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# Assessing the effect of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) aspects on destination image: a case of vacation tourists visiting Mombasa, Kenya

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**ASSESSING THE EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (E-WOM)  
ASPECTS ON DESTINATION IMAGE: A CASE OF VACATION TOURISTS VISITING  
MOMBASA, KENYA**

REHEMA JAFARALI KASSAM



Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters in Business  
Administration at Strathmore Business School

Strathmore University

Nairobi, Kenya

2018

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**Rehema Jafarali Kassam**

March 2018.

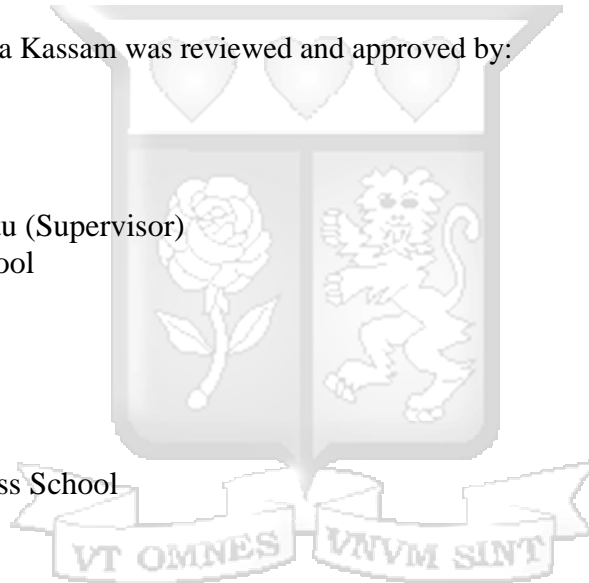
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## **ABSTRACT**

The development of the Internet and improvements in information and communication technologies (ICTs) allow consumers to share their opinions and experiences of products and services with other consumers through electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM, word-of-mouth) communication. The impact of innovations in information technology are particularly apparent in the tourism sector; today, social media provide many opportunities for travelers to share their holiday experience with their connected others. This study aimed to assess the effect of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) aspects on destination image with a particular focus on vacation tourists visiting Mombasa, Kenya. Primary data was collected through questionnaires distributed physically to 440 respondents. Results from this study indicate that perceived electronic word of mouth (EWOM) credibility, Positive electronic word of mouth (EWOM), and Volume of electronic word of mouth (EWOM), had a greater influence on destination image as compared to Users Expertise on EWOM, and Negative EWOM, on destination image. The implication of the results to therefore is that managers in their various capacities of service delivery should ensure that tourists have a positive experience of the destination; this, in turn, encourage positive EWOM about the destination image in existing Web 2.0 technology applications.

**KEY WORDS:** Electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM), consumer behavior, consumer affection, product perception, purchase intention and word of mouth (WOM).

## Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 Background.....	2
1.2.1 Mombasa as a tourist destination.....	6
1.3 Problem statement.....	6
1.4 Research objectives.....	7
1.5 Research questions.....	7
1.6 Significance of study.....	8
1.7 Scope of the study.....	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Word of mouth (WOM).....	9
2.3 Electronic word of mouth (EWOM).....	9
2.4 Destination image.....	12
2.5. Characteristics of electronic word of mouth.....	12
2.5.1 Types of Electronic Word of Mouth.....	13
2.4.3 Determinants of EWOM influence.....	16
2.4.4. Negative electronic word of mouth (EWOM).....	17
2.4.5 Positive electronic word of mouth (EWOM).....	18
2.4.6 Volume of EWOM.....	18
2.4.7. Perceived source credibility.....	19
2.4.8 Users Expertise.....	20
2.5 Elaboration likelihood model.....	21
2.6 Conceptual Framework.....	22
Perceived Electronic Word of Mouth credibility.....	23
Positive Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM).....	23
Volume of Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM).....	23
Negative Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM).....	23
Users Expertise.....	24
Perceived destination image.....	24
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	25

<b>3.1 Introduction</b> .....	25
<b>3.2 Research design</b> .....	25
<b>3.3 Data collection method</b> .....	25
<b>3.3.1 Primary Data</b> .....	25
<b>3.4 Sampling design</b> .....	26
<b>3.5 Research instrument</b> .....	26
<b>3.5.1 Validity and Reliability</b> .....	27
<b>3.5.2 Analysis Technique</b> .....	27
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS</b> .....	29
<b>4.1 Introduction</b> .....	29
<b>4.1.1 Demographics of respondents</b> .....	30
<b>4.2 Analysis of objectives</b> .....	37
<b>4.21 Preamble</b> .....	37
<b>4.22 Perceived Electronic Word of Mouth E-WOM Credibility</b> .....	40
<b>4.23 Positive Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)</b> .....	40
<b>4.24 Negative Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)</b> .....	40
<b>4.25 Users Expertise</b> .....	40
<b>4.26 Volume of Electronic Word of Mouth</b> .....	40
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	42
<b>5.1 Perceived electronic word of mouth E-WOM credibility</b> .....	42
<b>5.2 Positive electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)</b> .....	42
<b>5.3 Negative electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)</b> .....	43
<b>5.4 Users Expertise</b> .....	43
<b>5.5 Volume of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)</b> .....	44
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	45
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	47
<b>APPENDIX A</b> .....	61
<b>APPENDIX B</b> .....	72
<b>APPENDIX C</b> .....	73
<b>APPENDIX D</b> .....	77

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Destination image is a major factor influencing tourists' choice of destination (Hanlan & Kelly 2004). Destination image is a term widely accepted by marketing researchers and practitioners, and it plays an important role in travel decision making processes (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000). Since destination image has been commonly recognized as a critical aspect of successful tourism development and destination marketing, it is often explored in tourism research (Pike, 2002). The development of the destination image has a multi-dimensional nature and formation (Martin & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2007). In that regard, tourists develop their destination image through exposure to information available through various sources. Word-of-mouth (WOM) message has been shown as the most important source of information in developing a destination image. The influence of WOM has been examined for several decades in the marketing field. However, despite the apparent importance of WOM in marketing, literature on the impact of the same as relates to tourism destination choice remains scarce.

The importance of tourism and tourists' image of tourism destinations have been stressed in a number of studies (Pike, S, 2010; McCartney, Butler, and Bennett, 2010; Ortega and Gonzalez, 2007; World Tourism Association, 2007). As reported in the World Tourism Association (2007), in the year 2006, the demand for tourism increased by 4, 5% compared to the previous year; this is said to position this activity among those with the higher growth rates on the planet. According to Ortega and Gonzalez (2007), the tourism industry has turned out to be an important industry in that it has contributed to making most local, as well as national, economies stronger. Choosing a tourist destination to visit can be likened to evaluating any product/service before its purchase (e.g. Wiang and Gao, 2010; Bilkey and Nies, 1982).

The image, which a tourist has of a tourist destination, particularly a country, can influence the decision to choose the destination. A tourist' image of a destination, particularly as relates to the actual country of interest, is important to investigate (Pike, 2011; Gallarza, Saura, and García, 2002); investigation into the phenomenon, however, has been scanty in the extant literature. In relation to a tourist destination, Kotler (1993) consider that an image is constructed based on beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person possesses about a place.

Recent developments in electronic communication technology, as Koji (2016) suggests, has led to the rise of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) which allows individuals to share their opinions and experiences with other individuals via electronic communication channels – such as e-mails, blogs, networks, chat rooms, online reviews, and websites – through user-generated information. This exchange of information has therefore become critical in promotion and communication of ideas, which shape decision making regarding tourist destinations. EWOM utilizes huge scale, anonymous, ephemeral nature of the internet and introduces a new way of capturing, analyzing, interpreting, and managing the influence of customer communication in hospitality and tourism marketing.

As Jeong and Jang (2011) state, in contrast to traditional WOM, EWOM spans more widely and rapidly as it is directed at multiple individuals, is anonymous, and available at any time; thus, the potential impact of EWOM on customers' decision-making processes can be more powerful than the impact of traditional WOM.

There are numerous tourists who are looking for sites using EWOM for latest, easier, and reliable information as compared to information supplied by travel companies. As a result, the destination image, satisfaction, and visit intention are influenced by EWOM of a tourist destination (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016). EWOM plays an important role in shaping near-real-time destination image as tourist share information after their vacations. E-WOM can also affect the satisfaction that tourists perceive, as they are likely to preform opinions after interacting with information received through research of other's reviews (Setiawan, 2014; Woo, Jin, & Sanders, 2015).

## **1.2 Background**

Blogs, online reviews, and social networking websites enable customers to interact virtually and to share information, opinions, and knowledge about all kinds of goods, services, and brands (Filiari and Mcleay (2013). Web 2.0 applications are empowering online user interaction, collaboration, and influencing how travelers create, exchange, and use information. Some of these applications are fostering the spread of word-of-mouth (WOM) on the web, namely E-WOM. E-WOM has been defined as “any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or company that is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet” (Hennig-Thurau. 2004, p. 39).

The potential impact of others' opinions has dramatically increased with the development of the Internet. The Internet is changing the way consumers communicate by providing a common space in which to share opinions and reviews. Consumers' opinions can be read by other consumers around the world, and thus have a great potential reach. This communication process is known as electronic word of mouth (E-WOM).

Recent studies have shown that E-WOM influences consumer behavior as well as company sales; in fact, 90% of online shoppers consult consumers' opinions online before purchase, and 70% of consumers trust E-WOM (Lopez & Sicilia, 2012). As with traditional WOM, E-WOM has been shown to have more impact compared to firm-generated sources of information on the Internet. It is also more effective than traditional advertising media, which appears to be losing effectiveness. Consumer confidence in TV, newspapers and magazine ads declined by around 25% between 2009 and 2011 (Lopez & Sicilia, 2012). In light of E-WOM's reach and influence, it is interesting to study how E-WOM works and what makes certain opinions more influential than others – a concern addressed in this paper. In addition, marketers are becoming increasingly interested in extending their understanding of E-WOM to use that understanding as a new communication tool (Lopez & Sicilia, 2012).

The processes of consumer decision-making are affected by the level of involvement and how much risk they perceive involved in the purchase. According to Radder and Huang (2008), low involvement is a situation whereby a consumer makes purchases as a routine given known information about the products or services and minimal impact – of the products and services – on the consumer's life. The most difficult buying decisions are those involving high risk, high cost, involve complexity of decision making, and include new products or services (Branchik and Shaw 2015). Holiday planning, therefore, can be considered a high-involvement purchase process where more intensive information search and evaluation is needed to overcome uncertainty (Brian & Luiz, 2011).

The high-involvement process of planning a holiday involves three activities – (1) recognizing the need for travel, (2) searching for a destination and related travel arrangements and (3) evaluating various options (Xiang and Gretzel 2010).

Nicolau and Mas (2006) presenting idea from travelers' point of view consider two phases of decisions that tourists have in the process of choosing a travel destination. They suggest the first stage to be about whether to go on a holiday and the length of the holiday, and the second stage is selection of destination and other conditional decisions. According to Loudon and Bitta (2009) decision making process includes problem recognition, search and evaluation of purchasing process, and post-purchase behavior. Kotler (2000) presents a more detailed point of view examining a five-stage model, which is delineated into the stages – problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. In the context of tourism, the purchase process is much more complex as it involves decisions on such aspects as destination, transportation, and hotel choice.

Information shared through personal interaction has been shown to be more influential in consumer decision making, so much so, that it is deemed more influential than advertising in shaping perception of potential, actual, and former customers (Al Muazam, Oct, 2016; Almana & Mirza, 2013; Fan and Mia, 2012; Khammash, 2008). Consumers can now individually read consumer-related advice through their laptops, tablets or smart mobile phones right at home. Due to this, E-WOM is perhaps one of the most reliable and effective marketing tools in use today. With emphasis on the service industry, marketing managers are beginning to pay serious attention to online reviews or web positing; E-WOM, without doubt, has significant impact on consumer decision-making (Aslam 2011, Hennig-Thurau; Gwinner et al., 2004).

EWOM has been shown to have significant influence on consumer behaviors, affecting such aspects as loyalty and purchasing decisions (Amal, & Abdulrahman, 2013, Henning, & Walsh, 2004, Gruen, Osmonbekov, & Czaplewski, 2006; Lin, Luam, & Yun Kuei Huang, 2005). As a result of this, it is critical to understand why consumers should pay attention to E-WOM and even seek advice through a virtual world. EWOM communications forms are an exciting area of research. However, there is a lack of this particular research on destination image for Mombasa as this is considered a potential tourist destination.

There is limited research in regard to the effect of online reviews and their influence on consumer decisions. The development of ICTs, primarily the Internet, has enriched the consumer's communication environment (Vilpponen et al., 2006) and brought about new forms of electronic peer-to-peer communication (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2004). Ahuja and Carley (1999) describe this

new enriched environment as “an amorphous web of connections.” The development of social network platforms on the Internet has facilitated social interconnections (Tussyadiah et al., 2015) and individuals have been provided with a medium to share information and opinions with other people more easily than ever before (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

The Internet has brought drastic changes to the field of communications (Dellarocas, 2003; Kozinets, 2002), and computer-mediated communication has become very important in information searches and the experience-sharing process. Empowered with computer-mediated communication, individuals and online communities have the power to shape culture, community opinion, and consumer preferences. The new tourism consumers supported by the ICTs are more informed, more independent, more individualistic, and more involved; they also tell stories about their experiences to other people.

