

DOCTORAL (PhD) DISSERTATION

ELIYAS EBRAHIM AMAN

**University of Sopron
Sopron
2025**

University of Sopron
István Széchenyi Economics and Management Doctoral School

**TOURISM MARKETING PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS:
PERSPECTIVE OF BALE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK,
ETHIOPIA**

Doctoral (PhD) dissertation

Written by:
Eliyas Ebrahim Aman

Supervisor(s):
Dr. habil. Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry (Associate professor)

Sopron
2025

The evaluation of the dissertation

**Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism
Development in Protected Areas: Perspective of Bale Mountain National
Park, Ethiopia**

Dissertation to obtain a PhD degree

Written by:

Eliyas Ebrahim Aman

Prepared by the University of Sopron

István Széchenyi Economics and Management Doctoral School

within the framework of the _____ Programme

Supervisor(s): Dr. habil. Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry (Associate professor)

The supervisor(s) has recommended the evaluation of the dissertation be accepted: yes / no

supervisor(s) signature

The evaluation has been recommended for approval by the reviewers (yes/no):

1. judge: Dr. _____ yes / no _____
(signature)

2. judge: Dr. _____ yes / no _____
(signature)

Result of the public dissertation defence: _____ %

Sopron, 20____ year _____ month _____ day

Chairperson of the Judging Committee

Qualification of the PhD degree: _____

UDHC Chairperson

Acknowledgement

First and foremost, I thank Almighty Allah for giving me the courage and strength to complete my PhD study. All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of the Universe. It was not effortless journey, but with the help of Allah everything is possible, and I did it.

Second, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. habil. Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry, for his supervision and guidance. Thanks for your continuous supervision, kindness, support, and encouragement in carrying out my PhD study from proposal preparation to completing my dissertation, which could not be expressed in words.

I sincerely extend my thanks to Dr. Judit Pappné Vancsó, PhD, who supported me in getting the letter of supervision and valuable contributions and feedback in preparing a robust proposal for my dissertation. I would like to also extend my gratitude to Dr. Csilla Obádovics, PhD, and Dr. Erzsébet Nedelka, PhD, for their support during my PhD journey.

My acknowledgment also goes to Mada Walabu University, University of Sopron, and the Tempus Foundation for giving me such a wonderful scholarship opportunity and helping me to successfully complete my PhD journey.

I sincerely extend my thanks to the participants of the field survey and respondents, as the research would not have been possible without their valuable responses.

My special thanks and appreciation go to my lovely wife, Munira Habtamu. You have been a source of strength and courage for me, and thank you for taking care of our children, shouldering all responsibilities alone, and encouraging me to get my PhD journey done. My deepest thanks go to my mother-in-law and all my sisters for being with me in your moral support and supplication.

Last but not least, I would like to sincerely thank the reviewers of my dissertation, Dr. Rita Lukács, Ph.D., and Dr. habil. SZABÓ Zoltán PhD, MBA, for their valuable time and thoughtful insights. Their feedback has greatly strengthened the quality of my work. I am deeply grateful for their constructive feedback.

Table of Contents

The evaluation of the dissertation.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Table of contents.....	iv
List of figure.....	vii
List of table.....	viii
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	ix
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	x
Abstract.....	xi
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Overview	1
1.2. Background to the Study	1
1.3. Statement of the Problem	4
1.4. Objective of the Study	5
1.5. Research Questions	6
1.6. Hypotheses	6
1.7. Scope of the Study	7
1.8. Significance of Study	7
1.9. Definition of key terms.....	8
1.10. Organization of the study	8
1.11. Summary.....	9
2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	10
2.1. Introduction	10
2.2. Tourism marketing	10
2.3. Measurement of tourism marketing practices	14
2.3.1. Traditional marketing mix	15
2.3.2. Modern marketing mix	23
2.4. Role of tourism marketing mix at various stage of travel decision making	25
2.5. Sustainability	27
2.5.1. Sustainable tourism	27
2.5.2. Measurement of the dimensions of sustainable tourism.....	29
2.6. Relationship between tourism marketing and national park	35
2.7. Research Gaps	36
2.8. Proposed research model	37
2.9. Hypotheses development and Rationale.....	38
2.10. Summary.....	40

3.	METHODOLOGY	41
3.1.	Introduction	41
3.2.	Description of the study area	41
3.3.	Research Design	45
3.3.1.	Qualitative Research Approach	45
3.3.1.1.	Sample selection	45
3.3.1.2.	Data collection	46
3.3.1.3.	Data analysis.....	47
3.3.2.	Quantitative Research Approach	48
3.3.2.1.	Questionnaire design and hypotheses development.	48
3.3.2.2.	Pre-testing the questionnaire	48
3.3.2.3.	Pilot testing.....	49
3.3.2.4.	Population and sampling techniques	49
3.3.2.5.	Sampling design and techniques.....	49
3.3.2.6.	Descriptive data analysis and presentation methods.	50
3.3.2.7.	Structural equation modelling (SEM)	50
3.4.	Ethical Consideration.....	51
3.4.1.	Review and approval.	51
3.4.2.	Integrity.....	52
3.4.3.	Consent	52
3.4.4.	Confidentiality and Anonymity	52
3.5.	Summary.....	54
4.	RESULT AND DISCUSSION	55
4.1.	QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	55
4.1.1.	Introduction	55
4.1.2.	Qualitative Research Paradigm and philosophical assumptions	55
4.1.3.	Interview questionnaire design.....	56
4.1.4.	Pilot test.....	56
4.1.5.	Sample section.....	57
4.1.6.	Data collection.....	57
4.1.7.	Profile of interviewees and focus group discussion	57
4.1.8.	Finding of Qualitative Study	59

4.1.9. Tourism marketing practices	59
4.1.10. Finding regarding sustainable tourism	63
4.2. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	65
4.2.1. Introduction	65
4.2.2. Demographic Characteristics of respondents	66
4.2.3. Descriptive Analysis.....	67
4.2.3.1. Tourism marketing practices	67
4.2.3.2. Sustainable tourism dimensions	71
4.2.4. Assessment of measurement model.....	73
4.2.4.1. Reliability of constructs.....	73
4.2.4.2. Convergent validity	73
4.2.4.3. Discriminant validity	78
4.2.5. Higher order reflective measurement model	81
4.2.6. An assessment of the structural model	83
4.2.6.1. Path coefficients	84
4.2.6.3. Predictive accuracy(Q^2).....	86
4.2.6.4. Effect size (f^2).....	86
4.2.7. Structural model estimation.....	87
4.3. DISCUSSION OF THE HYPOTHESES	89
4.3.1. Introduction	89
4.3.1.1. Tourism marketing and economic dimension (hypothesis 1).....	89
4.3.1.2. Tourism marketing and sociocultural dimension (hypothesis 2)	90
4.3.1.3. Tourism marketing and environmental dimension (hypothesis 3)	91
4.3.1.4. Tourism marketing and sustainable tourism (hypothesis 4).....	91
4.4. Summary.....	92
5. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS	93
6. SUMMARY, IMPLICATION, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION	96
6.1. Introduction.....	96
6.2. Research summary	96
6.3. Theoretical contributions of findings.....	98
6.4. Practical contributions of research findings.....	98
6.5. Limitations and future research directions.....	100
References.....	102
Appendices.....	121

List of figure	Page
FIGURE 1. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY (SOURCE: RESEARCHER’S OWN CONSTRUCTION)	9
FIGURE 2. DIMENSION OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM (WHITE ET AL., 2006, ZAMFIR & CORBOS, 2015).....	28
FIGURE 3. PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL (SOURCE: RESEARCHER’S OWN CONSTRUCTION).....	38
FIGURE 4: MAP OF THE STUDY AREA	41
FIGURE 5. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS (SOURCE: RESEARCHER’S OWN CONSTRUCTION)	47
FIGURE 6. REVIEW AND ETHICAL APPROVAL STAGE.....	52
FIGURE 7. STEPS TAKEN TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE STUDY	53
FIGURE 8. FACTOR LOADING AND P-VALUE FOR LOWER ORDER CONSTRUCT	76
FIGURE 9. FACTOR LOADING AND T-VALUE FOR LOWER ORDER CONSTRUCT	77
FIGURE 10. FACTOR LOADING AND P-VALUE FOR HIGHER ORDER CONSTRUCT	82
FIGURE 11. PATH COEFFICIENTS AND T-VALUES	84
FIGURE 12. PATH COEFFICIENTS AND P-VALUES	85
FIGURE 13. MODEL ESTIMATION SHOWING THE OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL (P-VALUES).....	87
FIGURE 14. MODEL ESTIMATION SHOWING THE OVERALL T-VALUES.....	88
FIGURE 15. PSYCHOMETRIC MEASURES OF TOURISM MARKETING AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.....	93

List of table	Page
TABLE 1. PREVIOUS STUDY RELATED WITH MARKETING MIX.....	13
TABLE 2. CONVENTIONAL MEASUREMENT OF MARKETING MIX	22
TABLE 3. MODERN MEASUREMENT OF MARKETING MIX	25
TABLE 4. INFLUENCES OF TOURISM MARKETING MIX AT VARIOUS STAGE OF TRAVEL DECISION MAKING....	26
TABLE 5. MEASUREMENT OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DIMENSIONS	34
TABLE 6. PROFILE OF INTERVIEWEES.....	58
TABLE 7. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION PROFILE.....	58
TABLE 8. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS	66
TABLE 9. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF TOURISM MARKETING PRACTICES	69
TABLE 10. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	72
TABLE 11. KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST	73
TABLE 12 . ASSESSMENT OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY FOR LOWER ORDER CONSTRUCTS .	74
TABLE 13. FORNELL-LARCKER CRITERION.....	78
TABLE 14. HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT RATIO (HTMT)-MATRIX	79
TABLE 15. CROSS-LOADING.....	80
TABLE 16. ASSESSMENT OF RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY FOR HIGHER ORDER CONSTRUCTS .	81
TABLE 17. FORNELL-LARCKER CRITERION.....	83
TABLE 18. HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT RATIO (HTMT)-MATRIX	83
TABLE 19. CROSS-LOADING.....	83
TABLE 20. PREDICTIVE POWER AND RELEVANCE.....	86
TABLE 21. EFFECT SIZE (F^2).....	86
TABLE 22. SUMMARY OF MODEL	89

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

APPENDIX 2. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONS (SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE)

APPENDIX 3. LETTER OF AUTHORIZATION FROM THE SUPERVISOR AND DOCTORATE SCHOOL TO CONDUCT DATA COLLECTION.

APPENDIX 4. ETHICAL COMMITTEE APPROVAL AND MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH ETHIOPIAN WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AUTHORITY.

APPENDIX 5. LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM OROMIA TOURISM COMMISSION

APPENDIX 6. DECLARATION ON IDENTITY

APPENDIX 7. LEGAL DECLARATION

APPENDIX 8. CO-AUTHOR'S DECLARATION (1)

APPENDIX 9. SOME PHOTOS OF BALE MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK TAKEN DURING DATA COLLECTION.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AMA	American Marketing Association
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BMNP	Bale Mountains National Park
CR	Composite Reliability
Eco	Economic sustainability
Env	Environmental sustainability
EWCA	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FZS	Frankfurt Zoological Society
HTMT	Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio
IRTS	International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
MWU	Madda Walabu University
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OFWE	Oromia forest and Wildlife Enterprise
PLS	Partial Least Square
SEM	Structural Equation Model
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
So	Social sustainability
ST	Sustainable Tourism
TMP	Tourism Marketing Practices
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, & Cultural Organization.
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor
WTO	World Tourism Organization
WCED	World Commission on Environment and Development

Abstract

The primary focus of my research is on tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in the context of national parks, where tourism marketing plays a crucial role in economic, social, and environmental sustainability. With the growing popularity of tourism in the protected areas, there is a need to implement appropriate tourism marketing practices to enhance sustainable tourism. Additionally, there is a concern associated with over-tourism and under-tourism in protected areas due to a lack of relevant marketing practices, especially in developing countries. As a result, prioritizing short-term economic gains over long-term economic, sociocultural, and environmental sustainability exposes national parks in developing countries to unsustainable practices. In this regard, examining the role of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in protected areas is critically important. The objective of this research is to investigate the role of tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism in national parks. In an attempt to address this aim, this research employed mixed research approaches to enhance the depth, breadth, and overall quality of the research findings. To achieve the intended objectives of the qualitative data collection, a semi-structured interview, a focus group discussion, and observation were adopted, which would help to gain a comprehensive and better understanding of the situation. Moreover, a structured and closed-ended questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was developed for the quantitative approach. Furthermore, a PLS-SEM approach was adopted to test hypotheses and measure various dimensions in the proposed model. SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS version 4 were utilized to carry out the analysis of data. The findings of this research revealed that TMP can explain 62.4% of the variance of the economic dimension, 57.5% of the variance of the social dimension, 53.6% of the variance of the environmental dimension, and 27.9% of the variance of sustainable tourism. In addition, the results of the hypothesis testing indicated that all hypotheses were found to be statistically significant. The findings of this research have the potential to make valuable contributions to both academic knowledge and practical applications. Primarily, the research provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in the context of protected areas. Secondly, the study enhances the existing body of knowledge, as there is no prior empirically validated research model that combines tourism marketing and sustainable tourism.

Thirdly, this model helps tourism marketing decision-makers to refine their thinking about tourism marketing and sustainable tourism, which will reinforce them toward improving the sustainability of tourism that contributes to a sustainable future. Fourthly, the research empowers local communities in and around the national parks to improve their marketing practices, contributing to the economic viability of local communities. Ultimately, this research seeks to demonstrate the potential of tourism marketing to contribute to human well-being and a more sustainable future, directly aligning with the sustainable development goal mission.

Keywords: Tourism marketing, sustainable tourism, sustainability, national park, protected areas

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

This chapter aims to present the overall structure of the dissertation and outline the conducted research. The study pertains primarily to tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in protected areas. Therefore, the chapter commences with section 1.1., which offers a concise outline of the chapter. Moreover, sections 1.2. to 1.8 provide a brief overview of the research background, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, and definitions of terms. The chapters wrap up with an overview of the dissertation structures, providing a concise overview of each of the chapters contained in this paper.

1.2. Background to the Study

Since the introduction of industrialization, various business and social changes have led to the concept of tourism ([Sengel, 2021](#)). Industrialization had brought about the need for holidays and travel even in its early stages, as the workers felt the need for temporary rest and relaxation after long hours of work ([Raju, 2009](#)). Furthermore, as pilgrimages expanded, diplomacy extended, international trade prolonged, and the world economy developed ([Raju, 2009](#)), the need to travel for political, economic, and cultural reasons increased ([Christou, 2022](#)). Nowadays, the world widely recognizes tourism as the largest and primarily service-based industry ([Butler, 1999](#); [Cavalcante et al., 2021](#)), playing a critical role in bringing about rapid economic, social, and environmental changes and serving as a major area of study and career opportunity for many people ([World Travel & Tourism Council, 2024](#)).

Moreover, the United Nations has recognized tourism as an important catalyst for promoting the transition to a green economy and acknowledges its potential to make an essential contribution to achieving sustainable development ([Scheyvens & Cheer, 2022](#)). The term tourism is defined as the aggregate of phenomena and relationships resulting from the interaction among tourists, suppliers, government, and host communities ([Leiper, 1979](#); [Zhang et al., 2009](#)). According to [IRTS \(2008\)](#), “tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business, and other purposes for not more than one consecutive year.” In this sense, tourism encompasses a variety of industries, services, and activities that create travel experiences, including transportation, accommodation, dining, shopping, entertainment, facilities, and various other amenities for those who are traveling away from home ([Dasgupta, 2010](#)).

Tourism offers a diverse array of experiences designed for various interests, objectives, and motives (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Particularly, tourism in protected areas is one of the many types of tourism that offers various recreational services (Bushell & Bricker, 2017; Bhammar et al., 2021). In addition to preservation and conservation, protected areas offer numerous recreational benefits through tourism (Winter et al., 2020), yielding profound economic and social benefits (Watson et al., 2014; Kc et al., 2024). Tourism in protected areas incorporates a variety of recreational possibilities within the realm of nature-based tourism (Winter et al., 2020; Donici & Dumitras, 2024), including ecotourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, educational tourism, scientific tourism, birdwatching tourism, geotourism, forest tourism, and cultural tourism (Mandić, 2022). However, there is a concern associated with over-tourism and under-tourism (Barač-Miftarević, 2023) in protected areas due to a lack of relevant marketing practices (Honey & Frenkiel, 2021), especially in developing countries. Therefore, with growing popularity for tourism in the protected areas in the presence of existing challenges, there is a need for the implementation of appropriate tourism marketing practices to enhance sustainable tourism in protected areas (Aman & Papp-Váry, 2021).

In tourism and tourism-related business, success is based on understanding and implementing appropriate marketing concepts (Raju, 2009). According to the American Marketing Association, “marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and process for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that value customers, clients, markets, and society at large” (Gundlach & Wilkie, 2009, p. 260). Kotler & Keller (2012) defined marketing as a societal process by which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want through creating, offering, and freely exchanging products and services of value with others. Marketing is a process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

When it comes to defining tourism marketing, the literature lacks consistency and clarity, and scholars cannot agree upon clear definitions. However, what is evident is that the concept of tourism marketing can be associated with the core business of strengthening economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Niñerola et al., 2019; Cavalcante et al., 2021). Avraham & Ketter (2016) highlighted tourism marketing as a marketing concept and principles applied to the travel and tourism industries. In this sense, tourism marketing is a marketing practice that tourism organizations apply to create, convey, provide, and distribute value-added offerings to visitors, partners, and the local community (Pomeroy et al., 2011).

Similarly, [Raju \(2009\)](#) describes tourism marketing as the systematic and organized efforts exerted by the tourism industry at international, national, and local levels to optimize the satisfaction of tourists, groups, and individuals given sustained tourism growth. Tourism marketing is the process of balancing the objectives of a tourism organization with the needs of tourists ([Kotler & Armstrong, 2010](#)). Primarily, tourism marketing emphasizes developing products and services, establishing reasonable pricing strategies, developing distribution channels to target markets, and creating comprehensive tourism services ([Hong, 2008](#)). Tourism marketing is a technical and administrative activity that is conducted by tourism organizations both domestically and internationally to identify prospective and expected markets with the objective of enhancing and expanding the number of visitors ([Sadq et al., 2019](#)). Prior studies have also emphasized the significance of tourism marketing (e.g., [Sadq et al., 2019](#); [Rahmoun & Baeshen, 2021](#); [Ali, 2021](#)).

The focus of this study is exploring tourism marketing practices and sustainability of tourism in the context of protected areas, particularly the Bale Mountains National Park, a UNESCO-designated national park and home to extraordinary fauna and flora with an exceptional degree of endemism. The national park is facing several challenges arising from human-made problems, such as agricultural land expansions, rapid village expansions, extended forest fires, and overgrazing ([Belayneh et al., 2013](#); [Mamo & Bekele, 2011](#); [Teshome et al., 2011](#)), which have become severe threats for the sustainability of tourism and the survival of the national park itself ([Aman & Papp-Váry, 2021](#)). The existence of such concerns impacts the ability of tourism activities to sustainably bring sociocultural, environmental, and economic benefits to the areas, as well as their contribution to the country's tourism sector.

Therefore, the primary motivation of this study is to investigate the tourism marketing practices and sustainability of tourism in and around the Bale Mountains National Park and to develop a model that ensures a long-term sustainability of tourism in and around the national park. In doing so, the research enhances the empirical and theoretical understanding of the tourism marketing practices along with sustainable tourism dimensions.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Tourism marketing is one of the major areas of marketing (Elida, 2014) that plays a great role in poverty reduction and ensures the quality of life, employment, and decent work for the nation, as well as the sustainability of the natural and cultural environment (Shalan, 2005; De Sausmarez, 2007; Reihanian et al., 2012). The potential contribution of tourism marketing to sustainable tourism development on national and global development agendas is also becoming a reality (Butler, 1999). In national parks, sustainable tourism is applied to protect the natural environment and biodiversity, improve the community's living standards by optimizing local economic benefits, and provide high-quality experiences and satisfaction for tourists (Plummer & Fennell, 2009). Mihanyar et al. (2016) and Puhakka & Saarinen (2013) argue that national parks and sustainable tourism cannot be separated for future sustainable tourism development.

Similarly, Plummer & Fennell (2009) highlighted that the relationship between tourism marketing and national parks is the most intimate place where tourism marketing is progressively considered an effective tool for socio-economic development. Lei et al. (2014) assert that there is a significant relationship between national parks and tourism marketing, which directly influences the development of sustainable tourism and the sustainability of national parks. National parks have great potential to hasten sustainable tourism development to maintain a sustainable combination of economic, social, and environmental conditions in our competitive world (Sriarkarin-Lee, 2018; Valdivieso et al., 2014). If well-managed and with the right application of tourism marketing (Wearing et al., 2016), the national park can generate quality jobs for durable growth, reduce poverty, and offer incentives for environmental conservation (Watson et al., 2014; Ristic et al., 2019). However, the prioritization of short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term economic, sociocultural, and environmental sustainability exposes national parks in developing countries to unsustainable tourism practices (Altinay et al., 2007; UNWTO, 2020).

Furthermore, national parks offer an income source for local communities and the national economy while safeguarding the environment's integrity (Weaver, 2001). However, shockingly, human economic activities are destroying biodiversity, primarily through land spread transformations, contamination, improbable abuse of common assets, the presentation of invasive species, and the effects of environmental change (Brüggemann et al., 2001). The tourism industry can tackle this effect by consolidating the tourism marketing concept and practices to create an ecologically sustainable environment and sustainable tourism. Particularly, Bale Mountains National Park is endowed with various biodiversity resources but has not realized the potential

benefit of these resources to the local community and country development due to a lack of effective tourism marketing practices.

Besides, tourists desire a high-quality tourism product, reasonable pricing, accessibility, accurate information regarding the destinations, hospitality, service delivery, and an appealing tourism atmosphere (Foued & Sawsan, 2019). Hence, the quality of tourism in national parks plays a key role in improving the quality of destinations, attracting potential tourists, and the success of sustainable tourism development (Lei et al., 2014). Moreover, it enhances the country's tourist attractions, including its biodiversity, cultures, natural environments, and ancient history (An et al., 2019). However, the national parks face major issues due to a lack of strong control and effective management of tourism marketing, such as tourism products, tourism pricing, distribution, and accessibility of tourism products, marketing and promotional activities, skilled human power, physically attached facilities, and processes (Sharpley & Pearce, 2007). Despite this, little research has been conducted on the matter.

In light of this, the researcher is deeply interested in exploring the topics of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in protected areas. Thus, the study explored the link between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism through a detailed investigation. In addition, this research outlined how the concept and application of tourism marketing in national parks contribute to social, economic, and environmental protection, thereby strengthening and accelerating progress on sustainable tourism development. In this regard, the study clarified the essence of tourism marketing in enhancing national parks and sustainable tourism development and developed a suitable model that paves the way for expanding tourism investment opportunities in protected areas.

1.4. Objective of the Study

The overall aim of this research was to examine tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism development in and around Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia. Specifically, the purpose of the research was to:

- 1) Examine tourism marketing's impact on long-term economic viability and socioeconomic benefits for all stakeholders.
- 2) Analyse how tourism marketing respects host communities' sociocultural authenticity and preserves their built and live cultural assets and traditional values in and around the national park.

- 3) Assess how tourism marketing optimizes environmental resources, sustains ecological processes, and protects natural heritage and biodiversity.
- 4) Find out the relationship and to what extent tourism marketing impacts sustainable tourism.

1.5. Research Questions

To achieve the purposes of the study, the following questions were addressed:

- 1) Does tourism marketing ensure viable, long-term economic operations and provide long-term socioeconomic benefits to all stakeholders?
- 2) Does tourism marketing impact the sociocultural authenticity of host communities and conserve their built and living cultural heritage and traditional values in and around the national park?
- 3) Does tourism marketing make optimal use of environmental resources, maintain essential ecological processes, and help conserve natural heritage and biodiversity?
- 4) What is the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism, and to what extent does tourism marketing impact sustainable tourism?

1.6. Hypotheses

At a significance level of 0.05, the following hypotheses were examined for the purpose of the study:

- **H1:** Tourism marketing has statistically a positive significant impact on ensuring viable and long-term economic operations and benefits to all stakeholders in and around the national park.
- **H2:** Tourism marketing has a statistically significant impact on respecting the sociocultural authenticity of host communities and preserving their cultural assets and traditional values in and around the national park.
- **H3:** Tourism marketing has a statistically significant impact on making optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecological processes, and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.
- **H4:** There is a statistically significant relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism.

1.7. Scope of the Study

This research was limited in terms of setting (geography), variables of interest, subjects for investigation, and time to ensure its manageability. Accordingly, the study was delimited in four ways:

1. Geographically, it was delimited to Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia.
2. In terms of variables of interest, the study focused on exploring tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism.
3. In terms of the subject of study, it was delimited as follows:
 - ❖ Tourists (both domestic and international tourists).
 - ❖ The national park staff personnel, such as tour reception, the manager, tourism experts, and tour guides.
 - ❖ The investors include lodge owners, hotel owners, tour operators, and travel agents.
 - ❖ Public sectors (tourism offices, Oromia forest and wildlife enterprise, Ethiopian wildlife conservation authority).
 - ❖ NGOs (Frankfurt Zoological Society).
 - ❖ Local communities living in and around the national park and residing within a radius of 3-5 kilometers from the park will be selected as subjects of the study to attain the objective of the research.
4. Finally, in terms of time, the study was conducted between July 2023 and May 2025.

1.8. Significance of Study

The findings of this study could have five significant implications. This research may have five major ramifications. First, it is essential to comprehend the connection between tourism marketing and the sustainability of tourism in national parks in light of recent trends toward achieving sustainable development objectives. In accordance with this assumption, the researcher believes that the findings of this study could play a crucial role in attaining sustainable development objectives. Second, the outcome of the study may have a significant impact on balancing the requirements of tourism with the sustainability of the national park in order to maintain a sustainable contribution to economic, social, and environmental conditions.

Thirdly, the researcher believes that the findings of this study can be instrumental in bringing to the attention of policymakers and practitioners the various challenges the national park faces due to an absence of appropriate application and implementation of tourism marketing. Thus, the research contributes significantly to the sustainability of tourism and national parks. Fourthly, this

study makes a substantial contribution to knowledge by devising new, diverse models that advance the existing body of literature on the relationship between tourism marketing, sustainable tourism, and sustainable national parks. Additionally, the study offers valuable insights and lays the groundwork for future research in the field, catering to researchers and academics with a keen interest in the subject matter. Lastly, it assists the researcher in fulfilling the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree in organizational and management science.

1.9. Definition of key terms

Tourism: the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for leisure, business, and other purposes for not more than one consecutive year (WTO).

Marketing: the activity, set of institutions, and process for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that value customers, clients, markets, and society at large (AMA).

Tourism marketing: a marketing practice that tourism organizations apply to create, convey, provide, and distribute value-added offerings to visitors, partners, and the local community (Pomeroy et al., 2011).

Sustainable tourism: 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 (Butler, 1999).

1.10. Organization of the study

The dissertation consists of six chapters. Chapter one comprises the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the research questions, the hypotheses of the study, the operationalization of variables, the scope of the study, the significance of the study, and the operational definition of terms. Chapter two provides a literature review on tourism marketing and sustainable tourism development. The literature review helps build a solid theoretical and conceptual base on which research can stand. The aim is to identify gaps in the literature that define the agenda for the dissertation. Chapter three presents the methodology, the data collection procedure, and the method of analysis. Chapter four presents the qualitative data analyses, quantitative data analysis, and the empirical findings in light of the hypotheses. Chapter five summarizes the new scientific results. Finally, chapter six presents the summary, implication, limitation, and future research directions of the dissertation. The organization of the dissertation is summarized in [Figure 1](#), which clearly outlines the structure of the study.

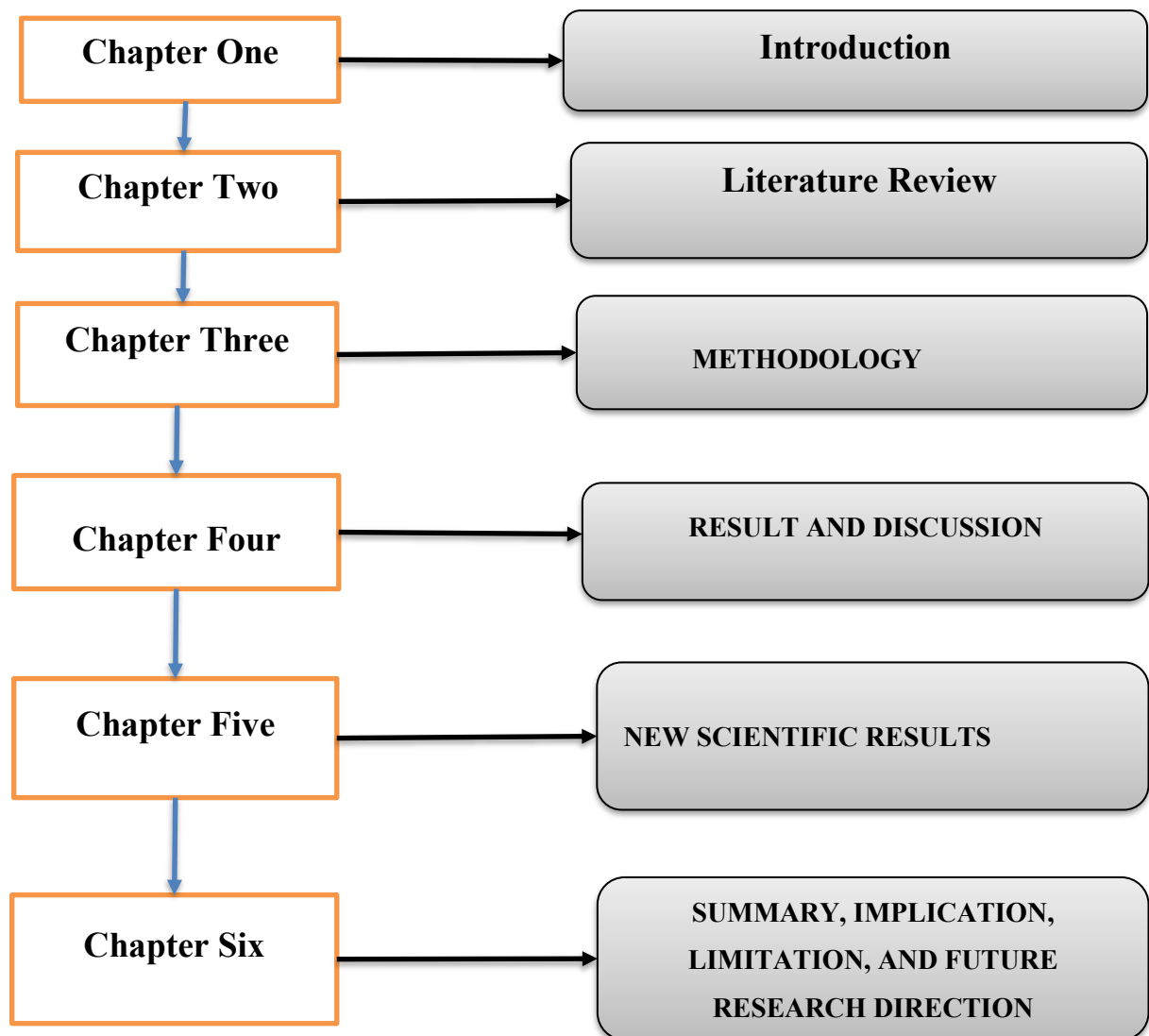


Figure 1. Organization of the study (source: researcher's own construction)

1.11. Summary

This chapter provide a brief overview of the research background, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, hypotheses of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, definitions of terms, and dissertation structures.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This chapter comprises an overview of pertinent literature about the research related to tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism in national parks. The literature reviews were conducted to encompass the variables within the conceptual framework of this study, including conceptual reviews of diverse scholars, theoretical reviews elucidating the relationships between the variables, and empirical reviews pertinent to specific variables or their combinations within the study framework. Thirteen concepts were reviewed, which comprised the main independent variable (tourism marketing practices) and seven sub-independent variables (tourism product, tourism pricing, placing, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence). Moreover, the main dependent variable (sustainable tourism, economic, social, and environmental dimensions) were reviewed.

2.2. Tourism marketing

Tourism marketing is one of the many types of marketing categories discussed in the literature. In tourism and tourism-related industries, success relies on understanding the concept and application of marketing in tourism (Raju, 2009). In other words, the right application of tourism marketing concepts is crucial for the success of tourism businesses. Regarding the definition of tourism marketing, scholars cannot agree upon distinct definitions, and literature lacks consistency and clarity. However, what is evident is that the concept of tourism marketing can be associated with the core business of strengthening economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Niñerola et al., 2019; Cavalcante et al., 2021). Avraham & Ketter (2016) highlighted tourism marketing as a marketing concept and principles applied to the travel and tourism industries. In this sense, tourism marketing is a marketing practice that tourism organizations apply to create, convey, provide, and distribute value-added offerings to visitors, partners, and the local community (Pomeroy et al., 2011).

Similarly, Raju (2009) describes tourism marketing as the systematic and organized efforts exerted by the tourism industry at international, national, and local levels to optimize the satisfaction of tourists, groups, and individuals given sustained tourism growth. Tourism marketing is the process of balancing the objectives of a tourism organization with the needs of tourists (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Primarily, tourism marketing emphasizes developing products and services, establishing reasonable pricing strategies, developing distribution channels to target markets, and creating comprehensive tourism services (Hong, 2008). Tourism marketing

is a technical and administrative activity that is conducted by tourism organizations both domestically and internationally to identify prospective and expected markets to enhance and expand the number of visitors ([Sadq et al., 2019](#)).

Conventionally, tourism marketing has been focused on growing tourist numbers and treating tourism sites as commodities ([Buhalis, 2000](#)). Moreover, the significance of tourism marketing in enhancing sustainable tourism in protected areas remains unclear ([Pomeroy et al., 2011](#)). As a result, tourism marketing is sometimes regarded as an enemy of sustainability. Such critique implies that either marketing has been construed far too narrowly, or it has done a very poor job of marketing itself, or both ([Mwinuka, 2017](#)). Despite the fact that a growing number of visitors can aid in the development of new conservation programs and contribute to the continuous upkeep of the environment, they inevitably have several negative effects ([Archer et al., 2012](#); [Postma & Schmuckler, 2017](#)). Similarly, [Mossaz & Coghlan \(2017\)](#) pointed out that most tourism agents sell destinations in an effort to get customers, but they do not care about the environmental conservation of the destinations. This shows that tourism marketers do not really engage in the sustainability of the destination for future use.

On the other hand, the significance of tourism marketing has been highlighted in previous studies by different researchers. For instance, [Rahmoun & Baeshen \(2021\)](#) pointed out tourism marketing as a source of income and employment. According to the author, tourism marketing provides a macroeconomic and financial benefit not only to national economies or regional advancement but also to local communities. Additionally, [Ali \(2021\)](#) explained that tourism marketing encompasses an opportunity for nations troubled with joblessness and destitution to generate employment and income for regional and national socio-economic development.

According to [Behnassi \(2008\)](#), tourism marketing comprises a chance for nations beset with destitution and joblessness to generate employment and income for regional and national socio-economic development, but the management and implementation of tourism marketing determine its outcomes, including the potential for both positive and negative impacts. However, despite the significance of tourism marketing in national parks, none of the existing studies in the literature has thoroughly examined tourism marketing topics in connection with national parks. Rather, they focus on and address different topics within this line of research ([see Table 1](#)).

For instance, [Gilmore & Simmons \(2007\)](#) conducted research on two key themes: integration and coordination of tourism activities and use of strategic marketing for sustainable tourism initiatives within the national parks. The study findings showed that the national park designation

appears to provide a strategic framework for sustainable tourism. [Al Muala \(2012\)](#) investigated the relationship between the marketing mix, tourist satisfaction, and loyalty in Jordan's curative tourism industry. Using seven marketing mix elements and data from 690 valid questionnaires, the results reveal that product and place significantly influence destination loyalty, while price, people, and process do not. However, product, place, physical evidence, people, and process significantly affect tourist satisfaction. [Ferrari & Pratesi \(2012\)](#) examined how Italian national parks use marketing to balance environmental conservation with economic development. The study finds that sustainable tourism marketing can support both conservation goals and local economic sustainability.

[Ismail et al. \(2015\)](#) examined the impact of the service marketing mix on customer satisfaction in two Bank of Ceylon branches in Batticaloa district, using data from 100 customers. Correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship between all seven elements of the marketing mix and customer satisfaction. The findings confirm that the service marketing mix has a significant and high impact on customer satisfaction in the banking sector. [Magatef \(2015\)](#) studied the impact of the tourism marketing mix on foreign tourist satisfaction in Jordan, using 300 questionnaires collected at major tourist sites and hotels. Results showed that product and promotion have the strongest influence, while price and distribution also significantly affect satisfaction. The study recommended developing targeted marketing strategies for all elements, with particular emphasis on product and promotion.

[Potjanajaruwit \(2015\)](#) examines marketing mix factors influencing cultural tourism destination decisions in Chonburi province using data from 400 tourists and 14 local tourist stakeholders. The findings highlight differing priorities between domestic and international cultural tourists. [Alipour et al. \(2018\)](#) evaluated the impact of the seven P's of marketing mix elements on sporting goods customers satisfaction in Tehran, using a sample of 380 respondents. The results indicate that all marketing mix elements significantly influence customer satisfaction. [Azhar et al. \(2019\)](#) investigated the impact of the marketing mix and service quality on tourist satisfaction in Medan's tourism destinations using data from 200 respondents selected through quota sampling. Findings revealed that both marketing mix and service quality have significant partial and simultaneous effects on tourist satisfaction.

