High cost of living
- ☐ Lack of infrastructural development (e.g., good roads, health care system etc.)
- ☐ Other

13. III. To you, how can the use of ICTs in tourism help to mitigate the overuse of tourism resources?

- ☐ Environment Management Information Systems for environment data tracking, waste management, cost and benefit assessment analysis for better socio-cultural and nature decision making.
- ☐ Virtual tourism and traffic management systems as part of measure to curtail over tourism at some destinations.
- ☐ Carbon emission Calculator for the monitoring of a cleaner environment for both locals and tourists.
- ☐ Other

14. IV. What are the main barriers to poverty alleviation that you know of?

- ☐ Lack of knowledge for available opportunities
- ☐ Lack of jobs
- ☐ Resistance to change (e.g., behavior, attitude)
- ☐ Lack of Government support
- ☐ Lack of Present-day ICT and professional Skills
- ☐ Legal Constraints
- ☐ Other

15. V. Which attitudes and behaviors of local people affect their poverty state?

- ☐ Lack of effort/Laziness
- ☐ No attempt to improve oneself
- ☐ Resistance to change
- ☐ Other

Questions related to e-Tourism (Briefly answer the following questions according to your opinion)

In this section, your opinion will be sought on eTourism's paradigm shift and its relationship to sustainability, socio-economic development and poverty alleviation for the locals or individuals. This section will also take your opinion on the exact jobs and opportunities created by the emergence of ICTs, which jobs have become obsolete and which ones require new skill and technical know-how.

16. I. In your opinion, to what extent has e-Tourism (ICTs) caused a paradigm shift in the industry? Select one.

- ☐ To a very large extent
- ☐ To a large extent
- ☐ Not sure
- ☐ To some extent
- ☐ To no extent

17. II. In what aspects can e-Tourism be used as a sustainable tourism tool? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Socio-Cultural
- ☐ Environmental
- ☐ Economic
- ☐ Other

18. III. How can e-Tourism serve as an effective means for socio-economic development and or poverty alleviation?

- ☐ Access to Education, Information, Health care
- ☐ Platform for Innovation and business opportunities
- ☐ Direct access to market
- ☐ Other

19. IV. Which specific aspects of poverty can e-Tourism contribute to alleviate?

- ☐ Good Education
- ☐ Income generation for individuals
- ☐ Present-day ICT training and skills
- ☐ Access to Knowledge on available opportunities
- ☐ Other

20. V. Which specific aspects of poverty can e-Tourism not alleviate? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Lack of effort / Laziness
- ☐ Not attempt to improve oneself
- ☐ Resistance to change
- ☐ Other

21. VI. In what ways can the potential of e-Tourism be used as relationship tool between communities and other tourism stakeholders as a means for poverty alleviation? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Community informatics (e.g., individual empowerment, community participation in decision making)
- ☐ Location based services (e.g., raise awareness for tourists on local culture and heritage to avoid conflict)
- ☐ Destination Management System (e.g., Platforms for promoting economic benefits for locals or individual)

☐ Other

22. VII. In your opinion, who have been the main beneficiaries of e-Tourism (ICTs)?

Select all that apply.

- ☐ Poor individuals
- ☐ Tourism businesses
- ☐ Governments
- ☐ Tourists
- ☐ Development agencies
- ☐ Other

23. VIII. How has e-Tourism (ICTs) effectively contributed to improving living standards of people or individuals? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Education
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Literacy
- ☐ Employment (e.g., online business owners)
- ☐ Direct link to the market (individuals, small businesses)
- ☐ Income/revenue generation
- ☐ Access to Information (Healthcare, job opportunities)
- ☐ Other

24. IX. How can e-Tourism both improve living conditions of the people and protect the environment? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Carbon Emission Calculator
- ☐ Virtual Tourism (e.g., to reduce Overtourism)
- ☐ Waste Management System

- ☐ Environmental Impact Assessor
- ☐ Education, Training, Literacy
- ☐ Efficient Energy Use
- ☐ Other