As with the traditional word of mouth, E-WOM has shown to have more impact compared to firm-generated sources of information on the internet and more effective than traditional advertising media, which appear to be losing usefulness (Lopez & Sicilia, 2014). Results from a major tourism agency from China indicate that the purchasing decisions of tourists are strongly influenced by online reviews of travelers. A recent study for the tourist sector from Germany shows that 62% of the 2,000 interviewed Germans claimed that online reviews and the comments of other consumers have had an impact on their holiday-related decisions given that when selecting a hotel or a destination, consumers rely very much on user reviews published on the internet (Schemmann, 2011).

The products offered in the tourism sector are mostly services and, therefore, are intangible in nature. Intangible assets are, usually, hard to describe and, therefore, consumers tend to rely on data transmitted from mouth-to-mouth from an experienced source in order to reduce the risk of uncertainty and perception (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008, p. 36). In addition, since the hospitality and tourism products and services contain more interpersonal interaction that needs to be experienced by consumers, the influence of E-WOM in the hospitality industry is more significant than in other industries (Litvin 2008 and Wu, 2013). In light of E-WOM's reach and influence, it is interesting to study how E-WOM works in tourism and hospitality industry and what makes certain opinions more influential than others.

### **1.2.1 Mombasa as a tourist destination**

Mombasa is a city on the coast of Kenya. It is the country's second-largest city, after the capital Nairobi, with an estimated population of about 1.2 million people as of 2016 with a resident population of 523,183 as of the 2009 census. Its metropolitan region is the second largest in the country and has a population of approximately two million people. Administratively, Mombasa is the capital of Mombasa County (KNBS, 2017).

Mombasa is Kenya's main tourist destination. It is located on the Eastern coastline of Kenya bordering the Indian Ocean, a geographical positioning that has made it a popular destination for its beaches. Mombasa offers diverse marine life, world-class hotels and a friendly atmosphere. There is a tropical climate all year with a wide variety of activities for tourists (KNBS, 2017).

Mombasa is a Swahili founded and ruled city. It was founded between the 1st and 5th century. At certain times, it was occupied by the Portuguese, Arabs and British and originated back in the 16th century. Mombasa's culture today still exhibits that of its past. Historical ruins like Forte Jesus de Mombasa (Fort Jesus), an historic Portuguese fort, and the Old Town, are attractions influenced by Mombasa's trade culture, with many examples of Portuguese and Islamic architecture (KNBS, 2017).

### **1.3 Problem statement**

According to Weerawit & Vinai 2014, Word-of-mouth has traditionally been shown to be an effective way of extracting useful information for purchase decisions, for example, in Jordan, electronic word of mouth is suggested as a solution for organizations starting restaurants and other businesses because it is inexpensive and highly effective (Al-Azzam, 2016). Electronic word of Mouth (E-WOM) is able to perform multiple tasks: to transform communication networks, to increase recipients' awareness, and to eventually lead to increased adoption or sales (Bruyn and Lilien, 2008). Multiple studies also show that consumers tend to lean towards and be more interested in products that are discussed online; whether through blogs, forums, or traditionally marketed sites (Pai and Chu, 2013).

Although E-WOM has shown its efficacy towards consumer opinion and behavior, it is still at a studies on the effects observed are still few, and more research needs to be done. Minimal research has examined the impact of E-WOM specifically on the destination image of Mombasa, Kenya.

Given that today's consumers are no longer passive receivers of product-related information but rather active communicators who seek fellow consumers' opinions, it is necessary to explore the current impact and possibilities of EWOM. Pourabedin and Migin (2015) observe that while WOM has always been important, its importance today is higher than ever. Since, E-WOM spreads faster and wider, it has more powerful impact on the customer's decision-making process (Pourabedin and Migin, 2015). While there are studies conducted on the impact of EWOM in other industries, the impact of Electronic Word Of Mouth on the destination image in Mombasa Kenya is yet to be explored, hence this study aims to fill this research gap by assessing the effect of Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-WOM) Aspects On Destination Image: A Case Of Vacation Tourists Visiting Mombasa, Kenya.

#### **1.4 Research objectives**

The main objective of this research is to assess the effect of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) aspects on Destination image: A case of Vacation Tourists visiting Mombasa, Kenya. The sub-objectives are supported by the following.

- i) To determine whether perceived credibility electronic word of mouth- EWOM will affect the perceived destination image of Mombasa.
- ii) To investigate the influence of positive electronic word of mouth (EWOM) toward the perceived destination image of Mombasa.
- iii) To investigate the influence of negative electronic word of mouth (EWOM) toward the perceived destination image of Mombasa.
- iv) To determine the relationship between user expertise of online reviews and the perceived destination image of Mombasa.
- v) To investigate the relationship between volume of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) reviews and perceived destination image of Mombasa.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

- i) Is there a relationship between perceived electronic word of mouth (EWOM) credibility that will affect the perceived destination image of Mombasa?

ii) Is there a relationship between positive electronic word of mouth (EWOM) and the perceived destination image of Mombasa?

iii) Is there a relationship between negative electronic word of mouth (EWOM) and the perceived destination image of Mombasa?

iv) Is there a relationship between volume of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) and the perceived destination image of Mombasa?

v) Is there a relationship between user's expertise on Trip advisor and the customer purchasing decision of Mombasa as a perceived travel destination?

### **1.6 Significance of study**

This study will provide relevant explanations about the influence of electronic word of mouth (EWOM) on Mombasa as a travel destination as well as hotel marketing. It will provide contributions to the minimal literature and research on this specific sector and offer insight into the influence of EWOM on Mombasa as a travel destination. The information will also be useful from a marketing point of view, as it will inform how the various variables – perceived source credibility, volume of electronic word of mouth (EWOM), positive electronic word of mouth, negative electronic word of mouth, users' expertise can be manipulated to enhance Mombasa's image as a holiday destination. This study will try to determine which variables were most influential on the consumer's selection of Mombasa as a preferred destination for holiday.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

Due to the wide scope of this subject, the research covers the travelers who have travelled to Mombasa in the past six months and those travelling to Mombasa during the course of the research. This study has some limitations, which may be considered avenues for future research, most notably, the study region is limited to Mombasa and therefore research on other travel destinations in Kenya may be warranted.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of previous studies conducted in the field; it provides a systematic understanding of relevant literature hence highlight the gap that the current study fills and how this study relates to previous publications. It also provides details on the various concepts involved in the study.

### **2.2 Word of mouth (WOM)**

Since this study is conducted to investigate the effect of EWOM on the destination image, it is imperative that related literature on word of mouth (WOM) is discussed. However, the researcher discusses the definition of word of mouth before proceeding with the literature review. Jalilvand, et al., (2011) define the phrase "word of mouth" as a process by which consumers share information and opinions about a product or service with others; this definition has been agreed upon by multiple researchers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) who posit that word of mouth allows people to share news and opinions about different products, services, and brands. Word-of-mouth is the process of how consumers pass informal opinions on a tour agency and the products or services offered by it to other consumers (Noorsaliza, 2012; Mohammad & Neda, 2011). The difference between positive and negative word of mouth is that positive word-of-mouth refers to when consumers hold positive feedback towards products offered by a tour agency, for example, via the media and negative word-of-mouth results when customers hold negative feedback towards products offered via the media (Mohammad & Neda, 2011)

### **2.3 Electronic word of mouth (EWOM)**

The dissemination of the Internet allows consumers to share their opinions of and experiences with products and services with other consumers through electronic word of-mouth (EWOM). This type of communication is regarded similar to word-of-mouth (WOM) and is called word-of-mouth or online word-of-mouth communication that empowers consumers (McConnell & Huba, 2007). People share their opinions with connected others by sending e-mails, posting comments and feedback to websites and forums, publishing online blogs, and forming and joining communities on the Internet. Broadband connections combined with user-generated media blogs, podcasts, videos, and other free and readily available tools, offer consumers the opportunity to have a voice.

With the help of Web 2.0 social media, consumers shape public perceptions of products and services (McConnell & Huba, 2007).

The resulting situation is that people are persuaded by advertisers – the people (family members, acquaintances, and even strangers) they come into contact with and talk to everyday are considered as noteworthy and influential sources of opinion and information about products, services, brands, and voter choice (Thorson & Rodgers, 2006).

Electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) gives customers both social and economic value and therefore individuals may have different motivations in using or generating E-WOM (Balasubramanian & Mahajan, 2001; Hennig-Thurau, 2004). Eight different motivations for online information and opinion seeking before purchasing a product or a service have been identified: reducing risk, imitating behaviors of others, obtaining lower prices, accessing easy information, accidental/unplanned, because it is cool, stimulation by offline inputs such as TV, and getting prior purchase information (Cheong & Morrison, 2008; Goldsmith & Horowitz, 2006).

The power of social media is immense. It enables individuals to interact with other people all around the world based on their interests. Recent developments in ICTs allow consumers of tourism, which is a highly information-intensive industry (Benckendorff et al., 2014), to produce and share information. Maser and Weiermair (1998, p. 107) suggest that “information can be treated as one of the most or even the most important factor influencing and determining consumer behavior.” Social media – a group of Internet based communication-based applications supplied by the Web 2.0 platform – provide Internet users with a valuable tool to interact and communicate with others (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The development of Web 2.0 technologies has allowed tourists to share their travel-related experiences, their knowledge and observations through social media (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

This exchange might affect the whole value of the business, which is directly related to customer loyalty (Steffes & Burgree, 2008). The emerging effect of EWOM continues to be appreciated by professionals in marketing roles it has become apparent, as elucidated in the highlighted literature, that customers are increasingly looking at reviews and factoring what they encounter into their buying patterns.

Internet facilitated Word-of-Mouth shares the elemental similarities of purpose with the traditional form (Steffes & Burgee, 2009), but it also differs in certain ways. This newer communication is defined by Hennig-Thurau (2004) as a statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet (Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Jansen, 2009).

Electronic word of mouth is transmitted via written words and a large number of consumers are able to receive and potentially spread the initial message online. This indicates that electronic word of mouth ought to diffuse faster than offline word of mouth (Prendergast, Cheung & Thadani, 2010). Furthermore, its communication network is larger than that of traditional word of mouth by having a variety of means, which consumers may utilize to exchange information (Jalilvand, 2011)

Accordingly, electronic word of mouth has virtually an unlimited reach and due to its bidirectional communication properties, it is considered as a one-to-world platform rather than as one-to-one platform (Dellarocas, 2003, in Steffes & Burgee, 2009). Due to the separation of both space and time of the sender and the receiver, electronic word of mouth is also seen as an asynchronous process (Steffes & Burgee, 2009) and in contrast to the traditional form; it is viewed as more persistent and usually more easily accessible. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the text-based information is archived on the social media platform and is commonly available for an indefinite period of time (Cheung & Thadani, 2010).

Furthermore, electronic word of mouth offers a better measurability due to its presentation format, quantity and persistence, which are easier to observe than in traditional word of mouth; thus, electronic word of mouth is more voluminous in quantity, compared to information received from traditional contacts within an offline state (Chatterjee, 2001, in Cheung & Thadani, 2010). In contrast to the traditional form, electronic word of mouth is rather of anonymous nature, which might have influence on consumers' determination of quality and credibility of the messages (Lee & Youn, 2009). While searching or providing advice, consumers do not have to expose their real identities, which might enhance consumers to share opinions or experiences with others; thus leading to an increasing volume of electronic Word of mouth (Chatterjee, 2001). As a result of online platforms' functioning, consumers receive a large and diverse set of expertise opinions about specific products, services or brands from individuals with whom they have no or only little

prior relationship (Duhan, 1997) hence, it might be easier to find specific information online rather than offline.

## **2.4 Destination image**

While the tourism product's characteristics of complexity and multidimensionality influence tourism destination image, more importantly, the intangibility of tourism services hinders image assessment due to the uncertainty of pre-visited selection (Ishida et al., 2016). Images were more important than tangible products in marketing materials for intangible products because perceptions rather than reality motivate consumers to purchase (Gallarza et al., 2002).

As Echtner and Ritchie (1991) observe, destination image is commonly recognized as an important aspect of successful tourism development and destination marketing, due to its effect on both push and pull factors. Push factors are supply-side aspects of motivations for travel and pull factors are demand-side aspects of desirable features or attributes of destination attractions (Ishida et al., 2016). In effect, then, it appears that destination image could be considered in terms of both an attribute-based component and a holistic component. In addition, the authors argue that some images of destinations could be based upon directly observable or measurable characteristics, (scenery, attractions, accommodation facilities, price levels), while others could be based on more abstract, intangible characteristics (friendliness, safety, atmosphere). Therefore, the notion of functional and psychological characteristics, as suggested by Martineau (1958), could be applied to destination images.

The framework of image could be used as a basis for conceptualizing destination image e.g. Country of Nepal as an example: functional characteristics, psychological attributes, holistic (Imagery), i.e. cool climate, low prices, poor roads, mental picture of physical characteristics, (mountainous, villages), friendly people, generally safe, general feeling or atmosphere, (mystic) etc. (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991).

## **2.5. Characteristics of electronic word of mouth.**

From a marketing point of view, social media is increasingly used as evaluation platforms for consumer experiences (Morosan 2014). In a sense, the role of social media, enabling customers to talk to one another, is an extension of traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) communication.