Table 1. Previous study related with marketing mix

Authors	Topics
Gilmore & Simmons, 2007	Integrating sustainable tourism and marketing management: Can National Parks provide the framework for strategic change?
Ferrari & Pratesi, 2012	National parks in Italy: Sustainable tourism marketing strategies.
Al Muala, 2012	Assessing the relationship between marketing mix and loyalty through tourists' satisfaction in Jordan curative tourism.
Ismail et al., 2015	Impact of service marketing mix on customer satisfaction
Magatef, 2015	The impact of tourism marketing mix elements on the satisfaction of inbound tourists to Jordan.
Potjanajaruwit, 2015	Marketing mix for tourism in the Chonburi province.
Alipour et al., 2018	The effects of the 7P marketing mix components on sporting goods customer satisfaction.
Azhar et al., 2019	Effect of marketing mix and service quality on tourist satisfaction.
Hasan & Islam, 2020	The Effect of Marketing Mix (7Ps') on Tourists' Satisfaction: A Study on Cumilla.
Othman et al., 2020	Effects of service marketing mix on umrah customer satisfaction: Empirical study on umrah traveling industry in Malaysia.
Karim et al., 2021	The impact of 4ps marketing mix in tourism development in the mountain areas
Elgarhy & Mohamed, 2023	The Influences of Services Marketing Mix (7ps) on Loyalty, Intentions, and Profitability in the Egyptian Travel Agencies: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction.
Hossain et al., 2024	Assessing the effect of marketing mix on tourists' satisfaction: Insights from Bangladesh.

source: researcher's own construction

Similarly, [Hasan & Islam \(2020\)](#) examined the impact of the 7Ps marketing mix on tourist satisfaction in Cumilla district, Bangladesh, using survey data from 50 respondents. The findings reveal that five of the seven marketing mix elements positively influence tourist satisfaction, while promotion and process were rated unsatisfactory. Likewise, [Othman et al., 2020](#), conducted customer perceptions of the service marketing mix and their impact on customer satisfaction in the Umrah travel industry in Malaysia using data from 384 repeat Umrah customers. Findings reveal that all dimensions of the marketing mix positively influence customer satisfaction.

[Karim et al. \(2021\)](#) explored the relationship between the 4Ps of marketing and tourism development in the mountain areas of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan, using data from 509 tourists. Results show that price and promotion have no significant impact, as tourists are less sensitive to costs and rely mainly on social media. [Elgarhy & Mohamed \(2023\)](#) examined the impact of the service marketing mix (7Ps) on tourists loyalty using structural equation modelling. Results indicate that all 7Ps directly enhance tourist satisfaction and indirectly boost loyalty. [Hossain et al. \(2024\)](#) assessed the impact of the marketing mix on tourist satisfaction in Bangladesh using PLS-SEM analysis. Findings show that product, price, process, and physical evidence significantly and positively influence tourist satisfaction.

2.3. Measurement of tourism marketing practices

The four components of the marketing mix-product, price, place, and promotion-are designed to accommodate the needs and desires of customers. This is the conventional method that has been developed in accordance with the marketing of products and services. However, some confusion has been noticed in the literature regarding the expanded tourism marketing mix. According to [Pomeroy et al. \(2011\)](#), an expanded tourism marketing mix includes 11 Ps (product, price, place, promotion, participants, physical evidence, process, packaging, programming, and partnerships).

According to Joseph (1996), cited by [Sadq et al. \(2019\)](#), in addition to the traditional marketing mix, the modern marketing mix includes three elements: people, process, and physical evidence. For this research, the traditional marketing mix and modern marketing are adopted. In other words, the 7P's of the marketing mix: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence are used to examine the tourism marketing practices of Bale Mountains National Park. The measurement of tourism marketing practices for this study is summarized in [Table 2](#).

2.3.1. Traditional marketing mix

Tourism product

In general terms, a “product” is anything that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use, or consumption that might satisfy a want or need, including tangible commodities, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas” (Kotler & Keller, 1991). However, as tourism is predominantly a service-oriented industry, experiences and hospitality are the main products provided by tourism businesses (Dasgupta, 2010). These are intangible products and are more difficult to market than tangible products such as cars. The intangible nature of services makes quality control difficult but crucial. It also makes it more difficult for potential customers to evaluate and compare service offerings. But as long as the inherent sense of curiosity and adventure dwells in the hearts of human beings, the desire to travel and experience new things in different environments will grow. In addition, instead of the product moving to the customer, the customer must travel to the product, that is, the area and/or the community (Raju, 2009).

Many scholars and researchers define tourism products in different ways (Xu, 2010). Medlik and Middleton (1973) define tourism products as a collection of services, activities, and benefits that comprise the total tourism experience. According to the authors, it consists of five elements: destination attractions, destination facilities, accessibility, images, and price. Witt (1989) divides the term "tourist product" into "specific and total" levels. A specific level is that of a discrete product offered by a single business, such as a sightseeing tour or an airline seat, while a total level is the complete experience of the tourist from the time one leaves home to the time one returns. Jefferson and Lickorish (1988) describe tourism products as a collection of physical and service features together with symbolic associations that are expected to fulfill the wants and needs of the visitors.

Furthermore, in 1989, Lewis and Chambers proposed an alternative concept of tourism products. From their point of view, tourism products are composed of “goods, environment, and services.” They further argue that the product can be viewed on three different levels: the "formal product," or the product that the tourist believes one is buying; the "core product," or that product that the tourist is actually buying; and the "augmented product," which is the combination of the core product plus any other value-added features and benefits provided by the supplier.

In 1994, Smith broke down the tourism product into five elements: physical plant, service, hospitality, freedom of choice, and involvement. In line with Smith’s five-element tourism product

theory, the physical plant and freedom of choice are tangible elements, and the others are intangible. A physical plant is the core of any tourism product, which includes a site, natural resource, or facility such as a waterfall, wildlife, or resort. It may be either fixed property, such as a hotel, or mobile equipment, such as a cruise ship. The physical plant also refers to conditions of the physical environment such as weather, water quality, crowding, and the condition of the tourism infrastructure. Land, water, buildings, equipment, and infrastructure provide the natural and cultural resources on which any form of tourism is based. Their physical design has a major impact on the consumer's experience. The quality of the physical plant can be assessed by whether the design enhances the user's experience, protects the environment, and makes the product accessible to tourists with a wide range of physical abilities or limitations.

The physical plant requires the input of services to make it useful for tourists. In this context, "service" refers to the performance of specific tasks required to meet the needs of tourists. Quality service, though, is still not sufficient. As [Clemmer \(1990\)](#) has argued, consumers in virtually every field now expect "enhanced service" or "something extra." This expectation of something extra has long been a part of tourism: It is hospitality. Hospitality is an expression of welcome by local residents to tourists arriving in their community. For example, while the service of front desk staff refers to the efficient processing of hotel guests, hospitality emerges when this service is performed with a smile, genuine warmth, and the willingness to respond to other needs of the guest, such as information on local restaurants.

Freedom of choice refers to the necessity that the traveler has some acceptable range of options in order for the experience to be satisfactory. The degree of freedom of choice will vary greatly, depending on whether travel is for pleasure, business, family matters, or a combination. It varies with the traveler's budget, previous experience, knowledge, and reliance on a travel agent or prepackaged tours. Despite this variation, any satisfactory tourism product must include some elements of choice. Involvement in pleasure travelers means playing or relaxing in a way that is personally satisfying and feels sufficiently safe and secure that one can doze poolside, stroll on the beach, or strike up conversations with other tourists or locals. It means having access to activities and programs that capture the imagination, interest, and enthusiasm of the potential participant. The sense of involvement causes time to pass without notice as the tourist explores the world around him, other people, or his own mental and emotional response to the trip. Involvement, combined with freedom of choice, warm hospitality, competent service, and a good physical plant (which includes accessibility, acceptable environmental quality, good weather, and

appropriate numbers of other people), virtually guarantees a quality and satisfying tourism product.

Moreover, each tourism sector can be considered as a tourism product, attracting tourists by focusing on a particular business or leisure purpose. For example, a theme park is developed to entertain tourists by establishing and injecting themed backgrounds and objects. Hotels are constructed to meet travelers' needs for lodging at the destinations they visit. A cruise aims to satisfy a variety of needs, such as exercise, voyaging, entertainment and leisure, and family togetherness. A wildlife refuge protects wild animals and welcomes leisure tours. A retail outlet focuses on tourists' inclination to shop. These tourism products in distinct sectors differ in their development strategies and focus on the tangible and intangible elements involved. Hence, a tourism product comes into existence when the five elements are correctly and successfully integrated to catch the attention of tourists and further satisfy their multiple needs, as identified in the conceptual model (Xu, 2010).

In national parks, the product is the combination of natural attraction (landscapes, wildlife, and biodiversity), cultural heritage, recreational activities, and supporting services (guiding, accommodation, and transportation). To ensure sustainable tourism the national product should be designed and managed to meet visitors' needs while protecting the environment, respecting local culture, and supporting community well-being. As shown in Table 2, in this study, the product refers to all elements a destination has to offer, including the physical, social, and cultural environment as well as attractions, transportation, and lodging facilities, and other travel-related services. Therefore, this variable can be measured by the availability of sufficient and appealing accommodation, adequate infrastructure, multiple cuisines and foods from various cultural backgrounds, attractive and beautiful landscapes, availability of natural resources, availability of wildlife resources, and authentic culture of local communities.

Tourism pricing

Basically, price comes in many forms and performs many functions. Rent, tuition, fares, fees, rates, tolls, wages, and commissions are all the price we pay for some goods or services (Asmundson, 2013). For instance, we pay rent for an apartment, interest for using money, premiums for insurance, fees for a dentist, dues for a professional or social organization, and fares for transportation companies (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). In business, a consultant may require a repayment for service rendered, an executive is given a salary, a salesperson receives a commission, and a worker is paid a wage (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Of course, what we paid for recreational services in the national park is a fee. Hence, price is the amount of money that is

needed to acquire some combination of other products or its accompanying services (Ebeling & Lavoie, 1990). In other words, price is the money exchanged for the ownership or use of goods or services (Dolgui & Proth, 2010). It is often used to indicate value when it is paired with perceived benefits of the products or services (Asmundson, 2013).

Prices, as a marketing strategy and an economic variable, significantly influence the sustainability of tourism, thereby affecting economic, social, and environmental conservation (Kim & Lee, 2017). Given the contribution of income generated from the national parks, fees for recreational services in national parks are an increasingly relevant source of income (Alpízar, 2006). A carefully constructed fee mechanism may enhance the financial self-sufficiency of national parks, thereby providing a positive impact on economic, social, and environmental conservations (Walpole et al., 2001). In many cases, national park tourism is the only source of revenue for the communities living in and around the parks, and decisions concerning the appropriate pricing of recreational services must consider the socio-economic development of local communities (Mulwa et al., 2018). Moreover, tourism activities can influence a diverse range of ecosystem activities, potentially affecting the resilience and fundamental operations of the ecosystems (Hannon, 2001). Hence, taking into account the ecological impact is crucial in developing pricing for national parks (Sutton et al., 2019).

However, if the national park is located in developing countries and entrance fees are minimal and falling below the amounts that visitors are willing to pay for utilizing the resources, then the adverse outcome is that the destinations will effectively subsidize recreations for visitors at the expense of the socio-economic development of local communities (Alpízar, 2006). As in any other developing country, the Bale Mountains National Park is constantly under pressure from insufficient income to maintain resources properly and the urge to use these resources for alternative economic activity (Aman et al., 2023). In pricing tourism products in the national park, most predominantly consider aesthetic impacts, which may hold minimal ecological significance (Walpole et al., 2001). Ecologically significant impacts, such as erosion and wildlife disruption, may be overlooked in setting price (Alpízar, 2006).

Moreover, despite the significance of the national park for tourism in Ethiopia, the increase in tourism activities has not led to a matching increase in the income of the national park to manage and protect these resources for tourism activities (Admasu, 2011). Hence, services must give an appropriately estimated fee for the safeguarding of biodiversity, assuming responsibility for biological system administration-and co-benefits, including socio-cultural services of benefit to the local communities (Aman et al., 2023). People are happy to pay ecological components to keep

them existing, regardless of whether these individuals legitimately use these services (Tse & Qiu, 2016). Therefore, in this study, price is defined as the amount of money paid by tourists to acquire tourism products or services in protected areas, as well as a tool for conservation, equity, and community development. As shown in Table 2, this variable can be measured by whether the price paid by tourists provides a satisfactory level of revenue for the national park, covers any damage caused by the tourist to the environment, and generates an appropriate level of benefits for the host community.

Tourism Placing

Distribution channels are a set of interconnected entities involved in the process of making products or services accessible for use or consumption (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). It is the pathways a product or service passes through after production, culminating in acquisition and utilization by the ultimate consumer (Kotler & Keller, 2012). In the context of tourism, tourism distribution channels are a set of institutions that serve as intermediaries between tourism providers and travelers during the purchasing process to facilitate the customer's accessibility to the service system (Kracht & Wang, 2010; Elid, 2014). In other words, placing in tourism means a mechanism of ensuring that tourism products are easily accessible and available to the target customers (Raju, 2009). Placing can also serve as a marketing mix that connect tourism product producers to customers, as well as link supply and demand (Gartner & Bachri, 1994). Tourism distribution channel systems not only influences the option available to consumers but also marketing strategies and business model adopted by different channel members .

Especially, the advancement of information technology have hampered the tourism distribution structure, resulting in additional layers of intermediaries, direct communication between suppliers and consumers, and reintermediation process for existing players to adopt to the changing environment (Kracht & Wang, 2010). This technology-driven structural transformation provides consumers with greater options, while simultaneously creating a more competitive landscape for channel participants (Pearce et al., 2004). For instance, for the last three decades tourism distribution channels evolved from computer reservation system to global distribution system to the internet age, resulting in online travel agencies (such as Trip.com, Booking.com, Airbnb, Agoda, Expedia, and TripAdvisor), digital platforms and websites (official destinations websites, hotel and airlines websites), social media and content marketing (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok), customer support mechanisms (Live chat, AI chat bots, call centers, email support), virtual tours and interactive content (VR, AR), and brochures and digital guides (digital pdf, apps, downloadable guides) (Lolakhon, 2024). This digital platforms used to

provide information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage, enabling visitors to get transparent, credible, and engaging information. Moreover, digitalization promote direct access to destination, smart visitor management, and virtual promotion.

Furthermore, the availability of a wide range travel opportunities (flights, trains, buses, cruises, car rentals, etc.) plays a vital role in the tourism distribution channel by making destinations more accessible and attractive to potential visitors . Destination with more travel opportunities are easier to sell, since intermediaries know that travelers will not face barriers getting there. For example, if there is more travel options, visitors can reach destinations more easily and at different budget levels, help intermediaries to combine transportation with accommodation and attraction, and help visitors to mix and match travel modes. In addition, the presence of a destination on Google maps, along with clear information on travel time and distance, benefits both visitors and destinations in multiple ways. For visitors, easily accessibility on the google maps and accurate directions can help them to locate the destination easily, plan the route, to schedule activities and transportation, to estimate fuel, and lower anxiety, especially for the first time or international visitors. For destination, it increases visibility, competitiveness, and visitor flow, while also helping manage tourism more effectively.

In this study, the tourism placing represents the accessibility and availability of Bale Mountains National Park tourism products and services. Therefore, As shown in [Table 2](#), this variable can be measured by the availability of a wide range of travel opportunities to visitors, the provision of information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage, easy accessibility of the destination on Google Maps, availability of an estimation of travel time and distance, and availability of attractions and support facilities along different travel routes ([Raju, 2009](#)).

Tourism promotion

Promotion is an organization's marketing mix that serves to inform, persuade, and remind their target market, in hopes of influencing the recipients feelings, beliefs, or behaviours to purchase their products or services, thereby raising sales and brand recognition ([Kotler & Armstrong, 2010](#)). While sharing some similarities, approaches to promotion can vary greatly between physical products and services due to fundamental differences in their nature ([Dasgupta, 2010](#)). The former focused on highlighting tangible features (sizes, color, materials) and the benefits derived from them (durability, convenience, performance), whereas the latter is focused on quality, credibility, and trust for building confidence in the service they provide ([Dasgupta, 2010](#)). Since services are intangible, inseparable, variable, and perishable in nature ([Raju, 2009](#); [Dasgupta, 2010](#); [Kotler & Keller, 2012](#)), service promotion often emphasizes tangibilizing the

intangible: the expertise and professionalism of service providers, customer experiences, stimulating demand to manage perishability, building loyalty and relationships, and educating customers to promote their offerings and build trust (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010). Hence, as the principal products provided by recreational or tourism businesses are experiences and hospitality, the cost of a promotion can be more expensive than for the physical goods (Dasgupta, 2010).

To promote protected areas, tourism marketers may consider highly effective digital marketing strategies, such as social media marketing, content marketing, search engine marketing, search engine optimization, augmented reality, virtual reality, digital storytelling, online public relations, viral marketing, email marketing, influencers, and websites (Kekezi, 2019; Aman & Papp-Váry, 2022). To be cost-effective and reach a wider audience (Minazzi, 2015), tourism marketers may consider utilizing social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to connect with vast, diverse, and geographically dispersed audiences, including potential visitors from all over the world (Alghizzawi et al., 2018). Social media marketing is a popular and widely used tool by tourists as a source of information and plays an important role in influencing tourist decisions (Zeng & Gerritsen, 2014). It allows destinations to create and distribute credible and quality content regarding tourism products and services (Leung et al., 2013).

Linking the promotion of protected areas to the search engine marketing and search engine optimization is also useful to increase the quality of relevant organic traffic from search engines to the website through the use of keywords to gain better visibility and increase sales. Moreover, utilizing digital storytelling using photos, audio clips, videos, and graphic visualization as well as providing information about the destination in the form of memes can stimulate a tourist's desire for a tour and capture the attention of future tourists (Smutkoa, 2022; Paiva et al., 2023). Furthermore, publishing articles in online public relations catalogs, online press releases, forums, and sharing videos about protected areas can possibly increase estimation and appreciation of the environment through spreading mindfulness and awareness of ecological issues. In addition, using email marketing, websites, and influencers allows tourism destinations to send personalized emails to target audiences, distribute trustworthy information, and promote their tourism potential to millions of people.

Protected areas can also be considered augmented and virtual reality since it allows tourism destinations to ensure anyone who interacts with attractions from anywhere in the world. More importantly, the traditional method of advertising in the form of print and broadcast media, brochures and booklets, billboards, and display signs should never be neglected, since they are

perceived as a source of legitimate information among visitors. Hence, using these digital marketing tools and traditional advertising methods, tourism marketers might consolidate the standards and practices of economic, social, and environmental aspects of protected areas, thereby contributing to sustainable tourism. Therefore, in this study, tourism promotion is any practice that national parks utilize to inform, persuade, and remind to attract potential tourists to the Bale Mountains National Park.

Table 2. Conventional measurement of marketing mix

Dimensions	Measurement	Sources
Tourism product	Accommodation	(Smith, 1994; Xu, 2010; Kgote & Kotze, 2013; Ariya et al., 2017).
	Infrastructure (transportation, electricity, water)	
	Cuisines from various cultural backgrounds	
	Stunning landscape	
	Natural resources (forest, flora, lakes, beaches).	
	Wildlife resources (fauna, mammals, birds, etc.)	
	Unique and authentic culture of local community	
Tourism pricing	Provide a satisfactory level of income	(Walpole et al., 2001; Alpízar, 2006)
	Cover any ecological harm or damage caused by the visitor	
	Generate an appropriate level of benefits for the host community	
Placing tourism	Present a wide range of travel opportunities to customers	(Raju, 2009; Elid, 2014)
	Provide information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage	
	Provide directions.	
	Provide maps .	
	Provide estimates of travel time and distance	
	Offer support facilities along different travel routes within the national park.	
Promotion	Utilize printing and media broadcast to promote and build favorable image of the national park.	(Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Minazzi, 2015; Alghizzawi et al., 2018; Kekezi, 2019)
	Implement a variety of short-term incentives to attract tourists.	
	Utilize direct marketing to communicate directly about the national park	
	Create and share relevant content via social media platform	
	Sponsoring local events and festivals, or sports tournaments.	

source: researcher's own construction

2.3.2. Modern marketing mix

People

This element of the marketing mix involves all employees of organizations who produce and deliver the services (Kotler & Keller, 2012). It has been widely established that many services entail personnel encounters between clients and employees, which significantly influences the customers sense of satisfaction with the services (Khan, 2014). Thus, people are considered an important part of the marketing mix due to their role in delivering services and guaranteeing customer satisfaction (Marc Lim, 2023). As opposed to goods, which are produced, stored, and consumed, in tourism businesses the production and consumption of services cannot be separated from the individuals who provide them, suggesting that people in tourism businesses have a more profound impact on customer satisfaction than those in product marketing.

In essence, establishing a formidable brand, an original product, or impressive social media exposure is futile if tourism organizations lack the appropriate personnel to support their tourism marketing. In this regard, it is imperative that all employees, regardless of their level of customer interaction or behind-the-scenes involvement, obtain appropriate training and support to facilitate their knowledge of changes in their position and their impacts within and beyond the tourism organization (Marc Lim, 2023). In this research, people reflect on the ability and qualities of employees to provide and create satisfaction and memorable tourist experiences.

Process

A process is generally described as the execution of actions and functions that enhance product value while minimizing customer benefits, with greater significance in services than goods (Muala and Qurneh, 2012). Kotler & Armstrong (2010) defined process as the actual mechanisms, flow of activities, procedures, and standard service delivery and systems of operations that help customers to access services in the simplest way. In tourism marketing, the implementation and seamlessness of this flow are influenced by both the service provider and visitors. The service providers have proactive influences (e.g. in designing the service process and setting the standards) and in establishing the framework within which the interaction occurs (e.g. waiting times, the flow of information, and the overall customer experiences).

Moreover, the visitor's needs, expectations, behaviour, and feedback shape how the service process is revealed in real-time. For instance, visitors' specific complaints, questions, or requests can lead to adjustments in service delivery. Hence, the speed of the process and the abilities of the service providers are plainly evident to the customers, forming the foundation of their pleasure

with the accessibility and consistent quality in entire experiences (Khan, 2014). In this regard, even though balancing service demand with service supply is exceedingly challenging due to the simultaneous consumption and production characteristics of services, the tourism marketers must avoid ad hoc planning and decision-making and ensure that state-of-the-art marketing ideas and concepts play an appropriate role in all they do.

In this study, process is the actual mechanisms, flow of activities, procedures and standard service delivery and systems of operations that helps customers to access Bale mountains national park in the simplest way. Therefore, this variable can be measured by provision of service within the standard time frame, delivery of efficient and high-quality services quickly and easily, accessibility of service in the easiest way (see Table 3).

Physical evidence

Drawing from Kotler et al. 2023, physical evidence constitutes the tangible proof perceived by consumers and prospects during their interaction with the destinations. Physical evidence is the physical surroundings of service organizations where services and products are developed for customers to interact (Suyono et al., 2023), together with the tangible aspects that exist and are utilized to convey or fulfill service functions (Marc Lim, 2023). It comprises the environment in which the organization and customer interact and any tangible elements that enhance communication or performance of the service during service delivery (Smith, 1994).

As tourism is a service-based industry, services and products cannot be delivered to the customer, which makes it more difficult for potential customers to evaluate and compare service offerings (Dasgupta, 2010). Therefore, the way in which destinations portray their services and products during their stay significantly affects their target audience and can either lead to bad experiences in getting to or leaving a site or significantly affect a tourist's overall travel experiences (Raju, 2009). This underscores the necessity for tourism destinations to meticulously design and develop their brand touchpoints to convey the proof of promise that prospects can anticipate from the destinations. Hence, the physical evidence presented by protected areas must confirm the expectations and assumptions of the visitors during their stay (Thusyanthy & Senthilnathan, 2011). For example, physically touched facilities should be portrayed in a visible and attractive way, whereas intangible services should adopt a more flexible approach.

Moreover, developed ecological systems can be significant devices for arranging the working environment in a way that limits their natural effects. For instance, green structure (using vitality proficient and non-contaminating development materials, sewage frameworks, and energy

sources) is an inexorably significant way for destinations to diminish its effects on the environment. In addition, in light of the fact that waste treatment and disposal are frequently major long-term natural issues in the protected areas, contamination avoidance and waste minimization strategies are particularly significant for protected areas. As shown in Table 3, in this study, physical evidence is anything that makes the intangible characteristics of services tangible and part of satisfaction for tourists (Zeithaml et al., 2018). It includes physically touched facilities like buildings, equipment, decors, gardens, parking lots, lighting systems, and colors, surrounding environments, and everything that could be visible and attractive.

Table 3. Modern measurement of marketing mix

Dimensions	Measurement	Sources
People	The staff of the national park is friendly	(Kotler & Keller, 2012; Khan, 2014; Marc Lim, 2023)
	Employee behavior and attitude increase tourist satisfaction and create a memorable experience	
	Employees look professional.	
	The park has knowledgeable and skilled employees to understand the needs and answer tourist questions	
Process	Provide service within the standard time frame.	(Kotler & Armstrong, 2010; Al Muala, 2012; Khan, 2014)
	Responding quickly to customer inquiries or complaints	
	Treating visitors with respect, politeness, and professionalism	
Physical evidence	Attractive and enough place to rest	(Thusyanthy & Senthilnathan, 2011; Zeithaml et al., 2018)
	Well-furnished and attractive working environment	
	Logos, signs, images, displays, symbols, and photographs	
	understandable and show all aspect of the national park.	

source: researcher's own construction

2.4. Role of tourism marketing mix at various stage of travel decision making

The tourism marketing mix plays a critical role at each stage of the travel decision-making process (Satit et al., 2012). At the problem recognition stage, unique experiences of the destination, clear tourism product information, transparent pricing, easy distribution channels, and promotion

of the destination help visitors to create a desire to visit the destination (Bennett & Strydom, 2001). At the information search stage, visitors seek clear and detailed information about the destination, including entrance fees, tour costs, and available tourism experiences. At the evaluation stage, visitors compare the destination with other destinations based on the information and offerings. At the purchase stage, the visitor chooses a destination that matches their desire and expectations (Weerasophon, 2024). Finally, at the post-purchase stage, visitors provide positive or negative feedback based on actual delivery experiences. Table 4 shows how the tourism marketing mix affects and aligns with every stage of travel decision-making.

Table 4. influences of tourism marketing mix at various stage of travel decision making

7Ps of Marketing	1. Problem Recognition	2. Information Search	3. Evaluation of Alternatives	4. Purchase Decision	5. Post-Visit Evaluation
Product	Unique experiences create desire to visit	Tourists seek details about available activities	Compared to other destinations based on offerings	Influence final choice if experience matches expectations	Satisfaction based on actual delivery of experience
Price	Cost perception may trigger interest	Visitors look for entrance fees, tour costs	Value-for-money compared to alternatives	Affordability influences booking decision	Perceived fairness affects review and returns decision
Place		Availability of info on websites, tour apps, agencies	Easy access boosts competitive edge	Convenience of booking affects choice	Influences likelihood of recommendation
Promotion	Ads, social media, brochures spark interest	Tourists search based on promotions seen	Destination image shaped by promotional quality	Discounts or campaigns drive decision	Memory of marketing vs. reality affects loyalty
People			Perceptions of staff professionalism influence choice	Friendly service supports decision	Staff interaction directly impacts satisfaction
Process		Tourists assess ease of access, booking process	Compare systems for safety and simplicity	Smooth booking boosts conversion	Seamless experience improves post-visit impression
Physical evidence	Photos/videos create desire	Tourists search for visual cues (cleanliness, signage)	Compare environments, amenities	Confidence in what they see encourages visit	Environment, infrastructure shape final impression

source: researcher's own construction

2.5. Sustainability

The notion of sustainability has emerged significantly over time, reflecting environmental challenges, changing societal values, and economic realities (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). Originally, it was coined between the 17th and 18th centuries in forestry with the aim of sustainable yield in response to increasing forest resource degradation and depletion across Europe and then broadened to sustainable forest management (Purvis et al., 2019; Wiersum, 1995). In the late 20th century, the concept of sustainability expanded beyond environmental concern, which encompassed economic and social dimensions (Basiago, 1998; Lozano, 2008). Moreover, globalization of the local and national economy, the desire to push for change and economic development, and industrial and population growth have led to potential damage to the natural environment in an irreversible way (Bramwell & Lane, 1993).

Having this in mind, in 1985, the World Commission on Environment and Development introduced the idea of sustainable development as a policy concept, driven by natural resource limitations and human aspirations for a better life (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). Since then, the concept of sustainability has been one of the rapidly growing research areas and has engrossed the attention of many scholars (Hashemkhani Zolfani et al., 2015). Most commonly, sustainability is defined as “the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland 1987, p. 292). There has been a steady rise in the topic of sustainability in all domains, among researchers, scholars, practitioners, and policy makers worldwide (Bungău et al., 2024). In the tourism industry, sustainable tourism is not merely a competitive advantage but a critical concept for tourism business survival and development (Iniesta-Bonillo et al., 2016; Breiby et al., 2020; Grilli et al., 2021).

2.5.1. Sustainable tourism

For over two decades, the concept of sustainable tourism has been the main discourse of researchers in the whole tourism industry. This is because it is crucial to balance tourism needs with responsible resource use to ensure long-term benefits while preserving resources and local culture for future generations. Bramwell and Lane (2012) pointed out that the idea of sustainable tourism had emerged as a negative and reactive concept in response to many tourism challenges and was accepted as capable of creating positive changes and ways to secure positive benefits for socioeconomic development. Sustainable tourism is described as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, and host communities” (UNWTO and UNDP, 2005, p. 12). In the same way, UNWTO (2013, p. 17) explains sustainable tourism as “producing optimal use of environmentally friendly resources that comprise a key element in tourism improvement, maintaining essential ecological processes, and helping to preserve natural heritage and biodiversity.” (Landini, 2021)

highlighted that sustainable tourism is the responsible management of tourism activities and destinations to minimize negative impacts on the environment, culture, and local communities while promoting long-term benefits.

As shown in Figure 2, mostly, the notion of sustainability revolves around three interconnected concepts: economic, social, and environmental. Literature has used a wide range of terms to describe these three concepts, including aspects, perspectives, dimensions (Bungău et al., 2024), pillars (Waas et al., 2011; Schoolman et al., 2012; Boyer et al., 2016; Purvis et al., 2019), and components. However, the term dimension was used in this study.

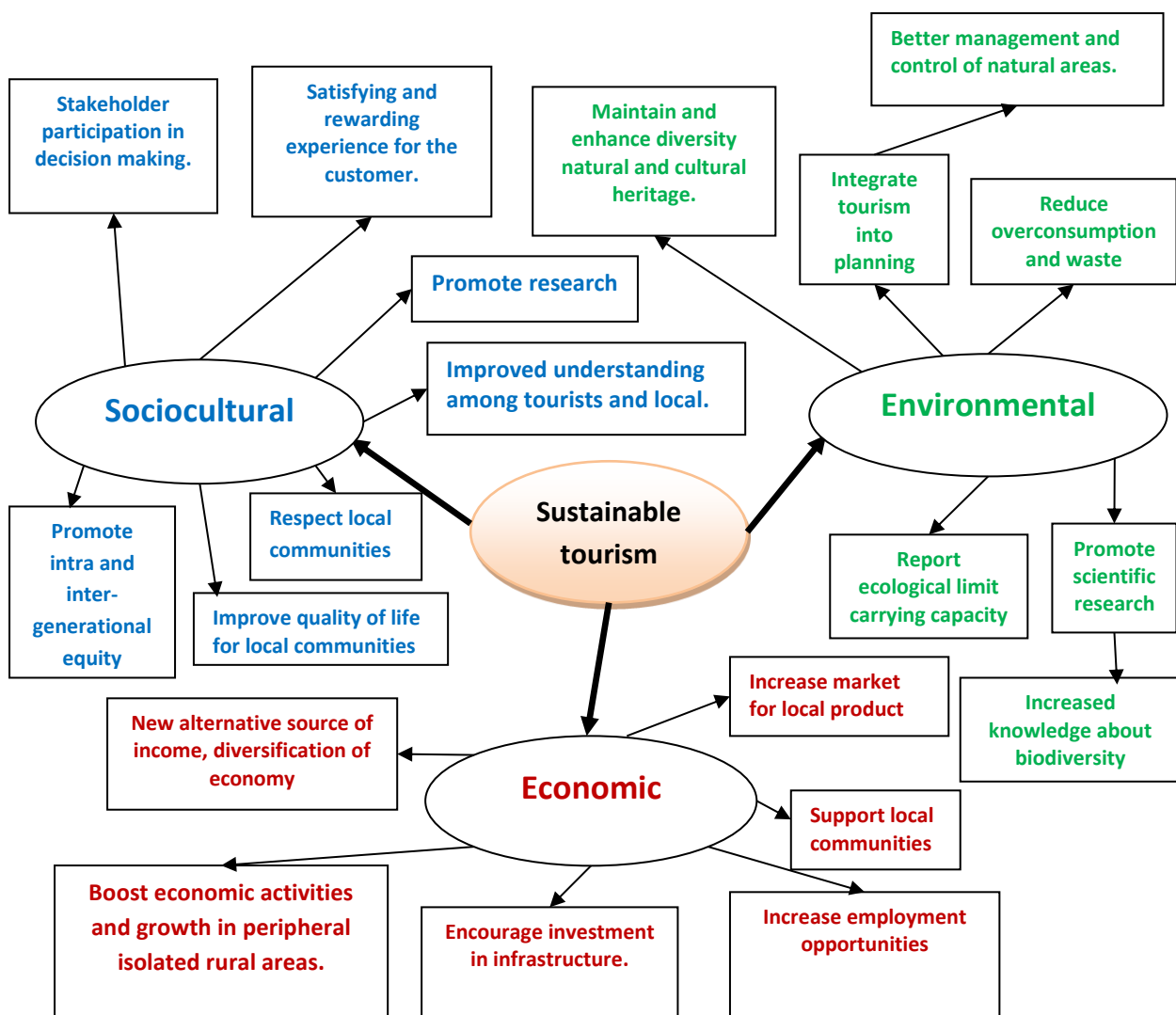


Figure 2. Dimension of sustainable tourism (White et al., 2006, Zamfir & Corbos, 2015)

In national parks, the concept of sustainable tourism is used to preserve biodiversity and natural ecosystems, enhance the well-being of the community by making the best possible use of what the local economy can offer, and give visitors better adventures and a sense of satisfaction

(Plummer & Fennell, 2009). Puhakka and Saarinen (2013) argued that sustainable tourism and tourist destinations cannot be separated. Particularly, national parks have huge potential to boost tourism and keep a favorable balance of environmental, social, and economic conditions on our competitive planet (Sriarkarin & Lee, 2018; Valdivieso et al., 2014). However, there are still fundamental issues that need to be addressed in the national park in order to achieve sustainable tourism. National parks need to manage tourism marketing practices in a sustainable way to achieve economic, social, and environmental objectives (Aman & Papp-Váry, 2021).

Despite the essential nature of sustainable tourism in national parks, the literature on tourism marketing and sustainable tourism is overlooked. While some studies have focused on the management of national parks (Oleśniewicz et al., 2020; Ferretti-Gallon et al., 2021), others have emphasized residents attitudes and visitors satisfaction with the state of sustainable tourism (Trišić et al., 2022). Moreover, many studies tend to focus on only one or two aspects of sustainability—either economic, social, or environmental perspectives (Pérez-Calderón et al., 2022). For example, the study conducted by Pérez-Calderón et al. (2022) emphasized the influence of tourism businesses on the areas of socioeconomic in Spanish national parks and lacks an indication of the influence of tourism businesses on environmental dimensions. Hence, in developing integrated strategies for sustainable tourism in the national parks, relevant research emphasizing the implementation and utilization of tourism marketing has become essential. Thus, this study scrutinized the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in terms of economic, social, and environmental sustainability in the national park.

2.5.2. Measurement of the dimensions of sustainable tourism

Economic sustainability

Economic sustainability refers to the ability of an economic system to maintain itself over time, without depleting natural resources or causing significant social or environmental harm (van Niekerk, 2020; Elsayy & Youssef, 2023). It involves balancing economic growth and development with social and environmental concerns to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Elsawy & Youssef, 2023). A sustainable economy is one that creates long-term value for society (Barrier, 2017), while minimizing negative impacts on the environment and promoting social equity (Harris et al., 2023). Achieving economic sustainability requires a focus on sustainable development, which involves integrating economic, social, and environmental objectives into policy and decision-making processes (Rees, 2021). This can involve promoting clean energy and resource efficiency, encouraging sustainable production and consumption patterns, investing in education

and social infrastructure, and supporting local communities and businesses (Omer, 2008; Elliott, 2012; Blewitt, 2012; Holmberg & Sandbrook, 2019).

In this study, economic sustainability is the economic ability of tourism destinations and sustainable tourism to maintain itself without depleting national parks or causing significant social or environmental harm. Therefore, as shown in Table 4, this variable can be measured by whether the economic sustainability of tourist destinations ensures the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations, increased employment opportunities, a rise in the market for local products, support for local economies, and maximized contributions of tourism to the prosperity of the national park (White et al., 2006; UNWTO, 2013; Bricker et al., 2022). Moreover, consistent with objective one, the relationship between tourism marketing and economic sustainability has been explored.

Tourism marketing has a positive effect on the country's economic development, local community, and regional and federal governments (Mayer et al., 2010; Mayer, 2014). This is due to the formation of the tourism industry from various sectors such as the travel sector, the hospitality sector, and tourist destination products, including its natural resources, cultural heritage, and cuisines and foods from various cultural backgrounds (Rahmoun & Baeshen, 2021). Particularly, national park tourism enhances the country's tourist attractions, including its biodiversity, cultures, natural environments, and ancient history (An et al., 2019). It is a significant component of the growing footprint (Truong & Hall, 2016). The literature exposes that tourism marketing presents a chance for countries plagued by poverty and unemployment to generate employment and income for regional and national socioeconomic development (Foued & Sawsan, 2019), but the outcomes, including the potential for both positive and negative impacts, are determined by the management of tourism development (Kirovska, 2011).

Social sustainability

Aligning with the Brundtland report or WCED, 1985, social sustainability refers to the ability of a society or culture to maintain and enhance its social and cultural diversity, well-being, and resilience over time (Dillard et al., 2008; Vallance et al., 2011). It involves ensuring that the needs and aspirations of current and future generations are met while preserving and promoting cultural traditions, values, and identities (Helgadóttir et al., 2019). Socio-cultural sustainability recognizes the intrinsic value of social and cultural diversity and aims to create conditions that foster and celebrate it (Roca-Puig, 2019). This includes promoting inclusive and equitable participation in decision-making (Ajmal et al., 2018), supporting the preservation and transmission of traditional

knowledge and cultural practices, and ensuring access to basic social services and amenities, such as education, health care, and cultural institutions (Hollander et al., 2016).