25. X. What are the exact jobs and opportunities created by e-Tourism that individuals can benefit from to improve their standard of living? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Content Curator (e.g., for virtual museums)
- ☐ Marketing Specialist (Online)
- ☐ Reputation Manager
- ☐ Brand Influencers
- ☐ Accommodation Provider (e.g., Airbnb, Homestays)
- ☐ Transport Services Provider (e.g., Uber, Lift)
- ☐ Food Service Provider (e.g., Homemade food)
- ☐ Tourism Consultant (Remote)
- ☐ Other

26. XI. In your opinion, which jobs in the tourism industry have become obsolete or will be obsolete in the near future because of ICTs? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Concierge
- ☐ Travel Agents (Travel Intermediation)
- ☐ Front Desk Personnel
- ☐ Information Desk/Kiosk Personnel
- ☐ Tour Guide
- ☐ Waiter (ess)
- ☐ Tourism Educators
- ☐ Hotel Reps
- ☐ Other

27. XII. Which jobs in the industry now, in your opinion, require new skills because of ICTs? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Front/information desk personnel
- ☐ Managers (e.g., hotel, airline, restaurant, destination)
- ☐ Sales representatives
- ☐ Accountants
- ☐ Tour Guides
- ☐ Travel Consultants
- ☐ Travel Agents
- ☐ Tour Organizers
- ☐ Call Center Staff
- ☐ Public Servants
- ☐ Other

28. XIII. What job skills and technical know-how are required in this e-Tourism era? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Computing and Software Skills
- ☐ Social Media Skills
- ☐ Digital Conferencing and Meeting Skills
- ☐ Data Analysis Skills
- ☐ Digital Product and Project Management Skills
- ☐ Data Base Searching Skills
- ☐ Emailing and Messaging Skills
- ☐ Digital Design and Data Visualization
- ☐ Other

29. XIV. In your opinion, what are the major challenges in this e-Tourism era? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Acceptance and Adoption
- ☐ Resistance to Change
- ☐ Elimination of Human Service contact
- ☐ Redundancy
- ☐ Lack of or inadequate Information (On the introduction of ICTs)
- ☐ Technological Gap/Digital divide
- ☐ Other

30. XV. What are your recommendations to curtail the above-mentioned challenges? Select all that apply.

- ☐ Better Education & training
- ☐ Awareness Creation
- ☐ Government Support
- ☐ Other

Possible contributions of e-tourism paradigm shift

In this section, your opinion will be sought on eTourism's paradigm shift and its possible contributions to society, individuals and to the cause of poverty alleviation.

Please rate the following suggestions depending on your agreement with the contribution of eTourism's paradigm shift by circling the appropriate scale.

(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree

31. I. Protecting biodiversity and tourism resources

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

32. II. Revitalizing traditional culture

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

33. III. Improving community living conditions

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

34. IV. Creating more jobs and opportunities

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

35. V. Benefiting individuals economically

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

36. VI. Enhancing individual's knowledge and awareness

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

37. VII. Building capacity and training skills for the people

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

38. VIII. Improving cooperation among tourism stakeholders

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

Possible contributions of e-tourism for a society and Individuals

Please rate the following suggestions depending on your agreement on eTourism's (ICTs) ability to contribute to society and individuals by circling the appropriate scale.

(1) Strongly Disagree (2) Disagree (3) Neutral (4) Agree (5) Strongly Agree

39. I. e-Tourism can help develop people economically

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

40. II. e-Tourism can contribute to protecting traditional culture

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

41. III. e-Tourism can contribute to raising standard of living

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

42. IV. e-Tourism (ICTs) can enhance knowledge, skills, and capacity

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

43. V. e-Tourism (ICTs) can primarily benefit the poor and other individuals

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

44. VI. e-Tourism (ICTs) has brought about more positive benefits than negative effects

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

45. VII. e-Tourism (ICTs) caused a substantial paradigm shift in the industry

Select only one.

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

46. VIII. Overall, I strongly support e-Tourism as a sustainable means for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation

1	2	3	4	5
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree

47. IX. What are your recommendations so as for e-Tourism to contribute effectively to poverty alleviation?