Such EWOM is thought to be important for services, particularly those like leisure travel that are multipart or are associated with high-risk. This is because their intangible nature makes pre-purchase trial impossible. Like traditional WOM, the conversations occurring between consumers are outside the direct control of businesses (Law et al., 2014). Although EWOM can be evaluated as an extension of traditional WOM, it has some unique characteristics: the first difference lies in the magnitude of the effect. Conventional marketing wisdom has long held that a dissatisfied customer tells ten people. However, in the new age of social media, he or she can now potentially influence thousands of consumers. The second difference is about types of tools. Social media springs from mixed technology and media origins that enable real-time communication and use multi-media formats and numerous delivery platforms with global reach capabilities. The third difference is about acquaintanceship between message sender and receiver. Traditionally, WOM has been used in the context of familiarity, whereby people knew each other and formed relationships with one another. With EWOM, geography is no longer a communication barrier and anonymity is possibly making self-disclosure easier than ever before (Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012; Mangold & Faulds, 2009; O'Connor, 2010).

### **2.5.1 Types of Electronic Word of Mouth**

There are four distinct categories of E-WOM that emerge, which include: many-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many and one-to-one. Many-to-one EWOM (e.g. the number of votes) represents the trend or explicit preference of a crowd. One-to-many text-based EWOM (e.g. product reviews) is descriptive and requires the audience to use more cognitive effort to read the reviews. Many-to-many EWOM (e.g. online discussion groups) is a high involvement activity in which consumers continuously participate in the communication process. Finally, dyad-based one-to-one E-WOM (e.g. instant messaging) is mostly private and non-transparent communications (Cheung, 2008).

The advances of the Internet offer a fertile ground for electronic word-of-mouth (EWOM) communication. More and more consumers use Web 2.0 tools (e.g., online discussion Forums, consumer review sites, weblogs, social network sites, and else) to exchange product Information (Cheung, 2008).

EWOM has undoubtedly been a powerful marketing force, and its significance has not gone unnoticed by the academic community. EWOM communication has become an emerging research area with an increasing number of publications per year. The EOM research articles appear in a variety of journals in the fields of information systems, marketing, management, computer sciences, and psychology (Cheung & Thandani, 2010). Clearly, the importance of EWOM as a focused area of research interest within the academic community is strong and growing.

As the field becomes mature, we observe an increasing number of systematic examinations of the Literature for subfields of the discipline, including electronic commerce (Lee 2007; Shaw, 1999), electronic customer relationship management (Romano & Fjermestad, 2001/02; 2003), group support systems (Fjermestad & Hiltz, 1998/99; Arnott & Pervan, 2005), online consumer Behavior and user satisfaction (Cheung, 2005).

Several scholars in the field (Alavi & Carlson, 1992) have already argued that it is important to have a benchmark from which to track the status of an emerging discipline that is based on published research articles rather than conventional wisdom. Relevant academic and peer reviewed journals that are related to scope of EWOM are identified by through two methods – using keywords such as “electronic word-of-mouth”, “EWOM”, “online reviews”, “online recommendations”, “marketing buzz”, and “online consumer reviews” and secondly reviewed ten journals (including five IS and Electronic Commerce specific Journals and five Marketing Journals) manually to ensure that no major E-WOM articles were ignored.

The three most researched EWOM topic areas were impact, market, and spreading. This three-topic areas account for approximately 70 percent of all EWOM research published between 2001 and 2010. The most researched E-WOM topic area was impact, with 36 percent of all articles. Prior EWOM studies with a primary focus on the impact examined EWOM as a process of personal influence, in which communications between a communicator (sender) and a receiver can change the receiver’s attitude and purchasing decision. Market (16 percent of all articles) and spreading (15 percent of all articles) are other two popular topic areas among E-WOM research. (Kiecker & Cowles, 2001; Park & Kim, 2008; Park & Lee, 2008).

Prior E-WOM studies on market typically examined the impact of EWOM with the market-level parameters, including online book sales (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006), box office receipts (Duan

2008), game sales (Zhu & Zhang, 2010), as well as firm profits and consumer surplus (Dellarocas, 2006).

There was also a significant amount of studies on spreading of EWOM. The most prominent study of EWOM communication motives is by Hennig-Thurau (2004). They built on Balasubramanian and Mahajan's framework (2001) and identified five main motivational categories of positive EWOM communication. The topic areas were further explored by their publication outlets. As shown in Table 2.1, among articles published in marketing journals, 31 percent focused on the impact and 17 percent examined the spreading of EWOM. There were significant proportions of studies examining the strategy, research framework, and market of EWOM (each contributes 14 percent). Among articles published in Marketing Information journals, the impact of EWOM (42 percent) was the most popular research topic area, followed by market (19 percent) and spreading (16 percent).

### Summary of electronic WOM publications

CATEGORY	IMPACT	SPREADING	MESSAGE	STRATEGY	FRAMEWORK	MARKET	SOCIAL NETWORK
<b>MARKETING</b>	13 (31%)	7 (17%)	4 (10%)	6 (14%)	6 (14%)	6 (14%)	0 (0%)
<b>MIS</b>	13 (42%)	5 (16%)	3 (10%)	4 (13%)	0 (0%)	6 (19%)	0 (0%)
<b>Others</b>	4 (40%)	0 (0%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)
<b>Total</b>	30 (36%)	12 (14%)	9(11%)	11 (13%)	13 (16%)	1(1%)	1 (1%)

Table 2.1: Figures as per the publication outlets

Word of Mouth usually flows in homophilous and heterophilous networks (Rogers, 2003). Homophily networks represent groups of individuals who shares certain attributes such as experiences, beliefs, and socioeconomic and education backgrounds, whereas heterophily networks represent individuals who are unlike from each other. For example, homophily networks may consist of family members, friends, classmates, and colleagues, while heterophily networks include strangers. Word of Mouth among homophilous individuals is more effective than WOM in heterophilous networks in regard to people's behavior changes because the identification of both sides of communication increases the message source credibility (Rogers, 2003).

In the Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Rogers (2003) contended that WOM exerts interpersonal influences on the persuasion stage of innovation diffusion. That is, when people decide to adopt or reject a new product or service, they tend to seek product or service related information from others, such as, family members, peers, colleagues, or acquaintances. The information that they get from these people is influential in their decision regarding the adoption of the new product or service.

### **2.4.3 Determinants of EWOM influence**

Online WOM has different determinants according to the various Marketing literature as compared to traditional WOM influence (Bansal and Voyer, 2000). Several factors increase the influence of EWOM despite it having an inherent powerful influence on customers, (Sweeney 2008; López and Sicilia, 2011; Lin 2013). The differences between EWOM and WOM include: Traditional WOM research has established the importance of the information source in this communication process (Sweeney 2008). Unlike traditional WOM, the information source in EWOM is anonymous, which further enhances the role of source credibility in this communication process. Therefore, the impact of source credibility cannot be ignored in this context.

Another important determinant relates to receiver expertise. While some previous studies supported that Receiver Expertise has negative impact in EWOM effectiveness (Fan & Miao, 2012; Zhu & Zhang, 2010), some others state that receiver expertise has a positive impact on E-WOM influence, a finding that needs further investigation.

The ability of WOM to operate within a consumer network appears to be influenced by the tie strength, or the intensity of the social relationship between consumers (Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Sweeney, 2008), and by how similar (homophily) or dissimilar such consumers are in terms of their backgrounds, opinions, likes and dislikes.

This study also considers the characteristics that are related to the communication process as determinants of EWOM influence. Hence, three of the most important WOM attributes that have been examined in the literature are positive electronic word of mouth, negative electronic word of mouth and volume of electronic word of mouth will be examined. Several studies have shown that positive E-WOM valence impacts on product sales. However, other studies have found no evidence for this relationship (López & Sicilia, 2014).

Therefore, this paper tries to clarify the varying results found in the literature by studying positive electronic word of mouth, negative electronic word of mouth, and volume as perceived by consumers. Lastly, previous research has shown that the influence of electronic word of mouth is more important in hospitality and tourism industry due to the nature of the product in hospitality industry (Litvin, 2008; Sweeney, 2014). Literature also classifies goods and products into tangible/intangible, high risk/less risk, and very complex/less-complex products (Senecal & Nantel, 2004; Adjei, 2010; Karimi, 2013). It is important to investigate the operationalization of the variables on the electronic word of mouth impact; these determinants are as below:

#### **2.4.4. Negative electronic word of mouth (EWOM)**

As the number of negative online consumer reviews increases, consumers' attitudes towards the product would become more unfavorable (Lee 2008). In other instances, some scholars argue that positive information is more persuasive. Levin and Gaeth (1988) presented consumers with descriptions of ground beef framed either as 75 per cent lean or 25 per cent fat and showed that the product was more likely to be favorably evaluated when described as the former.

Negative electronic word of mouth (EWOM), messages are found to have a stronger influence on a consumer's evaluation of experiential services than a positive message (Yang & Mai, 2010). This is likely to be particularly true for online reviews of intangible travel-related services. A major purpose of relying on EWOM to evaluate such services is the reduction of uncertainty and perceived risk (Bronner and de Hoog, 2011). Consumers are expected to be influenced more by negative reviews because they would rather prefer to "err on the side of caution" and avoid services that receive more negative reviews than positive ones. A study in New Zealand found that negative E-WOM had a very strong negative impact on a destination's image (Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott, 2003). Negative comments are mainly generated as a response to dissatisfaction and can be harmful to business retailers and manufacturers by having an adverse effect on business (Charlett 1995).

The act of diffusion of negative information could be even more harmful than solely complaining, which is mostly invisible (Zhoa et al, 2015). Applying the elaboration likelihood model, Lee (2008) found that consumers' attitudes become more unfavorable as the proportion of negative online consumer reviews increases. Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) noticed that negative online reviews lower consumers' attitudes towards a hotel in which they are interested, even though it would increase their awareness of it.

#### **2.4.5 Positive electronic word of mouth (EWOM)**

In contrast to negative comments, positive reviews mainly focus on extolling a company's quality orientation, such as making recommendations to others (Brown 2005). Positive online reviews are generally recognized as a valuable vehicle for promoting a firm's products and services (Gremler, 2001).

More particularly, previous studies highlight the importance of customer recommendations in a service context, as it has been empirically illustrated that a single recommendation can be convincing enough to persuade someone to try a particular service provider (Gremler, 1994).

An online review forum may present both positive and negative reviews about a product (Chatterjee, 2001). Negative electronic word of mouth messages are found to have a stronger influence on a consumer's evaluation of experiential services than a positive message (Yang & Mai, 2010). This is likely to be particularly true for online reviews of intangible travel-related services. A major purpose of relying on electronic word of mouth to evaluate such services is the reduction of uncertainty and perceived risk (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011). Consumers are expected to be influenced more by negative reviews because they would rather prefer to "err on the side of caution" and avoid services that receive more negative reviews than positive ones. A study in New Zealand found that negative electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), had a very strong negative impact on a destination's image (Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott, 2003). Clemons et al. (2006) found that strongly positive ratings would lead to a significant growth in product sales. Both positive and negative online reviews can influence consumers' attitudes towards a given company.

#### **2.4.6 Volume of EWOM**

Volume is another important attribute of WOM, and it measures the total amount of interactive messages (Liu, 2006). Variations in the volume of online customer reviews provide evidence that not all hotels are treated equally, and hence, it is reasonable that not all reviews are treated equally. It has been regarded as a key antecedent of the WOM effect (Bone, 1995). In online settings, volume of reviews is the number of comments from reviewers about a specific product or service (Davis & Khazanchi, 2008). Several studies demonstrate that volume significantly correlates with consumer behaviors like customer-initiated contacts with manufacturers (Bowman and

Narayandas, 2001) and market performance in terms of sales (Amblee & Bui, 2007; Liu, 2006; Zhu & Zhang, 2010). This effect is moderated by the increase of customer awareness. Before consumers decide to buy a product about which they have little information, some awareness has to be built (Mahajan, 1984). Higher volumes of comments, either online hotel booking intentions positive or negative, in online communities are more likely to attract information seekers and then increase product awareness (Davis & Khazanchi, 2008). The number of online comments also signals the level of agreement among consumers (Elliott, 2002).

However, Davis and Khazanchi (2008) argued that an increase in volume of online reviews alone has no significant impact on book sales in e-commerce multiproduct sales. Godes and Mayzlin (2004) reported that the volume of consumer reviews does not have significant explanatory power in terms of weekly box office revenues. Nevertheless, considering the information asymmetry present and the unique features of tourism products such as intangibility and integration of production and consumption offers insightful information (Litvin, 2001; Taylor, 1980).

#### **2.4.7. Perceived source credibility**

Literature on the subject indicates that credibility is the most frequently investigated determinant associated with the information source (Cheung & Thadani, 2010, 2012). According to Akyuz (2013), some literature has shown that source credibility determines communication effectiveness. Therefore, source credibility has been considered a crucial determinant of E-WOM influence (Menkveld, 2013; Sweeney, 2008).

Ayeh, (2013) stated that credibility can simply be defined as believability of some information and or its source. The literatures show that the concept has been implied in different contexts to different entities including human, media, technology and information (Ayeh, 2013; López and Sicilia, 2014). A review of extant literature shows that there are several terms and dimensions which have been established and used in the literatures to describe source credibility; terms such as source expertise (Ruiterkamp, 2013; Yang & Mai, 2010), source trustworthiness (Chu & Kim, 2011; Fan & Miao, 2012), reviewer quality, reviewer reputation (Hu, 2008), and type of recommendation source (Litvin, 2008). In tourism and hospitality context, EWOM presents some challenges related to credibility (Ayeh, 2013).