Socio-cultural sustainability also involves addressing the root causes of social and cultural inequalities, such as discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion, and promoting social justice and human rights (Axon, 2020). This requires a deep understanding of the cultural and social dynamics that shape people's lives, as well as a commitment to engage in respectful and collaborative dialogue with communities to co-create sustainable solutions (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017). Social sustainability in tourism can be achieved through various responsible initiatives (Roca-Puig, 2019), such as maintaining cultural heritage, nurturing cultural and community pride, fostering infrastructure development, promoting cultural comprehension between visitors and the local community, producing educational opportunities, and promoting inter-institutional understanding (Puhakka et al., 2009).

In this study, social sustainability refers to the ability of tourism marketing to maintain and enhance social and cultural diversity in and around national parks. As shown in Table 4, this can involve respecting and enhancing the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, and distinctiveness of host communities, improving the quality of life for local communities, empowering local communities in the future development of tourism, stakeholder participation in decision-making, and provision of all available services without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or other ways (White et al., 2006; UNWTO, 2013; Bricker et al., 2022).

In national parks, the sociocultural dimension is fundamental to the destination's sustainability (Bricker et al., 2022). It is widely assumed that tourism marketing activities have a significant impact on the community's eventual fate, as well as increased pride in the local area where residents are receptive and welcoming to visitors (Verbeek et al., 2011). It has many impacts on sociocultural life because multicultural societies are enriched with unique and different experiences, such as new traditions, new cultures, and new civilizations from all over the world (Liu et al., 2013). Moreover, it helps protect cultural heritage by generating money that is directly reinvested in the restoration of historically significant buildings, archaeological sites, and architectural landmarks (Eagles et al., 2002).

Furthermore, it supports locally based tourism-related businesses such as hotels, restaurants, and lodges (Eagles et al. 2000). In addition to supporting locally based tourism-related businesses, it paves the way for improved accommodations, transportation, and attractions, which also benefit the local economy (Akasha et al., 2020). While the primary goal of many of these initiatives is to

provide a better experience for tourists, they also have positive effects on the surrounding community and can safeguard other essential rural services such as providing public transportation, maintaining village shops, and developing and maintaining cycleways and footpaths (Sharpley, 2003). However, besides its positive impact, tourism marketing has a negative impact on local communities, such as creating hostilities between residents and visitors as the host community becomes resentful of tourism and a tendency towards gambling, nightclubbing, and prostitution that can undermine the social fabric of traditional communities, especially in developing countries (Archer, 2005).

In spite of these issues, the significance of tourism marketing in supporting or impeding sociocultural growth needs greater consideration, as sociocultural dimensions are often overlooked in favor of environmental and economic dimensions (Dillard et al., 2008). Therefore, highlighting the impact of tourism marketing in respect to host communities' sociocultural authenticity and preserving their built and live cultural assets and traditional values in and around the national park is crucial to minimize any negative social impacts as a long-term strategy (Avraham & Ketter, 2016).

Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability refers to the responsible and balanced use of natural resources and the protection of the environment to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Morelli, 2011; Little et al., 2016). It involves promoting the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources, reducing waste and pollution, and minimizing the negative impact of human activities on the environment (McKinnon, 2010; Vezzoli, 2018). Achieving environmental sustainability requires collaboration among individuals, businesses, governments, and international organizations (McKinnon, 2010). It requires a long-term perspective that recognizes the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental systems and seeks to achieve balance and harmony among them (Hariram et al., 2023). Environmental sustainability recognizes that the earth's resources are limited and that human activities must be managed in a way that maintains the ecological balance and preserves the earth's natural systems (Mensah, 2019). This includes promoting the use of renewable energy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, protecting biodiversity, and preserving ecosystems and natural habitats (Singh, 2023).

In this study, environmental sustainability is the ability of tourism destinations and sustainable tourism to maintain and protect national park resources to meet the needs of the present without

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Rodríguez-Rodríguez & Martínez-Vega, 2017). As shown in Table 5, this can involve maintaining and enhancing the quality of landscapes, supporting the conservation of natural areas, habitats, and wildlife, minimizing the use of scarce and non-renewable resources, reducing overconsumption and waste, and minimizing the pollution of air, water, and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors (Angelkova et al., 2012; Winter et al., 2020; Cervený, 2022). Literature implies that tourism marketing within national parks has various positive environmental effects (Sharpley & Pearce, 2007). Primarily, it enhances environmental awareness and appreciation by providing environmental information and raising tourists' knowledge of the ecological effects of their actions (Yu et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the money brought in by tourists is an additional source of conservation funding (Goodwin, 2002). Therefore, it immediately contributes to the preservation of sensitive zones and living areas. For instance, park fees and other kinds of revenue can be dedicated to funding environmentally beneficial projects. Finally, promote national park tourism that has minimal negative environmental and sociocultural impacts (Truong & Hall, 2016). However, due to a lack of an appropriate tourism marketing strategy, protected areas such as parks have experienced extensive erosion to their coastal paths as a result of the number of walkers, climbers, and fishermen using them for access (Pecl et al., 2017; Mamo et al., 2010), as well as littering, excessive noise, damage to verges from parked vehicles, debris from illicit companies, open fires, and disturbances to wildlife (Belayneh et al., 2013; Mamo and Bekele, 2011; Teshome et al., 2011).

This causes topsoil erosion and compaction, resulting in damaged flora and fauna disturbances (Weeraratna, 2022). To minimize this effect, appropriate use of tourism marketing strategies could be an effective tool in the conservation and management of national parks, as well as in the social and economic development of the countries (Steven et al., 2011; Ballatyne et al., 2009; and Balmford et al., 2009). Tourism marketing is a potentially useful approach for the tourism industry to promote environmental and ecological awareness (Sharpley & Pearce, 2007). According to Bushell (2003), environmental consciousness and the significance of supporting nature conservation cannot be taught in a classroom; rather, visitors are frequently more inspired to contribute to the protection of natural places when they can see a visible benefit or return. The measurement of sustainable tourism dimension for this study is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Measurement of sustainable tourism dimensions

Sustainable tourism dimension	Variables	Sources
Economic	Ensure the viability and competitiveness of the national park	(White et al., 2006; UNWTO, 2013; Bricker et al., 2022)
	Increased employment opportunities	
	Increases market for local products	
	Support local economies	
	Maximize the contribution of tourism to sustain of the national park	
Socio-cultural	Improve the quality of life for local communities	(White et al., 2006; UNWTO, 2013; Bricker et al., 2022)
	Empower local communities in the future development of tourism	
	Stakeholders' participation in decision-making (government, investor, local community, universities, NGOs, and tourist)	
	Provide all available services without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or other ways.	
	Respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, and distinctiveness of host communities	
Environmental	Maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes	(White et al., 2006; UNWTO, 2013; Bricker et al., 2022)
	Support the conservation of natural areas, habitats, and wildlife	
	Minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources (minerals)	
	Reduces over-consumption and waste	
	Minimize the pollution and the generation of waste by visitors .	

source: researcher's own construction

2.6. Relationship between tourism marketing and national park

National Park is a well-defined protected area under a brand name, mixing all tourism products and services, including its unique nature and diverse attractions, fauna, flora, and birds (Hartwell et al., 2018). It has immense potential to offer high quality and unique environmental characteristics to succeed in tourism development as well as attract many visitors (Alters et al., 2007). For instance, globally, national parks attract approximately eight billion tourists per year (Balmford et al., 2015), and European national parks attract more than two billion tourists annually (Schägner et al., 2016). Despite this, the national park could also be an effective tool in the conservation of natural resources, socio-cultural heritage, and economic development (Ballantyne et al., 2009; Balmford et al., 2009; Steven et al., 2011). Currently, many countries promote national park tourism to achieve their goals for both nature conservation and socio-economic development. For instance, in Vietnam, national park tourism is recognized as playing a crucial role in local, regional, and national development, particularly in the tourism sector (An et al., 2019).

Given the vital significance of sustainable tourism to the social and economic fabric of national parks, appropriate application of tourism marketing is indispensable (Aman & Papp-Váry, 2021). Literature reveals that the relationship between tourism marketing and national parks is the most intimate place where tourism marketing is progressively considered as an effective tool for socio-economic development (Plummer & Fennell, 2009). According to Lei et al. (2014), national park tourism and tourism marketing have a big relationship that has a direct impact and effect on sustainable tourism development and sustainable national park. Similarly, Puhakka & Saarinen (2013) and Mihanyar et al. (2016) argued that for future sustainable tourism development, national parks and tourism marketing cannot be separated. In national parks, tourism marketing is applied to protect the natural environment and biodiversity while improving the living standards of the community by optimizing local economic benefits and providing high-quality experiences and satisfaction for tourists (Plummer & Fennell, 2009). Additionally, Bowers (2016) states that tourism marketing is a driving force that is significantly changing society, the economy, and the environment.

On the other hand, national parks have a tremendous potential to hasten sustainable tourism development to maintain a sustainable combination of economic, social, and environmental conditions in our competitive world (Valdivieso et al., 2015; Sriarkarin & Lee, 2018). Thus, tourism marketing and national parks together can balance tourism needs and the environment with the sustainable socio-economic development of local communities (Sharpley & Pearce, 2007). Furthermore, well-managed tourism marketing (Albrecht, 2016) in the national park can

generate quality jobs for durable growth, reduce poverty, and offer incentives for environmental conservation (Watson et al., 2013; Ristić et al., 2019). Therefore, given the vital significance of sustainable tourism for the social and economic fabric of national parks, the appropriate application of tourism marketing is indispensable.

Moreover, the quality of tourism in national parks plays a key role in the success of sustainable tourism development, and the role of tourism marketing in improving the quality of destinations is crucial (Lei et al., 2014). It enhances the country's tourist attractions, including its biodiversity, cultures, natural environments, and ancient history (An et al., 2019). Nevertheless, not much academic research has been conducted yet on finding out the role of tourism marketing in contributing to successful and sustainable tourist destinations (Eagle et al., 2016). For instance, Sharpley & Pearce (2007) argued that there is no specific tourism marketing role specifically for sustainable tourism in English National Park destinations, but sustainable tourism is rather promoted by other organizations. According to the author, marketing for them is only socio-economic, although it increases tourism to a destination.

Similarly, Esparon et al. (2015) suggest that sustainable tourism in some areas acts as a destination competitiveness tool in tourism marketing processes but does not contribute in a meaningful way to a successful tourist destination. Thus, it is important for national park managers not only to promote a larger number of tourist arrivals but also the protection and conservation of the environmental, social, and cultural heritage of a destination (Tse & Qiu, 2016). The literature noted that it is important for tourism marketing to be concerned with meeting customers' needs and organizational objectives by doing good socially and environmentally (Sharpley & Pearce, 2007).

2.7. Research Gaps

Conventionally, tourism marketing has been focused on growing tourist numbers and treating tourism destinations as commodities (Buhalis, 2000). As a result, tourism marketing is sometimes regarded as an enemy of sustainability. Despite the extensive studies on sustainable tourism from different perspectives, the relationship and the impact of tourism marketing on sustainable tourism in protected areas have not yet been investigated. At face value, it is not clear how important tourism marketing is to contributing to sustainable tourism in protected areas (Pomeroy et al., 2011). However, to achieve sustainable tourism in protected areas, organizations need to devise relevant tourism marketing practices that balance the needs of tourism with sustainable economic, social, and environmental conservation. Moreover, as far as the researcher's knowledge, a

validated and empirically tested measurement scale for tourism marketing has not yet been established. This study, therefore, attempts to fill the gap in literature and measure and validate dimensions of tourism marketing constructs and sustainable tourism in protected areas in the context of Bale Mountains National Park.

Relevant tourism marketing practices are essential because the protected areas are facing numerous challenges that threaten their existence and sustainability of tourism. Given the critical conditions of Bale Mountains National Park, there is a need for empirical investigations of tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism to overcome such challenges. Despite the significance of such studies in the context of protected areas in Ethiopia, particularly in Bale Mountains National Park, no study has yet been conducted to measure tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism to the best of the researcher's knowledge. This gap in the existing literature has been a primary impetus for this research. Furthermore, conceptually, it is established that tourism marketing is essential for the sustainability of tourism and the sustainability of national parks, yet there is a dearth of empirical research to evaluate and validate this relationship. Therefore, this research addresses the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism as well as sustainable national park. In light of the gaps highlighted in the literature, a research model has been proposed, as seen in [Figure 3](#).

2.8. Proposed research model

Based on the gaps in literature, this study is directed by objectives of developing a research model: tourism marketing, dimensions of sustainable tourism, and sustainability of tourism in the context of national parks. By synthesizing the previous literature on tourism marketing and sustainable tourism, this study proposes a model that contributes to achieving sustainable tourism in the national park. [Figure 3](#) presents a concise representation of the research concept and illustrates the proposed research model for the current study. Aligned with [Dwyer et al. \(2009\)](#) in terms of achieving sustainable tourism development, it is apparent that there must be the right application of tourism marketing to maximize the economic benefits to the local community while simultaneously minimizing the environmental and social costs. As a result, it is crucial to identify and gather knowledge about tourism marketing practices to develop sustainable tourism in protected areas ([Aman & Papp-Váry, 2021](#)).

Tourism marketing and sustainable tourism are contextually the interconnected concept. Therefore, it was important to contextualize the variables and factors identified through reviewing the literature. For this study, one independent variable (tourism marketing) and four dependent

variables (economic sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, and sustainable tourism) were identified. Based on the existing literature, variables of tourism marketing: product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence were identified. Dimensions of sustainable tourism were explored based on triple bottom line sustainability (Goodland, 1995), and the variables were extracted from principle of sustainable tourism (White et al., 2006, Zamfir & Corbos, 2015). In addition, the researcher conducted a field survey study to identify the variables and measurement of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism.

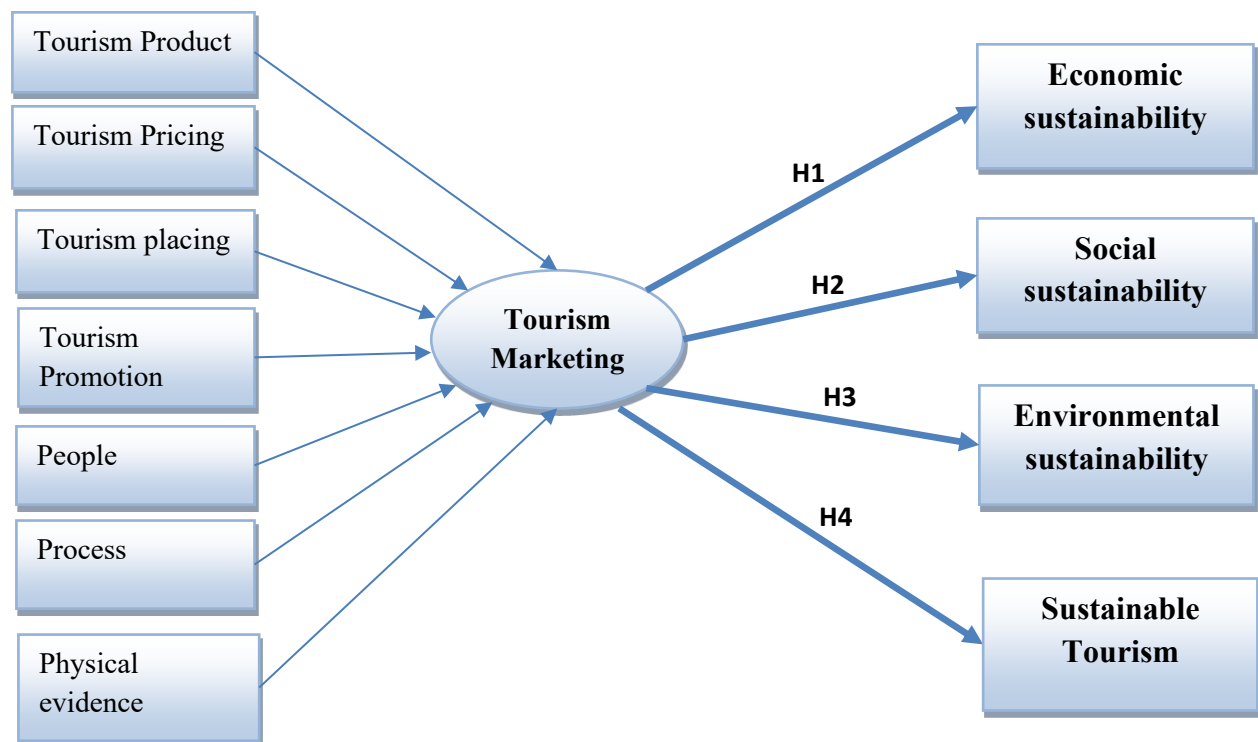


Figure 3. Proposed research model (source: researcher's own construction)

2.9. Hypotheses development and Rationale

Tourism Marketing and Economic Sustainability

Previous literature has shown that tourism marketing has a significant impact on the country's economic development, local community, and regional and federal governments (Mayer et al., 2010). This is due to the formation of the tourism industry from various sectors such as the travel sector, the hospitality sector, and tourist destination products, including its natural resources, cultural heritage, and cuisines and foods from various cultural backgrounds (Dasgupta, 2010; Rahmoun & Baeshen, 2021). Particularly, national park tourism enhances the country's tourist attractions, including its biodiversity, cultures, natural environments, and ancient history (An et al., 2019). It is a significant component of the growing footprint (Truong & Hall, 2017). Moreover,

the literature exposes that tourism marketing presents a chance for countries plagued by poverty and unemployment to generate employment and income for regional and national socioeconomic development (Foued & Sawsan, 2019). In view of this, relevant tourism marketing practices have a positive impact on long-term economic sustainability, which leads to the designing of the following hypothesis:

- **H1:** Tourism marketing has statistically a positive significant impact on ensuring viable and long-term economic operations and benefits to all stakeholders in and around the national park.

Tourism Marketing and Sociocultural Sustainability

It is widely assumed that tourism marketing activities have a significant impact on the community's eventual fate, as well as increased pride in the local area where residents are receptive and welcoming to visitors (Verbeek et al., 2011). It has many impacts on sociocultural life because multi-cultural societies are enriched with unique and different experiences, such as new traditions, new cultures, and new civilizations from all over the world (Liu et al., 2013). Moreover, it helps protect cultural heritage by generating money that is directly reinvested in the restoration of historically significant buildings, archaeological sites, and architectural landmarks (Eagles et al., 2002). Relying on this, the following hypothesis was developed:

- **H2:** Tourism marketing has a statistically significant impact on respecting the sociocultural authenticity of host communities and preserving their cultural assets and traditional values in and around the national park.

Tourism Marketing and Environmental Sustainability

Literature implies that tourism marketing within national parks has various positive environmental effects (Sharpley & Pearce, 2007). Primarily, it enhances environmental awareness and appreciation by providing environmental information and raising tourists' knowledge of the ecological effects of their actions (Yu et al., 2020; Zheng et al., 2020). Furthermore, the money brought in by tourists is an additional source of conservation funding (Goodwin, 2002). Therefore, it immediately contributes to the preservation of sensitive zones and living areas. For instance, park fees and other kinds of revenue can be dedicated to funding environmentally beneficial projects. In view of the above previous literature, tourism marketing is a potentially useful approach for the tourism industry to promote environmental and ecological awareness (Sharpley & Pearce, 2007), which leads to the development of the following hypothesis:

- **H3:** Tourism marketing has a statistically significant impact on making optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecological processes, and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity.

Tourism Marketing and Sustainable Tourism

Sustainable tourism and tourism marketing are closely related, as effective tourism marketing can encourage responsible tourism habits and provide long-term benefits for destinations. By emphasizing environmentally friendly accommodation, heritage preservation, and activities with minimal impact, tourism marketing significantly influences sustainable tourism. Moreover, tourism marketing boosts local business, helps conserve cultural legacy, and assists in safeguarding the natural environment, which contributes to sustainable tourism. Furthermore, tourism marketing can inform visitors on their social and environmental influences, encouraging them to be responsible travellers. When tourism marketing adheres to sustainable tourism principles, it not only attracts visitors but also guarantees socially and environmentally sustainable destinations that remain for future generations. In light of the above argument, the following hypotheses are hypothesized as follows:

- **H4:** There is a statistically significant relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism.

2.10. Summary

This chapter elucidated the theoretical and conceptual framework underpinning the study, highlighting the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. It reviewed the conceptual and empirical literature on tourism marketing, identified the measurement of tourism marketing, and discussed the role of the tourism marketing mix at various stages of travel decision-making. Furthermore, this chapter explored the concept of sustainability and sustainable tourism, approaches for measuring sustainable tourism dimensions, and the linkage between tourism marketing, sustainable tourism, and national parks. Building on these insights, the research gap was identified, and the conceptual model that integrates tourism marketing with sustainable tourism and its dimensions was developed. Finally, four hypotheses were formulated to empirically examine the relationship between tourism marketing, sustainable tourism, and dimensions of sustainable tourism.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter elucidated the scientific procedure and approach employed to ensure the quality, transparency, and robustness of the research process in order to accomplish the study objectives. Hence, in this section, the researcher delves into the research philosophy and design employed throughout the research process, which includes a description of the study area, research design, sample size and sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis approach, and ethical consideration.

3.2. Description of the study area

Ethiopia is located in the Horn of Africa within the latitude and longitude of 9.49690 N, 36.89610 E. It is confined by Eritrea to the north, Djibouti to the northeast, Somalia to the east, Kenya to the south, and South Sudan and Sudan to the west. The total population in Ethiopia was estimated above 135 million people, according to the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia web, 2025. The country is endowed with huge natural resources, such as agricultural resources (coffee, livestock, cereals, pulses, and oilseeds), mineral resources (gold, tantalum, potash, and many other resources), water resources, tourism resources (natural beauty, cultural heritage, and historical sites), and a wide range of forests and national parks, which are hotspots of biodiversity.

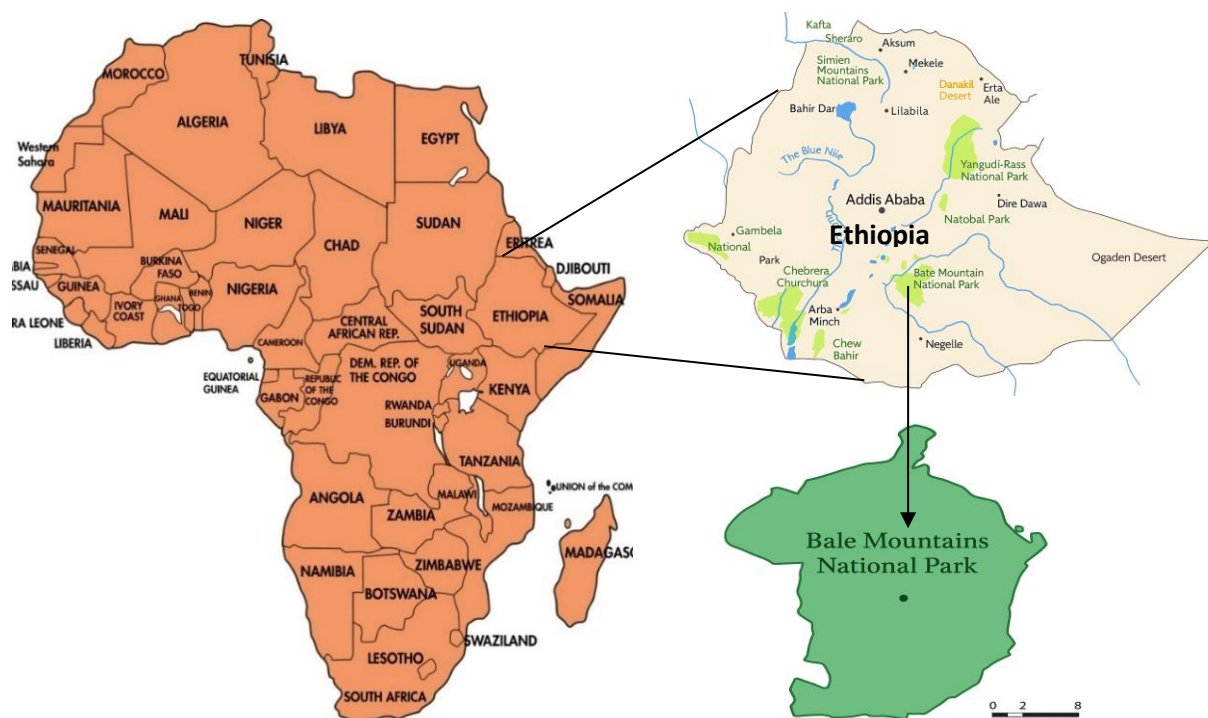


Figure 4: Map of the study area

According to [EWCA \(2023\)](#), Ethiopia has 21 protected areas and national parks, namely, Abijata Shalla National Park, Alitash National Park, Arsi Mountains National Park, Awash National Park, Babile Elephant Sanctuary, Bale Mountains National Park, Borena National Park, Borena Saynt Werehimeno National Park, Chebera Churchura National Park, Gambella National Park, Geralle National Park, Gibe Shelleko National Park, Halledighe Asebot National Park, Kafta Sheraro National Park, Loka Abya National Park, Mago National Park, Maze National Park, Nech Sar National Park, Omo National Park, Senkellelle Sanctuary, and Simien Mountains National Park. Although conducting research in all national parks might seem ideal, it's often impractical for researchers. Collecting data from an entire national park could take years and be expensive, which is not feasible for the researcher. Due to time and budget constraints, the researcher selected Bale Mountains National Park as a study area, considering its wider coverage of tourism resources, logistics feasibility, and familiarity with the study area, including local culture and tradition, regulation, and language.

Bale Mountains National Park (6°29' to 7°10'N and 39°28' to 39°57'E) is located in the Oromia region, southeast of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The park was established in 1970 by the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (EWCA) and is still managed by EWCA under the National Law of Wildlife Development, Conservation, and Utilization (Proclamation No. 541/2007). The national park covers an area of 215,000 hectares in the heart of the Bale-Arsi Massif with a spectacularly diverse landscape and natural beauty. It is surrounded and demarcated by 29 neighboring kebeles (the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia) with a buffer zone of 235,121 hectares, approximately 5 to 20 km from the park's boundaries ([EWCA, 2023](#)).

The national park is comprised of distinct ecosystems, habitats, and associated biodiversity; Africa's largest area of afro-alpine habitat above 3,000 m above sea level, with numerous glacial lakes, wetlands, and moorlands; and the second-highest peak at 4,377 m above sea level, which is prominently called Tullu Dimtu ([Alters et al., 2007](#)). The park is a UNESCO-designated national park and home to extraordinary fauna and flora with an exceptional degree of endemism. In several cases, the only remaining populations of globally threatened species across numerous taxonomic groups. For example, Mountain Nyala and Bale Monkey are endemic to this national park, along with numerous endemic rodents, amphibians, and Ethiopian wolves, the most important remaining populations. It is home to 1,660 documented species of flowering plants, 177 of which are endemic to Ethiopia and 31 exclusively to the Bale Mountains ([Alters et al., 2007](#)).

The forests of the Bale Mountains serve as a genetic reservoir for wild forest coffee and countless medicinal plant species. The dense, green, misty jungle contains huge trees, moss-draped branches, and impenetrable undergrowth wrapped in a tangle of creepers, among which wild coffee and medicinal plants grow. Moreover, 79 mammal species have been recorded in the park; 23 of these are endemic, including eight rodent species. There are 363 documented bird species, including over 170 recorded migratory bird species, such as wintering and passing raptors, including the Greater Spotted Eagle. The Haremma Shrew, the Giant Mole Rat, Malcolm's Ethiopian Toad, the Bale Mountains Tree Frog, and the Bale Mountains Frog can only be found in the Bale Mountains.

The park hosts an estimated two-thirds of the global population of the endemic Mountain Nyala, the most important Ethiopian wolf population. It is home to the Menelik's Bushbuck, an endemic subspecies. The Bale Monkey is endemic to the Ethiopian Highlands, east of the Rift Valley, and is restricted to the bamboo belt of the Bale Mountains and the Sidamo Highlands. Additionally, national Park' diverse ecosystems, biodiversity, scenic beauty, and natural attractions provide massive tourism opportunities for local communities and the country as a whole. It also draws eco-tourists and wildlife enthusiasts interested in observing unique flora and fauna in their natural habitat.

Furthermore, it allows visitors to engage with local culture through homestays, cultural tours, and community-led activities, thereby promoting sustainable tourism that supports local livelihoods. In addition, the rugged terrain and diverse landscapes of Bale Mountains National Park offer opportunities for adventure tourism activities such as trekking, mountain biking, and camping. Despite having massive tourism potential, Bale Mountains National Park's contribution to socioeconomic development has untapped potential. Therefore, given the tremendous potential for tourism development and policy relevance, the researcher is fascinated by the idea of carrying out research on tourism marketing and sustainable tourism development in the study area.

3.3. Research Design

For this research study, a descriptive and explanatory type of research design was employed. The descriptive research design was used to describe the data and characteristics of what is being studied to obtain current information, formulate certain principles, and give solutions to the problems in the study area (Babbie, 2020). The explanatory research method was employed to analyze the cause-and-effect relationship between variables (tourism marketing and sustainable tourism).

Regarding the research approach, the researcher applied a mixed research approach to enhance the depth, breadth, and overall quality of research findings. As Babbie (2020) noted, a qualitative research approach is used to narrate and interpret the contextualized understanding of experiences and perspectives, while quantitative research is employed to generalize the findings and results from descriptive and inferential statistics. Hence, combining both approaches often leads to more comprehensive and actionable recommendations for policy implementation and future research.

3.3.1. Qualitative Research Approach

In mixed research methods, the decision to collect qualitative data before quantitative data is often rooted in the logic of the research design, which is known as a sequential exploratory research approach. The purpose of collecting qualitative data was to gain a deep understanding of the research context and the language used by participants. Also, it was aimed to validate and conceptualize the initial questionnaires designed from the literature review so that the quantitative phase of the study is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the topic. To achieve the intended objectives of the qualitative data collection, a semi-structured interview, a focus group discussion, and observation were adopted, which would help to gain a comprehensive and better understanding of the study area.

3.3.1.1. Sample selection

Like quantitative research methods, qualitative research approaches also require the selection of samples from the population being studied. The sampling techniques utilized for this research are purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Purposive sampling is one of the techniques often employed in qualitative investigations to obtain information. As a result, this technique was chosen to collect information from the key managerial figures and experts using interviews that are not readily or conveniently available from other respondents.

Moreover, since all respondents have no equal know-how about tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism development, the sample was selected purposefully based on their know-how and the contact they have with tourism activities and national parks for the sake of attaining the objective of the study. The number of samples proposed by researchers for interviews varies. Some researchers advise for unlimited numbers of interviews, while others propose a limited range. A range of four to eight interviews is regarded as appropriate for qualitative research.

However, in this study, a total of 15 interviews were conducted, comprising 2 interviewees from the Bale Mountains National Park, 3 from Bale Zone culture and tourism office, 2 from Oromia Forest and Wildlife Enterprise Bale Branch, 2 from the Ethiopia Wildlife Conservation Authority, 2 from the Frankfurt Zoological Society, 3 from Madda Walabu University, and 1 from the Bale Tourist Guide Association which is enough for this study. Consequently, additional interviews were unnecessary, as the data had reached its saturation point at this phase.

Moreover, focus group discussions (FGD) were held in 6 different towns within and adjacent to the national park. A total of six focus group discussions—one in Dinsho, one in Robe, one in Adaba, one in Rira, one in Angetu, and one in Dallo-Mena—were conducted with local communities to delve deeper into the sustainability dimensions (economic, social, and environmental) in Bale Mountains National Park. In general, 21 samples (15 interviews and 6 focus group discussions) were employed for this study.

3.3.1.2. Data collection

Following the completion of the sample selection process, participants were contacted in person and via telephone to arrange their interview. Even though scheduling interviews with busy managers and experts was challenging, a tentative and flexible schedule was fixed according to the availability and convenience of the participants. After obtaining verbal consent, a confirmation text message and email with the interview date and time as well as a brief overview of the interview were sent to interviewees. Interviewees were guaranteed that their involvement would be entirely voluntary and kept private. Then, an interview was conducted using a semi-structured questionnaire.

With the agreement and consent of the participants, the conversations were recorded, and notes were taken throughout the sessions. The average length of the interview was one hour and five minutes. The interview was transcribed immediately following the conversation to accurately capture the spirit and nuances of the interview. The interviews were primarily done in local

languages (Afan Oromo and Amharic). So, throughout transcription, careful consideration was given to preserve the respondents original intended meaning. To obtain additional verification on this matter, respondents have been contacted to validate the transcribed data.

3.3.1.3. Data analysis

To ensure easy access and management during data analysis, all data were recorded in audio and text throughout the qualitative data collection process. To get a more comprehensive view, the combination of thematic and framework analysis was used. Thematic analysis allows for identifying key themes and patterns in tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism, while framework analysis provides a structured approach to organize data around specific tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism dimensions. The qualitative data analysis process for this study is shown in [Figure 5](#).

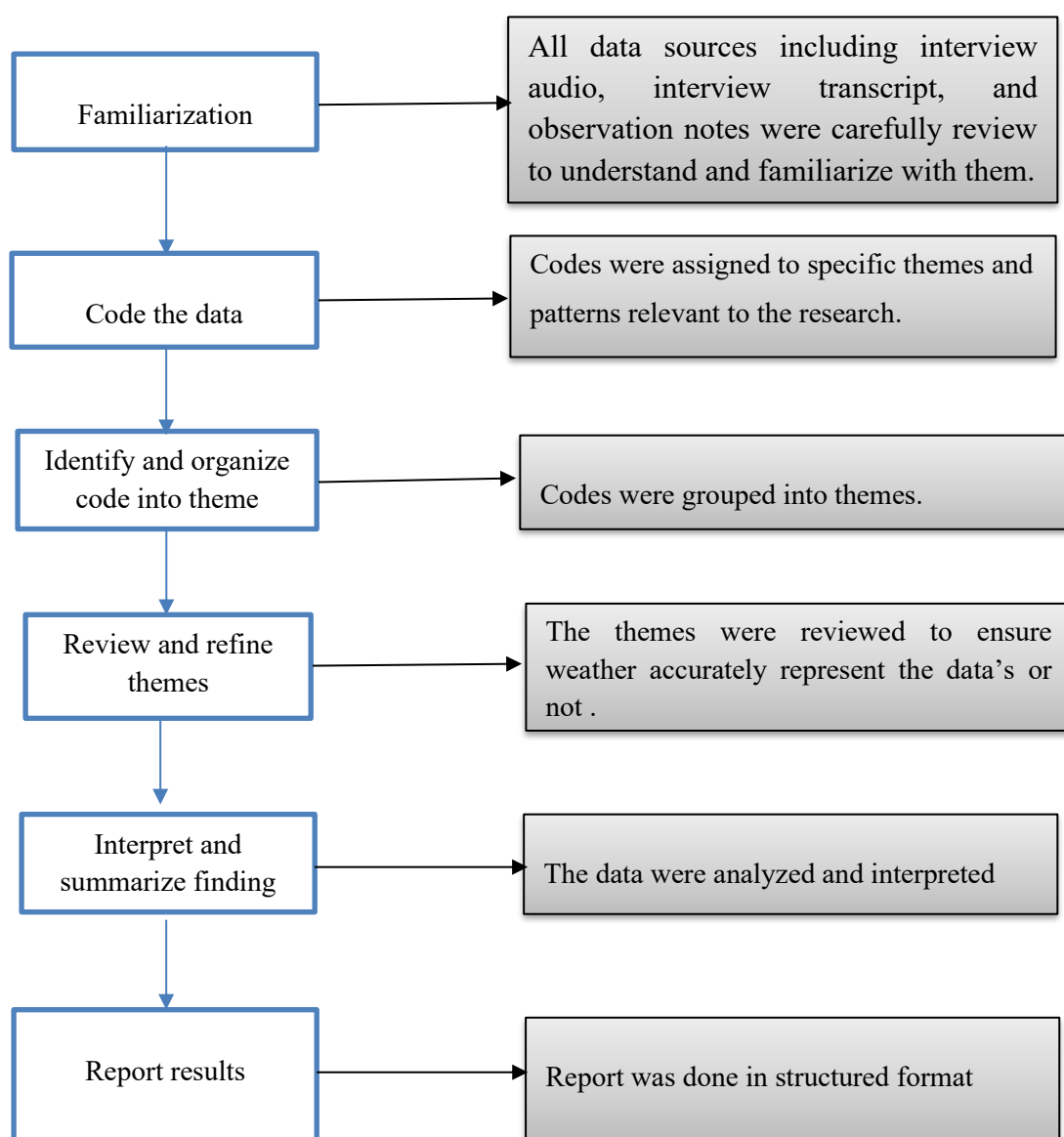


Figure 5. Qualitative data analysis process (source: researcher's own construction)

3.3.2. Quantitative Research Approach

Once the qualitative study was finalized, the next phase was the validation and confirmation of variables and links among factors by using a quantitative study. This phase was comprised of designing the questionnaire, developing the hypotheses, pre-testing the questionnaire, performing the pilot test, determining the sampling technique, collecting data, and analyzing the quantitative data.

3.3.2.1. Questionnaire design and hypotheses development.

On the basis of previous literature and qualitative field study surveys, a questionnaire was designed to measure various dimensions and test the hypothesized link among the constructs. To develop the quantitative survey instrument, this study employed a structured and closed-ended questionnaire. Based on the analysis of the prior study, it is clear that the majority of structural equation model (SEM)-based research studies utilize the Likert scale to measure the items in the questionnaire.

This study implemented a five-point Likert scale to gather data regarding a degree of agreement or disagreement among the participants for each statement, which was comprised of “1= strongly disagree,” “2= disagree,” “3= neutral,” “4= agree,” and “5= strongly agree.” Although all data collection has its own cons and pros, the five-point Likert scale was selected as a data collection instrument based on its versatility and simplicity for respondents to understand and balanced options without forcing participants into extreme positions. Also, data collected using Likert scales can be easily quantified and analyzed statistically, allowing the researchers to identify trends and patterns effectively.