On one hand, tourists may believe EWOM to be credible because it originates from other tourists who are considered as having no commercial interest (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). On the other

hand, and in contrast of traditional WOM, EWOM is not obtained from strong tie groups as family or friends (Cheung & Thadani, 2010), any consumer can reach and exchange product or service related information with a vast and geographically dispersed group of strangers which calls for the problem of manipulation and abuse by some service providers (Litvin, 2008).

Bronner and de Hoog (2011) go on to emphasize that electronic word of mouth (EWOM) may in fact be even more influential than WOM given its characteristics of global reach, the speed with which it travels, ease of use, and anonymity, absent of direct face-to-face pressure. From the Destination Marketing Organizations supply side, Akoumianakis (2011) steered a case study on flexible vacation packages using collaborative assembly toolkits and dynamic packaging to package the tourist product through virtual communities of practice. Web 2.0 allows for collective intelligence and collaboration hence tourists can collaborate through information exchange to create useful products. Tourist entities can therefore collaborate to create products and services that have direct appeal to clients. The tourists, in this scenario, shape the industry by continuously providing information for both prospectors and business entities (Lange-Faria & Elliot, 2012).

#### **2.4.8 Users Expertise**

Another distinctive feature of online reviews is that they are provided by anonymous individuals (Lee 2008). In fact, information sharing is not a genuinely random behavior, as there exists market “mavens” who have a particular propensity to post messages about shopping and the marketplace messages (Feick and Price, 1987).

Consumers can identify such market mavens and follow them in the process of making purchasing decisions. As such, the characteristics of communicators, both senders and receivers, play a critical role in information persuasiveness (Dholakia and Sternthal, 1977). More importantly, in the online context, people who made postings tend to search for travel information from others who engage in similar activities (Akehurst, 2009).

To what extent an information source can be regarded as a “market maven” is decided by his or her expertise in a certain topic of interest. As suggested by Bristor (1990) expertise is: the extent to which the source is perceived as being capable of providing correct information and expertise is expected to induce persuasion because receivers have little motivation to check the veracity of the source’s assertions by retrieving and rehearsing their own thoughts.

Individuals who are highly ranked in expertise are also likely to have more knowledge of alternative products and services (Mitchell & Dacin, 1996). Such reliance on experts is mainly because the performance of a product can be assessed from the information provided (Bansal & Voyer, 2000). In a reduced and altered cues environment, it is difficult for information seekers to evaluate the knowledge and competence of a reviewer because of the limited access to personal attributes and background. The use of trip advisor site invites reviewers to write about their experiences at a destination, city, attraction or hotel. Miguens et al., (2008) described it as a website "based on the idea that travelers rely on other travelers" reviews to plan their trips, or at least can be satisfactorily helped in their decisions by them." Users visit the site to get unvarnished opinions about where they intend to stay, rather than relying on biased reports on a hotel's or a tourist board's website, in keeping with research that says people trust the opinions of other consumers rather than of marketing agencies (Dickinger, 2011; O'Connor, 2010; Papathanassis & Knolle, 2011).

## **2.5 Elaboration likelihood model**

This study adapted the conceptual framework from the information adoption model. Sussman and Siegal's (2003) study used the information adoption model to explain how people are influenced to adopt information posted in computer-mediated communication contexts. Under the information adoption model is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). ELM was developed by Petty and Cacioppo during the 1980s. In ELM, attitude change occurs via two routes of influence: central or peripheral route. Recipients taking the central route process information critically. Conversely, people taking the peripheral route to persuasion use less cognitive efforts during attitude formation (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Petty and Wegener (1999) discuss the two routes to persuasion concluding that message recipients in higher elaboration state are more likely to engage in thoughtful information processing, and consequently their opinions are highly affected by argument quality. Conversely, individuals with lower elaboration likelihood are expected to base the attitude change on peripheral cues, e.g., source credibility.

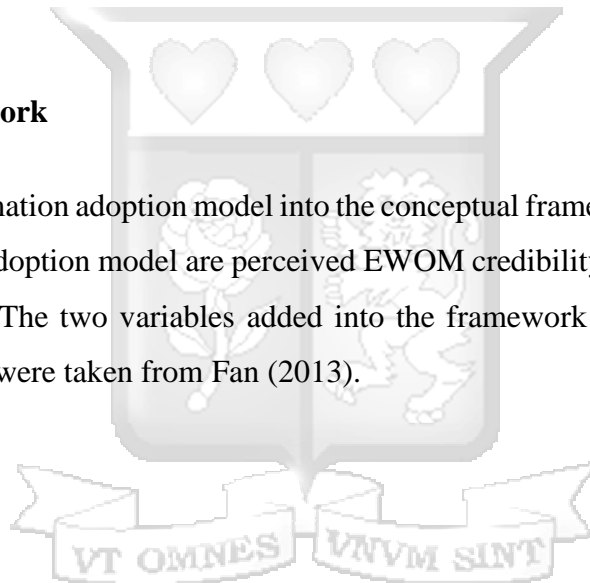
In ELM, expertise is associated with ability to process information. Expertise gives individuals the ability to process information. According to Celsi and Olson (1988), involvement is associated with individual's motivation to process the given information whereas prior knowledge or

expertise the individual possesses is associated with the ability to process information. In ELM, involvement gives individuals the motivation to understand information and is likely to process it via the central route (MacInnis & Park, 1991). Conversely, individuals lacking either motivation or ability most likely process information via peripheral route (Celsi & Olson, 1988; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

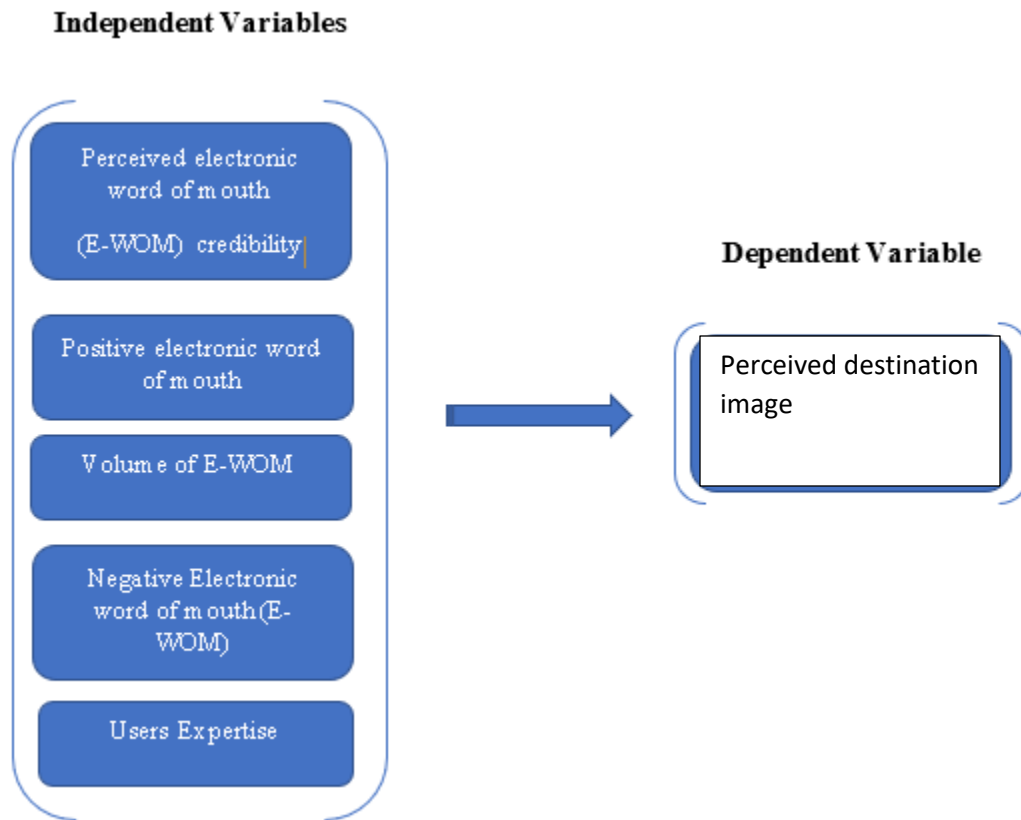
ELM has been used in several studies such as the mobile banking sector to understand mobile banking user behaviour (Zhou & Tao, 2012). Besides, ELM is also used to understand the interactions among website content and design (Gregory, Meade & Thompson, 2013). ELM also explained why a given influential process may lead to different outcomes and impacts on human perceptions, behaviour and understanding information system acceptance (Li, 2013).

## **2.6 Conceptual Framework**

This study adapted information adoption model into the conceptual framework. The three variables taken from information adoption model are perceived EWOM credibility, EWOM user's expertise and volume of EWOM. The two variables added into the framework are positive EWOM and negative EWOM, which were taken from Fan (2013).



**Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework**



**Perceived Electronic Word of Mouth credibility**

EWOM credibility is defined as the extent to which one person perceives the EWOM recommendation as believable, true or factual (Cheng & Zhou, 2010, August) It is worth mentioning that credibility suggested by E-WOM refers to the online message itself as well as to the source, meaning the communicator of the message.

**Positive Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)**

Positive EWOM are types of compliments given to firms by buyers (Singh & Pandya 1991). In this study, the positive EWOM is defined as positive review of the perceived destination image.

**Volume of Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)**

Volume measures the total amount of WOM interactions (Liu, 2006).

**Negative Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)**

Negative EWOM is described as buyers' criticisms against the firms (Singh & Pandya 1991). In this study, negative EWOM is defined as negative review of the perceived destination image.

### **Users Expertise**

Expertise is referred to as the extent of skillfulness, authoritativeness, competence, and qualification a person has about the specific field (Applbaum & Anatol, 1972). In this study, E-WOM user expertise is defined as EWOM user's skillfulness and knowledge about E-WOM.

### **Perceived destination image**

Kotler (1993) consider that an image is constructed based in beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person possesses about a place. In this study perceived destination image is defined as mental abstract image of a place.



## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides detailed information on the methods and procedures used to collect accurate and relevant data. This chapter aims to provide assurance that appropriate research procedures were followed. The major items included in this chapter are research and sampling design, and data collection methods. In addition, elaborations of constructs, scales of measurement and data analysis methods are also described.

### **3.2 Research design**

This study employed a descriptive research to survey a representative sample of travelers based in Nairobi who have travelled to Mombasa within the past one year (study conducted in 2017) or who will travel to Mombasa within the course of the research, to determine which independent variable (perceived EWOM credibility, positive EWOM, negative EWOM, EWOM users' expertise, volume of Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM), that may influence Mombasa as a destination image.

According to Zikmund et al., (2010) surveys are fast, inexpensive, accurate, and efficient way to obtain information from a population. Survey also permit researchers to collect a large amount of data from a sizeable population in an economical manner (Saunders et al., 2009). This study also employs the use quantitative data and inferential statistics to provide insights into the data.

### **3.3 Data collection method**

#### **3.3.1 Primary Data**

For this study, primary data was collected through a survey questionnaire that is adapted from journal questionnaires. Zikmund (2010) defined survey as a research technique in which information is obtained from a targeted sample of population using questionnaires. The self-administered survey questionnaires were distributed to travelers based in Nairobi who have travelled to Mombasa within the last one-year and those who are travelling to Mombasa within the course of the research. The questionnaires were designed with closed-ended questions using a 5-point Likert scale.

### 3.4 Sampling design

The target population for this study are travelers who are based in Nairobi who have travelled to Mombasa within the last one year (as of 2017) and who were travelling to Mombasa within the course of the research period. Holidaymakers were targeted as they travel more in search of adventure hence making use of online facilities.

Non-probability sampling technique was adopted in this study, as was inaccessibility of sufficient information for a sampling frame. Instead, reliance was on convenience sampling, where samples are easily accessible and cost effective. Convenience sampling is used to select a random group of people where a list of the population is unavailable. The size and the characteristics of the random group selected can be controlled. The selection process of samples took place until the intended sample size was achieved.

Generally, the respondents were all above 18 years old and already had the economic ability to book a hotel room. For two respondents below 18 years, there was a parent and/or guardian assisting the respondent to answer the questionnaire.

According to the latest statistics by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the known total population of hotel guests in Kenya was 1, 455,205 in 2012 (KNBS Statistical Abstract, 2012). Therefore, using regression analysis, the total population sample to visit Mombasa is 191863 persons. Hence using the below formula, using a 95% confidence level, .5 standard deviation, and a margin of error (confidence interval) of +/- 5% is;

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Necessary Sample Size} &= (Z\text{-score})^2 * \text{StdDev} * (1\text{-StdDev}) / (\text{margin of error})^2 \\ &= ((1.96)^2 * .5(.5)) / (.05)^2 \\ &= (3.8416 * .25) / .0025 \\ &= .9604 / .0025 \\ &= 384.16 \end{aligned}$$

385 respondents are needed, however 440 responses were collected.

### 3.5 Research instrument

Survey questionnaires were used in this research because this is the most commonly used method used to obtain data from a huge number of respondents, as it is quick, efficient, less costly and accurate in assessing information from the target respondents.

### 3.5.1 Validity and Reliability

To assess the reliability and understandability of the questions employed for the study, a pilot test was conducted. A pre-test was done prior to distributing the survey questionnaires so as to identify ambiguous questions and problem areas in recording the data. The questionnaire was distributed to master's Students of Business at Strathmore Business School and for reliability; the Cronbach alpha for each construct was examined.

The most apparent observations from the test were the need to explain the concept of Electronic Word of Mouth and to restructure the questionnaire for easy readability; the content of the questionnaire was however not problematic for the respondents. Following the feedback received, the questionnaires were reformatted and re-distributed. The reliability of the scales was established through a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.924, which indicated 92% reliable; the output is presented below:

Case Processing Summary		
	N	%
Valid	19	100.0
Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
Total	19	100.0

a. List wise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.924	29

Table 3.1: Reliability of Questionnaire Statistics.

### 3.5.2 Analysis Technique

The dependent variable in the study was ordinal in nature therefore limiting the use of linear or multiple-linear regression models in assessing the relationship between the dependent and multiple independent variables; this is because the interval value between numbers in the Likert scale cannot be viewed as uniform or holding mathematical significance. The ordered logistic regression model was therefore found to be a suitable replacement also owing to the fact that the independent variables are also of ordinal nature. The assumptions made in this test are that the order of ranking

pertaining to perception of Mombasa as a travel destination assume natural ordering but the significance between a rating of one and two, for instance, cannot be judged as being the same as that from five to six. SPSS (version 22) software was utilized in analysis.



## CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides statistical analysis of the data collected through the study questionnaire. The first section focuses on the response rate following issuance of questionnaires to the public. Descriptive statistics of the data are then presented with graphical representation employed to enhance the comprehensibility of the data. The graphical tools applied are pie charts and histograms. Given the nature of the data, whereas the mode and median scores were reported, the mean values were excluded in analysis of central tendency of the data; this was a result of controversial interpretation of the measure of central tendency with regard to ordinal data (Sullivan & Artino, 2013).

#### Response Rate

The targeted total for the study was 385 respondents, however, in an effort to include a wide range of demographics over different geographic regions; more responses were collected resulting in total of 440. Not all 440 responses, however, constituted full entries; this was partly due to the nature of the questionnaire – in that valid responses in some questions necessitated skipping of others – and respondent unwillingness to fill a question. All data were however included in the analysis to prevent loss of information through exclusion of partial response with otherwise pivotal information.

The overall Cronbach's alpha for the dataset comprising 440 responses, of which some contained empty cells, is shown below.

#### Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Valid	322	73.2
Excluded <sup>a</sup>	118	26.8
Total	440	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 4.1: Cronbach Alpha

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.895	31

### 4.1.1 Demographics of respondents

Of the 440 respondents, 201 were female and 237 were male. 2 respondents, representing 0.4% of the total, did not provide responses for this section. Figure 4.1 shows the percentage of respondents per category excluding blanks.

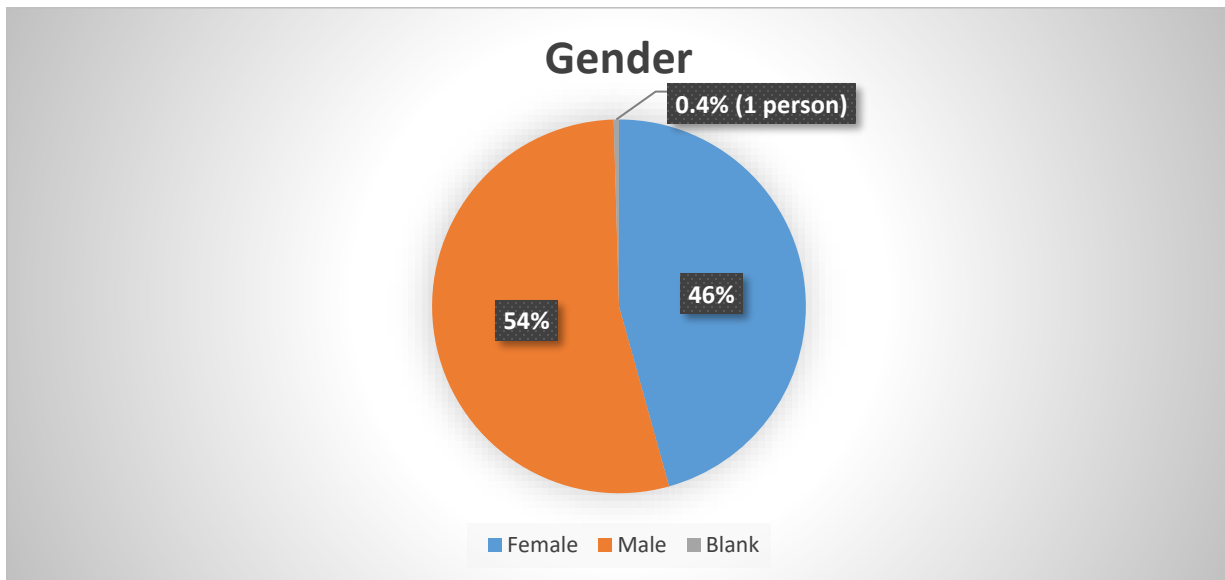


Figure 4.1 Percentage by Gender

The ages of the respondents ranged from 15 to 75 with a median age of 30 and a mode of 23. The distribution of the response in this variable were skewed to the right hence indicating that parametric statistical tool could not be reliably applied in analysis of data in this category. Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of data in various categories and the overall frequency distribution of the

variable.

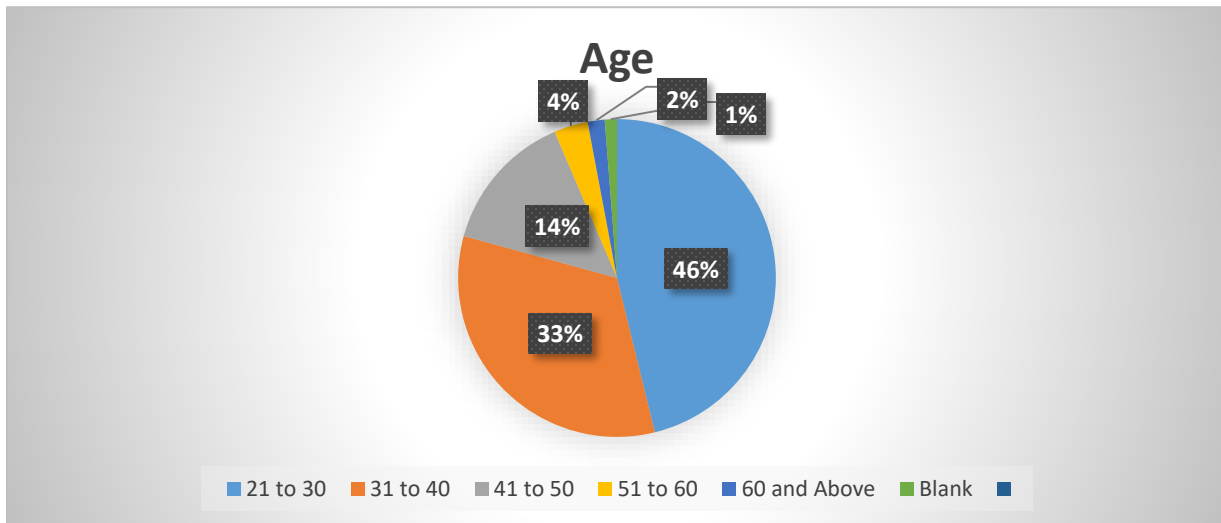


Figure 4.2 Percentage of responses by group.

Of the 440 respondents, 378 were Kenyan while 60 were non-Kenyans. 2 respondents, representing 0.8% of the respondents did not provide answer for this section. The modal response was therefore Kenyan and given the nature of the data, a median value could not be computed. Figure 4.3 shows the percentage of responses by category

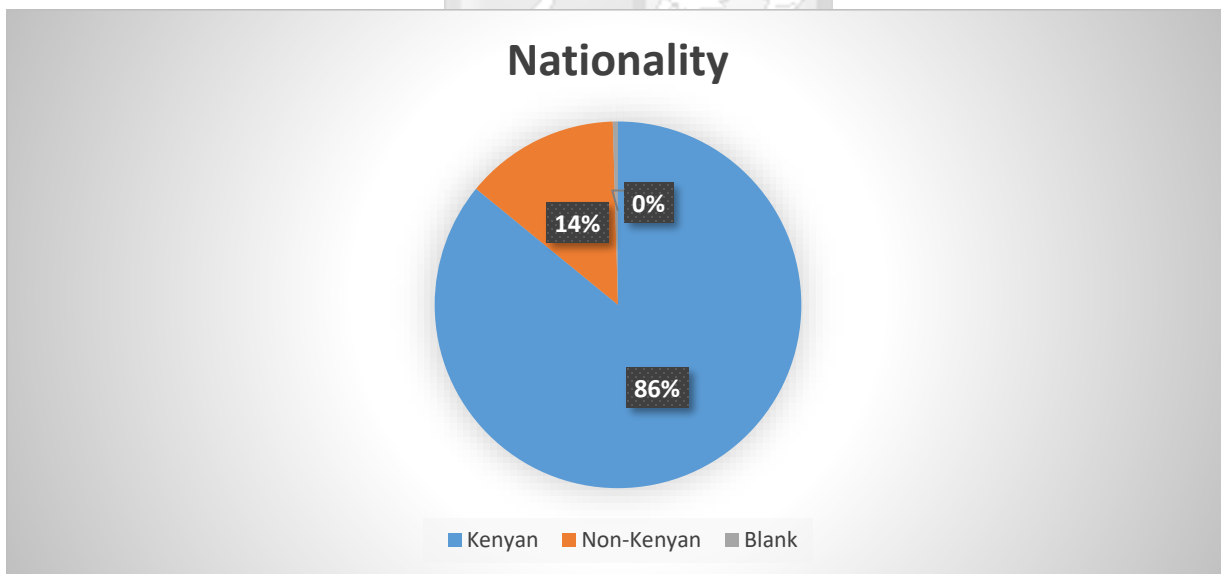


Figure 4.3 Percentage by Nationality

With regard to marital status, of the total number of respondents, 225 were single, 172 married, 28 in the “other” category, 13 divorced and two did not provide responses for this question. Categories

“single” and “married” accounted for 90% of total responses while the rest contributed 10%. The modal response for the variable was therefore the response “single”. Figure 4.4 shows the percentage marital status for each category.

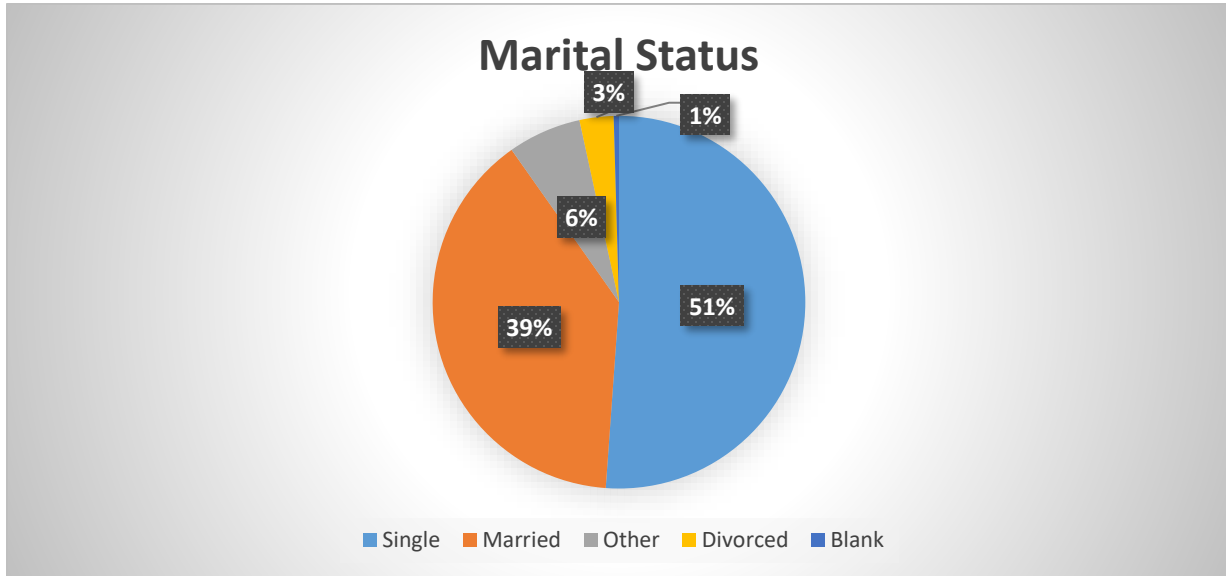


Figure 4.4 Percentage by Marital Status.