3.3.2.2. Pre-testing the questionnaire

The initially developed questionnaire was pre-tested by distributing it to 55 participants using a Google Form. Among the distributed questionnaires, fifteen tourists, ten Madda Walabu University lecturers, fifteen local communities, five tour guides, five employees of Bale Mountains National Park, three investors, and two tourism experts from the Bale Zone culture and tourism office responded. Also, the participants were requested for recommendations and suggestions regarding the deletion or addition of some questions to reach agreement on the practicability and understandability of chosen dimensions. Based on the advice and opinion of these participants, particularly from Madda Walabu University professionals, the required modification was made, and again, the new version of the questionnaire was sent to the supervisor and doctoral school for approval to conduct a field survey. Finally, the researcher designed a comprehensive instrument after making minor modifications based on the qualitative survey.

3.3.2.3. Pilot testing

Based on the finalized version of the questionnaire, a pilot study was carried out in order to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire as well as identify any difficulties that might have arisen from findings. In this phase, tourists were the potential respondents. In all, 100 questionnaires were distributed to participants. Among the distributed questionnaires, a total of 58 filled-out and valid responses were obtained from the respondents. Finally, statistical analysis of data was performed to check the validity and reliability using SPSS software.

3.3.2.4. Population and sampling techniques

The population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate and must be defined in terms of elements, geographical boundaries, and time. In this study, the population includes all stakeholders connected with Bale Mountains National Park. The sample is a subgroup or subset of the population. From the entire population, only a representative sample from the population or target group of interest for the survey and analysis was selected. As a result, the sample for this research consisted of tourists (both domestic and international tourists). The other stakeholders were not included as a sample in the quantitative part of the study due to the fact that the opinions of other stakeholders were covered using the interview and focus group discussion in the qualitative part of the study.

3.3.2.5. Sampling design and techniques

An adequate number of samples is essential for any statistical analysis to achieve the appropriate level of a predictive model. Generally speaking, the sample was selected purposefully on the basis of identifying tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism development in the Bale Mountains National Park. The minimum and required sample size of respondents was determined based on a formula developed by [Cochran \(1963\)](#) to calculate a large and unknown population. This was used because the population is infinite, and it's difficult to predict how many tourists visit the destination. Therefore, to take an appropriate sample size, the researcher considers a 95% level of confidence and a 5% or 0.05 level of estimated precision in this formula. The sample size was determined as follows:

$$n = \frac{P(1-P) Z^2}{E^2}$$

Where n = size of sample

p = is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population (0.5)

$Z^2 = 1.96$ is the desired confidence level for 95%

$E^2 = 0.05$ is the desired level of precision, 5%. confidence

Thus, the sample size for the infinite population will be as follows.

$$n = \frac{0.5(1-0.5) (1.96)^2}{(0.05)^2} = 384$$

Hence, the minimum required sample size for an infinite population should be no less than 384. Based on this rule of thumb, a total of 410 filled-in and valid responses were collected, which is more than the minimum requirement of 384 sample sizes suggested by [Cochran \(1963\)](#).

3.3.2.6. Descriptive data analysis and presentation methods

After data collection, appropriate methods were implemented to analyze and interpret the primary data. Primarily, data was recorded, edited, and coded. Thereafter, descriptive analysis such as frequencies, mean percentage, and standard deviation was employed. This is due to the fact that descriptive analysis offers general characteristics without needing to examine every individual data point, allows researchers to see how often certain values occur within a dataset, provides insight into the central value around which other observations cluster, indicates how much variation exists from the average score in a data set, and lays groundwork necessary for more complex analysis like inferential statistics. Moreover, inferential analyses such as correlation were employed to examine the relationship between tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism. Correlation analysis is among the ways in which data was analyzed to observe the relationship between the variables.

3.3.2.7. Structural equation modelling (SEM)

A partial least square (PLS)- based structural equation modeling (SEM) approach was adopted to test hypotheses and measure various dimensions in the proposed model. The reason for using the SEM approach is that it enables researchers to address multiple interconnected research inquiries in a single, organized, and thorough analysis by simultaneously modeling the interconnection between various dependent and independent constructs. Also, structural equation modeling provides additional advantages to the researcher that are lacking in the first-generation statistical analysis. SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS version 4 were utilized in order to carry out the analysis of data. SPSS was employed to code the collected data from respondents and to perform descriptive analysis, while SmartPLS was utilized to execute structural equation modeling.

Assessment of measurement model

It is crucial to examine the measurement model at a lower level of constructs prior to progressing to higher-order constructs ([Hair et al., 2020](#)). In the lower-order measurement model, both convergent and discriminant validity are assessed. While convergent validity is evaluated by computing reliability, internal consistency, and AVE, discriminant validity is proven by looking at cross-loadings and correlations of the constructs with the square root of AVE ([Cheung et al., 2024](#)). Moreover, since this research consists of a higher-order and multidimensional

measurements, a measurement model at higher-order construct was also conducted. The higher-order and multidimensional concepts are characterized by the number of levels and the relationship between the constructs in the model (Becker et al., 2012; N. Zeng et al., 2021). In the reflective-formative model, the lower-order constructs are reflectively measured constructs that form a general concept (Becker et al., 2012). Moreover, in this study, a two-stage approach was used to operationalize a higher-order construct with a reflective lower-order construct. At the higher-order level, tourism marketing practices are measured by the lower-order constructs: tourism product, tourism pricing, tourism placing, tourism promotion, people, process, and physical evidence as a reflective item. It can be argued that there is a high interdependence among the lower-order constructs. For instance, promotion is related to tourism products and tourism pricing (Khan, 2014). Similarly, other constructs like placing are related to physical evidence (Jain, 2013). With this in mind, it is logical to model tourism marketing practices as a reflective higher-order construct (MacKenzie et al., 2011).

Assessment of structural model

Following the measurement model's assessment, it has been proved to be valid and reliable; the subsequent step is the assessment of the structural model (Hair et al., 2012). The structural models assess the statistical relevance of the proposed links between constructs by analyzing path coefficients among the constructs (Ali et al., 2018). Consistent with the suggestions of Hair et al. (2012), Ali et al. (2018), and Hair et al. (2020), the structural model assessment of this study has been assessed by analyzing the coefficients of determination (R^2). In conjunction with coefficients of determination (R^2) values, the path coefficients and t-values of the proposed correlations were computed to determine the significance of the constructs in the model (Hair. Jr et al., 2021). Also, to test the relationship between constructs, the bootstrapping method is chosen for the data analysis in this study.

3.4. Ethical Consideration

3.4.1. Review and approval

Obtaining ethical approval and the necessary permits for data collection is a critical step in research. As shown in Figure 6, throughout this study, the researcher carefully took into account all ethical considerations at each phase of the research endeavour. In the initial phase of the research process, a study proposal, which encompasses meticulously crafted questionnaires, is submitted to the supervisor for his critical evaluation and constructive feedback. Following the supervisor's critical assessment and comment, the researcher proceeded to review the proposal in accordance with the feedback provided by the supervisor. Upon receiving approval from the supervisor, the researcher obtained a letter of authorization from the doctorate school to conduct data collection in the field (See appendix 3).

At stage 2 of the approval process, a letter of approval for data collection from the doctoral school, a summary of the research proposal, and a designed question have been submitted to the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and the Oromia Tourism Commission. This is due to the fact that gaining ethical approval and research approvals for any study pertaining to the national park is not only required by law but also plays a crucial role in supporting conservation efforts and guaranteeing the preservation of the park's natural resources. Following various courses of action research, the ethical committee has granted approval and entered into a memorandum of understanding with the researcher (See appendix 4 and 5).

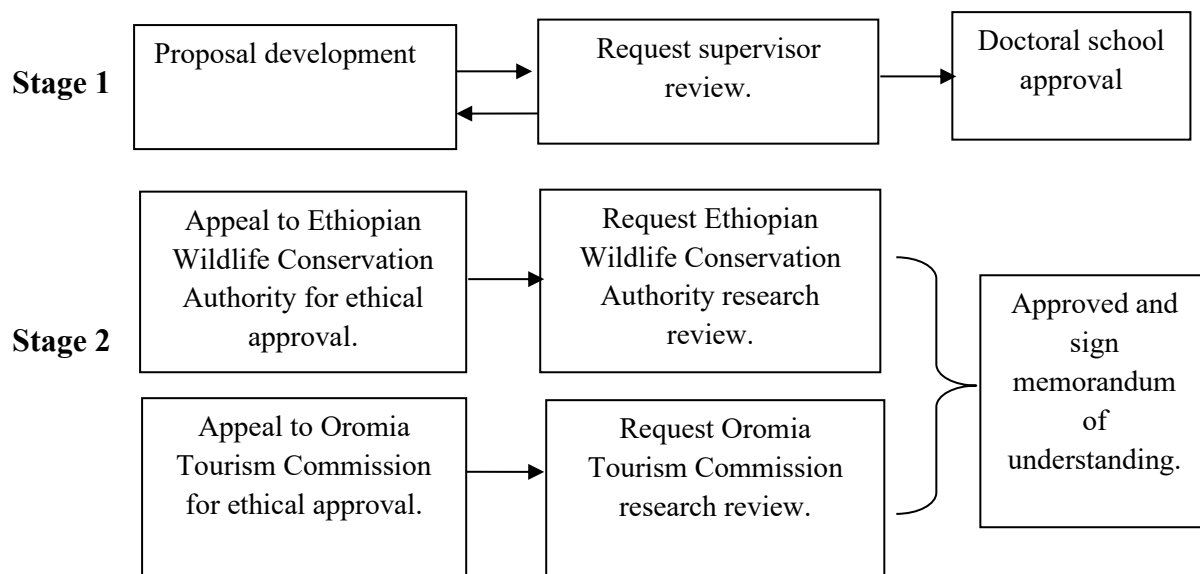


Figure 6. Review and ethical approval stage

3.4.2. Integrity

In research, integrity refers to the adherence to principles of transparency, honesty, accountability, and trustworthiness throughout the entire research process. As shown in [Figure 6](#), to ensure the quality, transparency, and robustness of the research process, the researcher maintained rigorous and high standards throughout the entire process.

3.4.3. Consent

During the data collection, the researcher adequately informed each potential respondent about the researcher's objectives, methods, risks, and anticipated benefits. Moreover, the researcher notified the potential respondents that their participation in the study is entirely voluntary, and they are free to withdraw at any time without consequences.

3.4.4. Confidentiality and Anonymity

In order to protect the confidentiality and privacy of respondents, any information shared by participants during the study is kept secure and not disclosed to unauthorized individuals.

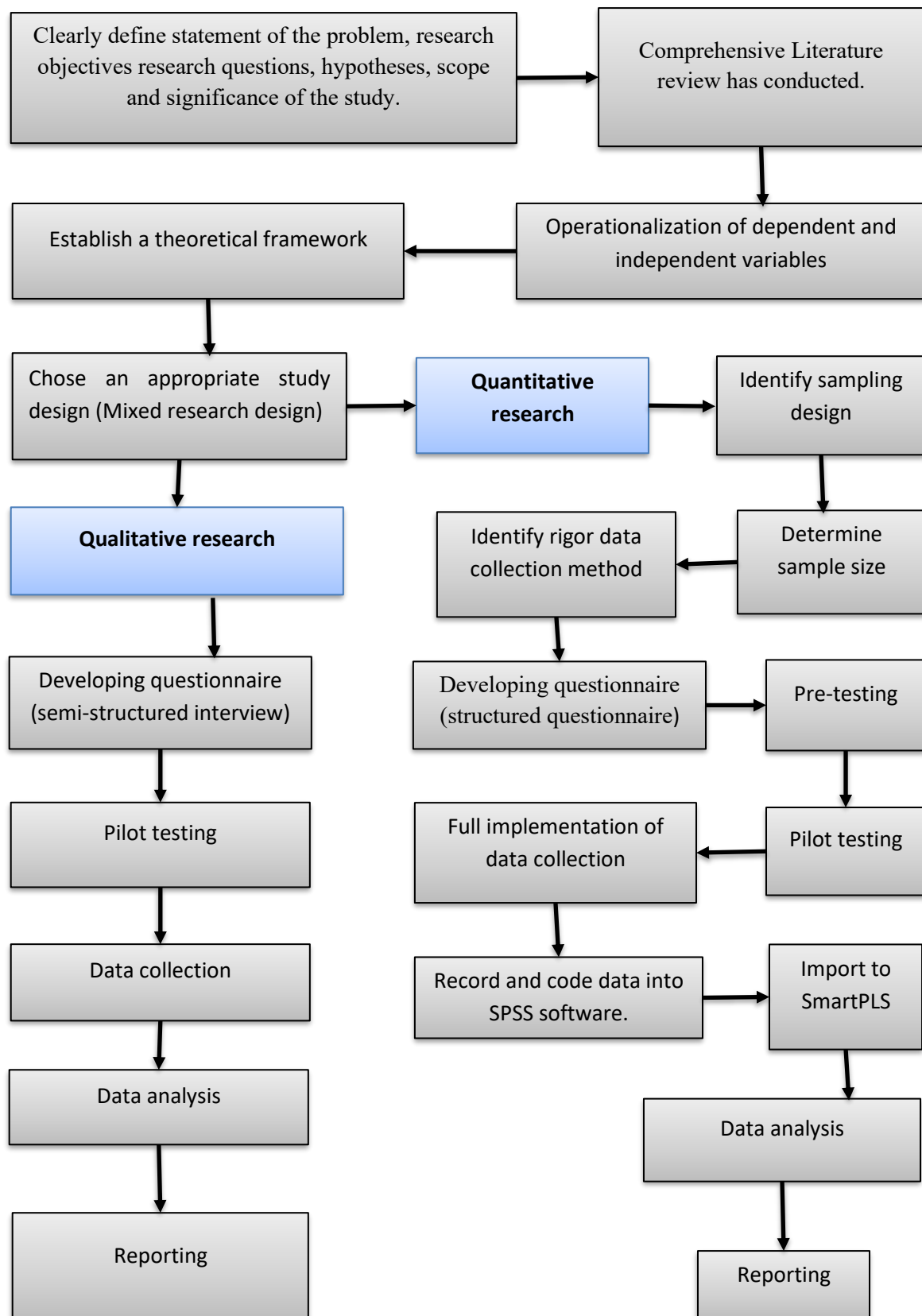


Figure 7. Steps taken to ensure the integrity of the study

3.5. Summary

This chapter presented the methodological approaches implemented in the study. A mixed research approach was adopted to enhance the depth, breadth, and overall quality of research findings as well as to ensure a balanced understanding of the research problem. For the qualitative study, the data were collected through 15 semi-structured interviews and 6 focus group discussions. These participants were selected purposively based on their relevance and experiences in tourism marketing. The qualitative study was analyzed using thematic and framework analysis, which allowed the identification of key themes and patterns as well as provided a structured approach to organize data around specific tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism dimensions. For the quantitative study, 410 filled-in and valid responses were collected via survey. SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS version 4 were utilized to carry out the analysis of data. SPSS was employed to code the collected data from respondents and to perform descriptive analysis, while SmartPLS was utilized to execute structural equation modeling.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.1.1. Introduction

This section describes the analysis of data collected from the qualitative study using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observation. While semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 key managerial figures and experts from various organizations operating in and around the national park, focus group discussions were conducted with six groups (each consisting of 7–10 members) of local communities living in and around the park.

The aim of this section is to investigate and cross-examine the variables and factors defined in the initial research model, as displayed in figure 3 (see page 38). This study has been conducted on tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism development in Bale Mountains National Park, but the initial study model was compiled from various literature reviews that are based on different perspectives. Therefore, conducting a qualitative study is vital for verifying the model's applicability and validity within this specific research context. Moreover, the qualitative study aims to dig deeper into the study area to probe tourism marketing practices and sustainability as well as to explore the prevalence of the construct in the model.

This section begins with an overview of qualitative study and the findings of qualitative analysis. In the content analysis of the qualitative study, the field study model was designed and compared with the initial model. Finally, a refined and comprehensive research model of tourism marketing practices and sustainability of tourism in national parks was developed.

4.1.2. Qualitative Research Paradigm and philosophical assumptions

According to [Babbie \(2020\)](#), paradigms are fundamental frames of reference or frameworks for observation and understanding that shape both what we see and how we understand it. A research paradigm is a set of beliefs, values, systems, or techniques that guide how the researchers approach the process of inquiry, solve research problems, shape their understanding of knowledge, and interpret findings ([Guba & Lincoln, 1994](#)). [Phillimore & Goodson \(2004\)](#) described the qualitative research paradigm as an approach used in the social sciences and humanities to explore complex phenomena that cannot easily be investigated using a quantitative approach. The qualitative research paradigm is underpinned by several philosophical assumptions, such as ontological, epistemological, axiological, methodological, and rhetorical assumptions ([Baškarada & Koronios, 2018](#)).

The main aim of the qualitative study in this research is to draw out individual experiences, beliefs, and perceptions using semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions regarding tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism in the study area. Thus, consistent with the research aim, the researcher adopted epistemological assumptions to achieve the goal of the study. The epistemological assumption assumes that knowledge is gained through subjective experiences, active participation and interpretation of the researcher, and interaction of the researcher with participants to understand their opinion, perception, and perspectives (Wong et al., 2011). In addition, the researcher ascribes positivism as a research paradigm because reality and truth are independent and free from the researcher. Positivism is independent, self-governing, and objective of existence truth (Kankam, 2019). Babbie (2020) highlighted positivism as a verified scientific truth through logical analysis and empirical observation of what was observed.

4.1.3. Interview questionnaire design

To incorporate the major aspects of the model, a semi-structured interview was designed in two sections: tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism dimension. Overall, eleven main questions with twenty-four follow-up probing interview questions were designed in the qualitative study. The first section includes seven main questions with sixteen follow-up questions to explore the general tourism marketing practices of Bale Mountains National Park. In this section, the key informants were asked about 7ps of tourism marketing practices, which included tourism products, tourism pricing, tourism placing, tourism promotion, people, processes, and physical evidence.

The second section was constructed to gain insights into sustainable tourism and its relationship with tourism marketing. Questions 8, 9, and 10 have been designed consistently for this topic. Specifically, question 8 explores whether Bale Mountains National Park ensures economic sustainability in and around the national park. Similarly, question 9 was designed to investigate whether the national park ensures the sociocultural sustainability of local communities in and around it. Likewise, question 10 was designed to identify whether Bale Mountains National Park ensures environmental sustainability. Finally, question number 11 was developed with three follow-up probing questions to investigate the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in Bale Mountains National Park (see Appendix 1).

4.1.4. Pilot test

Before conducting the initial interview, a pilot test was performed to test the applicability and understandability of the interview questions and any other related issues with the interview guide.

Five participants, consisting of two lecturers of tourism and hospitality, one lecturer of marketing management, and two tourism experts, took part in the pilot test. All interview questions seemed applicable and relevant; however, some modifications were made based on the feedback of respondents. For instance, before modification, question number 8 stated: Do you think that Bale Mountains National Park tourism product prices are reasonable? However, following the feedback of respondents on the pilot test, the question was adjusted to: What kind of pricing approach is being implemented at Bale Mountains National Park?

4.1.5. Sample section

Fifteen (15) key informants (3 managers and 12 experts) and six (6) focus group discussions were chosen for qualitative data collection. All respondents were selected purposively based on personal contact as well as their know-how and the contact they have with tourism activities and the national park. As a result, purposive and snowball sampling were employed in this study. To assist the participants in grasping the study goals, an overview of the interview questions together with detailed information was given. The participants were notified and involved in this investigation voluntarily. [Tables 6](#) and [7](#) illustrate the profiles of interviewees and focus group discussions.

4.1.6. Data collection

After the sample selection was completed, the interviewees were contacted via telephone to arrange the interview schedules. The feedback was positive, with fifteen out of twenty participants agreeing to take part in the interview. Moreover, a focus group discussion was arranged with the help of local tour guides in their respective areas. The duration of both the interview and focus group discussions was one hour on average. The conversation was recorded with the consent of the respondents, and notes were compiled throughout the course of the conversation. The response was written down promptly following the interview to accurately capture its meaning and tones.

4.1.7. Profile of interviewees and focus group discussion

Fifteen (15) interviewees, comprised of 3 managers and 12 experts from various organizations, were chosen. Six focus group discussions were conducted with local communities in different towns. As shown in [Table 6](#), among respondents, R1, R2, and R3 are from MWU; R4 and R5 are from BMNP; R6 and R7 are from FZS; R8, R9, and R10 are from the Bale Zone Cultural and Tourism Office; R11 and R12 are from EWCA; R13 is from OFWE; R14 is from Visit Oromia; and R15 is from Nyala tourist guide associations. In terms of academic qualifications, 9 (60%) hold a master's degree, 5 (33.33%) hold a bachelor's degree, and 1 (6.67%)

holds a PhD degree, suggesting that the respondents are generally well educated. Regarding age, respondents fall between 30 and 54.

Table 6. Profile of interviewees.

Code	Age	Level of education	Role	Sex	Organization
R1	37	PhD	Ass. professor	M	Madda Walabu university
R2	30	MA	Lecturer	M	Madda Walabu university
R3	32	MA	Lecturer	M	Madda Walabu university
R4	47	MA	Manager	M	Bale Mountains National Park
R5	44	MA	Expert	M	Bale Mountains National Park
R6	41	MA	Expert	M	Frankfurt Zoological Society
R7	38	MA	Expert	M	Frankfurt Zoological Society
R8	45	MA	Manager	M	Bale zone culture and tourism office
R9	35	BA	Expert	M	Bale zone culture and tourism office
R10	38	BA	Expert	F	Bale zone culture and tourism office
R11	42	MA	Expert	M	Ethiopian wildlife conservation authority
R12	45	MA	Expert	M	Ethiopian wildlife conservation authority
R13	36	BA	Expert	M	Visit Oromia
R14	34	BA	Expert	M	Oromia forest and wildlife enterprise
R15	54	BA	Manager	M	Nyala tourist guide association

Source: Qualitative field study 2024

Table 7. Focus group discussion profile

Group	Place	No of participant
Group 1	Robe	8
Group 2	Dinsho	9
Group 3	Rira	7
Group 4	Angetu	7
Group 5	Dallo-Mena	8
Group 6	Adaba	7

Source: Qualitative field study 2024

Table 7 illustrates that a total of six focus group discussions consisting of 7-9 individuals—one in Robe, one in Dinsho, one in Rira, one in Angetu, one in Dallo-Mena, and one in Adaba were conducted with local communities.

4.1.8. Finding of Qualitative Study

This section presents the findings of the qualitative data obtained from the content analysis of the field survey (interview, focus group discussion (FDG), and observation). The findings are categorized into two subsequent sections: The first section discusses findings regarding tourism marketing practices. The second section discusses findings related to sustainable tourism and its relationship with tourism marketing.

4.1.9. Tourism marketing practices

Tourism marketing practices encompass numerous strategies aimed at improving destinations and creating memorable experiences for visitors (Janjua et al., 2022). By utilizing a combination of tourism marketing mixes, national parks can contribute to sustainable tourism. Therefore, the initial focus of the interview and focus group discussion was on tourism marketing practices, with the aim of exploring and identifying them within Bale Mountains National Park. All participants in interviews and focus group discussions agreed that there were tourism marketing practices in the national park. Details of qualitative findings on tourism marketing practices are discussed in the following subsections.

Tourism product

Bale Mountains National Park is the largest national park in the southeastern part of Ethiopia, with a wide range of topographies, climates, beautiful water bodies, and landscapes, as well as a high level of endemic species (Alers et al., 2007; Forest & Enterprise, 2014; Hansilo & Tiki, 2017; Welteji & Zerihun, 2018). Content analysis of both interviews and focus group discussions also revealed that Bale Mountains National Park is endowed with a rich array of attractions, including natural beauty, biodiversity, cultural heritage, recreational activities, and educational opportunities. These attractions offer unique and diverse tourism experiences, such as trekking and hiking, wildlife viewing, scenic landscapes, cultural experiences, bird watching, and camping.

However, all respondents stated that compared to the abundance of tourism products in the national park, the availability of infrastructure and accommodation is still limited. R2 stated that “...insufficient infrastructure, such as inadequate roads, public transportation options, and parking facilities, can hinder visitors access to the national park and tourism activities in and around our national park,” which may reduce the accessibility of the national park to certain groups, such as disabled individuals and the elderly, and increase congestion in only limited areas. Similarly, R1 said that “...inadequate availability of accommodations within or around the national park can lead to overcrowding and increased demand for existing facilities, which

may result in higher prices for accommodations and make it more difficult for tourists to plan their trips to Bale Mountains National Park with their budget constraints.” Aligned with this, R9 also stated that “*inadequate infrastructure can impact the economy of local communities and businesses that rely on tourism activities.*” This was further confirmed by all focus group discussions, which stated that “*...lack of roads is always challenging for park rangers and researchers to monitor wildlife populations.*” In addition, all participants of the field study stated tourists may find various food options within and near the national park, including local Ethiopian dishes and international cuisine. Local Ethiopian dishes, such as Injera, Cacabsa, Marqa, and Burato, are rich and flavorful. Furthermore, R4 mentioned that dishes such as salads, pasta, grilled meats, and vegetarian options are available to cater to international and domestic visitors.

Tourism pricing

National parks and protected areas face growing pressure to provide their economic value, especially in developing countries where there is a significant demand for land and natural resources (Walpole et al., 2001). Nature-based tourism provides a mechanism for generating substantial advantages from protected areas for both the government and local populations if properly marketed. Proper pricing of tourism products in the national park can help attract more visitors, increase revenue generation, encourage sustainable tourism practices, contribute significantly to local economies, facilitate effective management of visitor numbers during peak season, and provide funding for conservation efforts within and surrounding national parks. The gains from national parks are expected to provide real benefits to local communities, allowing them to protect and value national parks as sustainable sources of income.

However, R4 and R5 expressed that there is a lack of appropriate pricing in Bale Mountains National Park. The park lacks market segmentation for the various tourism experiences it offers (R5). Aligned with this, R1, R2, and R3 stated that “*the park provides a range of tourism experiences, including wildlife viewing, trekking and hiking, scenic landscapes, cultural experiences, bird watching, and camping, at a fee of ETB 90 (\$1.6) for international visitors, ETB 20 (\$0.35) for domestic visitors, and ETB 10 (\$0.17) for students.*” Participant R4 stated, “*...it is possible to claim that the entrance fee for Bale Mountains National Park is unjustifiable.*” This assertion is because the national park does not have the power to set prices for tourism offerings and experiences, which could potentially impact the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the national park and its tourism activities (R4 and R5).

Tourism placing

In tourism, placing refers to the accessibility and availability of destinations for visitors, including the availability of a wide range of travel opportunities and the provision of crucial information at the pre-purchase stage. However, tourism destinations prioritize providing services upon visitors' arrival, often overlooking their responsibility to improve travel to and from their destination. This can pose challenges for visitors in effectively planning and budgeting their trip. Similarly, the field study revealed options and challenges in the accessibility and availability of Bale Mountains National Park. Visitors can reach Bale Mountains National Park by either taking the road from Addis Ababa to Bale Robe or by flying domestically from Addis Ababa to Wako Gutu Airport.

Also, the national park provides information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage through its official websites and tour guides who specialize in organizing trips to this destination (R5). However, despite being a UNESCO-designated national park, there is no recent and updated information on Google and Google Maps, including address, areas, visitor number, elevation, working hours, coordinates, management, phone number, website, UNESCO site ID, directions, estimated travel time, and distance, which causes difficulty in planning a trip to the national park as well as limited trust and interest.

Tourism promotion

According to R4 and R5, Bale Mountains National Park utilizes various promotional strategies and tools to educate and attract visitors, including social media, official websites, partnerships, and outdoor advertising. For instance, R4 mentioned that the park utilizes various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, to showcase its natural beauty, wildlife, and attractions. Moreover, the park partners with social media influencers to promote and share their experiences at Bale Mountains National Park on their social media channels to reach a wider audience interested in travel and nature. Additionally, the park posts informative photos, videos, and guides on their official website to attract potential visitors interested in learning more about Bale Mountains National Park history, geology, wildlife, and biodiversity. Also, the national park is working with Ethiopian Airlines to use billboards along major international and domestic flights as well as posters in airports.

People

The hospitality and friendliness of all human actors playing a critical role in the success of Bale Mountains National Park can greatly influence tourists' overall experiences during their stay

at the destination. R4 mentioned that *“our staff prioritizes offering immersive nature experiences that allow visitors to connect with Bale Mountains National Park’s diverse ecosystem and appreciate the park’s natural beauty.”* Moreover, the tour guides are committed to enhancing visitors’ understanding and appreciation of the park’s ecological significance through informative discussion-guided tours (R15). R15 also added that *“Whether guests are staying at lodges within the park or nearby accommodations, we prioritize hospitality and ensure visitors feel welcome and comfortable throughout their stay to ensure memorable experiences.”* R5 stated that *“based on the evaluation and feedback from tourists, ranging from 75 to 95 out of 100, it suggests that the knowledge, skills, behavior, and services of the staff and other service providers are very satisfactory in ensuring visitors satisfaction and experiences. However, we are working to improve on areas that rated less than 90 points.”*

Process

R4 and R5 stated that to ensure smooth and enjoyable experiences, tourists can involve some procedures. According to these respondents, tourists can organize their trip using three options. First, tourists can organize their trip with the help of private tours and operators, which include transportation, accommodations, and guides, especially recommended for international visitors unfamiliar with the areas. Second, they can arrange their trips at their own expense with the assistance of private tour guides. Third, they can arrange their trip directly to Bale Mountains National Park by using an official website and booking hotels, lodges, campsites, and guided tours before their visit in advance and ensure availability, particularly during the peak season.

Upon arrival at Bale Mountains National Park, tourists must pay entrance fees at the park’s headquarters in Dinsho. Then, visitors are welcomed in the visitor’s information centers and provided with brochures, maps, and orientation sessions that educate visitors about the park’s rules, regulations, and safety precautions. Tour guides assist visitors to enhance and ensure satisfaction during their stay at Bale Mountains National Park. At the end of their visit, the national park provides a suggestion box for visitors to gather input from visitors regarding their experiences and suggestions for improvement.

Physical evidence

Physical evidence is the physical surroundings of service organizations where services and products are developed for customers to interact (Suyono et al., 2023). In the Bale Mountains National Park, physical evidence is one of the marketing elements that affect sustainable tourism and conservation efforts. All respondents argue that the national park is strong physical evidence

of its diverse landscape, endemic wildlife, geological features, and climate zones. Moreover, the respondents stated that the designation of working areas, offices, working environments, and availability of logos, signs, photographs, and images somehow follow certain guidelines.

However, there are visible weaknesses related to physical evidence in Bale Mountains National Park. For instance, R5 mentioned that *“in our national park, human settlement expansion, overgrazing, and infrastructure development issues are challenges in fully meeting the needed standards.”* Aligned with this, respondent R4 added, *“Even if our main office at Dinsho is relatively well furnished, many of our campsites and ranger offices lack proper furnishing, office supplies, and visitor-friendly amenities.”* Regarding communicability and understandability, R10 stated that *“the national park has prepared well-designed travel guidebooks, brochures, and maps that provide valuable information about attractions, wildlife, and facilities to enhance tourist communication performance.”* Corresponding to this, R4 added, *“We put up clear and informative signage, images, and symbols placed throughout the park to provide directions and safety guidelines to enhance the understandability of visitors.”* Yet there are visible issues, such as some signs being faded or damaged and a lack of consistent design, which reduce their visibility and understandability.

4.1.10. Finding regarding sustainable tourism

Economic sustainability

There was a significant degree of agreement among the responses given regarding the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. Participants in all interviews and focus group discussions directly or indirectly indicated the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. All participants agreed that tourism marketing has a positive impact on the economic sustainability of the local community. Tourism marketing in and around Bale Mountains National Park has created many job opportunities and improved the standard of living in local communities. For instance, R4 and R5 said that *“there are successful and discernible instances where tourism marketing positively influenced host communities in terms of economy.”* According to these respondents, there are several local community associations in the Bale Mountains National Park that provide services to tourists, including the Nyala Guides Association provides tour guidance services; Walin Jirana Wood Sellers Association sells dry firewood sourced from privately grown eucalyptus trees; Keyrensa Horse Association rents riding horses to visitors; Borofa Porters Association provides and maintains horse-related equipment; Key Kebero Cook Association provides cooking services to visitors during camping and trekking

in the park; Barre Women's Handcraft Association provides local products or souvenirs to visitors; and Sankate Association provides services and products such as local guiding services, green coffee for sale, coffee ceremony services, wildlife honey, and artisan crafts. The economic impact of tourism marketing is also connected to infrastructural development in hospitality areas such as hotels, resorts, restaurants, and lodges, which generate economic benefits and ensure the competitiveness of the destinations (R8, R9, R10).

Sociocultural sustainability

Tourism marketing promotes cultural exchange between local communities and visitors, which fosters mutual understanding and appreciation for each other's traditions and customs. Tourism marketing creates a sense of pride in local culture and helps preserve cultural heritage. The participants in the field survey also indicated the relationship between tourism marketing and sociocultural sustainability. For instance, R5 stated, *"When visitors come to Bale Mountains National Park, we don't just show them the beauty of the natural environment and wildlife; we also promote our culture to them."* Aligned with this, R2 added that *"when visitors appreciate our culture, we are proud of our culture and preserve it for the future generation."* Participant R3 expressed that tourism marketing empowers local communities and other stakeholders by providing opportunities to participate in decision-making processes related to tourism development in and around the national park.

For instance, participant R3 stated, *"We have community-based tourism initiatives called Adaba-Dodola that aim to ensure tourism benefits are shared equitably and to promote a sense of community pride and ownership over tourism development activities in and around Bale Mountains National Park."* Similarly, R5, R11, and R12 expressed that the park collaborates with non-government organizations, universities, and investors for educating about the culture, history, traditions, and practices associated with local people. This initiatives can lead to strong social cohesion among all stakeholders and contribute significantly to the well-being of local communities by preserving indigenous cultural heritage and promoting environmental conservation while generating economic benefits (R1).

Environmental sustainability

Another valuable finding of the qualitative study is the relationship between tourism marketing and environmental sustainability. The national park conducts campaigns to educate visitors about sustainable practices, such as responsible wildlife viewing and minimizing waste, to reduce the ecological footprint of tourism activities in the national park (R4, R11, R12). For

example, R4 stated that the “*Protect Red Fox*” campaign launched by the Ethiopian Wolf Conservation Program in collaboration with Bale Mountains National Park educates tourists about the importance of preserving the park’s wildlife.

Moreover, R6 and R8 stated that Bale Mountains National Park raises funds and generates income from tourism marketing support for conservation projects aimed at protecting and restoring natural habitats, wildlife, and sensitive ecosystems within the national park. “*Nyala conservation*,” launched by Bale Mountains National Park in collaboration with Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Funds and the Frankfurt Zoological Society, aimed to raise awareness and support Nyala conservation.” In partnership with ECAW, FZS, and MWU, BMNP advocates for policies and regulations that support environmental conservation and sustainable tourism (R4). Additionally, R5 asserted that BMNP’s “*Many worlds, one park*” slogan advocates for stronger protection, environmental conservation, and biodiversity, which can positively influence the environmental sustainability of BMNP and sustainable tourism.

4.2. QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

4.2.1. Introduction

The previous section discussed the qualitative part of this study. This chapter outlines the results and presents an analysis of the gathered data. A total of 50 questions were prepared to assess tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism in Bale Mountains National Park, divided into three sections. The first part of the question asked the respondents to provide general information such as gender, age, academic qualification, and type. In the second section of questions, the respondents were asked about the tourism marketing practices of Bale Mountains National Park. Finally, the third section asked the respondents about sustainable tourism in Bale Mountains National Park.

Data were primarily gathered using face-to-face questionnaire surveys, while some responses were obtained via online survey. Together with a pilot test, a sample of 650 questionnaires was distributed to collect the data. Out of the 650 questionnaires distributed, 450 were responded to and 200 were not. Out of 450 responses, 40 were removed from the dataset at the time of data screening because of the high number of missed and outlier responses, and 410 were considered for data analysis. After screening the missing outlier data, the analysis was performed using SPSS and SmartPLS software.

Thus, this section provides a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive statistics of data, assessment of measurement models, and assessment of structural models.

4.2.2. Demographic Characteristics of respondents

As shown in Table 8, the demographic characteristics of the participants show that they are predominantly men, with males making up 67.07% of the respondents and females accounting for 32.93%. The majority of respondents (38.04%) fall into the 30-40 age group, followed by 29.02% of respondents aged between 18 and 29, indicating that the participants skew younger. In terms of academic qualification, 44.87% hold a bachelor's degree, while 25.12% hold a master's degree, suggesting that the majority of respondents are generally well educated. Regarding the tourist category, 79.6% of respondents were domestic tourists, while 20.74% were international tourists, implying that Bale Mountain National Park is highly visited by domestic tourists.

Table 8. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	percentage
Gender	Male	275	67.07
	Female	135	32.93
Total		410	100%
Age	18- 29	119	29.02
	30-40	156	38.04
	41-50	90	21.95
	50 & above	45	10.97
Total		410	100%
Academic qualification	Vocational	82	20
	B.Sc./BA	184	44.87
	MBA/MSc/MA	103	25.12
	MPhil/PhD	25	6.09
	other	16	3.90
Total		410	100%
Group	Domestic tourist	325	79.26
	International tourist	82	20.74
Total		410	100%

Source: field study survey 2024

4.2.3. Descriptive Analysis

4.2.3.1. Tourism marketing practices

Product

In this section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the availability of tourism products in and around Bale Mountains National Park. Based on feedback, mean scores and standard deviations of all statements are given in [Table 9](#). Since it is the tendency of respondents to be more positive, a median of all mean scores of 7 statements was calculated and assumed as the middle point, which was 3.4090. Tourism product measurements having a mean score equal to or above the median score of 3.4090 are considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurements having a mean score below the median are considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. In accordance with this logic, the availability of stunning landscape scores a mean of 4.2732, wildlife resources score a mean of 4.1073, natural resources score a mean of 3.9976, the unique and authentic culture of the local community scores a mean of 4.0463, and local cuisines from various cultural backgrounds score a mean of 3.9341, implying that Bale Mountain National Park has huge tourism potential. On the other hand, accommodation and infrastructure scores have a mean of 1.7195 and 1.7854, respectively, which indicates poor availability of accommodation and infrastructure in and around the national park.