The variable education status contained six categories of which the category “bachelor’s degree” accounted for the highest proportion of responses. Categories “PhD” and “Master’s Degree” accounted for less than 5 percent of responses. The modal response was therefore “Bachelor’s Degree”. Figure 4.5 shows the distribution per category in proportion

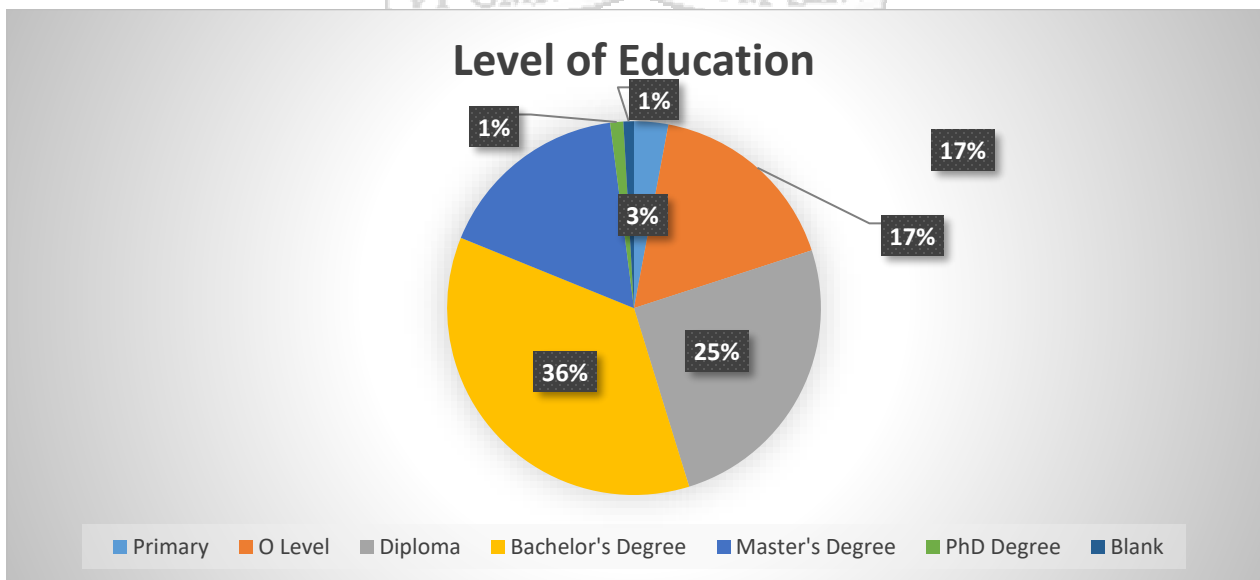


Figure 4.5 Percentage by Level of Education

This variable "Occupation" consisted of five categories – student, self-employed, employed, unemployed, housewife, and others. One percentage of the responses were blank and the modal response, at 42% of total responses, was “Employed”. The proportion of respondents for this variable is shown in figure 4.6.

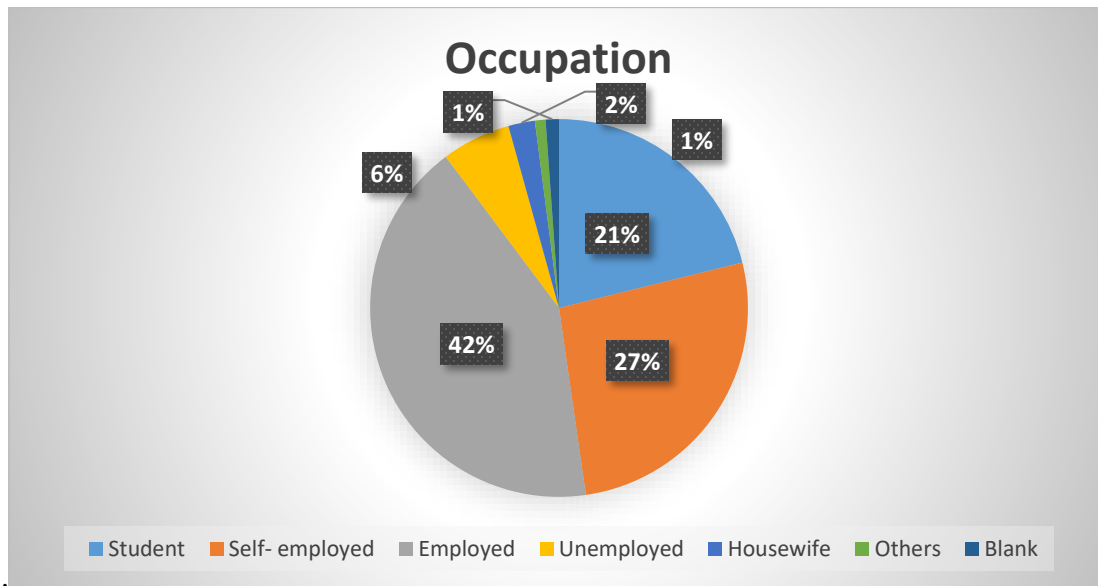


Figure 4.6 Percentage by Occupation

95% of the respondents had been to Mombasa more than once. Of the total, 19 had visited once while four did not provide a response for the question. The modal response for this question was therefore that indicating that respondents had visited Mombasa more than once. Figure 4.7 shows the distributions per category.

## Have you ever traveled to Mombasa before?

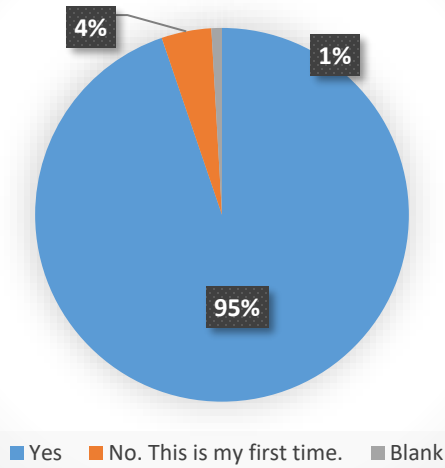


Figure 4.7 Percentage of respondents with subsequent visits

Wide ranges of responses were gathered for the variable “How many times have you travelled to Mombasa for leisure?” This is attributed to the open-ended nature of the question. Of the responses, 110 respondents indicated that they had been to Mombasa for 2 times; this was the modal response in this category. Other responses of notable frequency were “3” with 71 respondents, “4” with 39 respondents “5” with 28 respondents and “6” with 12 respondents.

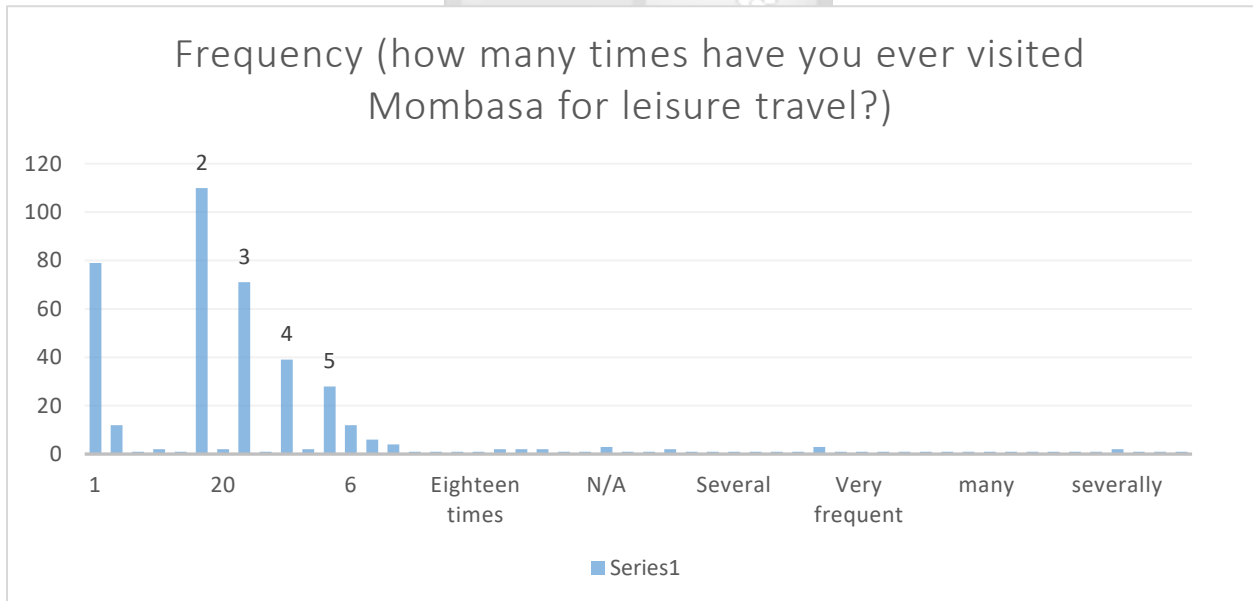


Figure 4.8 Frequency of Visitation

71% of the respondents, indicating 311 respondents, had used review sites before. 27% had not used review sites and 2%, indicating 10 respondents, did not provide an answer for this question. The modal response this category was therefore “Yes”. Figure 4.9 shows the proportions per response category.

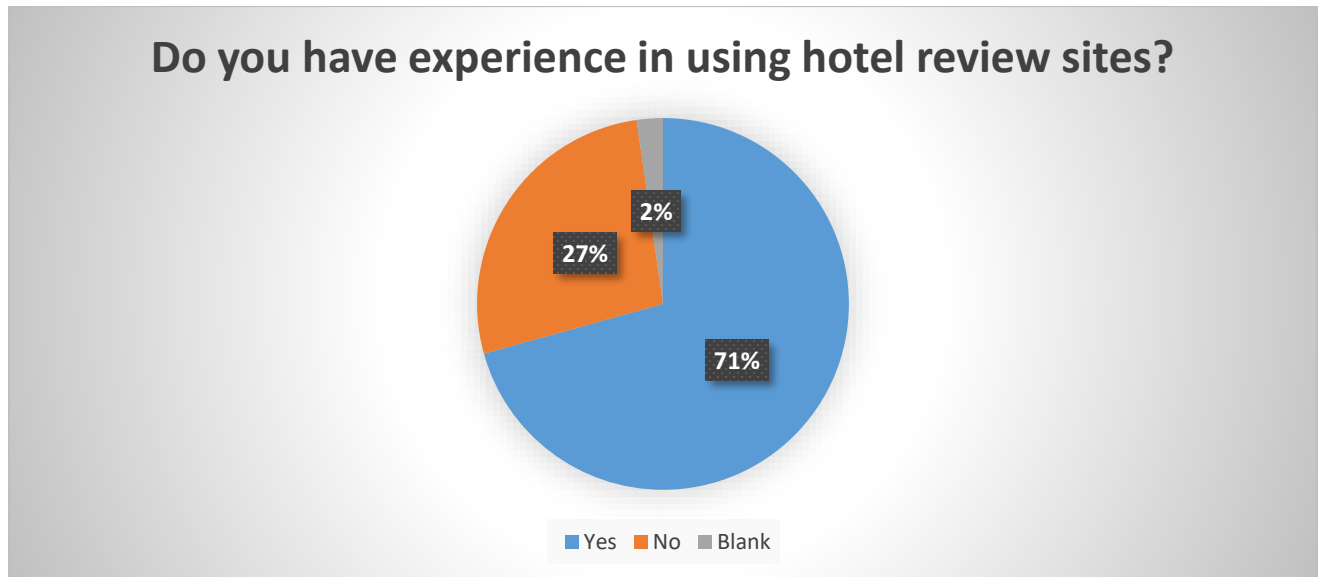


Figure 4.9 Experience in using Review Sites.

The number of respondents that indicated that they had used travel sites were isolated from those that had not. Respondents in the group that indicated that they had used travel sites were then distinguished on the basis of their usage or lack thereof of Trip Advisor; of these, 76% had used sites other than Trip advisor. Figure 4.10 shows the proportion of respondents that used Trip Advisor vis-à-vis those that did not. From the total responses assessing this variable, it emerged that Google was the most frequently used source of online reviews with 119 users whereas Trip Advisor had a total 96 mentions. Other notable sources were Facebook and Bookings.com; these are shown in figure 4.11.