Pricing

In this section, the respondents were asked the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the pricing of Bale Mountains National Park and its feasibility. As can be seen from [Table 9](#), the median of all mean scores of 3 statements is 2.3544. Tourism pricing measurements having a mean score equal to or above the median score of 2.3544 are considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurements having a mean score below the median are considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. Based on this logic, the provision of a satisfactory level of income for the national park scores a mean of 2.3024, the ability to cover any ecological harm or damage caused by the visitors scores a mean of 2.3463, and the capacity to generate an appropriate level of benefits for the host community scores a mean of 2.0146. All mean scores of tourism pricing measurement are below the median score, which indicates that the respondents skew to a low state of agreement.

Placing

In this section, the respondents were asked the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the placement of tourism products in and around Bale Mountains National Park. As can be seen from [Table 9](#), the median of all mean scores of 3 statements is 4.072. Tourism placing measurements having a mean score equal to or above the median score of 4.072 are considered to

have a better state of agreement, while measurements having a mean score below the median are considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. Going by this logic, the presentation of a wide range of travel opportunities to tourists scores a mean of 4.2732, the provision of information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage scores a mean of 4.1073, and the provision of estimates of travel time and distance scores a mean of 4.0463, while the provision of directions and maps and support facilities along different travel routes within the national park scores a mean of 3.9976 and 3.9341, respectively, indicating that low state of agreement.

Promotion

In the fourth section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked the extent of their agreement or disagreement with the usage of promotional tools by Bale Mountains National Park. Based on feedback, mean scores and standard deviations of all statements are given in [Table 9](#). Since it is the tendency of respondents to be more negative, a median of all mean scores of 5 statements was calculated and assumed as the middle point, which was 2.2770. Tourism promotion measurement having a mean score equal to or above the median score of 2.2770 is considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurement having a mean score below the median is considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. By applying this reasoning, usage of printing and broadcast media to build a favorable image about the national park scores a mean of 3.8244, while sponsoring local events and festivals or sports tournaments, implementing a various short-term incentives to attract tourists, using telephone, e-mail, and other tools to communicate directly about the national park, and creating and sharing relevant content to attract and retain tourists through social media score below the median score, implying poor practice of tourism promotion in Bale Mountains National Park.

People

In the fifth section of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked the extent of agreement or disagreement on the quality and behaviour of employees of Bale Mountains National Park in providing service. Based on feedback, mean scores and standard deviations of all statements are given in [Table 9](#). Measurements having a mean score equal to or above the median score of 1.9780 are considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurements having a mean score below the median are considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. Following this logic, employees look professional, and the knowledge and skill to understand the needs and answer tourist questions score a mean of 2.2951, while other measurements score below the median value.

Process

The sixth section of the questionnaire asked the respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with the flow of activities and procedures used by Bale Mountains National Park during delivery of service. [Table 9](#) presents the mean scores and standard deviations of all statements

based on feedback. Measurements having a mean score equal to or above the median score of 4.0580 are considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurements having a mean score below the median are considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. Going by this logic, providing service within the standard time frame scores a mean of 4.1070, treating visitors with respect and professionalism scores a mean of 4.0700, and responding quickly to customer inquiries or complaints scores a mean of 3.9970.

Physical evidence

The respondents were questioned regarding the degree of agreement or disagreement they felt with the tangible evidence of Bale Mountains National Park in the seventh section of the questionnaire. Table 9 provides the mean scores and standard deviations of all statements, based on the feedback of respondents. Measurements with a mean score with a value equal to or greater than the median score of 2.3300 are deemed to have a higher level of agreement, while those with a mean score that is lower than the median score are deemed to have a comparatively low level of agreement. In accordance with this reasoning, working areas are designated according to the needed standard score a mean of 1.668, offices and working environments are well furnished, and attractive scores mean of 1.663, which is lower than the median score. However, logos, signs, and images are understandable, and communicable scores have a mean of 3.492, and display photographs showing all the aspects of the destination scores have a mean of 2.497.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of tourism marketing practices

Tourism product measurement	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.D.
The national park has a stunning landscape	410	4	5	4.273	.446
Enrich with wildlife resources (fauna, mammals, birds, etc.)	410	3	5	4.107	.467
Rich with natural resources (forest, flora, lakes, beaches, etc.).	410	3	5	3.997	.346
Unique and authentic culture of local community	410	2	5	4.046	.723
Multiple local cuisines from various cultural backgrounds	410	2	4	3.934	.258
Enough and attractive accommodation	410	1	2	1.719	.449
Adequate infrastructure (transportation, electricity, water)	410	1	3	1.785	.416
Median Value				3.409	
Tourism pricing measurement					
Provide a satisfactory level of income for the national park	410	2	4	2.302	.498
Cover any ecological harm or damage caused by the visitors.	410	1	3	2.346	.634
Generate an appropriate level of benefits for the host community	410	1	3	2.014	.536
Median Value				2.354	
Tourism placing measurement					
Present a wide range of travel opportunities to tourists.	410	4	5	4.273	.446
Provide information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage.	410	3	5	4.107	.467

Providing directions and maps.	410	3	5	3.997	.346
Providing estimates of travel time and distance	410	2	5	4.046	.724
Offering facilities along different travel routes within the park.	410	2	4	3.934	.258
Median Value				4.072	
Tourism promotion measurement					
Sponsoring local events and festivals, or sports tournaments.	410	1	4	1.780	.818
Implement a variety of short-term incentives to attract tourists.	410	1	4	1.761	.750
Use telephone, e-mail, and other tools to communicate directly about the national park.	410	1	4	1.839	.796
Create and share relevant content through social media.	410	1	4	2.180	.868
Use printing and broadcast media to build a favourable image about the national park.	410	2	5	3.824	.631
Median Value				2.277	
People					
The staff of national park is friendly.	410	1	5	1.873	.985
Employee behaviour and attitude increase tourist satisfaction and create a memorable experience.	410	1	5	1.833	.850
Employees look professional.	410	1	5	2.000	.902
The park has knowledgeable and skilled employees to understand the needs and answer tourist questions	410	1	5	2.295	1.034
Median Value				1.5800	
Process					
Provide service within the standard time frame.	410	3	5	4.107	.467
Responding quickly to customer inquiries or complaints.	410	3	5	3.997	.346
Treating visitors with respect and professionalism	410	2	5	4.070	.724
Median Value				4.058	
Physical evidence					
Working areas are designated according to the needed standard.	410	1	2	1.668	.471
Offices and working environments are well furnished and attractive.	410	1	2	1.663	.473
Logos, signs, and images are understandable and communicable.	410	2	4	3.492	.769
Display photographs showing all the aspects of the destination.	410	2	3	2.497	.500
Median Value				2.330	

Source: field study survey 2024 and SPSS output

4.2.3.2. Sustainable tourism dimensions

Economic Dimension

In this section, the questionnaire asked respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with the contribution of tourism activities to economic sustainability in and around Bale Mountains National Park. Based on feedback, mean scores and standard deviations of all statements are given in [Table 10](#), and a median of all mean scores of 5 statements was calculated and assumed as the middle point, which was 3.8780. Economic dimension measurements having a mean score equal to or greater than the median score of 3.8780 are considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurements having a mean score less than the median are considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. In accordance with this reasoning, support local economies, increase employment opportunities, and increase the market for local products scores, with a mean greater than the median value, indicating a better state of agreement. However, two other measurements, i.e., ensuring the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations and maximizing the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the national park, score less than the median value given.

Socio-cultural dimension

Under this dimension, the questionnaire asked respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with the involvement of tourism activities in socio-cultural sustainability in and around Bale Mountains National Park. Based on feedback, mean scores and standard deviations of all statements are given in [Table 10](#), and a median of all mean scores of 5 statements was calculated and assumed as the middle point, which was 3.5440. Sociocultural measurement having a mean score equal to or greater than the median score of 3.5440 is considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurement having a mean score less than the median is considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement.

In accordance with this logic, empower local communities in the future development of tourism, scoring a mean of 4.012; improve the quality of life for local communities, scoring a mean of 3.773; and respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, and distinctiveness of host communities, scoring a mean of 3.668, while providing all available services without discrimination and stakeholder participation in decision-making, scoring less than the median value.

Environmental dimension

Under this dimension, the questionnaire asked respondents how much they agreed or disagreed with the contribution of tourism activities to environmental sustainability in and around Bale Mountains National Park. Based on feedback, mean scores and standard deviations of all statements are given in [Table 10](#), and a median of all mean scores of 5 statements was calculated

and assumed as the middle point, which was 3.9770. Environmental measurement having a mean score equal to or greater than the median score of 3.9770 is considered to have a better state of agreement, while measurement having a mean score less than the median is considered to have a comparatively low state of agreement. In accordance with this logic, three measurement scores are above the median value, and two measurement scores are below the median value.

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of sustainable tourism

Economic Dimension	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations	410	1	5	3.705	1.050
Increased employment opportunities	410	1	5	3.995	1.037
Increases market for local products	410	1	5	3.881	1.012
Support local economies	410	1	5	4.054	1.029
Maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the national park	410	1	5	3.775	1.003
Median Value				3.878	
Socio-cultural Dimension					
Improve the quality of life for local communities.	410	1	5	3.773	1.193
Empower local communities in the future development of tourism.	410	1	5	4.012	1.084
Stakeholder participation in decision-making (government, investor, local community, universities, and NGOs)	410	1	5	3.200	1.129
Provide all available services without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or other ways.	410	1	5	3.068	1.149
Respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, and distinctiveness of host communities.	410	1	5	3.668	1.075
Median Value				3.544	
Environmental Dimension					
Maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes.	410	2	5	3.949	.753
Support the conservation of natural areas, habitats, and wildlife.	410	2	5	4.019	.864
Minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources (minerals).	410	2	5	3.993	.888
Reduces over-consumption and waste (timber, firewood)	410	1	5	4.063	1.011
Minimize the pollution of air, water, and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.	410	1	5	3.863	1.081
Median Value				3.977	

Source: field study survey 2024 and SPSS output

4.2.4. Assessment of measurement model

4.2.4.1. Reliability of constructs

Cronbach's Alpha (α) is the predominant measurement for assessing the internal consistency of constructs (Streiner, 2003). Hence, the reliability assessment of the ten constructs was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha (α). Hair et al. (2020) assert that the reliability of the variable must equal or above an acceptable value of 0.7. As shown in Table 12, the reliability of the constructs in this study was found to be above the suggested level, indicating good internal consistency. Moreover, the adequacy of the sample was evaluated to determine the suitability of the data for a factor analysis. The adequacy of sampling was assessed using KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. According to Kaiser and Rice (1974), KMO values above 0.5 are deemed appropriate, whereas values ranging from 0.8 to 0.9 are considered very good. As a general rule of thumb, Hair et al. (2020) assert that the correlation between variables can be assessed using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. In this study, a statistically significant value of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Sig <0.05) was recorded, indicating that there is a significant correlation between the study variables. Therefore, a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value of 0.960 and a chi-square of 16596.906 with 741 degrees of freedom were noted at a significance level of .000. Table 11 summarizes these results.

Table 11. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.960
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity:	Approx. Chi-Square	16596.906
	df	741
	Sig.	.000

Source: field study survey 2024 and SPSS output

4.2.4.2. Convergent validity

Convergent validity is a type of measurement utilized to establish the validity of assessment by demonstrating a strong correlation among variables and evaluates whether a construct accurately measures the concept it is supposed to measure (Carlson & Herdman, 2012). Hence, to prove whether constructs were accurately measured, factor loadings (λ), composite reliability (ρ_c), and average variance extracted (AVE) were tested. Hair et al. (2021) argued that factor loading values of at least 0.7, composite reliability values exceeding 0.7, and average variance extracted values exceeding 0.5 are considered sufficient for establishing convergent validity. As shown in Table 12, factor loadings (λ) values greater than 0.7, composite reliability greater than 0.7, and average variance extracted (AVE) greater than 0.5 were recorded. Hence, the premise of convergent validity was satisfied.

Table 12 . Assessment of reliability and validity for lower order constructs

Constructs	Measurements	Factor loading
Tourism product	$\alpha = 0.883, CR = 0.909, AVE = 0.589, VIF = 2.754$	
Tp1	The national park has a stunning landscape	0.739
Tp2	Enrich with wildlife resources	0.786
Tp3	Rich with natural resources	0.818
Tp4	Unique and authentic culture of local community	0.743
Tp5	Multiple local cuisines from various cultural backgrounds	0.727
Tp6	Enough and attractive accommodation	0.739
Tp7	Adequate infrastructure	0.813
Tourism pricing	$\alpha = 0.792, CR = 0.878, AVE = 0.705, VIF = 1.883$	
Tpr1	Provide a satisfactory level of income for the national park	0.835
Tpr2	Cover any ecological harm or damage caused by the visitors.	0.876
Tpr3	Generate an appropriate level of benefits for the host community	0.807
Tourism placing	$\alpha = 0.891, CR = 0.918, AVE = 0.694, VIF = 2.384$	
Tpl1	Present a wide range of travel opportunities to tourists.	0.870
Tpl2	Provide information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage.	0.832
Tpl3	Providing directions and maps.	0.777
Tpl4	Providing estimates of travel time and distance	0.831
Tpl5	Offering facilities along different travel routes within the park.	0.849
Tourism promotion	$\alpha = 0.903, CR = 0.926, AVE = 0.716, VIF = 3.572$	
Tpor1	Sponsoring local events and festivals, or sports tournaments.	0.826
Tpor2	Implement a variety of short-term incentives to attract tourists.	0.834
Tpor3	Use telephone, e-mail, and other tools to communicate directly about the national park.	0.878
Tpor4	Create and share relevant content through social media.	0.809
Tpor5	Use printing and broadcast media to build a favourable image about the national park.	0.880
People	$\alpha = 0.946, CR = 0.961, AVE = 0.860, VIF = 3.187$	
Pep1	The staff of national park is friendly.	0.937
Pep2	Employee behaviour and attitude increase tourist satisfaction and create a memorable experience.	0.947
Pep3	Employees look professional.	0.902
Pep4	The park has knowledgeable and skilled employees to understand the needs and answer tourist questions	0.924

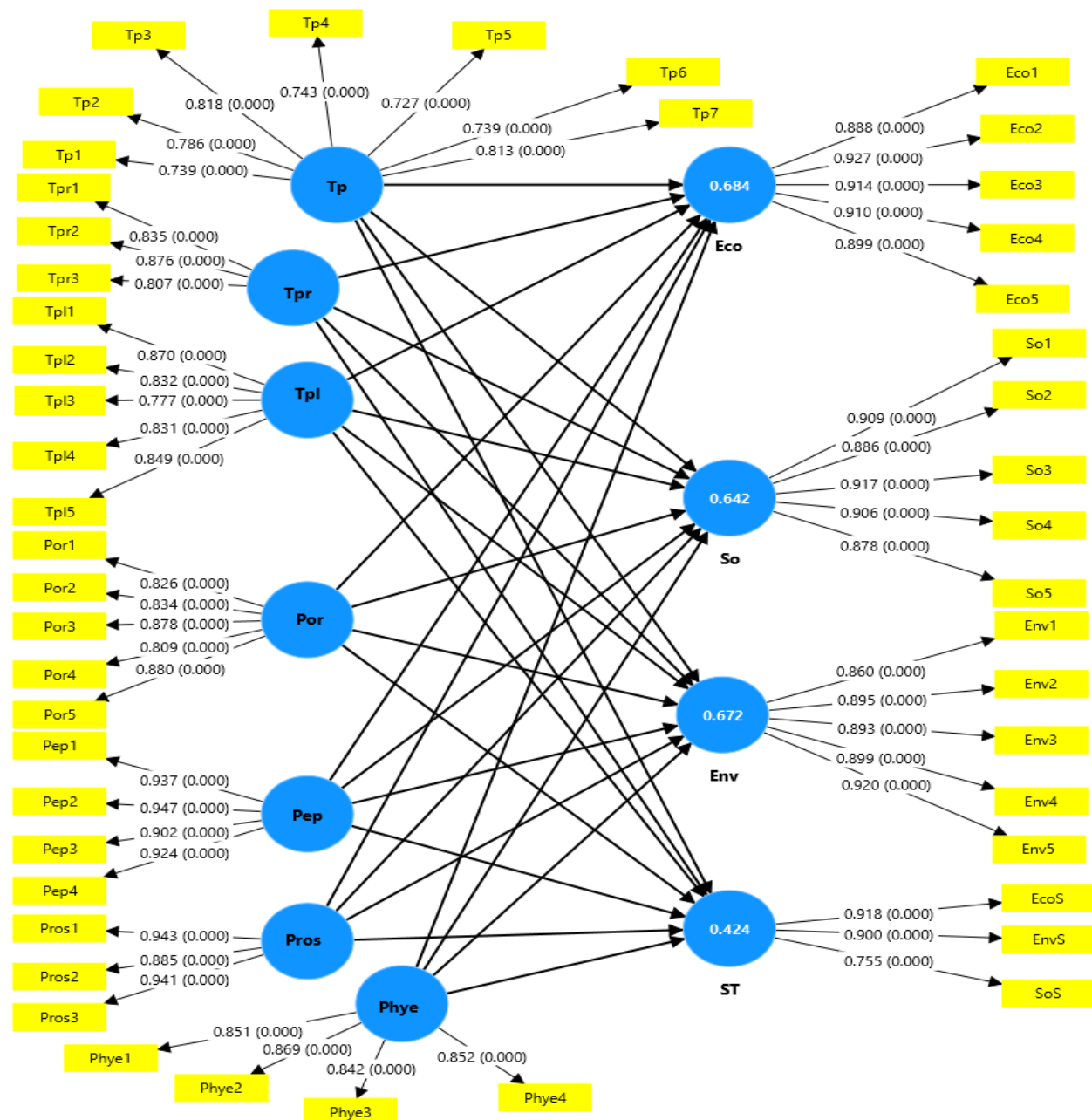
Continued.....

Process			$\alpha = 0.914, CR = 0.945, AVE = 0.853, VIF = 2.668$
Pors1	Provide service within the standard time frame.		0.944
Pors2	Responding quickly to customer inquiries or complaints.		0.885
Pors3	Treating visitors with respect, politeness, and professionalism		0.940
Physical evidence			$\alpha = 0.876, CR = 0.915, AVE = 0.729, VIF = 2.650$
Phye1	Working areas are designated according to the needed standard.		0.851
Phye2	Offices and working environments are well furnished.		0.869
Phye3	Logos, signs, and images are understandable and communicable.		0.842
Phye4	Display photographs showing all the aspects of the destination.		0.852
Economic dimension			$\alpha = 0.947, CR = 0.959, AVE = 0.824$
Eco1	Ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations		0.888
Eco2	Increased employment opportunities		0.927
Eco3	Increases market for local products		0.914
Eco4	Support local economies		0.910
Eco5	Maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the national park		0.899
Socio-cultural dimension			$\alpha = 0.941, CR = 0.955, AVE = 0.809$
So1	Improve the quality of life for local communities.		0.909
So2	Empower local communities in the future development of tourism.		0.886
So3	Stakeholder participation in decision-making (government, investor, local community, universities, and NGOs)		0.917
So4	Provide all available services without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or other ways.		0.906
So5	Respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, and distinctiveness of host communities.		0.878
Environmental dimension			$\alpha = 0.937, CR = 0.952, AVE = 0.799$
Env1	Maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes.		0.860
Env2	Support the conservation of natural areas, habitats, and wildlife.		0.895
Env3	Minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources.		0.893
Env4	Reduces over-consumption and waste (timber, firewood)		0.899
Env5	Minimize the pollution of air, water, and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.		0.920
Sustainable tourism			$\alpha = 0.827, CR = 0.895, AVE = 0.741$
EcoS	Derived from the mean score of economic dimensions		0.918
SoS	Derived from the mean score of sociocultural dimensions		0.755
EnvS	Derived from the mean score of environmental dimensions		0.900

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

The estimation of the structural model for the lower-order construct was also performed to examine the significance levels of the factor loadings. Loadings above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable, indicating that the indicators effectively represent their underlying constructs. As shown in Figure 8, in this study, all items exhibited loading ranging from 0.72 to 0.94, demonstrating acceptable results. Furthermore, the path coefficients show significant relationships among key constructs ($P < 0.05$), confirming that the relationships between variables are statistically significant. The factor loadings and p-values are shown in Figure 8, with the p-values presented in parentheses.

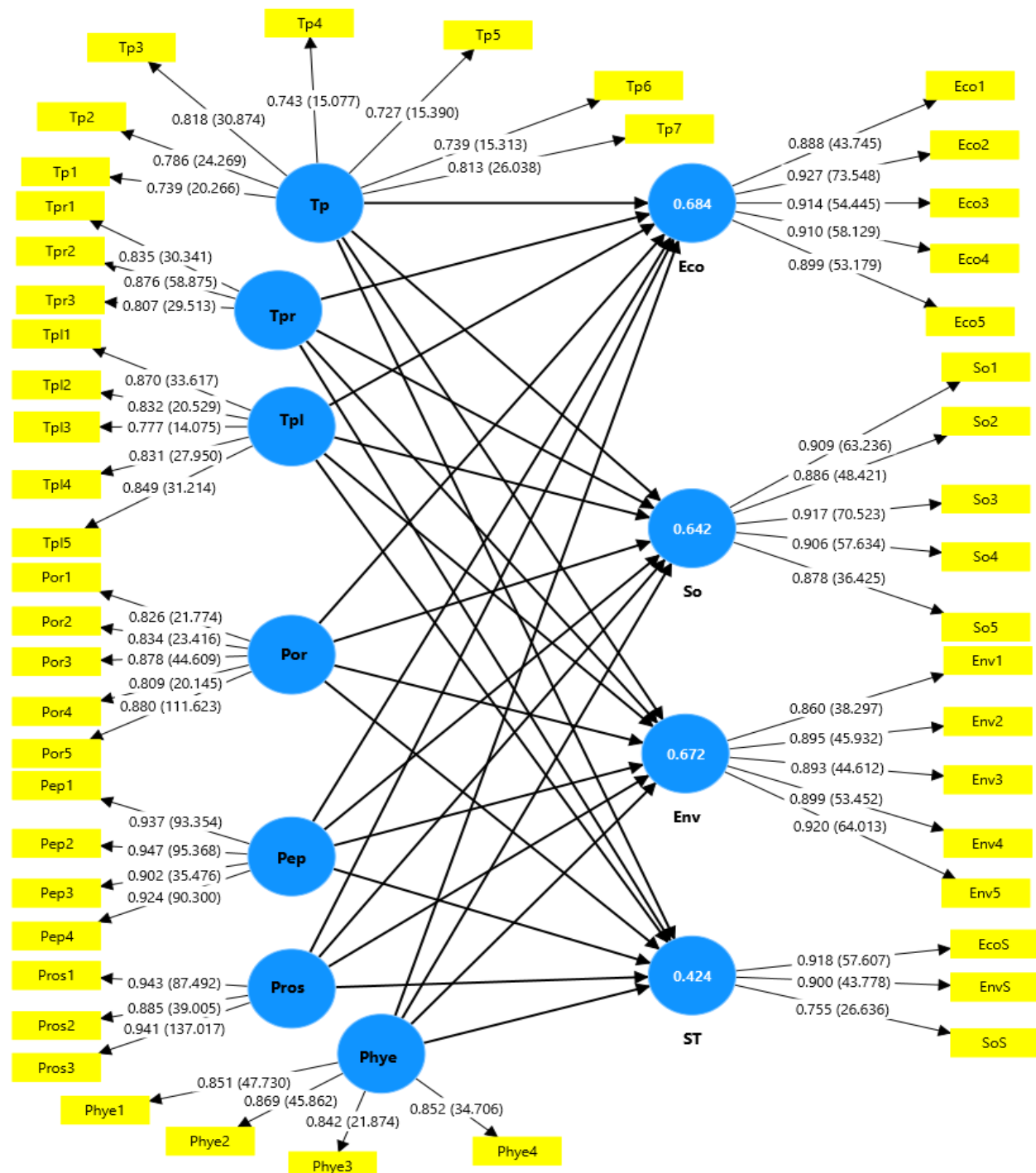
Figure 8. Factor loading and P-value for lower order construct



Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

Furthermore, the t-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure indicate the statistical significance of the path coefficient and factor loadings. As shown in figure 9, all path coefficients revealed t-values above 1.96, confirming significance at $p < 0.05$. This finding suggested that the relationship among constructs is statistically supported. The factor loadings and T-values are shown in Figure 9, with the T-values presented in parentheses.

Figure 9. Factor loading and T-value for lower order construct



Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

4.2.4.3. Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is a concept utilized to evaluate the extent to which a construct or measure is differentiated from other constructs or measurements (Cheung et al., 2024). This validity is established when the square root of a single construct's Average Variance Extracted is greater than the inter-variable correlation among the constructs in the model or when the square root of Average Variance Extracted surpasses its correlation values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Consequently, discriminant validity assesses constructs to confirm that those that should not exhibit strong correlation are, in fact, not significantly associated with one another (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022). Table 13 displays the correlation matrix of the constructs, indicating that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted value (highlighted in bold) exceeds the corresponding correlation values, confirming the fulfillment of the discriminant validity criterion.

Table 13. Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Eco	Env	Pep	Phye	Por	Pros	ST	So	Tp	Tpl	Tpr
Eco	0.908										
Env	0.791	0.894									
Pep	0.642	0.598	0.928								
Phye	0.595	0.442	0.682	0.854							
Por	0.543	0.426	0.778	0.771	0.846						
Pros	0.716	0.674	0.629	0.499	0.537	0.923					
ST	0.605	0.528	0.483	0.509	0.438	0.418	0.861				
So	0.769	0.701	0.652	0.691	0.58	0.666	0.626	0.899			
Tp	0.697	0.737	0.586	0.498	0.544	0.723	0.309	0.601	0.767		
Tpl	0.568	0.583	0.592	0.457	0.53	0.675	0.253	0.514	0.709	0.832	
Tpr	0.679	0.644	0.571	0.54	0.563	0.586	0.565	0.578	0.582	0.519	0.84

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

Moreover, discriminant validity is satisfying when the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) matrix is less than 0.85 (Henseler et al., 2015; Voorhees et al., 2016). Table 14 shows that the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) matrix value is less than the threshold, indicating good discriminant validity. Furthermore, discriminant validity is established when the loading of an item with the associated construct must exceed its loading with other constructs (Hair et al., 2021). Table 15 shows the cross-loading of constructs, indicating that corresponding constructs are greater than other constructs.

Table 14. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)-Matrix

	Eco	Env	Pep	Phye	Por	Pros	ST	So	Tp	Tpl	Tpr
Eco											
Env	0.839										
Pep	0.670	0.629									
Phye	0.649	0.483	0.745								
Por	0.556	0.433	0.844	0.842							
Pros	0.753	0.716	0.668	0.547	0.570						
ST	0.681	0.603	0.527	0.579	0.456	0.459					
So	0.816	0.748	0.682	0.754	0.589	0.709	0.710				
Tp	0.756	0.808	0.626	0.557	0.58	0.789	0.348	0.653			
Tpl	0.595	0.618	0.623	0.505	0.567	0.741	0.269	0.550	0.782		
Tpr	0.774	0.744	0.659	0.635	0.645	0.677	0.672	0.658	0.692	0.599	

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

Table 15. Cross-loading

	Eco	Env	Pep	Phye	Por	Pros	ST	So	Tp	Tpl	Tpr
Eco1	0.888	0.687	0.589	0.557	0.489	0.606	0.542	0.690	0.566	0.451	0.607
Eco2	0.927	0.743	0.609	0.590	0.508	0.637	0.587	0.730	0.630	0.523	0.633
Eco3	0.914	0.739	0.589	0.516	0.476	0.678	0.591	0.702	0.656	0.548	0.622
Eco4	0.910	0.709	0.530	0.511	0.459	0.671	0.536	0.682	0.653	0.503	0.590
Eco5	0.899	0.711	0.595	0.526	0.533	0.659	0.490	0.686	0.657	0.552	0.630
Env1	0.653	0.860	0.479	0.298	0.304	0.598	0.411	0.566	0.659	0.500	0.547
Env2	0.692	0.895	0.516	0.367	0.376	0.596	0.474	0.609	0.643	0.489	0.555
Env3	0.696	0.893	0.546	0.397	0.397	0.597	0.442	0.583	0.648	0.505	0.565
Env4	0.751	0.899	0.522	0.451	0.387	0.592	0.553	0.682	0.654	0.521	0.598
Env5	0.740	0.920	0.603	0.459	0.435	0.627	0.479	0.686	0.687	0.586	0.610
Pep1	0.564	0.540	0.937	0.620	0.729	0.571	0.406	0.584	0.524	0.552	0.516
Pep2	0.541	0.538	0.947	0.611	0.731	0.572	0.407	0.578	0.538	0.575	0.505
Pep3	0.546	0.507	0.902	0.573	0.691	0.558	0.388	0.529	0.520	0.490	0.511
Pep4	0.701	0.616	0.924	0.707	0.732	0.623	0.560	0.700	0.582	0.573	0.575
Phye1	0.498	0.441	0.600	0.851	0.611	0.412	0.447	0.580	0.453	0.410	0.445
Phye2	0.503	0.399	0.652	0.869	0.669	0.435	0.411	0.623	0.419	0.411	0.460
Phye3	0.573	0.372	0.491	0.842	0.635	0.446	0.480	0.608	0.412	0.343	0.467
Phye4	0.447	0.286	0.593	0.852	0.728	0.406	0.393	0.540	0.415	0.400	0.472
Por1	0.313	0.232	0.690	0.548	0.826	0.397	0.241	0.356	0.337	0.402	0.398
Por2	0.373	0.272	0.669	0.576	0.834	0.384	0.280	0.384	0.392	0.414	0.412
Por3	0.480	0.375	0.689	0.636	0.878	0.510	0.353	0.473	0.489	0.479	0.477
Por4	0.401	0.319	0.597	0.601	0.809	0.398	0.318	0.411	0.508	0.482	0.446
Por5	0.611	0.495	0.666	0.803	0.880	0.527	0.539	0.689	0.519	0.456	0.578
Pros1	0.641	0.605	0.595	0.443	0.496	0.943	0.304	0.589	0.698	0.615	0.510
Pros2	0.520	0.517	0.518	0.385	0.439	0.885	0.303	0.537	0.545	0.677	0.458
Pros3	0.782	0.714	0.618	0.531	0.539	0.941	0.513	0.696	0.734	0.596	0.627
EcoS	0.592	0.490	0.414	0.488	0.394	0.400	0.918	0.609	0.319	0.232	0.544
SoS	0.456	0.433	0.327	0.306	0.252	0.288	0.755	0.479	0.202	0.194	0.327
EnvS	0.510	0.449	0.486	0.487	0.451	0.378	0.900	0.528	0.263	0.227	0.547
So1	0.731	0.685	0.577	0.584	0.472	0.629	0.588	0.909	0.565	0.462	0.509
So2	0.738	0.679	0.526	0.532	0.432	0.630	0.605	0.886	0.583	0.465	0.493
So3	0.661	0.584	0.623	0.713	0.588	0.581	0.545	0.917	0.533	0.459	0.537
So4	0.675	0.572	0.629	0.702	0.604	0.590	0.529	0.906	0.544	0.494	0.552
So5	0.656	0.641	0.569	0.559	0.500	0.568	0.555	0.878	0.476	0.426	0.508
Tp1	0.617	0.540	0.587	0.526	0.598	0.606	0.279	0.504	0.739	0.580	0.518
Tp2	0.509	0.562	0.629	0.428	0.580	0.641	0.213	0.465	0.786	0.662	0.463
Tp3	0.505	0.561	0.578	0.435	0.508	0.630	0.245	0.506	0.818	0.640	0.434
Tp4	0.609	0.586	0.474	0.411	0.475	0.574	0.336	0.515	0.743	0.556	0.505
Tp5	0.459	0.521	0.210	0.244	0.204	0.477	0.107	0.364	0.727	0.478	0.378
Tp6	0.500	0.568	0.263	0.269	0.220	0.443	0.216	0.393	0.739	0.334	0.394
Tp7	0.515	0.609	0.347	0.318	0.277	0.489	0.227	0.450	0.813	0.532	0.409
Tpl1	0.528	0.480	0.612	0.456	0.596	0.612	0.232	0.463	0.607	0.870	0.464
Tpl2	0.387	0.421	0.512	0.368	0.451	0.533	0.143	0.385	0.561	0.832	0.411
Tpl3	0.355	0.379	0.397	0.309	0.336	0.465	0.147	0.392	0.501	0.777	0.298
Tpl4	0.612	0.619	0.571	0.437	0.505	0.640	0.377	0.488	0.668	0.831	0.562
Tpl5	0.398	0.460	0.305	0.285	0.243	0.506	0.065	0.374	0.572	0.849	0.347
Tpr1	0.539	0.528	0.374	0.390	0.356	0.392	0.552	0.501	0.335	0.287	0.835
Tpr2	0.673	0.582	0.544	0.589	0.563	0.572	0.478	0.565	0.592	0.513	0.876
Tpr3	0.478	0.507	0.527	0.354	0.500	0.513	0.382	0.368	0.544	0.518	0.807

Source : survey data (generated by smartpls4)

4.2.5. Higher order reflective measurement model

At this phase, the research assessed the measurement capabilities of the higher-order reflective constructs: tourism marketing practices (TMP). As stated in chapter 3, the measurement of reflective constructs was evaluated using reliability and AVE, as presented in Table 16. Figure 9 illustrates the hierarchical links between tourism marketing practices and endogenous constructs: economic dimension, social dimension, environmental dimension, and sustainable tourism. At the higher-order stage, the constructs (TMP) were measured by reflective constructs: tourism product, tourism pricing, tourism placing, tourism promotion, people, process, and physical evidence. Chapter 3 provided a detailed explanation of the measurement constructs. The construct scores were operationalized as substitutes to measure the higher-order construct using the two-stage approach, as outlined in Chapter 3. Table 16 displays the analysis results for measuring the higher-order constructs.

Table 16. Assessment of reliability and validity for higher order constructs

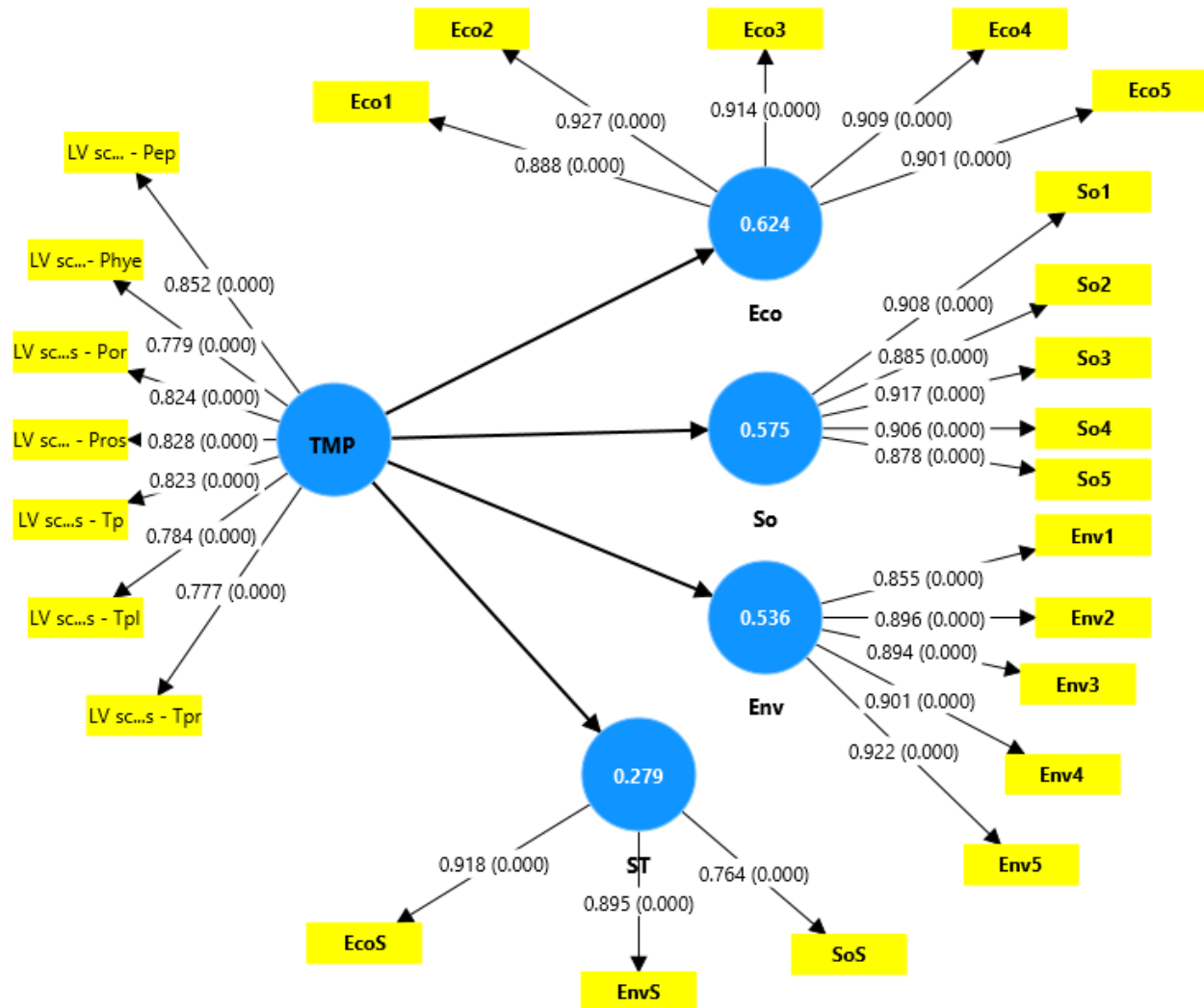
Higher order Constructs	Second order constructs score	t-value	Factor loading	α	CR	AVE	VIF
Tourism marketing practices (TMP)	Tourism product (Tp)	43.624	0.823	0.913	0.930	0.656	2.754
	Tourism pricing (Tpr)	29.259	0.777				1.883
	Tourism placing (Tpl)	18.032	0.784				2.384
	Tourism promotion (Tpor)	51.809	0.824				3.572
	People (Pep)	50.670	0.852				3.187
	Process (Pros)	36.310	0.828				2.668
	Physical evidence (Phye)	31.068	0.779				2.650

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

Table 16 indicates that the loading factor of each construct score related to tourism marketing practices (TMP) is above the threshold value of 0.7. Furthermore, it is evident that all t-values associated with the loading scores are significant at $P = 0.000$ (see Figure 10). Also, Table 16 shows proof that composite reliability (CR) for this higher-order construct significantly surpasses the recommended limit of 0.7. In addition, the AVE value demonstrates the convergent validity of this model, as it is greater than the minimum threshold of 0.5. Using the two-stage approach (Brunner et al., 2022), this was measured by latent variable scores derived from the lower-order constructs: tourism product, tourism pricing, tourism placing, tourism promotion, people, process,

and physical evidence (see Table 16). The measurement model of tourism marketing practices (TMP) after replacing the lower order construct is shown by Figure 10.