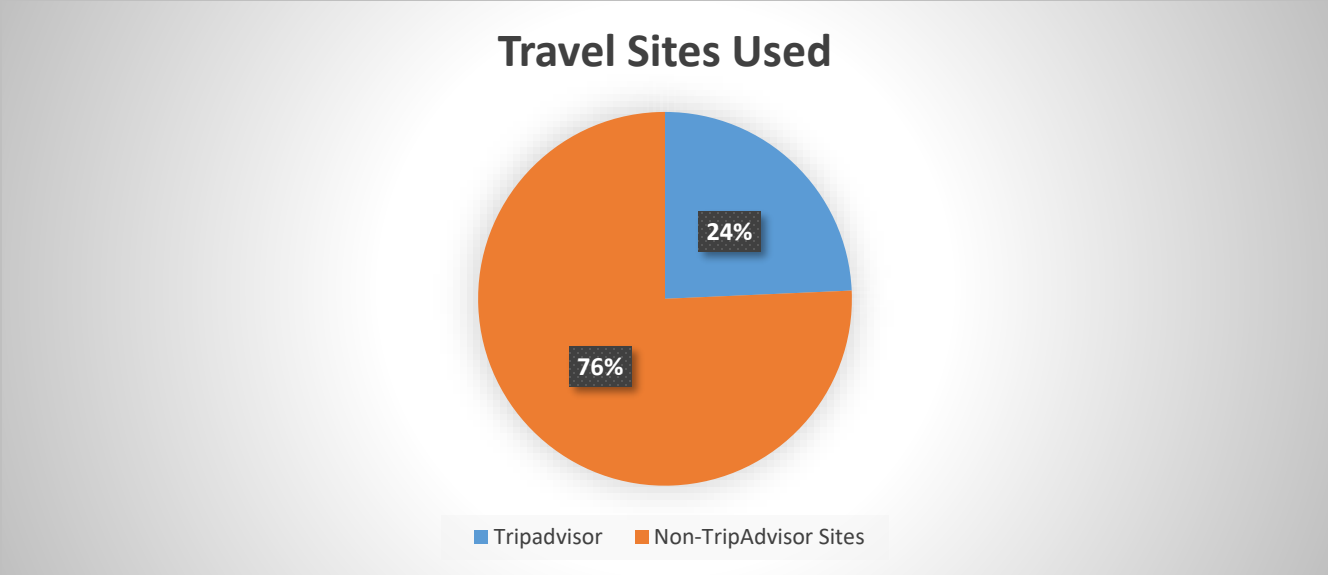


Figure 4.10 Travel Sites Used Percentage

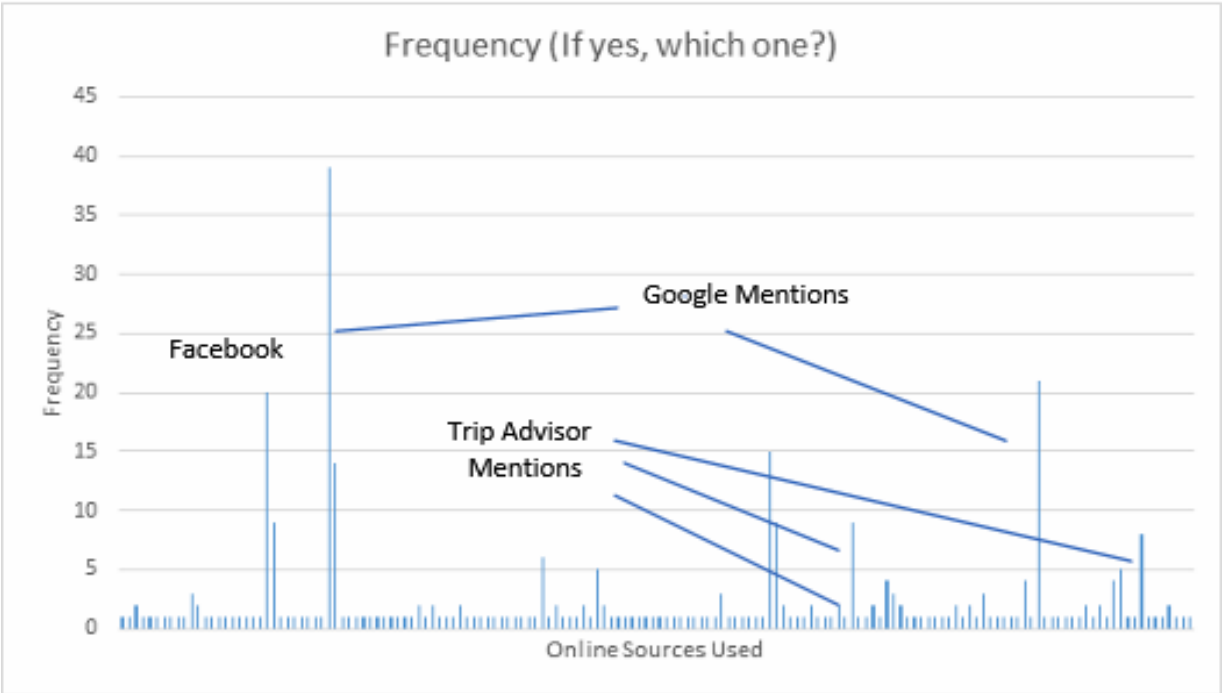


Figure 4.11 Other notable sources.

Of the 440 respondents, 29% travel with their partners and 21% travel alone. The proportions of the various responses are indicated in figure 4.12.

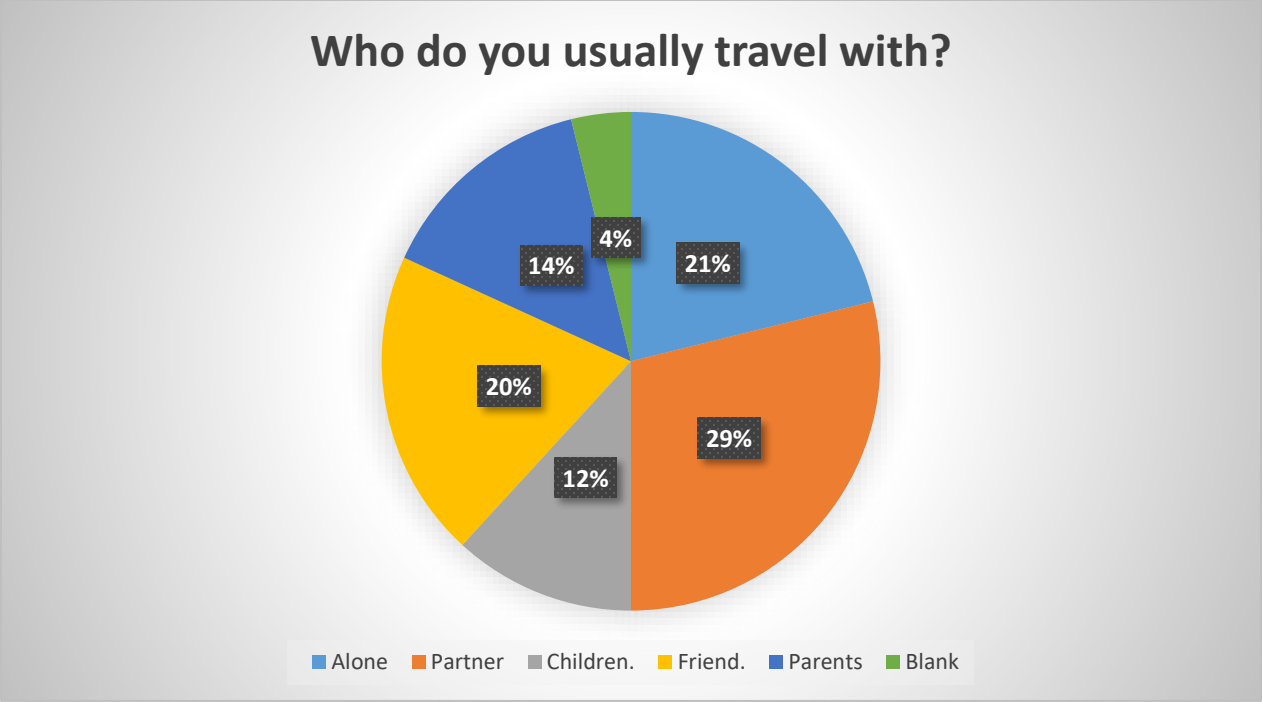


Figure 4.12. Accompanying Person Percentage

**4.2 Analysis of objectives**

**4.21 Preamble**

The relationship of independent and dependent variables in the study was assessed using a regression model ideal for ordinal data – ordered logistic regression (odds ratio ordinal regression). As a prerequisite to the evaluation of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, it was deemed necessary to conduct a model fitting assessment.

For the dependent variable, "Mombasa is an Absolutely Good Place.", one respondent indicated a rating of 1, and likewise, 1 respondent indicated a rating of 3. 7, 24, 34 and 29 reported ratings of 4, 5, 6 and 7, respectively. The various frequencies per level are indicated in Appendix A. 96 entries indicating use of Trip Advisor were analyzed with no missing data. Table 4.2 below provides model fitting information on the regression model assessing a null hypothesis  $H_0$  - All of the regression coefficients in the model are equal to zero. From the p value observed ( $<0.0001$ ) it is evident that at least one of the regression coefficients in the analysis is not equal to zero therefore rendering the generated prediction model significant under  $\alpha$  0.05. Median scores for each

individual in each category of the independent variables were computed to arrive at representative values to be used for the ordinal regression analysis.

**Model Fitting Information**

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept Only	236.985			
Final	97.339	139.646	25	.000

Link function: Logit.

Table 4.2 Model Fitting Information

Generated R-square values for the model indicate that 82.0% of the variance in the dependent variable, are accounted for by the presented model; this indicates that the model is substantially reliable, and inferences made thereof can be considered valid. The Nagelkerke value, the value most reported, and other similar R-square values are presented in table 4.3. With reference to this study, the model pertaining to persons’ experience in Mombasa, according to the Nagelkerke measure, 0.820 of the variability in the depended variable “Mombasa is an absolutely good place” is explained by the model with the independent variables being perceived electronic Word of Mouth Credibility, Positive and negative E-WOM, user expertise and Volume of E-WOM.

**Pseudo R-Square**

Cox and Snell	.767
Nagelkerke	.820
McFadden	.534

Link function: Logit.

Table 4.3 Coefficient of Determination R Square Values

The test for parallel lines was included to test that the data met the assumption of proportional odds which is necessary for ordinal regression and the test therefore serves to check the validity of the

associations derived from this analysis with regard to the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Output from the test for parallel lines, indicated in table 4.4 shows that the dataset used for the test presented with a p-value greater than 0.05; as such, the null hypothesis H0 - The location parameters (slope coefficients) are the same across response categories is not to be rejected. This data therefore satisfies the assumption of proportional odds, which is a pre-requisite for the ordinal regression analysis. The parameter estimates discussed in Table 4.4 are therefore valid.

**Test of Parallel Lines<sup>a</sup>**

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Null Hypothesis	97.339			
General	79.518 <sup>b</sup>	17.822 <sup>c</sup>	100	1.000

The null hypothesis states that the location parameters (slope coefficients) are the same across response categories.

- a. Link function: Logit.
- b. The log-likelihood value cannot be further increased after maximum number of step halving.
- c. The Chi-Square statistic is computed based on the log-likelihood value of the last iteration of the general model.

Validity of the test is uncertain.

Table 4.4 Test of Parallel Lines.

For each of the categories of independent variables, the highest ranking was chosen as the reference response; as such, the odds of the responses in each category were calculated based on the highest rating for the group. The odds ratio for the various responses were derived from the log estimates output following analysis. In doing so, the upper and lower limits of the odds of each response at  $\alpha$  0.05 were also included. Appendix C depicts the various odds ratios for each of the median ratings for the independent variables.

#### **4.22 Perceived Electronic Word of Mouth E-WOM Credibility**

Persons that provided the median rating of 5 as a response to the question on Perceived Electronic Word of Mouth E-WOM credibility were chosen as the comparison group in assessing the odds of the same persons indicating that Mombasa was an absolutely good place. Those who indicated ratings of 4.5, 4.0, 3.5, 3.0, 2.5, 2.0 and 1.5 had odds of 0.116, 0.075, 0.081, 0.021, 0.027, <0.001 and <0.001 respectively. The odds ratios deemed statistically significant where however ratings 3, 3.5 and 4, all others had p-values higher than 0.05.

#### **4.23 Positive Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM).**

For the aspect Positive Electronic Word of Mouth, ratings of 5 were chosen as the reference group. Those who indicated median ratings of 4, 3, 2 and 1 had odds of 0.437, 0.398, 1.000, and 0.009 respectively. None of the observations, however, had p-values less than 0.05 hence could not be rendered significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

#### **4.24 Negative Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM).**

For the aspect Negative E-WOM, the odds were 46.040 43.476 48.786 2.468 for median ratings 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. All observations were significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  with rating 4 the exception with p-value 0.508. Persons that indicated a high rating for negative E-WOM were therefore least likely to rate Mombasa as an absolutely good place while those with rating 3 were most likely to indicate a high rating for their experience in Mombasa.

#### **4.25 Users Expertise**

For the aspect E-WOM Users Expertise, the odds were 3.646, 52.219, 12.963, 28.697 for ratings 1, 2, 3 and 4. The observed odds for rating 1 were however not statistically significant with p-value 0.271. High ratings in this category were therefore not generally associated with a perceived high rating of respondents' experience of Mombasa.

#### **4.26 Volume of Electronic Word of Mouth**

For the aspect Volume of E-WOM, only one observation was statistically significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Ratings 4.5, 4.0 and 3.0 however indicated odds ratios of 0.630, 0.652, and 0.289. The general trend, therefore, was that of increasing high ratings of Mombasa as a destination, with increasing values assigned to the aspect; there was therefore a positive association between high ratings in

the aspect and respondents' experience in Mombasa. Therefore, there is a significant and positive relationship between volume of online reviews and the perceived destination image of Mombasa.



## **CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

### **5.1 Perceived electronic word of mouth E-WOM credibility**

In general, the responses in this section indicated that persons who perceived Trip Advisor as highly credible were the most likely to have a good experience in Mombasa, hence one can conclude that there is a significant and positive relationship between perceived electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) credibility and the perceived destination image of Mombasa. This view is in tandem with literature indicating that tourists may believe E-WOM to be credible because it originates from other tourists who are considered as having no commercial interest (Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009), in comparison to traditional WOM, E-WOM is not obtained from strong tie groups as family or friends but any consumer can reach and exchange product or service related information with a vast and geographically dispersed group of strangers (Livin 2008).

The fellow consumer opinion is often more influential than marketers' efforts to persuade consumers. Customer reviews that allow for consumer-to-consumer interaction can be found directly on tourism company websites, company blogs, sites such as TripAdvisor.com, or personal blogs (Hudson and Thal, 2013.). Trip advisor also creates trust among the users, by having volunteers, who serve as destination experts on the trip advisor without any financial benefits. These are individuals who care significantly about their country, city or village and are willing to help other travelers. Trip advisor makes sure to choose individuals who have regular and relevant contributions to the forums are friendly and offer good and honest advice (Trip advisor 2014).