Figure 10. Factor loading and P-value for higher order construct



Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

Similarly, the discriminant validity for the higher-order construct was assessed by comparing the correlation among the latent variables with the square root of AVE (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022) and the Heterotrait-monotrait ratio-Matrix (Roemer et al., 2021). The square root of AVE for the construct is greater than the corresponding constructs, and the HTMT ratio is less than the required threshold of 0.85 (see Tables 17 and 18). Furthermore, as shown by Table 19, the cross-loading of constructs reveals that corresponding constructs are greater than other constructs. Hence, the discriminant validity is established for higher-order constructs (TMP).

Table 17. Fornell-Larcker criterion

	Eco	Env	ST	So	TMP
Eco	0.908				
Env	0.792	0.894			
ST	0.605	0.529	0.861		
So	0.769	0.701	0.627	0.899	
TMP	0.79	0.732	0.528	0.758	0.81

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

Table 18. Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)-Matrix

	Eco	Env	ST	So	TMP
Eco					
Env	0.839				
ST	0.681	0.603			
So	0.816	0.748	0.71		
TMP	0.842	0.782	0.591	0.813	

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

Table 19. Cross-loading

	Eco	Env	ST	So	TMP
LV scores - Pep	0.642	0.599	0.481	0.652	0.852
LV scores - Phye	0.595	0.444	0.507	0.691	0.779
LV scores - Por	0.544	0.427	0.436	0.58	0.824
LV scores - Pros	0.716	0.674	0.418	0.666	0.828
LV scores - Tp	0.697	0.736	0.309	0.601	0.823
LV scores - Tpl	0.569	0.583	0.253	0.514	0.784
LV scores - Tpr	0.679	0.644	0.563	0.579	0.777

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

4.2.6. An assessment of the structural model

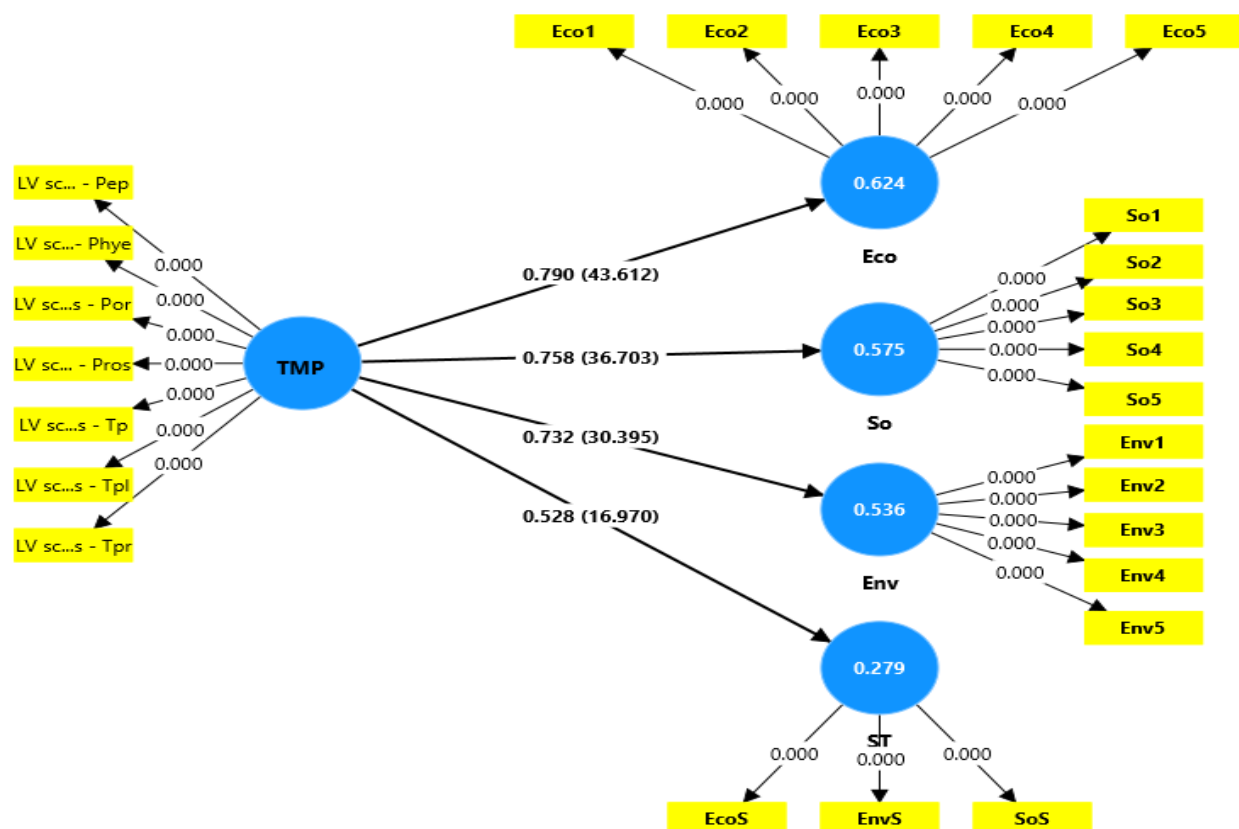
The measurement model validated that the collected data for this study was reliable and valid. The next phase is evaluating the structural model. This phase involved observing the statistical significance of path coefficients, path loading, and t-values among the constructs. In addition, the predictive power (R^2), predictive accuracy (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and goodness of fit index were

observed. Nevertheless, it is imperative to verify collinearity issues prior to evaluating the predictive power of the constructs in the model. Collinearity arises when variables demonstrate a high degree of correlation, making it challenging to produce a valid coefficient estimate. Collinearity was evaluated using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). In most cases, variance inflation factor levels below five signify the data has no issues with collinearity. As illustrated in Table 16, all Variance inflation factor values were below 5. Consequently, no collinearity problem existed among the constructs. Thus, it is now possible to evaluate the predictive power and accuracy of the model.

4.2.6.1. Path coefficients

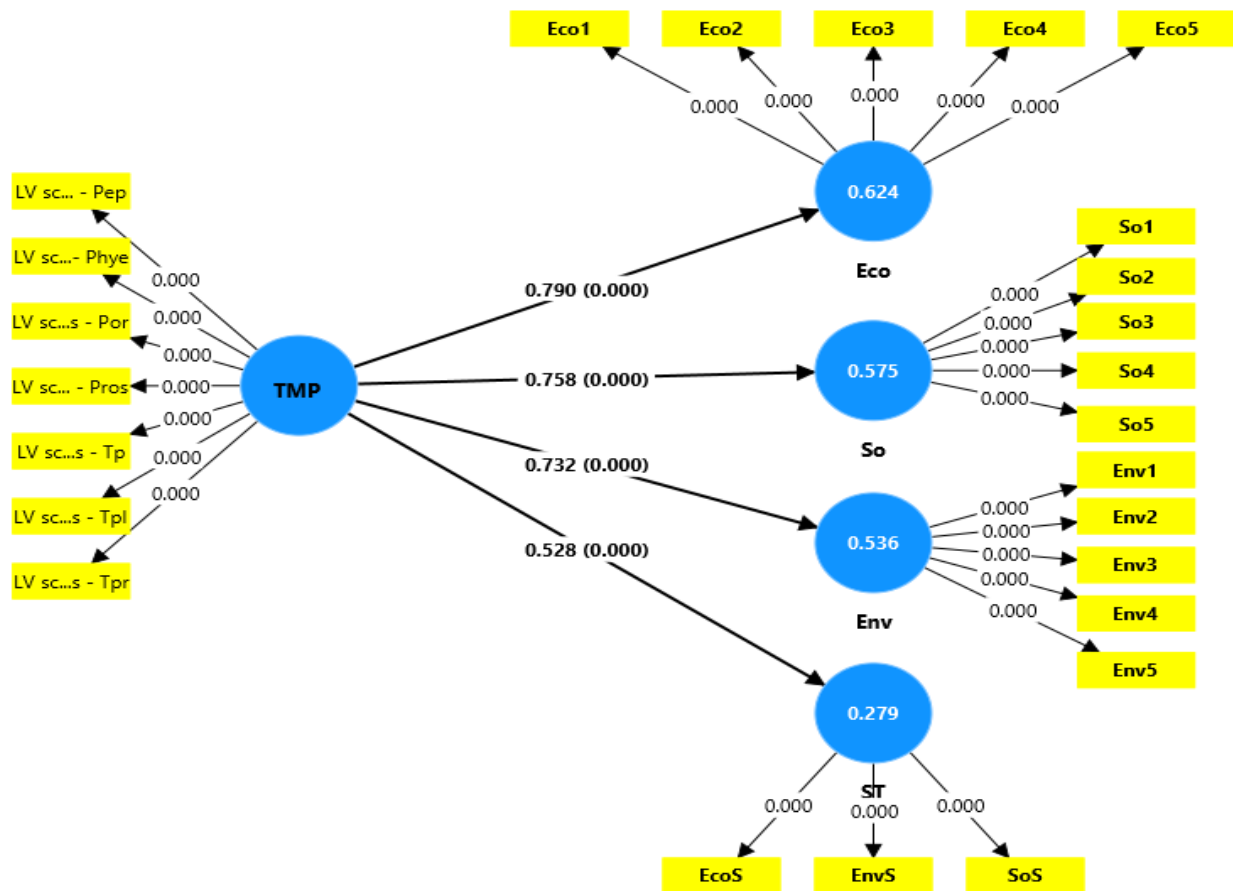
A path coefficient and associated t-values were computed to evaluate the correlation among the constructs as postulated in this study. The path coefficient with a positive value indicates a positive relationship between the constructs, while conversely, a negative coefficient suggests the opposite. The t-value assesses the significance of the correlations among the constructs. Figures 11 and 12 illustrate the path coefficient and t-values. It is important to note that the models depicted in Figures 11 and 12 incorporate the influence of independent variables (the tourism marketing) on dependent variables (the sustainable tourism).

Figure 11. Path coefficients and T-values



Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 bootstrapping output)

Figure 12. Path coefficients and P-values



Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 bootstrapping output)

4.2.6.2. predictive power (R^2)

In order to determine the ability of the structural model to predict and explain the endogenous latent variables, the coefficient of determination (R^2) values are evaluated. Four coefficients of determination were examined. The first elucidates the variance in economic dimensions, the second illustrates the variances in sociocultural dimensions, and the final explains the variance in environmental dimensions. The value of the coefficient of determination of tourism marketing practices = 0.82 indicates that tourism product, tourism pricing, tourism placing, tourism promotion, people, process, and physical evidence explain 82% of tourism marketing practices. The value of the coefficient of determination of the economic dimension = 0.06 indicates that tourism marketing explains 60% of the tourism variance of the economic dimension. Also, the value of the coefficient of determination of the socio-cultural dimension = 0.05 indicates that tourism marketing explains 50% of the variance of the socio-cultural dimension. Moreover, the value of the coefficient of determination of the environmental dimension = 0.04 indicates that

tourism marketing explains 40% of the variance of the environmental dimension. The predictive power (R^2) values are shown in [Table 20](#).

Table 20. Predictive power and relevance

Constructs	Coefficient of determination (R^2)	Predictive relevance (Q^2)
Economic dimension (Eco)	0.624	0.619
Social dimension (So)	0.575	0.571
Environmental dimension (Env)	0.536	0.532
Sustainable tourism (ST)	0.279	0.272

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

4.2.6.3. Predictive accuracy(Q^2)

This study also employed Stone-Geisser's indicators (Q^2) to evaluate the predictive accuracy of the constructs in addition to assessing predictive power (R^2). The calculation was performed with blindfolding methods in Partial Least Squares analysis. According to Hair 2020, a good indicator value should have exceeded zero. However, an excellent model would have a predictive accuracy (Q^2) value of 1, indicating that it accurately represents reality without any errors. [Table 20](#) demonstrates that predictive accuracy (Q^2) values surpass zero, proving that the Q^2 of the structural model is good. It also suggests that the constructs are crucial for the model's overall adjustment.

4.2.6.4. Effect size (f^2)

Besides the assessment of the coefficient of determination (R^2) and predictive accuracy (Q^2) values, the effect size (f^2) was also computed for the endogenous variables. The effect size (f^2) estimates the influence of a certain predictive construct on an endogenous variable (Hair et al. 2020). [Table 21](#) shows the effect size (f^2) of the higher-order construct tourism marketing practices (TMP) on the endogenous variables.

Table 21. Effect size (f^2)

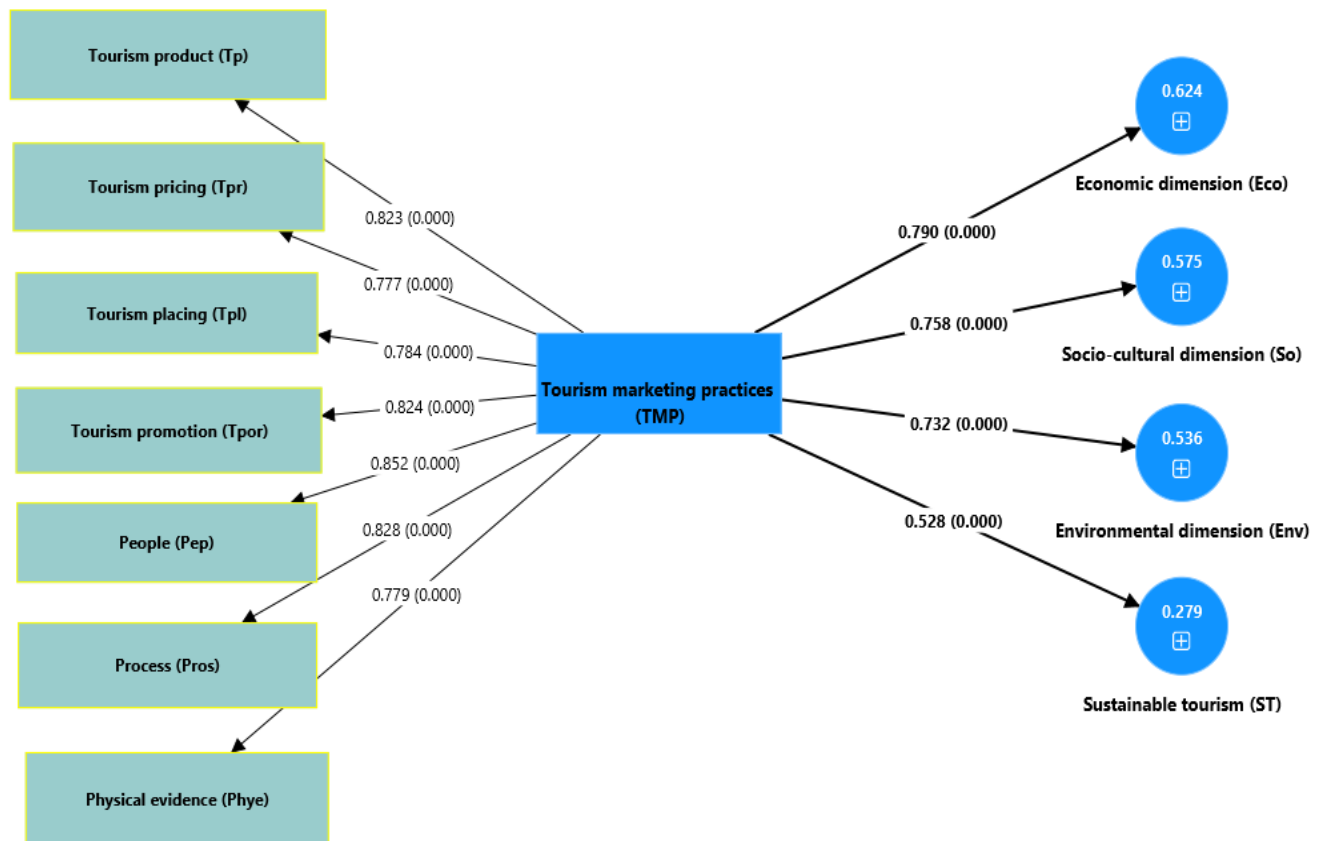
	Eco	So	Env	ST	TMP
TMP	1.656	1.355	1.156	0.386	

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

4.2.7. Structural model estimation

The structural model was estimated to evaluate hypotheses H1 to H4. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation modeling approach of non-parametric bootstrapping was employed to assess the significance of the predicted path coefficients (P-values). The path coefficients are illustrated in Figure 13 alongside their P-value in parentheses.

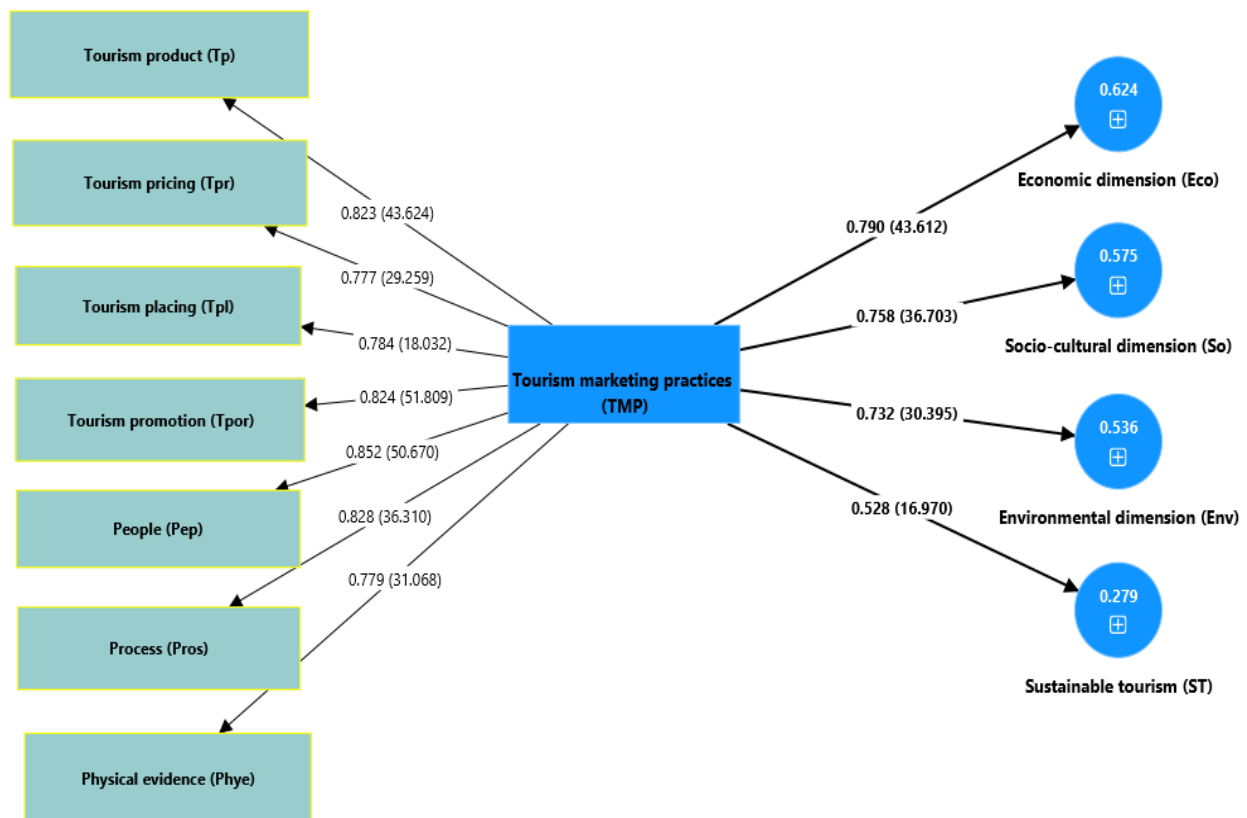
Figure 13. Model estimation showing the overall significance level (P-values)



Source : Survey data analysis 2024 (smartpls4 bootstrapping output)

A path coefficient and associated t-values were computed in order to evaluate the correlation among the constructs as postulated in this study. The path coefficient with a positive value indicates a positive relationship between the constructs, while conversely, a negative coefficient suggests the opposite. The t-value assesses the significance of the correlations among the constructs. Figure 14 illustrates the path coefficient and t-values. It is important to note that the models depicted in Figure 14 incorporate the influence of independent variables (tourism marketing) on dependent variables (sustainable tourism).

Figure 14. Model estimation showing the overall T-values



Source : Survey data analysis 2024 (smartpls4 bootstrapping output)

Table 22. Summary of Model

Hypothesis	Structural relationship	Path coefficients	t-value	P-value	Decision
H1	TMP -> Eco	0.790	43.612	0.000	Accepted
H2	TMP -> So	0.758	36.703	0.000	Accepted
H3	TMP -> Env	0.732	30.395	0.000	Accepted
H4	TMP -> ST	0.528	16.970	0.000	Accepted

Source: survey data 2024 (Smartpls4 output)

The outcomes of the hypothesis testing, illustrated in Table 22, indicate that all hypotheses are supported, as the T-values and P-values associated with them are above the critical value. The structural relationship analysis indicated a significant positive influence of tourism marketing on the economic dimension ($\beta = 0.790$, t-value = 43.612, $P = 0.000$). Accordingly, the study reveals that tourism marketing strongly influences the economic sustainability of Bale Mountains National Park. Therefore, H1 was accepted. Moreover, tourism marketing is significantly

associated with the sociocultural dimension ($\beta = 0.758$, $t\text{-value} = 36.703$, $P = 0.000$), implying that it is a significant contributor to the sociocultural sustainability of Bale Mountains National Park. Hence, H2 was supported. Furthermore, the structural relationships analysis showed the impact of tourism marketing on the environmental dimension ($\beta = 0.732$, $t\text{-value} = 30.395$, $P = 0.000$), indicating that tourism marketing is a significant influencer of the environmental sustainability of Bale Mountains National Park. Thus, H3 was accepted. In addition, tourism marketing has a significant positive relationship with sustainable tourism ($\beta = 0.528$, $t\text{-value} = 16.970$, $P = 0.000$). This finding directs acceptance for H4. Hence, H4 is accepted.

4.3. DISCUSSION OF THE HYPOTHESES

4.3.1. Introduction

This section aims to discuss the empirical findings of the preceding chapter. The empirical findings are discussed in accordance with the hypothesized correlations among various constructs in the model and the research objectives. In line with the research objectives and research questions, this study was undertaken to discover some important findings that had not previously been addressed in the field of tourism marketing in the context of protected areas, particularly in the context of Bale Mountains National Park. The study's unique contribution was the empirical validation of the tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism model and testing the relationship between them using Partial Least Square-based Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The study's findings are discussed in the following sections through the perspective of statistical evidence and existing theories. This section begins with an explanation of the hypotheses linked to the research model and then concludes with a short summary.

4.3.1.1. Tourism marketing and economic dimension (hypothesis 1)

H1- Tourism marketing has a statistically positive significant impact on ensuring viable, long-term economic operations and benefits to all stakeholders in and around the national park. This research investigates the relationship between tourism marketing and economic sustainability, which is aligned with study objective 1. The results of the analysis indicated significant statistical proof supporting that there is a positive relationship between tourism marketing practices and economic sustainability. The study findings report the positive relationship between tourism marketing practices and economic sustainability ($\beta = 0.790$, $t\text{-value} = 43.612$, $P = 0.000$), proving the theoretical premise that tourism marketing is an essential contributor to economic sustainability. It points out that enhancing appropriate tourism marketing practices will attract international and domestic visitors to Bale Mountains National Park, increasing revenue in local

economies. This outcome means that tourists strengthen multiple sectors, including transportation, hospitality, shopping, and entertainment, to generate revenue and sustain livelihoods. Moreover, it can be argued that effective tourism marketing practices can result in increased tourist inflows, demanding new investment opportunities and a larger workforce in various sectors. This generates employment opportunities for local communities, minimizes unemployment rates, provides consistent income for communities, and offers long-term economic benefits. The qualitative findings further corroborate the vital role of tourism marketing in ensuring economic sustainability in and around Bale Mountains National Park. It is discovered that tourism marketing activities in and around the national park are creating job opportunities for local communities. Therefore, the findings of this research underscore the significance of tourism marketing as an enabler variable to ensure economic sustainability through the development of relevant tourism marketing practices.

4.3.1.2. Tourism marketing and sociocultural dimension (hypothesis 2)

H2- Tourism marketing has a statistically significant impact on respecting the sociocultural authenticity of host communities and preserving their built and lived cultural assets and traditional values in and around the national park. This study attempted to investigate the impact of tourism marketing on the sociocultural sustainability of local communities. The survey findings provided significant proof that tourism marketing has a statistically significant impact on the sociocultural sustainability of local communities. It revealed that the path coefficient of the relationship between tourism marketing practices and sociocultural sustainability ($\beta = 0.758$), the corresponding t-value ($t = 36.703$), and the significant P-value ($P = 0.000$) indicate that tourism marketing practices impact the sociocultural sustainability of local communities. More importantly, it can be noted that tourism marketing often highlights the unique cultural and historical aspects of communities, which creates a demand for preserving and encouraging investment in safeguarding cultural heritage and passing traditions to future generations. The qualitative study findings also lead to the conclusion that tourism marketing is a contributor to sociocultural sustainability. Most respondents indicated that tourism marketing opens opportunities to educate about their culture, history, tradition, and practices associated with local communities. It was also found that empowering local communities can often create a sense of community pride and ownership over tourism development in and around Bale Mountains National Park.

4.3.1.3. Tourism marketing and environmental dimension (hypothesis 3)

H3- Tourism marketing has a statistically significant impact on making optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecological processes, and helping to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity. The findings of this research supported the hypothesis regarding a statistical relationship between tourism marketing and environmental sustainability, as there is statistical proof in favor of the hypothesized relationship. It was found that the path coefficient of association between tourism marketing practices and environmental sustainability is significant ($\beta = 0.732$, $t\text{-value} = 30.395$, and $P = 0.000$). From these results, it can be interpreted that tourism marketing has strong implications for achieving environmental sustainability in and around Bale Mountains National Park. The positive relationship between tourism marketing and environmental sustainability was also iterated by the qualitative study participants. In practice, it is noted that relevant tourism marketing practices can increase tourism inflows and generate revenue through ecotourism activities, entrance fees, partnerships, and sponsorships, which can be reinvested in habitat restoration, wildlife protection, and environmental protection. Therefore, fair tourism pricing and profitability are crucial to ensure the economic value of the national park. It also discovered that eco-friendly tourism promotion can foster a deeper connection between visitors and the environment, motivating them to act as advocates for environmental conservation.

4.3.1.4. Tourism marketing and sustainable tourism (hypothesis 4)

H-4 There is a statistically significant relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism development. The outcomes of this study pointed out that there is substantial statistical significance in support of the positive relationship that exists between tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism. Based on the findings, it was shown that the path coefficient of association between tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism ($\beta = 0.528$), the corresponding $t\text{-value}$ ($t = 16.970$), and ($P = 0.000$) are statistically significant, thereby indicating that tourism marketing practices can impact the sustainability of tourism in and around Bale Mountains National Park. In other words, it can be argued that tourism marketing can act as an enabler of economic, social, and environmental sustainability tourism in protected areas.

4.4. Summary

This chapter presented the result and discussion of the qualitative study and quantitative analyses of the field survey. In the first section the analysis of the qualitative study that included 15 interviews and 6 focus group discussions was explained. Several key themes and points that are characterize of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism practices in and around Bale Mountains National Park are revealed. In the second section the analysis of the quantitative study was presented. A total of 410 valid responses were collected to analyze the study model. Once the data were coded and recorded in SPSS software, descriptive analyses were performed to see and examine how often certain values occur within the dataset. Then, PLS-based SEM was employed using SmartPLS version 4 for analysis. The analysis of the data was conducted in two phases: measurement model assessment and structural model assessment. In the assessment of the measurement model, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were assessed both at lower-order and higher-order constructs. In the assessment of the structural model, the path coefficients and their respective T-values and P-values were assessed to check the significance of the model. In addition, predictive power (R^2), predictive accuracy (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and goodness of fit index were observed. Finally, the discussion of hypotheses was presented to evaluate the structural relationship between variables. The structural model estimation revealed that the tourism marketing practices (TMP) construct can explain 62.4% of the variance of the economic dimension, 57.5% of the variance of the social dimension, 53.6% of the variance of the environmental dimension, and 27.9% of the variance of sustainable tourism.

5. NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

The primary focus of this study was to examine the hypothesized relationship between tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism. More specifically, it aimed to investigate the relationship between tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism dimensions: economic, social, and environmental dimensions in the context of protected areas, mainly Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia. To ensure the quality, transparency, and robustness of the research process, the researcher applied a rigorous scientific procedure and approach. The first study explored the measurement indicators of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in the Bale Mountains National Park context. Then, the structural connections in the proposed model were tested. Consequently, the study identified several distinctive discoveries that would contribute to the field of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. The following are the novel scientific discoveries that were attained through the completion of this research.

1. This study introduced novel measuring scales to measure tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism constructs, which is crucial for theoretical advancements. As per the knowledge of the researcher, there are no existing tourism marketing practices, and sustainable tourism scales are developed in the context of protected areas. The study evaluated the psychometric features of tourism marketing and sustainability scales specifically for protected areas, using Bale Mountains National Park as a case study. [Figure 14](#) illustrates the psychometric measuring scales of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism.

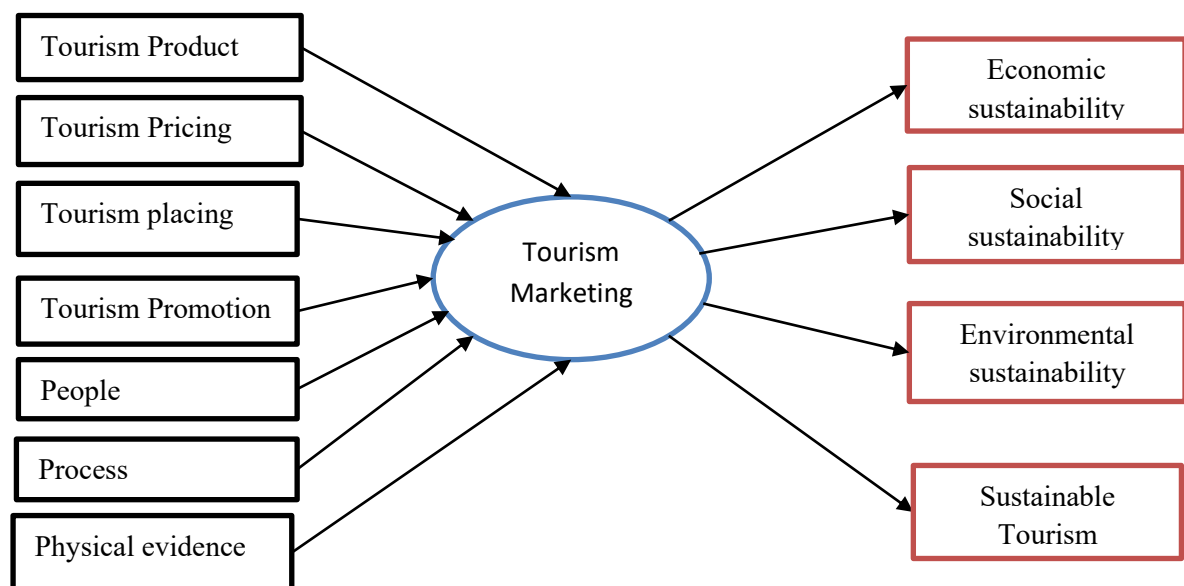


Figure 15. Psychometric measures of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism.

(source: researcher's own construction)

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of this study identified seven latent variables of tourism marketing comprising 31 items and three main dimensions of sustainable tourism consisting of 15 items. In addition, assessment of items and constructs' reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity was carried out as part of the research project at lower and higher levels in order to ensure the integrity of the measurement parameters.

2. This study implemented a sequential mixed research approach to investigate variables, establish instruments, and test hypotheses within the context of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism research. The implementation of mixed research methods in tourism marketing and sustainable tourism literature is inadequately advanced. This study, on the other hand, utilized the qualitative and quantitative research approach to address research questions through structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis, thus adding novel methodological approaches in the field. Moreover, as a measurement of higher-order construct of the tourism marketing variable has not yet been developed in protected areas, this study statistically validates and develops the measurement of higher-order constructs for tourism marketing practices by applying the standard approach of instrument development in a new context, ultimately providing a new methodological contribution.
3. The study revealed a positive relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism in the context of protected areas, specifically Bale Mountains National Park, through hypothesis testing utilizing structural equation modelling. The structural model estimation revealed that the tourism marketing practices (TMP) construct can explain 62.4% of the variance of the economic dimension, 57.5% of the variance of the social dimension, 53.6% of the variance of the environmental dimension, and 27.9% of the variance of sustainable tourism. Thus, the study indicated that all hypotheses were found to be statistically significant and have a positive relationship, which is a distinctive scientific finding. These findings were empirically validated through rigorous scientific procedures and approaches to ensure the quality, transparency, and robustness of the research findings.
4. This study combined two fundamental theories (the stakeholder theory and the resource-based view theory) to validate the hypothesis and describe the structural relationship, as a single theory was inadequate to thoroughly address the research questions. This integration was necessary to identify the relevant variables and

establish the relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. As a result, this study broadens the perspective of the resource-based view in the context of protected areas and makes a substantial contribution to the current literature. This is distinctive in the literature. In addition, this study empirically supports the extension of stakeholder and resource-based view theory by providing empirical support from Bale Mountains National Park.

5. Literature can be found on diverse topics, such as customer satisfaction ([Al Muala, 2012](#); [Ismail et al., 2015](#); [Magatef, 2015](#); [Potjanajaruwit, 2015](#); [Alipour et al., 2018](#); [Azhar et al., 2019](#); [Hasan & Islam, 2020](#); [Othman et al., 2020](#); [Elgarhy & Mohamed, 2023](#); [Hossain et al., 2024](#)), and strategic marketing ([Gilmore & Simmons, 2007](#); [Ferrari & Pratesi, 2012](#)) that focus on marketing mix. However, this study uncovered contextual distinctiveness by examining the structural relationship between tourism marketing and sustainable tourism dimensions within the context of protected areas, specifically Bale Mountains National Park.

6. SUMMARY, IMPLICATION, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

6.1. Introduction

The focus of this study was to examine the hypothesized relationship between tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism. More specifically, it aimed to investigate the relationship between tourism marketing practices and sustainable tourism dimensions: economic, social, and environmental dimensions in the context of national parks, mainly Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia. The final chapter begins with a study summary followed by the detailed contributions, limitations, and future research avenues.

6.2. Research summary

Tourism in protected areas is one of the many types of tourism that offers various recreational services. In addition to preservation and conservation, protected areas offer numerous recreational benefits through tourism ([Winter et al., 2020](#)), yielding profound economic and social benefits ([Kc et al., 2024](#)). Tourism in protected areas incorporates a variety of recreational possibilities within the realm of nature-based tourism ([Winter et al., 2020](#); [Donici & Dumitras, 2024](#)), including ecotourism, wildlife tourism, adventure tourism, educational tourism, scientific tourism, bird-watching tourism, geotourism, forest tourism, and cultural tourism ([Mandić, 2022](#)). However, there is a concern associated with over-tourism and under-tourism ([Barač–Miftarević, 2023](#)) in protected areas due to a lack of relevant marketing practices ([Honey & Frenkiel, 2021](#)), especially in developing countries. Moreover, the prioritization of short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term economic, sociocultural, and environmental sustainability exposes national parks in developing countries to unsustainable practices ([Altinay et al., 2007](#); [UNWTO, 2020](#)).

Furthermore, human economic processes are shockingly attacking biodiversity, primarily through land spread transformations, contamination, improbable abuse of common assets, the introduction of invasive species, and the effects of environmental change ([Brüggemann et al., 2001](#)). In addition, the national parks face major issues due to a lack of strong control and effective management of tourism marketing, such as tourism products, tourism pricing, distribution and accessibility of tourism products, marketing and promotional activities, skilled human power, physically attached facilities, and processes ([Sharpley & Pearce, 2007](#)). The tourism industry can tackle this effect by consolidating the tourism marketing concept and practices to create an ecologically sustainable environment and sustainable tourism. Particularly, Bale Mountains National Park is endowed with various biodiversity resources but has not realized the potential benefit of these resources to the local community and country development due to a lack of effective tourism marketing practices.

Therefore, with the growing popularity of tourism in the protected areas in the presence of existing challenges, there is a need for the implementation of appropriate tourism marketing practices to enhance sustainable tourism in protected areas (Aman & Papp-Váry, 2021). Also, the existing literature on tourism marketing (Pomeroy et al., 2011; Font & McCabe, 2017; Gunarekha & Binoy, 2020) lacks an empirically validated model that connects tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. In light of this, the current study aimed to examine tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism in Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia, as well as to develop a model of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism by reviewing the paper on the topic.

The qualitative study was carried out by interviewing 15 people, comprised of 3 managers and 12 experts from different organizations. In addition, 6 focus group discussions were conducted with local communities in different towns in and around Bale Mountains National Park. In total, 21 qualitative field surveys were performed. The data collected using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions from the participants were analyzed through content analysis (refer to Chapter 4). Based on the previous literature and qualitative study content analysis, a research model was designed. This research model was empirically validated, consistent with the mixed research approach used in this study.

The study model consisted of the dimension of tourism marketing: tourism product, tourism pricing, tourism placing, tourism promotion, people, process, and physical evidence; and the sustainable tourism dimension: economic dimension, sociocultural dimension, and environmental dimension. The measurement of the constructs adopted for this research was primarily sourced from previous literature. These measurements were used in designing questionnaires and analyzing the quantitative phase of the study (as explained in Chapter 3). The designed questionnaires were pretested and modified. Following the pre-test, the pilot study was carried out to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. Subsequently, after the pilot test, the final questionnaires were distributed, and 410 valid responses were collected. Once the data were coded and recorded in SPSS software, descriptive analyses were performed to see and examine how often certain values occur within the dataset and lay the groundwork for a partial least square-based structural equation modeling approach.

Following descriptive statistics, the data were analyzed utilizing the partial least square-based structural equation modeling approach using SmartPLS 4 (refer to Chapter 4). The partial least square analyses were carried out to assess the measurement and structural model. In the measurement model assessment, the reliability and validity of constructs were assessed at both lower-order and higher-order constructs. Then, in the structural model assessment, the path coefficients and their respective T-values and P-values were assessed to confirm the significance of the model. In addition, predictive power (R^2), predictive accuracy (Q^2), effect size (f^2), and goodness of fit index were observed. Finally, the structural model estimation was performed to

evaluate the hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4). The findings have both theoretical and practical contributions. The next section presents the contributions of the study.

6.3. Theoretical contributions of findings

The research model established for this study holds relevance in multiple theoretical areas. This research significantly enhances the understanding of tourism marketing and sustainable tourism through the testing and validation of measurement features. It also illustrates the relationship between tourism marketing and other constructs within the model: economic and social as well as environmental constructs. The comprehensive literature search on tourism marketing and sustainable tourism has identified significant research gaps. Although the concept of sustainability is prevalent in other fields, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is no previous research conducted in connection with tourism marketing. Hence, building upon prior literature and addressing gaps in the existing literature by proposing a new research model that provides significant insights.

Moreover, a qualitative study was conducted to contextualize the model. The study model developed addresses the tourism marketing strategy required to ensure the sustainability of tourism in and around Bale Mountains National Park. Consequently, the study augments the existing body of knowledge, as there is no prior research model that combines tourism marketing and sustainable tourism to improve the sustainability of tourism in the context of national parks, particularly Bale Mountains National Park.

6.4. Practical contributions of research findings

From a managerial perspective, it is crucial to understand the factors that ensure and maintain sustainable tourism by minimizing the negative effects of tourism marketing. For destinations that are enriched with huge tourism potential, particularly destinations like Bale Mountains National Park, this research presents a better understanding of tourism marketing and sustainability of tourism. The Bale Mountains National Park leaders will also gain an indication that they will equip themselves with the relevant model needed for developing appropriate tourism marketing practices, including tourism product development, tourism product pricing, tourism product placing, tourism product promotion, skilled human resources, effective and efficient delivery of services, and physical evidence.

More specifically, the tourism marketing decision-makers can also make use of the model to refine their perspectives on tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. Furthermore, the decision-makers will gain valuable insights from the model about enabling factors for improving

sustainable tourism. The tourism marketing factors in the model are significant input for tourism marketing managers to reinforce them toward improving economic, social, and environmental sustainability. This study considers national parks as a case, particularly Bale Mountains National Park; however, the study's implications are significant for other national parks in a similar context.

Moreover, the government authorities and other organizations might gain significant insights from the findings of this study to formulate their strategies and policies aimed at enhancing the tourism marketing practices of Bale Mountains National Park. The study finds that to enhance the sustainability of tourism, relevant tourism marketing practices are crucial. Therefore, as the role of the tourism industry plays a vital role in the economy of Ethiopia, the government must facilitate the tourism business in and around Bale Mountains National Park to ensure sustainable tourism. For instance, this study indicates that there is poor availability of accommodation and infrastructure in and around the park. The government authority may take the initiative to reduce poor availability of accommodation and infrastructure, including roads, transportation systems, and availability of poor accommodation. Such initiatives for infrastructure development will support Bale Mountains National Park to attract more visitors and boost tourism numbers, improve overall experiences, encourage long stays, and stimulate the local economy.

Furthermore, the study reveals a low and unsatisfactory capacity to generate income, poor provision of directions and supporting facilities within the national park, poor usage of promotional tools, lack of skills to create tourist satisfaction and memorable experiences, lack of quick responsiveness to customer complaints, and poor physical evidence, particularly with the working environment. The qualitative study found that one of the main reasons hindering the national park from generating satisfactory income is unfair entrance fees. Thus, the government should segment tourism products and adopt a value-based pricing strategy that will assist the national park in generating a satisfactory income. Also, as the park is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site, it should be updated on Google search, improve the provision of directions and supporting facilities within the national park, use all means of promotional tools to promote the park, provide training to enhance employee skills to create tourist satisfaction and memorable experiences, create an easy way to handle customer complaints, and improve the working environment.

Additionally, this research has substantial implications for the government and concerned bodies in terms of sustainability. In terms of economic sustainability, the study has a substantial contribution to concerned bodies to promote long-term economic benefits while minimizing

negative social and environmental impacts. For example, diversifying income sources such as handicrafts, honey production, and organic coffee farming to reduce dependency on the park's resources only; developing sustainable grazing systems to protect the park while assisting livestock-dependent residents; empowering local communities to run lodges and guest houses; and developing more tourism options can attract more tourists and generate revenue. Such initiatives may help to promote long-term economic sustainability while ensuring valuable resources for future generations.

This research also has profound implications for the government as well as pertinent bodies in terms of the environmental sustainability issues of the national park. Government and other stakeholder organizations such as OFWE, FZS, and MWU may work together to ensure conservation efforts, wildlife protection, and ecological value. Similarly, the government and other stakeholder organizations may also collaborate to improve the sociocultural sustainability of local communities through empowering them, promoting cultural heritage, providing financial support to encourage socio-cultural initiatives, and constructing cultural hubs for local gatherings. Such initiatives will help Bale Mountains National Park to comply with sociocultural sustainability requirements, which will eventually contribute to sustainable tourism. Last but not least, the government may also strive toward creating a politically secure environment and tourism-supportive policy to ensure sustainable tourism. As the study reveals, unstable political conditions are one of the main issues within the national park; thus, an agreement between political parties and government bodies will substantially aid in mitigating political instability and supporting sustainable tourism.

6.5. Limitations and future research directions

Every research approach and design has its own set of constraints and defects ([Rahman, 2016](#)). This study also has certain limitations, despite the relevant findings and contributions, which are noteworthy. At first, the current study implements a cross-sectional approach. A primary constraint of a cross-sectional approach in this study is that the investigation of the phenomenon of tourism marketing practices is limited to a single point or over a short period to capture a phenomenon or situation. Nevertheless, the assessment of tourism marketing practices and the sustainability of tourism requires a longer period of investigation and consideration of the impact of tourism marketing practices. Longitudinal research approaches, conversely, may reveal the dynamic features of the phenomenon over an extended period. Consequently, a longitudinal approach is advised for forthcoming research.

Second, as the measurement of tourism marketing practices, the seven 7Ps of tourism marketing: tourism product, tourism pricing, tourism placing, tourism promotion, people, process, and physical evidence are considered, while others are not considered as there is no common consensus in the literature. However, it would have been more thorough if other tourism marketing variables, namely, programming, packing, partnership, productivity, and quality, could have been incorporated. Third, the latent variables: TMP was measured by seven items. These constructs were initially developed in that way, and the scale was validated. Yet, future studies may benefit from a more thorough way to operationalize TMP by incorporating more items.

Fourth, this study was conducted within specific domains and one national park. Although tourism marketing is inherently context-specific, its application in different contexts would enhance trust in the research model. Finally, the data were collected from a single national park, Bale Mountains National Park; therefore, the findings of this research can only be directly applied to BMNP. Due to social peculiarities, the extent to which data and models can be applied to other national parks is unknown. Thus, future researchers should supplement their findings with data from other national parks or destinations.

References

- Admasu, A. A. (2011). Tourism and protected areas: Tourism development in the Bale Mountains National Park. *Walia*, 2011(Special), 282–294.
- Ajmal, M. M., Khan, M., Hussain, M., & Helo, P. (2018). Conceptualizing and incorporating social sustainability in the business world. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 25(4), 327–339. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504509.2017.1408714>.
- Albrecht, J. N. (2016). Marketing national parks for sustainable tourism. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 21(1), 116–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2016.1258583>
- Al Muala, A. (2012). Assessing the relationship between marketing mix and loyalty through tourists satisfaction in Jordan curative tourism. *American Academic & Scholarly Research Journal*, 4(2), 7–23.
- Alers, M., Bovarnick, A., Boyle, T., Mackinnon, K., & Sobrevila, C. (2007). *Reducing threats to protected areas: Lessons from the field*. The World Bank.
- Alghizzawi, M., Salloum, S. A., & Habes, M. (2018). The role of social media in tourism marketing in Jordan. *International Journal of Information Technology and Language Studies*, 2(3), 59–70.
- Ali, D. H. (2021). The impact of tourism marketing on the attracted tourists in the Shaqlawa. *Studies of Applied Economics*, 39(7), 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.25115/eea.v39i7.5230>.
- Ali, F., Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Ryu, K. (2018). An assessment of the use of partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in hospitality research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 514–538.
- Alipour, M., Pour, B. M., & Darbahaniha, A. (2018). The effects of the 7P marketing mix components on sporting goods customer satisfaction. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 7(1), 20–26.
- Alpízar, F. (2006). The pricing of protected areas in nature-based tourism: A local perspective. *Ecological Economics*, 56(2), 294–307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2005.02.005>.
- Altinay, L., Var, T., Hines, S., & Hussain, K. (2007). Barriers to sustainable tourism development in Jamaica. *Tourism Analysis*, 12(1–2), 1–13.
- Akasha, A. M. A., Ahmad, A., & Tham, J. (2020). Tourism marketing and perceived risks impact on attracting Libyan local tourists. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 6(08), 336–346.

- Aman, E. E., Omer, A., & Papp-Váry, Á. F. (2023). Tourism Marketing & Economic Sustainability of Tourist Destinations: Perspectives of Bale Mountains National Park. *Gazdaság És Társadalom*, 16(2), 40–70.
- Aman, E. E., & Papp-Váry, Á. (2021). *Sustainability of National Park and Tourism Development: - A systematic review on Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia*.
- Aman, E. E., & Papp-Váry, Á. (2022). Digital Marketing As A Driver For The Sustainable Tourism Development: *Multidiszciplináris Kihívások, Sokszínű Válaszok - Gazdálkodás-És Szervezéstudományi Folyóirat*, 2, Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.33565/MKSV.2022.02.01>.
- An, L. T., Markowski, J., Bartos, M., Rzenca, A., & Namiecinski, P. (2019). An evaluation of destination attractiveness for nature-based tourism: Recommendations for the management of national parks in Vietnam. *Nature Conservation-Bulgaria*, 32, 51–80. <https://doi.org/10.3897/natureconservation.32.30753>.
- Angelkova, T., Koteski, C., Jakovlev, Z., & Mitrevska, E. (2012). Sustainability and competitiveness of tourism. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 44, 221–227.
- Archer, B. (2005). The positive and negative impacts of tourism. *Global Tourism*, 79–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-7506-7789-9.50011-x>
- Archer, B., Cooper, C., & Ruhanen, L. (2012). The positive and negative impacts of tourism. In *Global tourism* (pp. 79–102). Routledge.
- Ariya, G., Sitati, N., & Wishitemi, B. (2017). Tourists' perceived value of wildlife tourism product at Lake Nakuru National Park, Kenya. *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation*, 8(2), 147–156. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ejthr-2017-0014>.
- Asmundson, I. (2013). What Is a Price? Maybe more than one bargained for. The answer varies depending on the transaction. *Finance & Development*, 50(4), 42–43.
- Avraham, E., & Ketter, E. (2016). Tourism Marketing for Developing Countries: Battling Stereotypes and Crises in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. *Springer*.
- Axon, S. (2020). The socio-cultural dimensions of community-based sustainability: Implications for transformational change. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 266, 121933.
- Azhar, M. E., Jufrizen, J., Prayogi, M. A., & Sari, M. (2019). Effect of marketing mix and service quality on tourist satisfaction. *Proceeding Uii-Icabe*, 133–140.
- Babbie, E. R. (2020). The practice of social research. Cengage Au.
- Ballantyne, R., Packer, J., & Hughes, K. (2009). Tourists' support for conservation messages and sustainable management practices in wildlife tourism experiences. *Tourism Management*, 30(5), 658–664. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.11.003>.

- Balmford, A., Beresford, J., Green, J., Naidoo, R., Walpole, M., & Manica, A. (2009). A Global Perspective on Trends in Nature-Based Tourism. *PLOS Biology*, 7(6). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1000144>.
- Balmford, A., Green, J. M. H., Anderson, M., Beresford, J., Huang, C., Naidoo, R., Walpole, M., & Manica, A. (2015). Walk on the Wild Side: Estimating the Global Magnitude of Visits to Protected Areas. *PLOS Biology*, 13(2), e1002074. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1002074>.
- Barač–Miftarević, S. (2023). Undertourism vs. Overtourism: A Systematic Literature Review. *Tourism: An International Interdisciplinary Journal*, 71(1), 178–192. <https://doi.org/10.37741/t.71.1.11>.
- Barrier, E. B. (2017). The concept of sustainable economic development. In *The economics of sustainability* (pp. 87–96). Routledge.
- Basiago, A. D. (1998). Economic, social, and environmental sustainability in development theory and urban planning practice. *Environmentalist*, 19(2), 145–161. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006697118620>.
- Baškarada, S., & Koronios, A. (2018). A philosophical discussion of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research in social science. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 18(1), 2–21.
- Becker, J.-M., Klein, K., & Wetzels, M. (2012). Hierarchical latent variable models in PLS-SEM: Guidelines for using reflective-formative type models. *Long Range Planning*, 45(5–6), 359–394.
- Behnassi, M. (2008). Sustainable tourism: foundations, indicators and contribution to the development of the countries of the South. *Revue de Droit et de Sciences Sociales*, 96-120.
- Belayneh, A., Yohannes, T., & Worku, A. (2013). Recurrent and extensive forest fire incidence in the Bale Mountains National Park (BMNP), Ethiopia: Extent, Cause and Consequences. *International Journal of Environmental Sciences*, 2, 29–30.
- Bennett, J. A., & Strydom, J. W. (Eds.). (2001). Introduction to travel and tourism marketing. Juta and Company Ltd.
- Bhammar, H., Li, W., Molina, C. M. M., Hickey, V., Pendry, J., & Narain, U. (2021). Framework for sustainable recovery of tourism in protected areas. *Sustainability*, 13(5), 2798.
- Blewitt, J. (2012). *Understanding sustainable development*. Routledge.
- Bowers, J. (2016). Developing sustainable tourism through ecomuseology: A case study in the Rupununi region of Guyana. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 24(5), 758–782. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2015.1085867>.

- Boyer, R. H. W., Peterson, N. D., Arora, P., & Caldwell, K. (2016). Five Approaches to Social Sustainability and an Integrated Way Forward. *Sustainability*, 8(9). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su8090878>.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (2012). Towards innovation in sustainable tourism research? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 20(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.641559>.
- Bramwell, B., & Lane, B. (1993). Sustainable Tourism: An Evolving Global Approach. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 1(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669589309450696>
- Breiby, M. A., Duedahl, E., Øian, H., & Ericsson, B. (2020). Exploring sustainable experiences in tourism. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 20(4), 335–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2020.1748706>.
- Bricker, K. S., Lackey, N. Q., & Joyner, L. (2022). A framework for sustainable tourism development in and around national parks. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 40(1), 134–153.
- Brundtland, G. H. (1985). World commission on environment and development. *Environmental Policy and Law*, 14(1), 26–30.
- Brundtland, G. H. (1987). Our common future—Call for action. *Environmental Conservation*, 14(4), 291–294.
- Brunner, M., Keller, L., Stallasch, S. E., Kretschmann, J., Hasl, A., Preckel, F., Lüdtke, O., & Hedges, L. V. (2022). Meta-analyzing individual participant data from studies with complex survey designs: A tutorial on using the two-stage approach for data from educational large-scale assessments. *Research Synthesis Methods*, 14(1), 5–35. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jrsm.1584>.
- Buhalis, D. (2000). Marketing the competitive destination of the future. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 97–116. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177\(99\)00095-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0261-5177(99)00095-3).
- Bungău, C., Badulescu, A., Ilieș, D. C., Vesa, C. M., & Tit, D. M. (2024). Advances in Sustainability Research from the University of Oradea. *Sustainability*, 16(7), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16072712>.
- Bushell, R. (2003). Balancing conservation and visitation in protected areas. *Nature-based Tourism, Environment and Land Management*, 197–208. <https://doi.org/10.1079/9780851997322.0197>
- Bushell, R., & Bricker, K. (2017). Tourism in protected areas: Developing meaningful standards. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(1), 106–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1467358416636173>.

- Butler, R. W. (1999). Sustainable tourism: A state-of-the-art review. *Tourism Geographies*, 1(1), 7–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616689908721291>.
- Brüggemann, J., Hernández, M., Rodríguez, E., Soler, J., & Tapper, R. (2001). Biodiversity and Tourism in the Framework of the Convention on biological Diversity: The case of the Tayrona National Park, Colombia. German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation.
- Carlson, K. D., & Herdman, A. O. (2012). Understanding the Impact of Convergent Validity on Research Results. *Organizational Research Methods*, 15(1), 17–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428110392383>.
- Cavalcante, W. Q. F., Coelho, A., & Bairrada, C. M. (2021). Sustainability and tourism marketing: A bibliometric analysis of publications between 1997 and 2020 using vosviewer software. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(9). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13094987>.
- Cervený, L. K. (2022). Sustainable recreation and tourism: Making sense of diverse conceptualizations and management paradigms. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, 38, 100520.
- Cheung, G. W., Cooper-Thomas, H. D., Lau, R. S., & Wang, L. C. (2024). Reporting reliability, convergent and discriminant validity with structural equation modeling: A review and best-practice recommendations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 41(2), 745–783. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-023-09871-y>
- Christou, P. A. (2022). *The History and Evolution of Tourism*. CABI. <https://doi.org/10.1079/9781800621282.0000>.
- Clemmer, J., & Sheehy, B. (1990). Firing on All Cylinders: The Service/Quality System for High-Powered Corporate Performance. Macmillan of Canada.
- Cochran, W. G. (1963). Sampling Techniques, 3RD Edition. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL4534980M/Sampling_techniques.
- Dasgupta, D. (2010). *Tourism marketing*. Pearson India.
- De Sausmarez, N. (2007). Crisis Management, Tourism and Sustainability: The Role of Indicators. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15(6), 700–714. <https://doi.org/10.2167/jost653.0>.
- Dillard, J., Dujon, V., & King, M. C. (2008). *Understanding the social dimension of sustainability* (Vol. 17). Routledge.
- Dolgui, A., & Proth, J.-M. (2010). Pricing strategies and models. *Annual Reviews in Control*, 34(1), 101–110.

- Donici, D. S., & Dumitras, D. E. (2024). Nature-Based Tourism in National and Natural Parks in Europe: A Systematic Review. *Forests*, 15(4), Article 4. <https://doi.org/10.3390/f15040588>.
- Dwyer, L., Edwards, D., Mistilis, N., Roman, C., & Scott, N. (2009). Destination and enterprise management for a tourism future. *Tourism management*, 30(1), 63–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.04.002>.
- Ebeling, R. M., & Lavoie, D. (1990). What is a price? Explanation and understanding. *Economics and Hermeneutics*, 9.
- Eagle, L., Hamann, M., & Low, D. R. (2016). The role of social marketing, marine turtles and sustainable tourism in reducing plastic pollution. *Marine pollution bulletin*, 107(1), 324–332. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpolbul.2016.03.040>.
- Eagles, P. F., McCool, S. F., & Haynes, C. D. (2002). Sustainable tourism in protected areas: Guidelines for planning and management (No. 8). Iucn.
- Eagles, P. F., McLean, D., & Stabler, M. J. (2000). Estimating the tourism volume and value in parks and protected areas in Canada and the USA. In *The George Wright Forum*, 17(3), pp. 62-76).
- Eizenberg, E., & Jabareen, Y. (2017). Social sustainability: A new conceptual framework. *Sustainability*, 9(1), 68.
- Elgarhy, S. D., & Mohamed, L. M. (2023). The Influences of Services Marketing Mix (7ps) on Loyalty, Intentions, and Profitability in the Egyptian Travel Agencies: The Mediating Role of Customer Satisfaction. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 24(6), 782–805. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2022.2080148>.
- Elid, C. (2014). *Marketing Mix in Tourism | Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*. <https://www.richtmann.org/journal/index.php/ajis/article/view/2955>.
- Elliott, J. (2012). *An introduction to sustainable development*. Routledge.
- Elsawy, M., & Youssef, M. (2023). Economic sustainability: Meeting needs without compromising future generations. *International Journal of Economics and Finance*, 15(10), 1–23.
- Esparon, M., Stoeckl, N., Farr, M., & Larson, S. (2015). The significance of environmental values for destination competitiveness and sustainable tourism strategy making: Insights from

- Australia's Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(5), 706–725.
- Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (2023). Protected areas. https://www.ewca.gov.et/park_type/national-park/view
- Ferretti-Gallon, K., Griggs, E., Shrestha, A., & Wang, G. (2021). National parks best practices: Lessons from a century's worth of national parks management. *International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks*, 9(3), 335–346.
- Font, X., & McCabe, S. (2017). Sustainability and marketing in tourism: Its contexts, paradoxes, approaches, challenges and potential. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7), 869–883. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2017.1301721>
- Forest, O., & Enterprise, W. (2014). Bale Mountains eco-region reduction of emission from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) project–Ethiopia. Farm Africa and SOS Sahel Ethiopia.
- Fornell, C., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1), 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378101800104>
- Foued, B., & Sawsan, K. (2019). The role of tourism marketing in enhancing tourism development: a comparative study between constantine and amman cities. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 24(1), 146–160. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.24112-349>.
- Gartner, W. C., & Bachri, T. (1994). Tour Operators' Role in the Tourism Distribution System: An Indonesian Case Study. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 6(3–4), 161–179. https://doi.org/10.1300/J046v06n03_09.
- Gilmore, A., & Simmons, G. (2007). Integrating sustainable tourism and marketing management: Can National Parks provide the framework for strategic change? *Strategic Change*, 16(5), 191–200. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jsc.798>.
- Goodwin, H. (2002). Local community involvement in tourism around national parks: opportunities and constraints. *Current Issues in tourism*, 5(3-4), 338-360.
- Goodland, R. (1995). The concept of environmental sustainability. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 1–24.
- Grilli, G., Tyllianakis, E., Luisetti, T., Ferrini, S., & Turner, R. K. (2021). Prospective tourist preferences for sustainable tourism development in Small Island Developing States. *Tourism Management*, 82, 104178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104178>
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2(163–194), 105.

- Gunarekha, B. S., & Binoy, T. A. (2020). Linkage between Sustainability and Tourism Marketing Mix Strategy. *Journal of Xidian University*, 14(4).
- Gundlach, G. T., & Wilkie, W. L. (2009). The American Marketing Association's New Definition of Marketing: Perspective and Commentary on the 2007 Revision. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 28(2), 259–264. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.28.2.259>.
- Hair, J. F., Howard, M. C., & Nitzl, C. (2020). Assessing measurement model quality in PLS-SEM using confirmatory composite analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 109, 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.11.069>
- Hair, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Mena, J. A. (2012). An assessment of the use of partial least squares structural equation modeling in marketing research. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 40(3), 414–433. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-011-0261-6>
- Hair Jr, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., Sarstedt, M., Danks, N. P., Ray, S., Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2021). Evaluation of reflective measurement models. *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) Using R: A Workbook*, 75–90.
- Hannon, B. (2001). Ecological pricing and economic efficiency. *Ecological Economics*, 36(1), 19–30.
- Hansilo, D. D., & Tiki, L. (2017). Challenges of human settlement on wildlife in Bale Mountains National Park, Southeast Ethiopia. *International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation*, 9(4), 107–114. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ijbc2015.1056>.
- Hartwell, H., Fyall, A., Willis, C., Page, S., Ladkin, A., & Hemingway, A. (2018). Progress in tourism and destination wellbeing research. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(16), 1830–1892.
- Hariram, N. P., Mekha, K. B., Suganthan, V., & Sudhakar, K. (2023). Sustainalism: An integrated socio-economic-environmental model to address sustainable development and sustainability. *Sustainability*, 15(13), 10682.
- Harris, E., Franz, A., & O'Hara, S. (2023). Promoting social equity and building resilience through value-inclusive design. *Buildings*, 13(8), 2081.
- Hasan, M. M., & Islam, M. F. (2020). The Effect of Marketing Mix (7Ps') on Tourists' Satisfaction: A Study on Cumilla. *The Cost and Management*, 48(2), 30–40.
- Hashemkhani Zolfani, S., Sedaghat, M., Maknoon, R., & Zavadskas, E. K. (2015). Tourism: A Comprehensive Literature Review on Frameworks and Applications Sustainable. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 28(1), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2014.995895>.

- Helgadóttir, G., Einarisdóttir, A. V., Burns, G. L., Gunnarsdóttir, G. Þ., & Matthíasdóttir, J. M. E. (2019). Social sustainability of tourism in Iceland: A qualitative inquiry. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 19(4–5), 404–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15022250.2019.1696699>.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 43(1), 115–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-014-0403-8>
- Hollander, R., Amekudzi-Kennedy, A., Bell, S., Benya, F., Davidson, C., Farkos, C., Fasenfest, D., Guyer, R., Hjarding, A., Lizotte, M., Quigley, D., Watts, D., & Whitefoot, K. (2016). Network priorities for social sustainability research and education: Memorandum of the Integrated Network on Social Sustainability Research Group. *Sustainability: Science, Practice and Policy*, 12(1), 16–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15487733.2016.11908150>.
- Holmberg, J., & Sandbrook, R. (2019). Sustainable development: What is to be done? In *Policies for a small planet* (pp. 19–38). Routledge.
- Honey, M., & Frenkiel, K. (2021). *Overtourism: Lessons for a better future*. Island Press.
- Hong, S. W.-C. (2008). *Competitiveness in the tourism sector: A comprehensive approach from Economic and Management points*. Springer science & business media.
- Hossain, A., Hasan, S., Khan, M. Y. H., & Chowdhury, Md. H. K. (2024). Assessing the effect of marketing mix on tourists' satisfaction: Insights from Bangladesh. *International Journal of Services and Operations Management*, 47(1), 47–73. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSOM.2024.136798>
- Iniesta-Bonillo, M. A., Sánchez-Fernández, R., & Jiménez-Castillo, D. (2016). Sustainability, value, and satisfaction: Model testing and cross-validation in tourist destinations. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11), 5002–5007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.04.071>
- Ismail, M. B. M., Mubarak, K. M., & Thulkifly, M. Z. (2015). Impact of service marketing mix on customer satisfaction. <http://192.248.66.13/handle/123456789/1777>.
- Jain, M. K. (2013). An analysis of marketing mix: 7Ps or more. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 1(4), 23–28.
- Janjua, Z. ul A., Krishnapillai, G., & Rehman, M. (2022). Importance of the sustainability tourism marketing practices: An insight from rural community-based homestays in Malaysia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 6(2), 575–594. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-10-2021-0274>.
- Jefferson, A., & Lickorish, L. J. (1988). Marketing tourism. A practical guide (p. 303pp).

- Kaiser, H. F., & Rice, J. (1974). Little Jiffy, Mark IV. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 34 (1), 111–117.p
- Kankam, P. K. (2019). The use of paradigms in information research. *Library & Information Science Research*, 41(2), 85–92.
- Karim, R., Latip, N. A., Marzuki, A., Haider, S., Nelofar, M., & Muhammad, F. (2021). The impact of 4ps marketing mix in tourism development in the mountain areas: A case study. *International Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, 9(2), 231–245.
- Kc, B., Adhikari, H., & Stainback, G. A. (2024). Tourism and national collaboration in protected areas. *Annals of Tourism Research Empirical Insights*, 5(2), 100151. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annale.2024.100151>.
- Kekezi, A. (2019). Exploration of marketing tools for the promotion of protected areas (Albania). *ECONOMICUS*, 18(2), 5–31.
- Kgote, T., & Kotze, N. (2013). Visitors perceptions and attitudes towards the tourism product offered by Pilanesberg National Park, South Africa. *African Journal for Physical Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, 2013(sup2. 1), 323–335.
- Khan, M. T. (2014). The Concept of “Marketing Mix” and its Elements (A Conceptual Review Paper). *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, 6(2), 95–107.
- Kim, J., & Lee, C. K. (2017). Role of tourism price in attracting international tourists: The case of Japanese inbound tourism from South Korea. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(1), 76–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2016.03.002>.
- Kirovska, Z. (2011). Strategic management within the tourism and the world globalization. *UTMS Journal of Economics*, 2(1), 69-76.
- Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., & Balasubramanian, S. (2023). *Principles of marketing* (19th edition). Pearson Education Limited
- Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2010). *Principles of Marketing*. Pearson Education.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2012). *Marketing management* (14th [ed.]). Prentice Hall.
- Kotler, P. (1991). *Marketing management: Analysis, planning, and control: Instructor's Manual*.
- Kracht, J., & Wang, Y. (2010). Examining the tourism distribution channel: Evolution and transformation. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 22(5), 736–757.
- Kuhlman, T., & Farrington, J. (2010). What is Sustainability? *Sustainability*, 2(11), Article 11. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su2113436>.

- Landini, S. (2021). An Introduction to Sustainable Tourism. In: Sustainable Tourism Contracts. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-83140-0_1
- Leiper, N. (1979). The framework of tourism: Towards a definition of tourism, tourist, and the tourist industry. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6(4), 390–407.
- Lei, W., Huibin, X., & Kostopoulou, S. (2014). The relation of destination marketing and destination management from a theoretical perspective. 11th International Conference on Service Systems and Service Management (ICSSSM) (pp. 1-6). IEEE. 10.1109/icsssm.2014.6943353.
- Leung, D., Law, R., Van Hoof, H., & Buhalis, D. (2013). Social Media in Tourism and Hospitality: A Literature Review. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30(1–2), 3–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2013.750919>
- Lewis, R. C., & Chambers, R. E. (1989). Marketing leadership in hospitality. Foundations and practices (p. 699).
- Little, J. C., Hester, E. T., & Carey, C. C. (2016). Assessing and Enhancing Environmental Sustainability: A Conceptual Review. *Environmental Science & Technology*, 50(13), 6830–6845. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.6b00298>.
- Liu, C.-H., Tzeng, G.-H., Lee, M.-H., & Lee, P.-Y. (2013). Improving metro–airport connection service for tourism development: Using hybrid MCDM models. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 6, 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2012.09.004>.
- Lolakhon, R. (2024). Application of the 4p concept in tourism. *Gospodarka Innowacje*, 51, 138–145.
- Lozano, R. (2008). Envisioning sustainability three-dimensionally. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 16(17), 1838–1846. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2008.02.008>.
- MacKenzie, S. B., Podsakoff, P. M., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2011). Construct measurement and validation procedures in MIS and behavioral research: Integrating new and existing techniques. *MIS Quarterly*, 293–334.
- Magatef, S. G. (2015). The impact of tourism marketing mix elements on the satisfaction of inbound tourists to Jordan. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 6(7), 41–58.
- Mamo, Y., Pinard, M. A., & Bekele, A. (2010). Demography and dynamics of mountain nyala *Tragelaphus buxtoni* in the Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia. *Current Zoology*, 56(6), 660–669. <https://doi.org/10.1093/czoolo/56.6.660>.

- Mamo, Y., & Bekele, A. (2011). Human and livestock encroachments into the habitat of Mountain Nyala (*Tragelaphus buxtoni*) in the Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia. *Tropical Ecology*, 52(3), 267–273.
- Mandić, A. (2022). *Protected Area Tourism*. Edward Elgar Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377486>.
- Marc Lim, W. (2023). Transformative marketing in the new normal: A novel practice-scholarly integrative review of business-to-business marketing mix challenges, opportunities, and solutions. *Journal of Business Research*, 160, 113638. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113638>.
- Mayer, M. (2014). Can nature-based tourism benefits compensate for the costs of national parks? A study of the Bavarian Forest National Park, Germany. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(4), 561–583. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2013.871020>.
- Mayer, M., Müller, M., Woltering, M., Arnegger, J., & Job, H. (2010). The economic impact of tourism in six German national parks. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 97(2), 73–82. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2010.04.013>.
- McKinnon, A. (2010). Environmental sustainability. *Green Logistics: Improving the Environmental Sustainability of Logistics*. London.
- Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 5(1), 1653531. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531>
- Medlik, S., & Middleton, V. T. (1973). Product formulation in tourism. *Tourism and marketing*, 13(1), 138-154.
- Mihanyar, P., Rahman, S. A., & Aminudin, N. (2016). Investigating the Effect of National Park Sustainability on National Park Behavioral Intention: Kinabalu National Park. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 37, 284–291. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671\(16\)30126-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2212-5671(16)30126-5).
- Minazzi, R. (2015). *Social Media Marketing in Tourism and Hospitality*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05182-6>
- Morelli, J. (2011). Environmental sustainability: A definition for environmental professionals. *Journal of Environmental Sustainability*, 1(1), 2.
- Mossaz, A., & Coghlan, A. (2017). The role of travel agents' ethical concerns when brokering information in the marketing and sale of sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7), 989–1006.

- Mulwa, R., Kabubo-Mariara, J., & Nyangena, W. (2018). Recreational value and optimal pricing of national parks: Lessons from Maasai Mara in Kenya. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Policy*, 7(2), 204–222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21606544.2017.1391716>
- Mwinuka, O. H. (2017). Reviewing the role of tourism marketing in successful sustainable tourist destinations. *Tourism and Leisure*, 6(2), 11.
- Niñerola, A., Sánchez-Rebull, M.-V., & Hernández-Lara, A.-B. (2019). Tourism Research on Sustainability: A Bibliometric Analysis. *Sustainability*, 11(5), <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11051377>.
- Oleśniewicz, P., Pytel, S., Markiewicz-Patkowska, J., Szromek, A. R., & Jandová, S. (2020). A model of the sustainable management of the natural environment in national parks—A case study of national parks in Poland. *Sustainability*, 12(7), 2704.
- Omer, A. M. (2008). Energy, environment and sustainable development. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 12(9), 2265–2300.
- Othman, B., Harun, A., Sadq, Z. M., Rashid, W. N., Abdullah, K. M., Mohammed, H. O., & Faeq, D. K. (2020). Effects of service marketing mix on umrah customer satisfaction: Empirical study on umrah traveling industry in Malaysia. *TEST Engineering and Management*, 83, 22895–22909.
- Paiva, D., Carvalho, L., Brito-Henriques, E., Sousa, A. M., Soares, A. L., & Azambuja, S. T. (2023). Digital storytelling and hopeful last chance tourism experiences. *Tourism Geographies*, 25(5), 1428–1444. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616688.2023.2224043>.
- Pecl, G. T., Araújo, M. B., Bell, J. D., Blanchard, J., Bonebrake, T. C., Chen, I. C., Clark, T. D., Colwell, R. K., Danielsen, F., Evengård, B., Falconi, L., Ferrier, S., Frusher, S., Garcia, R. A., Griffis, R. B., Hobday, A. J., Janion-Scheepers, C., Jarzyna, M. A., Jennings, S., Williams, S. E. (2017). Biodiversity redistribution under climate change: Impacts on ecosystems and human well-being. *Science*, 355(6332). <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aai9214>
- Pearce, D., Tan, R., & Schott, C. (2004). Tourism distribution channels in Wellington, New Zealand. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6(6), 397–410. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jtr.503>.
- Pérez-Calderón, E., Miguel-Barrado, V., & Sánchez-Cubo, F. (2022). Tourism Business in Spanish National Parks: A Multidimensional Perspective of Sustainable Tourism. *Land*, 11(2). <https://doi.org/10.3390/land11020190>.
- Phillimore, J., & Goodson, L. (2004). Progress in qualitative research in tourism: Epistemology, ontology and methodology. In *Qualitative research in tourism* (pp. 21–23). Routledge.

- Plummer, R., & Fennell, D. A. (2009). Managing protected areas for sustainable tourism: prospects for adaptive co-management. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(2), 149–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802359301>.
- Pomering, A., Noble, G., & Johnson, L. W. (2011). Conceptualising a contemporary marketing mix for sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19(8), 953–969. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2011.584625>.
- Postma, A., & Schmuecker, D. (2017). Understanding and overcoming negative impacts of tourism in city destinations: Conceptual model and strategic framework. *Journal of Tourism Futures*, 3(2), 144–156.
- Potjanajaruwit, P. (2015). Marketing mix for tourism in the Chonburi province. *International Journal of Economics and Management Engineering*, 9(3), 972–977.
- Puhakka, R., Sarkki, S., Cottrell, S. P., & Siikamäki, P. (2009). Local discourses and international initiatives: Sociocultural sustainability of tourism in Oulanka National Park, Finland. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17(5), 529–549. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669580802713457>.
- Puhakka, R., & Saarinen, J. (2013). New Role of Tourism in National Park Planning in Finland. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, 22(4), 411–434. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1070496513502966>.
- Purvis, B., Mao, Y., & Robinson, D. (2019). Three pillars of sustainability: In search of conceptual origins. *Sustainability Science*, 14(3), 681–695. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0627-5>
- Rahman, M. S. (2016). The Advantages and Disadvantages of using qualitative and quantitative approaches and methods in language “Testing and Assessment” research: A literature review. *Journal of Education and Learning*, 6(1), 102. <https://doi.org/10.5539/jel.v6n1p102>
- Rahmoun, M., & Baeshen, Y. (2021). Marketing Tourism in the Digital Era and Determinants of Success Factors Influencing Tourist Destinations Preferences. *Asia-Pacific Management Accounting Journal*, 16(1), 163–181. <https://doi.org/10.24191/APMAJ.V16i1-07>.
- Raju, G. P. (2009). *Tourism marketing and management* (1st ed). Manglam Publications.
- Rees, W. E. (2021). Achieving sustainability: Reform or transformation? In *The Earthscan reader in sustainable cities* (pp. 22–52). Routledge.

- Reihanian, A., Mahmood, N. Z. B., Kahrom, E., & Hin, T. W. (2012). Sustainable tourism development strategy by SWOT analysis: Boujagh National Park, Iran. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 4, 223–228. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2012.08.005>.
- Ristić, D., Vukoičić, D., & Milinčić, M. (2019). Tourism and sustainable development of rural settlements in protected areas - Example NP Kopaonik (Serbia). *Land Use Policy*, 89, 104231. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.104231>.
- Roca-Puig, V. (2019). The circular path of social sustainability: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 212, 916–924. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2018.12.078>.
- Rodríguez-Rodríguez, D., & Martínez-Vega, J. (2017). Assessing recent environmental sustainability in the Spanish network of National Parks and their statutory peripheral areas. *Applied Geography*, 89, 22–31.
- Roemer, E., Schuberth, F., & Henseler, J. (2021). HTMT2—an improved criterion for assessing discriminant validity in structural equation modeling. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 121(12), 2637–2650. <https://doi.org/10.1108/imds-02-2021-0082>.
- Rönkkö, M., & Cho, E. (2022). An Updated Guideline for Assessing Discriminant Validity. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(1), 6–14. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094428120968614>
- Sadq, Z. M., Othman, B., & Khorsheed, R. K. (2019). The impact of tourism marketing in enhancing competitive capabilities. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 8(5), 1–11.
- Satit, R. P., Tat, H. H., Rasli, A., Chin, T. A., & Sukati, I. (2012). The relationship between marketing mix and customer decision-making over travel agents: An empirical study. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2(6), 522–530.
- Schägner, J. P., Brander, L., Maes, J., Paracchini, M. L., & Hartje, V. (2016). Mapping recreational visits and values of European National Parks by combining statistical modelling and unit value transfer. *Journal for Nature Conservation*, 31, 71–84. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jnc.2016.03.001>.
- Scheyvens, R., & Cheer, J. M. (2022). Tourism, the SDGs and partnerships. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 30(10), 2271–2281. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2021.1982953>.
- Schoolman, E. D., Guest, J. S., Bush, K. F., & Bell, A. R. (2012). How interdisciplinary is sustainability research? Analyzing the structure of an emerging scientific field. *Sustainability Science*, 7(1), 67–80. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-011-0139-z>

- Şengel, Ü. (2021). Chronology of the Interaction between the Industrial revolution and modern tourism flows. *Journal of Tourism Intelligence and Smartness*, 4(1), 19–30.
- Shaan, I. M. (2005). Sustainable tourism development in the Red Sea of Egypt threats and opportunities. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 13(2), 83–87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2003.12.012>.
- Sharpley, R. (2003). Tourism, modernisation and development on the island of Cyprus: Challenges and policy responses. *Journal of sustainable tourism*, 11(2-3), 246–265.
- Sharpley, R., & Pearce, T. (2007). Tourism, Marketing and Sustainable Development in the English National Parks: The Role of National Park Authorities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15(5), 557–573. <https://doi.org/10.2167/jost613.0>.
- Steven, R., Pickering, C., & Guy Castley, J. (2011). A review of the impacts of nature-based recreation on birds. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 92(10), 2287–2294. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2011.05.005>.
- Singh, M. (2023). Environmental Conservation and Sustainability: Strategies for a Greener Future. *International Journal for Multidimensional Research Perspectives*, 1(3), 185–200.
- Sriarkarin, S., & Lee, C. H. (2018). Integrating multiple attributes for sustainable development in a national park. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 28, 113–125. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2018.08.007>.
- Smith, S. L. J. (1994). The tourism product. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21(3), 582–595. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383\(94\)90121-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0160-7383(94)90121-X)
- Smutkoa, L. S. (2022). Narratives of place: Integrated digital storytelling and story-mapping for sustainable recreation management. *Park and recreation administration*, 40(1), 154–174.
- Streiner, D. L. (2003). Starting at the Beginning: An Introduction to Coefficient Alpha and Internal Consistency. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 80(1), 99–103. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327752JPA8001_18
- Sutton, P. C., Duncan, S. L., & Anderson, S. J. (2019). Valuing our national parks: An ecological economics perspective. *Land*, 8(4), 54.
- Suyono, S., Lestari, D. A., Rusilawati, E., Kudri, W. M., & Renaldo, N. (2023). Marketing Mix on Customer Satisfaction at the Tax Consulting Office Dr. Sudarno, S.Pd., M.M., BKP and Colleagues Pekanbaru. *Journal of Applied Business and Technology*, 4(3), Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.35145/jabt.v4i3.135>
- Teshome, A., Deborah Randall, & Anouska Kinahan. (2011). The changing face of the Bale Mountains National Park over 32 years: A study of land cover change. *Walia*, 2011(Special), 118–130.

- Thusyanthy, V., & Senthilnathan, S. (2011). Customer satisfaction in terms of physical evidence and employee interaction. *The IUP Journal of Marketing Management*, XI (3), 2012, 7–24.
- Trišić, I., Privitera, D., Štetić, S., Genov, G., & Stanić Jovanović, S. (2022). Sustainable Tourism in Protected Area—A Case of Fruška Gora National Park, Vojvodina (Northern Serbia). *Sustainability*, 14(21). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142114548>.
- Truong, V. D., & Hall, C. M. (2017). Corporate social marketing in tourism: To sleep or not to sleep with the enemy? *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 25(7), 884–902. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2016.1201093>
- Tse, T. S., & Qiu, H. (2016). Issues arising from the rapid growth of Mainland Chinese visitors to Hong Kong: Implications for tourism marketing. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 12(3-4), 291-312.
- Tung, V. W. S., & Ritchie, J. B. (2011). Exploring the essence of memorable tourism experiences. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 38(4), 1367–1386.
- United Nations and World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2008). International recommendations for tourism statistics 2008 (IRTS 2008).
- UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical (2020). Available from: <https://www.eunwto.org/doi/abs/10.18111/wtobarometereng.2020.18.1.2>
- UNWTO, E. (2013). Sustainable tourism for development guidebook. *World Tourism Organization, European Commission, Madrid*.
- UNWTO & UNDP. (2005). UNEP, U. (2005). Making tourism more sustainable: a guide for policymakers. United Nations Environment Program, Division of Technology, Industry, and Economics, Paris.
- Valdivieso, J. C., Eagles, P. F., & Gil, J. C. (2014). Efficient management capacity evaluation of tourism in protected areas. *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 58(9), 1544–1561. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2014.937479>.
- Vallance, S., Perkins, H. C., & Dixon, J. E. (2011). What is social sustainability? A clarification of concepts. *Geoforum*, 42(3), 342–348. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2011.01.002>
- Van Niekerk, A. J. (2020). Inclusive economic sustainability: SDGs and global inequality. *Sustainability*, 12(13), 5427.
- Verbeek, D. H. P., Bargeman, A., & Mommaas, J. T. (2011). A sustainable tourism mobility passage. *Tourism Review*.
- Vezzoli, C. A. (2018). *Design for Environmental Sustainability*. Springer London. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4471-7364-9>.

- Voorhees, C. M., Brady, M. K., Calantone, R., & Ramirez, E. (2016). Discriminant validity testing in marketing: An analysis, causes for concern, and proposed remedies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 44(1), 119–134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-015-0455-4>
- Waas, T., Hugé, J., Verbruggen, A., & Wright, T. (2011). Sustainable Development: A Bird's Eye View. *Sustainability*, 3(10). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su3101637>
- Walpole, M. J., Goodwin, H. J., & Ward, K. G. R. (2001). Pricing Policy for Tourism in Protected Areas: Lessons from Komodo National Park, Indonesia. *Conservation Biology*, 15(1), 218–227. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1523-1739.2001.99231.x>
- Watson, J. E., Dudley, N., Segan, D. B., & Hockings, M. (2014). The performance and potential of protected areas. *Nature*, 515(7525), 67–73.
- Wearing, S., Schweinsberg, S., & Tower, J. (2016). Marketing National Parks for Sustainable Tourism. Multilingual Matters eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781845415594>.
- Weaver, D. B. (2001). The encyclopaedia of ecotourism. Cabi.
- Weeraratna, S. (2022). Understanding Land Degradation: An Overview. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12138-8>.
- Weerasophon, W. (2024). Marketing Mix Factors Affecting Thai Tourists' Decision to Purchase International Tour Packages. *Asian Administration & Management Review*, (7).
- Welteji, D., & Zerihun, B. (2018). Tourism–Agriculture Nexuses: Practices, challenges and opportunities in the case of Bale Mountains National Park, Southeastern Ethiopia. *Agriculture & Food Security*, 7(1), 8. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40066-018-0156-6>.
- White, V., McCrum, G., Blackstock, K. L., & Scott, A. (2006). Indicators and sustainable tourism: Literature review. *Macaulay Institute: Aberdeen, UK*.
- Wiersum, K. F. (1995). 200 years of sustainability in forestry: Lessons from history. *Environmental Management*, 19(3), 321–329. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02471975>
- Winter, P. L., Selin, S., Cervený, L., & Bricker, K. (2020). Outdoor Recreation, Nature-Based Tourism, and Sustainability. *Sustainability*, 12(1), 81. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12010081>
- Witt, S. F. (1989). Tourism marketing and management handbook.
- Wong, K. M., Musa, G., & Wong, E. S. K. (2011). A review of philosophical assumptions in management research. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(29), 11546–11550.
- World Travel & Tourism Council. (2024). Economic impact. <https://wttc.org/research/economic-impact> (accessed 28 June 2024).

- Xu, J. B. (2010). Perceptions of tourism products. *Tourism Management*, 31(5), 607–610. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2009.06.011>.
- Yu, K. J., Ying, J., Tian, Q. L., Sun, L. J., & Huang, G. (2020). Measure of input/output efficiency of the introduction of digital marketing into green products in ecological industry. *Journal of environmental protection and ecology*, 20, 346-354.
- Zamfir, A., & Corbos, R. (2015). Towards sustainable tourism development in urban areas: Case study on Bucharest as tourist destination. *Sustainability*, 7(9), 12709–12722. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su70912709>.
- Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2018). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm*. McGraw-Hill. <https://thuvienso.hoasen.edu.vn/handle/123456789/8038>.
- Zeng, B., & Gerritsen, R. (2014). What do we know about social media in tourism? A review. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 10, 27–36.
- Zeng, N., Liu, Y., Gong, P., Hertogh, M., & König, M. (2021). Do right PLS and do PLS right: A critical review of the application of PLS-SEM in construction management research. *Frontiers of Engineering Management*, 8(3), 356–369. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42524-021-0153-5>
- Zhang, X., Song, H., & Huang, G. Q. (2009). Tourism supply chain management: A new research agenda. *Tourism Management*, 30(3), 345–358.
- Zheng, Y., Goh, E., & Wen, J. (2020). The effects of misleading media reports about COVID-19 on Chinese tourists' mental health: a perspective article. *Anatolia*, 31(2), 337-340.

Appendix 1. Qualitative Research questions

Dear Sir/Madam,

This study is prepared to examine “TOURISM MARKETING PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS: PERSPECTIVE OF BALE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, ETHIOPIA.” Therefore, you are selected to rise and explore issues to achieve study objectives. We assure you that the information that you provide will be kept confidential and for academic purposes only. Your honest and thoughtful response is regarded as a great input to the quality of the research results. All information and ideas shared with us will be kept confidential. If you decide to participate, you have the right to decline to answer any particular questions; withdraw from the study at any point; ask any questions about the study at any time during participation, or provide information with the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researchers, and you will be given access to a summary of the research findings when the study is concluded.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation in advance!

Eliyas Ebrahim Aman

Ph.D. candidate at doctoral school of management and organizational science.

University of Sopron Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics

Email:- Eliyas.Ebrahim.Aman@phd.uni-sopron.hu
mamilebale@gmail.com

General Instruction

1. Your participation is Voluntary.
2. You are free to express your personal standpoint on the questions under the discussion.
3. There are no right or wrong responses as long as you share your experience.

Part I: General Information

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 18- 29 [] 30-40 [] 41-50 [] 50 &above []
3. Academic qualification: Vocational [] B.Sc./BA [] MBA/MSc/MA []
MPhil/PhD [] other , please specify _____
4. Role: _____
5. Company or organization: _____

Part I: Semi-structured interview questions related to tourism marketing practices in Bale Mountains national park (BMNP) with flow-up questions	
Main questions	Follow-up probing
1. Do you believe that BMNP has enough tourism products?	-what kind of tourism products are available in the national park? -How is the availability of infrastructure in the national park? -Is there enough and quality accommodation? -How is the availability of multiple cuisine and food for tourists? -Are there any areas where improvements could be made in terms of tourism products? -What kind of challenge did you face while improving tourism products?
2. What kind of pricing approach is being implemented at BMNP?	-Do you think that BMNP's tourism product prices are reasonable? -Does the revenue generated provide a satisfactory level of income for the national park? -Does the revenue generated cover any ecological harm or damage caused by the visitors or local community? -Does the revenue generated provide an appropriate level of benefits for the host community?
3. Do you think that BMNP is easily accessible?	-How is the park accessible to those who want to visit it before arriving at the destination?
4. Is the promotional activities of BMNP providing target audiences with accurate and timely information to encourage them to visit the national park?	-What kind of promotional strategy and tools do you use to promote the national park? -How effective was strategy? -Did you encounter any challenges while using this promotional strategy?
5. Is the behaviour and attitude of BMNP employees appropriate to create satisfaction and a memorable tourist experience?	-How do employees' behavior and attitude impact the overall image of the national park? -How do you describe the satisfaction and experience your employees provide for tourists? -Do you have mechanisms to obtain tourists feedback on their experience ?
6. Is there any actual mechanism, flow of activities, procedures, standard service delivery, and systems of operations that help tourists access services in the simplest way?	-What kind of procedures do you follow to delivery service in the simplest way?
7. Is there any tangible element that enhances communication during service delivery? If yes	-What kind of tangible element is available to boost communication performance during service delivery?

Part II: Semi-structured interview questions related to the sustainability dimension (with flow-up questions).	
8. Do you think the national park implement sustainable tourism practices to ensure economic sustainability? If yes	-What kind of economic sustainability practices is BMNP implementing to ensure economic sustainability? -Could you please give specific initiatives that contribute to economic sustainability?
9. Do you think the national park ensures sociocultural sustainability? If yes	-What kind of sociocultural sustainability dimension is the national park implementing to ensure sociocultural sustainability? -Could you please give specific examples or initiatives that contribute to sociocultural sustainability?
10. Do you think the national park ensures environmental sustainability?	-What kind of sustainability dimension is the national park implementing to ensure environmental sustainability? -Could you please give specific examples or initiatives that contribute to environmental sustainability?
11. How do you describe the relationship between tourism marketing and the sustainability of tourism in BMNPs?	-Do you think that tourism marketing has an impact on the economic sustainability of BMNP and the host community? If yes, how? Could you please give examples of successful and discernible instances where tourism marketing positively influenced economic sustainability? -Do you think that tourism marketing has an impact on the sociocultural sustainability of the local community? If yes, how? Could please give examples of successful and discernible instances where tourism marketing positively influenced sociocultural sustainability?
	Do you think that tourism marketing has an impact on the environmental sustainability of a national park? If yes, how? Could you please give examples of successful and discernible instances where tourism marketing positively influenced environmental sustainability?

Appendix 2. Quantitative Research questions (Survey questionnaire)

Dear Sir/Madam,

This survey is prepared to examine “*TOURISM MARKETING PRACTICES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PROTECTED AREAS: PERSPECTIVE OF BALE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK, ETHIOPIA.*” Therefore, you are selected to participate and fill out this questionnaire to achieve study objectives. We assure you that the information that you provide will be kept confidential and for academic purposes only. Your honest and thoughtful response is regarded as a great input to the quality of the research results. All information and ideas shared with us will be kept confidential. If you decide to participate, you have the right to decline to answer any particular questions; withdraw from the study at any point; ask any questions about the study at any time during participation, or provide information with the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researchers, and you will be given access to a summary of the research findings when the study is concluded.

Thank you very much for your time and cooperation in advance!

Eliyas Ebrahim Aman

Ph.D. candidate at doctoral school of management and organizational science.

University of Sopron Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics

Email:- Eliyas.Ebrahim.Aman@phd.uni-sopron.hu
mamilebale@gmail.com

General Instruction

1. No need of writing your name.
2. Your participation is Voluntary.
3. Please simply tick {√} mark on your choice of the space provided.

Part I: General Information

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 18- 29 [] 30-40 [] 41-50 [] 50 &above []
3. Academic qualification: Vocational [] B.Sc./BA [] MBA/MSc/MA [] MPhil/PhD [] other , please specify _____
4. Please indicate your category: Domestic tourist [] International tourist []

Part II: Measures of tourism marketing

1. Tourism product

These variable measures the tourism products of the national park.						
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the availability of the following tourism product in BMNP? Please indicate your response by selecting one of the following options: 1 = "strongly disagree" (SD), 2 = "disagree" (D), 3 = "neutral" (N), 4 = "agree" (A), 5 = "strongly agree"						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	The national park has a stunning landscape	1	2	3	4	5
2	Enrich with wildlife resources (fauna, mammals, birds, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Rich with natural resources (forest, flora, lakes, beaches, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
4	Unique and authentic culture of local community	1	2	3	4	5
5	Multiple local cuisines from various cultural backgrounds	1	2	3	4	5
6	Enough and attractive accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
	Adequate infrastructure (transportation, electricity, water)	1	2	3	4	5

2. Tourism pricing

These variable measures the tourism pricing of the national park.						
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the prices paid by tourists to BMNP cover the following? Please indicate your response by selecting one of the following options: 1 = "strongly disagree" (SD), 2 = "disagree" (D), 3 = "neutral" (N), 4 = "agree" (A), 5 = "strongly agree"						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Provide a satisfactory level of income for the national park	1	2	3	4	5
2	Cover any ecological harm or damage caused by the visitors.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Generate an appropriate level of benefits for the host community	1	2	3	4	5

3. Tourism Placing

These variable measures the placement of a tourism product.						
To what extent do you agree or disagree that BMNP reflects the following placement of tourism products? Please indicate your response by selecting one of the following options: 1 = "strongly disagree" (SD), 2 = "disagree" (D), 3 = "neutral" (N), 4 = "agree" (A), 5 = "strongly agree"						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Present a wide range of travel opportunities to tourists.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Provide information on crucial aspects at the pre-purchase stage.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Providing directions and maps.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Providing estimates of travel time and distance	1	2	3	4	5
5	Offering facilities along different travel routes within the national park.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Tourism Promotion

These variable measures the promotion of tourism products in the national park.						
To what extent do you agree or disagree that BMNP uses the following promotion mix? Please indicate your response by selecting one of the following options: 1 = "strongly disagree" (SD), 2 = "disagree" (D), 3 = "neutral" (N), 4 = "agree" (A), 5 = "strongly agree"						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Sponsoring local events and festivals, or sports tournaments.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Implement a variety of short-term incentives to attract tourists.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Use telephone, e-mail, and other tools to communicate directly about the national park.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Create and share relevant content through social media.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Use printing and broadcast media to build a favourable image about the national park.	1	2	3	4	5

5. People

These variable measures the quality of employees at your national park.						
To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are covered by BMNP? Please select one of the following responses: 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = neutral (N), 4 = agree (A), 5 = strongly agree.						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	The staff of national park is friendly.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Employee behaviour and attitude increase tourist satisfaction and create a memorable experience.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Employees look professional.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The park has knowledgeable and skilled employees to understand the needs and answer tourist questions	1	2	3	4	5

6. Process

These variable measures the flow of activities and procedures at your national park.						
To what degree do BMNP procedures and processes reflect the following? Please indicate your response by selecting one of the following options: 1 = "strongly disagree" (SD), 2 = "disagree" (D), 3 = "neutral" (N), 4 = "agree" (A), 5 = "strongly agree"						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Provide service within the standard time frame.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Responding quickly to customer inquiries or complaints.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Treating visitors with respect and professionalism	1	2	3	4	5

7. Physical evidence:

These variable measures the physical evidence at your national park.						
To what degree does BMNP's physical evidence reflect the following? Please indicate your response by selecting one of the following options: 1 = "strongly disagree" (SD), 2 = "disagree" (D), 3 = "neutral" (N), 4 = "agree" (A), 5 = "strongly agree"						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Working areas are designated according to the needed standard.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Offices and working environments are well furnished and attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Logos, signs, and images are understandable and communicable.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Display photographs showing all the aspects of the destination.	1	2	3	4	5

Part III: - Measures of sustainable tourism

1. Economic Dimension

These Variable measures the degree of the agreement of economic dimensions in the national park.						
To what degree does your national park's economic dimension reflect the following? Please indicate your response by ticking any of these response options: 1 = Strongly disagree (SD), 2= Disagree(D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5= Strongly agree.						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Ensure the viability and competitiveness of tourism destinations	1	2	3	4	5
2	Increased employment opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
3	Increases market for local products	1	2	3	4	5
4	Support local economies	1	2	3	4	5
5	Maximize the contribution of tourism to the prosperity of the national park	1	2	3	4	5

2. Socio-cultural Dimension

These Variable measures the degree of the Socio-cultural dimension in the national park.						
To what degree does your national park's Socio-cultural dimension reflect the following? Please indicate your response by ticking any of these response options: 1 = Strongly disagree (SD), 2= Disagree(D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5= Strongly agree.						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Improve the quality of life for local communities.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Empower local communities in the future development of tourism.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Stakeholder participation in decision-making (government, investor, local community, universities, and NGOs)	1	2	3	4	5

4	Provide all available services without discrimination by gender, race, disability, or other ways.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Respect and enhance the historic heritage, authentic culture, traditions, and distinctiveness of host communities.	1	2	3	4	5

3. Environmental Dimension

These Variable measures the degree of the Environmental dimension in the national park.						
To what degree does your national park's Environmental dimension reflect the following? Please indicate your response by ticking any of these response options: 1 = Strongly disagree (SD), 2= Disagree(D), 3= Neutral (N), 4= Agree (A), 5= Strongly agree.						
S/N	Description	SD	D	N	A	SA
1	Maintain and enhance the quality of landscapes.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Support the conservation of natural areas, habitats, and wildlife.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Minimize the use of scarce and non-renewable resources (minerals).	1	2	3	4	5
4	Reduces over-consumption and waste (timber, firewood)	1	2	3	4	5
5	Minimize the pollution of air, water, and land and the generation of waste by tourism enterprises and visitors.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 3. letter of authorization from the supervisor and doctorate school to conduct data collection.



ALEXANDRE LAMFALUSSY FACULTY OF ECONOMICS
István Széchenyi Economics and Management Doctoral School
9400 Sopron, Erzsébet street 9. Email: ikk-doktori@uni-sopron.hu

LETTER of SUPPORT for Eliyas Ebrahim Aman PhD Student Conducting Data Collection

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Eliyas Ebrahim Aman a dedicated and highly capable PhD candidate in István Széchenyi Economics and Management Doctoral School, Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics, at University of Sopron, Hungary. He is currently embarking on the crucial phase of data collection for his doctoral research, and I believe his work holds great promise in contributing valuable insights to the field of tourism and marketing.

Having had the privilege of working closely with Eliyas Ebrahim Aman as a PhD student, I can attest to his intellectual rigor, passion for the subject matter, and meticulous approach to research. His dedication to advancing knowledge in tourism and marketing is truly commendable, and he has demonstrated exceptional proficiency in navigating the complexities associated with tourism marketing sustainable tourism.

The proposed data collection phase is a critical component of Eliyas's research, and he has developed a well-thought-out plan that reflects a deep understanding of the methodologies required to address the research questions. His approach not only aligns with the current state of the field but also exhibits creativity and innovation. In addition to Eliyas's academic excellence, he has exhibited an excellent strong work ethic and the ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues and research participants alike. I am confident that he will execute the data collection phase with the same level of commitment and excellence that he has consistently demonstrated throughout the course of his doctoral studies.

I am aware that Eliyas has developed data collection instruments to successfully embark on the data collection phase, and I believe these are essential to ensuring the quality and rigor of his research. I kindly request that you consider Eliyas's request with utmost priority, as his work has the potential to make a significant contribution to our understanding of **"tourism marketing practices and sustainability of tourism development in national parks: perspective of bale mountain national park, Ethiopia."** Your support will not only benefit Eliyas but will also contribute to the overall success of University of Sopron in fostering cutting-edge research.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am confident that, with the necessary support, Eliyas will continue to excel and make meaningful contributions to tourism marketing and sustainable tourism. Should you have any further questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at papp-vary.arpad@uni-sopron.hu or +36 20 5812978.

Sopron, 23 February 2024.

With regards,

Dr. Árpád Papp-Váry PhD habil

PhD supervisor of Eliyas Ebrahim Aman



Prof. Dr. Csilla Obádovics PhD

Head of Doctoral School

Appendix 4. Ethical committee approval and memorandum of understanding with Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority



የኢትዮጵያ የዳር እንስሳት ጥበቃ ባለስልጣን
Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority



ቁጥር ጽ/31/33/2016
 Ref.No.
 ቀን መጋቢት 12 2016
 Date

ለባሌ ተራራዎች ብሔራዊ ፓርክ ጽ/ቤት

ዲገሮ

ጉዳዩ፡- የፕናትና ምርምር ፈቃድን ይመለከታል፤

የሾፐርን ዩኒቨርሲቲ አሌክሳንደር ላምፋሉሲ የኢኮኖሚክስ የትምህርት ክፍል የPhD ተማሪ የሆኑት አቶ ኤሌያስ ኢብራሂም አማን "Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism Development in National Parks: Perspective of Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia." በሚል ርዕስ በባሌ ተራራዎች ብ/ፓርክ ውስጥ በመንቀሳቀስ የምርምር ሥራቸውን ለማከናወንና መራጃዎችን ለመስብሰብ በጠየቁት መሠረት፤ ያቀረቡት ፕሮፖዛል ተገምግሞ አስፈላጊነቱ የታመነበት በመሆኑና ለዚህም በመ/ቤታችን በኩል የሚጠበቅባቸውን ፎርማሊቲ ያሟሉ ስለሆነ ከመጋቢት 10/2016 እስከ መጋቢት 9/2017 ዓ.ም ባለው የአንድ ዓመት ጊዜ ውስጥ የምርምር ሥራቸውን እንዲያካሂዱ የተፈቀደላቸው ስለሆነ ይኸው ታውቆ አስፈላጊው ትብብር አንዲደረግላቸው እያሳሰብን በጥበቃ ቦታው ውስጥ ስለሚሰበሰቡ ናሙናዎችና ስለሚከናወኑ ሥራዎች ለክትትል ይረዳ ዘንድ በቦታው በሚቆዩበት ጊዜ አግባብ ያለው ባለሙያ ተመድቦ በስምምነቱ መሠረት ሥራውን እንዲከታተል እንዲደረግና የተጓዳኝ ባለሙያው የቀን ውሎ አበል ክፍያ በተመራማርው የሚሸፈን መሆኑን እየገለጽን፤ የስምምነቱ 2 ገጽ ከዚህ ሽኝ ደብዳቤ ጋር አያይዘን የላከን መሆኑን እንገልጻለን።

ግልባጭ፡

ለኤሌያስ ኢብራሂም

አዲስ አበባ



ከሰላምታ ጋር



ዶ/ር ፈቃድ ረጋሳ ጃነ
 የዳር እንስሳት ምርምርና ልማት መ/ቤት
 ሥራ ስሪቱ

GUARDIANS OF THE WILD AND NATIVE

Tel: +251 115504838 +251 115514389 Fax: +251 115546804	E-mail: info@ewca.gove.et www.ewca.gove.et	P.O.Box: 386 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
--	---	---------------------------------------

Mexico, Yobek Commercial Center
9th floor

Note: The letter is written in the Amharic language, and the date is according to the Ethiopian calendar (E.C.). When I convert the Ethiopian date of 12/07/2016 E.C. to the Gregorian calendar, it corresponds to 21/03/2024 G.C.

**Memorandum of Understanding between the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority and Mr.
Eliyas Ebrahim Aman**

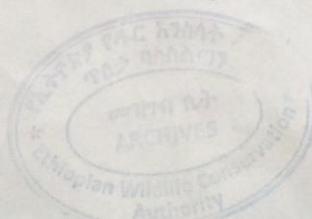
This agreement is made between the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Authority (hereinafter referred to as ("EWCA")) and Mr. **Eliyas Ebrahim** a Ph.D. student at the University of Sopron, Alexandre Lamfalussy Faculty of Economics (hereinafter referred to as ("The Researcher")) to conduct a research entitled "**Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism Development in National Parks: Perspective of Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia**" This MOU is intended to facilitate research and collaboration to lay out the expectations of the Parties in general terms and is not intended to create legally binding obligations on the parties.

Objectives

To study the Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism Development in National Parks: Perspective of Bale Mountains National Park, Ethiopia.

Article 1: Undertakings of the Researcher

- 1.1. The Researcher agrees to conduct the study based on the proposal, which was reviewed by the Authority and had been confirmed in line with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation law and research guideline.
- 1.2. The Researcher should refrain from any form of political activity, religious proselytizing, or similar activities and respect the cultural values of the local communities in which he is working
- 1.3. The Researcher agrees to provide EWCA with a brief written regular progress report of work accomplished (activities and findings) in a timely fashion, quarterly during the project life span, which summarizes findings to date.
- 1.4. The Researcher agrees to send the final results of the research to EWCA in the following ways after finalizing the research:
 - ✓ A Tape recording, film, etc.
 - ✓ A minimum of two copies of a Ph.D. thesis
 - ✓ A minimum of three copies of reprints of published articles
 - ✓ A minimum of three copies of a book, if applicable
- 1.5. The Research project must be fully self- supported
- 1.6. The Researcher agrees to take all pre-cautionary measures not to disturb the ecology of the wildlife in the conservation areas while doing the research activities



- 1.7. The Researcher agrees not to capture any wild animal.
- 1.8. The Researcher agrees to cover the daily subsistence allowance of the counterpart as stipulated by Ethiopian government regulation while the counterpart is accompanying the researcher or conducting fieldwork related to the research. The Researchers will also provide hands-on training in the field for the counterpart or other EWCA staff who request such a training.
- 1.9. In all publications that resulted from this study, EWCA and the concerned bodies in the study area shall be acknowledged.
- 1.10. EWCA and the concerned bodies in the study area will have the right to use any information supplied by the research.
- 1.11. The Ethiopian counterpart if any will be the co-author in the research publication

Article 2: Undertakings of EWCA

- 2.1. EWCA grants permission with an official letter to the Researcher to conduct a research in the Bale Mountains National Parks on the above-mentioned topic.
- 2.2. EWCA agrees to provide the necessary information and assistance for the researcher during the research period. This will include writing support letter for the importation of research supplies and equipment necessary to achieve project goals as well as sample export permit as necessary.
- 2.3 EWCA will monitor regularly the activities of the Researcher and provide feedback to the Researcher

Article 3: General

This Memorandum of Understanding was signed in Addis Ababa on the 21st of March, 2024 and shall enter into force beginning from the date of signature by EWCA and the Researcher and remain in force until the 20th of March, 2025. This MOU may be amended/ terminated in writing upon the mutual consent of the parties hereto.

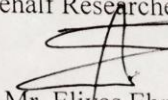
For and on behalf EWCA



Fekede Regassa Joka /PHD/
Wildlife Research and Development
Lead Executive Officer



For and on behalf Researcher



Mr. Elias Ebrahim
University of Sopron,
Alexandre Lamfalussy
Faculty of Economics

Appendix 5. Letter of support from Oromia Tourism Commission



KOMISHINII TURIZIMII OROMIYAA
የኦሮሚያ ተሪዝም ኮሚሽን
OROMIA TOURISM COMMISSION

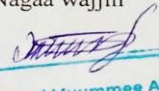


Lakk 9898/120/16
Ref.no. _____
Guyyaa 09/07/16
Date _____

Qaama Dhimmi Haaluu Hundaaf

Dhimmi : **Deeggarsaa gaafachuu** 

Komishiniin Turizimii Oromiyaa iddoowwaan hawwata Turizimii oromiyaan qabdu beeksisuun Ororaiyaa iddoo hawwata Turizimii filatamtu akka taatuuf hojjechaa jira. Iddoowwaan hawwata nannoon keenya qabdu beeksisuun yaa'iinsa tuuristoota biyya keessaa fi alaa dabaluu, galii naannoon keenya argattu guddisuu irratti xiyyeeffannoo kennuun kan hojjetu dha. Bu'uuruma kanaan **Obbo Eliyas Ebrahim Aman** kan jedhaman iyyaata gaafa guyyaa 14/03/2024 Komishinii keenyaatti dhiyyefataniin kadhimamaa **PHD Yuunivarsitii SOPRON** gosa barnoota Marketing Manegement barachaa kan jiraniifi yeroo amman kana immoo mata duree **"Tourism Marketing Practice and sustainability of tourism development in national Park Perspective of Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia"** irraatti gaggeessuu waan barbaadaniif qaamni dhimmi kun ilaallatuu kan keessaa becke deeggarsa barbaachisa ta'e akka taasisuuf gamanumaan isin beeksifna.

Nagaa wajjin


G/G

Komishineera KTotiif

I/A/Komishineera tiif

Daa/Bul/I/G/Turizimii tiif

KTO

Obboo Eliyaas Ebrahim tiif

B/jirtanitti



Daawud Muummee Alii
I/A/Komishinaraa fi I/C/Damee
Ikeet Turizimii

Oromiyaa Daawwadhaa
Visit Oromia
ኦሮሚያን ይጎብኙ

Address: Bole Main Road, Noah Plaza Building 7th floor, Finfinnee, Ethiopia

Email: info@oromiatourismcommission.et ☎ +25111668784/6839 📠 +251116687984 📠 24575

Note: The letter is written in the Afan oromoo language, and the date is according to the Ethiopian calendar (E.C.). When I convert the Ethiopian date of 09/07/2016 E.C. to the Gregorian calendar, it corresponds to 18/03/2024 G.C.

Appendix 6. DECLARATION ON IDENTITY

I, the undersigned *Eliyas Ebrahim Aman*, declare that **the printed and electronic versions** of the doctoral dissertation and thesis booklet **are identical in all respects**.

Sopron, 20____ year _____ month _____ day

signature of PhD candidate

Appendix 7. LEGAL DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, *Eliyas Ebrahim Aman*, by signing this declaration, declare that *Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism Development in Protected Areas: Perspective of Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia*, my PhD dissertation, was my own work; during the dissertation, I complied with the Act LXXVI of 1999 on the rules of copyright and the rules of the doctoral dissertation prescribed by the Doctoral School, especially regarding references and citations.¹

Furthermore, I declare that I did not mislead the supervisor (s) or the program leader with the dissertation.

By signing this declaration, I acknowledge that if it can be proved that the dissertation is not self-made or the author of a copyright infringement is related to the dissertation, the University of Sopron is entitled to refuse the acceptance of the dissertation.

I further declare that I am not in the process of obtaining a doctoral degree in the same discipline, that I am not in the process of having my doctoral degree revoked, and that I have not had a previously awarded doctoral degree revoked within 5 years.

Refusing to accept a dissertation does not affect any other (civil, legal, criminal) consequences of copyright infringement.

Sopron, 20____ year _____ month _____ day

signature of PhD candidate

¹ LXXVI. TV. 1999 Section 34 (1) Any person may quote the details of the work, to the extent justified by the nature and purpose of the receiving work and in the original, by the name of the source and the author designated there.

Article 36 (1) Details of public lectures and other similar works, as well as political speeches, may be freely used for information purposes, within the scope justified by the purpose. For such use, the source, along with the author's name, should be indicated, unless this is impossible.

Appendix 8. CO-AUTHOR'S DECLARATION (1)

I/We, the undersigned ***Dr. habil. Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry*** co-author(s) agree that ***Eliyas Ebrahim Aman*** doctoral student may use the results of the joint publication titled ***Tourism Marketing & Economic Sustainability of Tourist Destinations: Perspectives of Bale Mountains National Park*** in his/her doctoral dissertation titled “***Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism Development in Protected Areas: Perspective of Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia.***”.

Sopron, 20_____ year _____ month _____ day

signature of co-author(s)

CO-AUTHOR'S DECLARATION (2)

I/We, the undersigned ***Dr. habil. Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry*** co-author(s) agree that ***Eliyas Ebrahim Aman*** doctoral student **may use the results of the joint publication** titled ***Tourism marketing and national parks. A systematic literature review*** in his/her doctoral dissertation titled ***“Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism Development in Protected Areas: Perspective of Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia.”***

.

Sopron, 20_____ year _____ month _____ day

signature of co-author(s)

CO-AUTHOR'S DECLARATION (3)

I/We, the undersigned ***Dr. habil. Árpád Ferenc Papp-Váry*** co-author(s) agree that Eliyas Ebrahim Aman doctoral student **may use the results of the joint publication** titled ***Sustainability of National Park and Tourism Development: - A systematic review on Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia*** in his/her doctoral dissertation titled ***“Tourism Marketing Practices and Sustainability of Tourism Development in Protected Areas: Perspective of Bale Mountain National Park, Ethiopia.”***

Sopron, 20____ year _____ month _____ day

signature of co-author(s)

Appendix 9. Some photos of Bale Mountains National park taken during data collection.

Photo 1: Farewell billboard at Bale Mountains National Park



Photo 2: Welcome billboard at Bale Mountains National Park



Photo 3: Information Board listing entrance and services fees at BMNP

Entrance & Services Fees			
(all prices are in Ethiopian Birr)			
Entrance Fees (per 24 hr period)			
	Ethiopians	Residents	Foreign
<u>12 yrs and above</u>	20.00	50.00	90.00
<u>Less than 12 yrs</u>	10.00	10.00	10.00
<u>Students</u>	10.00		
Vehicle Fees (per vehicle per 24 hr period)			
	Ethiopians	Residents	Foreign
<u>Up to 12 seats</u>	10.00	15.00	20.00
<u>Greater than 12 seats</u>	15.00	30.00	40.00
Camping Fees (per tent per 24 hr period)			
	Ethiopians	Residents	Foreign
<u>1-4 person tent</u>	10.00	30.00	40.00
<u>More than 4 persons</u>	15.00	40.00	60.00

Photo 4: Photo taken in Gaysay grassland during field survey with my assistant.



Photo 5: Photograph captured in Haremma forest during a field survey with my research assistants.



Photo 6: Mount Tull Dimtu Photographed during a field survey (at highest point)



Photo 7: Photo captured on our way to Dello-mana and Angetu



Photo 8: Some of the photos from focus group discussions with local communities



Photo 9: Common cuisine at Rira (flat bread with organic honey, cacabsa, collard greens, and organic yogurt)