### **5.2 Positive electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)**

In general, persons that indicated a rating of 5 for this group were equally likely to rate Mombasa as an absolutely good place, as those with ratings of 2. Those with ratings of 4, 3 and 1 were less likely with those of ratings 1 least likely. Higher rankings in this group, with the exception of rating 2, were therefore positively associated with a good perception of Mombasa as a destination. Therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant and positive relationship between positive E-WOM and the perceived destination image of Mombasa.

Positive online reviews are generally recognized as a valuable vehicle for promoting a firms products and services (Gremler 2001). Zhu and Zhang (2006) studied the influence of consumer ratings on video game sales and showed that a higher rating by only one point was associated with the 4% increase in sales. In contrast to negative comments, positive reviews focus on extolling a company's quality orientation such as making recommendations to others

(Brown 2005).

### **5.3 Negative electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)**

High ratings of Odds ratio in this group were not associated with the view that Mombasa is an absolutely good place and there is no significant and positive relationship between negative E-WOM and the perceived destination image of Mombasa.

Negative information spreads faster than positive, as angry customers are more likely than satisfied ones to tell friends and relatives about their experiences. As the number of negative online consumer reviews increases, attitudes towards the product would become more unfavorable (Lee 2008). In addition, Negative electronic word of mouth messages are found to have a stronger influence on a consumer's evaluation of experiential services than a positive message (Yang & Mai, 2010). This is likely to be particularly true for online reviews of intangible travel-related services. A major purpose of relying on electronic word of mouth to evaluate such services is the reduction of uncertainty and perceived risk (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011). Consumers are expected to be influenced more by negative reviews because they would rather prefer to "err on the side of caution" and avoid services that receive more negative reviews than positive ones. A study in New Zealand found that negative electronic word of mouth had a very strong negative impact on a destination's image (Morgan, Pritchard, and Piggott, 2003).

Applying the elaboration likelihood model, Lee et al. (2008) found that consumers' attitudes become more unfavorable as the proportion of negative online consumer reviews increases. Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) noticed that negative online reviews lower consumers' attitudes towards a hotel in which they are interested, even though it would increase their awareness of it. Consumer behaviour research found strong evidence that negative information has more value to the reader of reviews than positive information (Sen and Lerman 2007). This study has also verified that persons that indicated a high odds ratio rating for negative E-WOM were therefore least likely to rate Mombasa as an absolutely good place as a destination image.

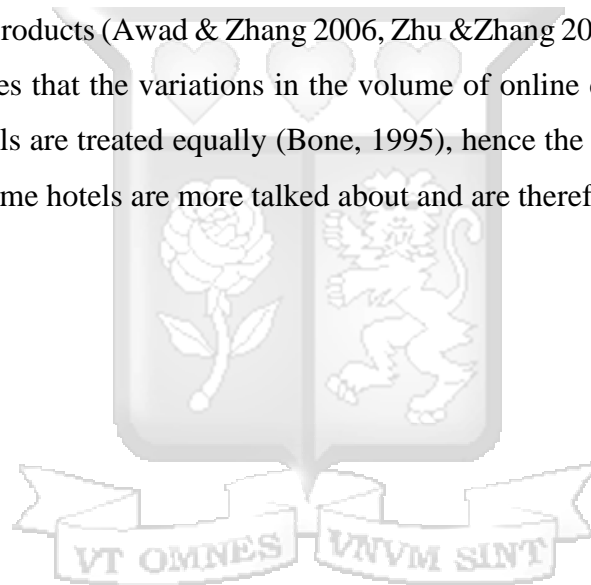
### **5.4 Users Expertise**

This refers to as cited by Bansal and Voyer 2000, which is reliance on experts because the performance of a product can be assessed from the information provided. However, in a reduced and altered cues environment, it is difficult for information seekers to evaluate the knowledge and competence of a user reviewers' expertise because of the limited access to personal attributes and background, and this is verified by this study that the high ratings of the odds ratio for users

expertise in this category were not associated with a perceived high rating of respondents' experience of Mombasa as a destination image.

### **5.5 Volume of electronic word of mouth (E-WOM)**

From this study, the general trend, therefore, was that of increasing high ratings of Mombasa as a destination image with increase in volume of E-WOM. According to Davis and Khanzanchi (2008), higher volumes of comments, either online hotel booking intentions positive or negative, in online communities are more likely to attract information seekers and increase product awareness (Elliot 2002). The existence of online WOM results in an increase in awareness and a positive (or negative) attitude towards a product that results in a change in sales (Alvarez 2007). For the most part, researchers have concluded that online customer reviews have a significant influence on the sales of products (Awad & Zhang 2006, Zhu & Zhang 2006). This is also supported by literature, which argues that the variations in the volume of online customer reviews provide evidence that not all hotels are treated equally (Bone, 1995), hence the variations observed in the study are justifiable as some hotels are more talked about and are therefore more visited.



## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The objectives of determining the appropriate E-WOM factors that influence Mombasa as a perceived destination image of Mombasa are achieved. The factors investigated are perceived E-WOM source credibility, positive E-WOM; negative E-WOM, volume of E-WOM, and user's expertise. The results from this study discovered that perceived e-WOM source credibility, positive E-WOM, volume of e-WOM have a positive and significant relationship with perceived destination image of Mombasa while negative e-WOM and users' expertise have no significant relationship with perceived destination image of Mombasa. This study provides organizations in the hospitality industry in Mombasa with a better understanding on how E-WOM works. Furthermore, this knowledge can be employed to replace traditional marketing means and progress of the industry's marketing approaches and continuously enhance business performance.

The results of this study have several implications with practical importance. According to Lewis and Chambers (2000), tourists who decide to travel to a certain destination may come to rely on E-WOM to retrieve reliable information that provides an actual situation that they have faced. Such tourists can also provide information of destinations where they have been and therefore transfer these experiences, through the internet, and provide a base for people who are searching for information to better understand the destination that they have selected.

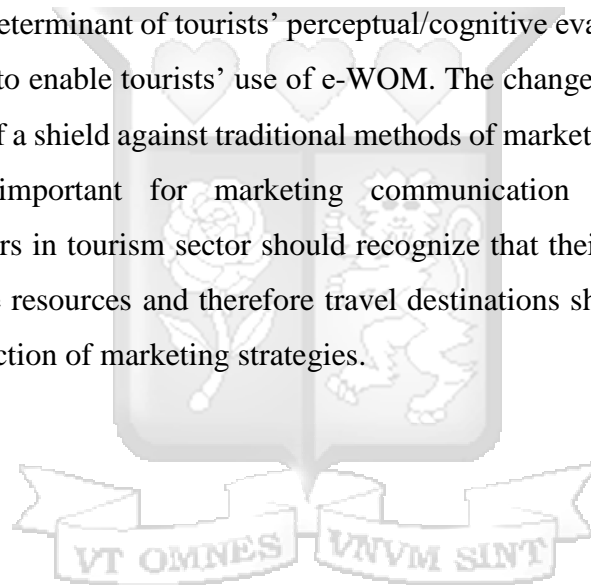
Indeed, the managers of the hotels, cultural sites, and tourist attractions need to identify which types of experience are most likely to trigger positive E-WOM and reduce negative E-WOM. When tourists have a positive experience of a service, product, or other resource provided by a destination, they may visit again and communicate positive e-WOM regarding the destination to other potential tourists. If a destination provides an enjoyable travel experience and excellent services, this is likely to encourage noble behavior from tourists toward the destination and to arouse a psychological desire among tourists to share their positive experience with others in an online environment. The managers in their various capacities can build online tourism communities where travelers exchange information.

Online exchanging of information in the community of the tourism service's website is important as travelers may communicate freely about their own travel feelings and factors such as the service

provided by a restaurant or hotel. The e-WOM information in such communities differs from that on the tourist enterprise's own website in that they facilitate multi-directional Information exchange and generally lack commercial motivation (Zhu & Lai, 2009).

These are reasons why e-WOM has greater influence on the decisions of tourists than the tourism enterprise's own websites. Therefore, a tourism enterprise should establish discussion communities on their websites where tourists can conveniently exchange their opinions and promote the tourism enterprise through e-WOM. Managers should encourage travelers to participate in the online community because a high number of reviews of a destination will lead to more information about the destination being disseminated among potential tourists, which will increase the likelihood of them selecting that destination.

Given that e-WOM is a determinant of tourists' perceptual/cognitive evaluations, tourism services should identify methods to enable tourists' use of e-WOM. The change in consumer's behavior - that is, the construction of a shield against traditional methods of marketing communications - has made it even more important for marketing communication to understand e-WOM communication. Marketers in tourism sector should recognize that their potential consumers are increasingly using online resources and therefore travel destinations should consider the avenue seriously in their construction of marketing strategies.



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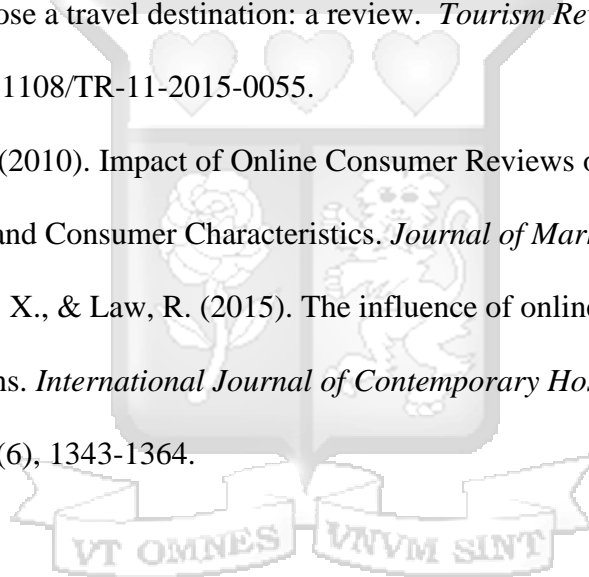
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APPENDIX A

Dear respondent,

**The purpose of this survey is to: ASSESS THE EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (E-WOM) ASPECTS ON DESTINATION IMAGE: A CASE OF VACATION TOURISTS VISITING MOMBASA, KENYA.**

**Thank you for your participation.**

Instructions:

- 1) There are TWO (2) sections in this questionnaire. Please answer ALL questions in ALL sections.
- 2) Completion of this form will take only 15 minutes.
- 3) The contents of this questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential.

Section A: Demographic Profile

1. Gender : Male

Female

2. Age: .....

3. Nationality

Kenyan

Non Kenyan

4. Marital status

Single

Divorced

Married

Others

5. Education status

Primary

O level

Diploma

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree  PHD degree

6. Occupation

a) Student

b) Self- employed

c) Employed

d) Unemployed

e) Housewife

f) Others

7. Have you ever travelled to Mombasa, Kenya?

1. Yes

2. No, this is my first time.

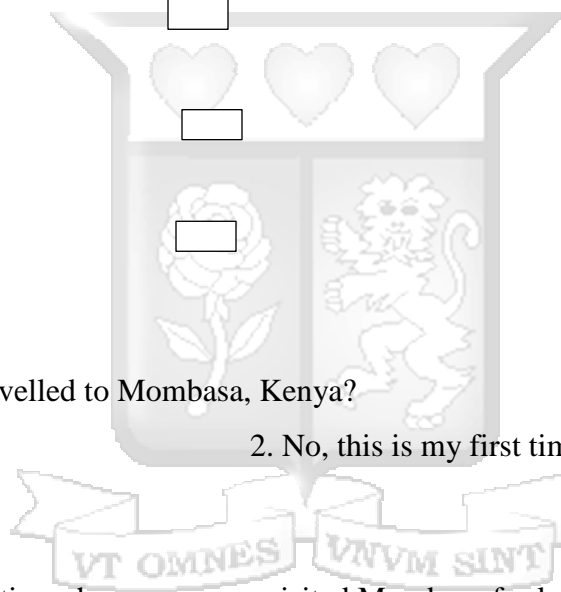
8. If yes, how many times have you ever visited Mombasa for leisure travel?

----------times.

9. Do you have experience in using hotel review sites

a) Yes

b) No



If yes which one.....

10. Who do you usually travel with?

- a) Alone
- b) Partner
- c) Children.
- d) Friend.
- e) Parents

**SECTION B: ASSESS THE EFFECT OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (E-WOM) ASPECTS ON DESTINATION IMAGE: A CASE OF VACATION TOURISTS VISITING MOMBASA, KENYA.**

This section is seeking your opinion regarding the factors that assess the effect of electronic word of mouth dimensions on the consumer's selection of hotels in Mombasa, Kenya.

1= Strongly disagree.

2 = Disagree.

3 = Neutral.

4= Agree.

5= Strongly agree

**1. PERCEIVED E-WOM CREDIBILITY**

<b>IV : PERCEIVED E- WOM CREDIBILITY</b>						
<b>No</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1	The reviews about the hotel are believable	1	2	3	4	5

2	The reviews about the hotel are factual	1	2	3	4	5
3	The reviews about the hotel are credible	1	2	3	4	5
4	The reviews about the hotel are trustworthy	1	2	3	4	5

## 2. POSITIVE E-WOM (PE)

IV2: POSITIVE E-WOM (PE)						
No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website mention positive things about the hotel	1	2	3	4	5
2	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website	1	2	3	4	5

	recommended the hotel					
3	Positive reviews on the booking website increase my booking desire on the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5

### 3. NEGATIVE E-WOM

IV3: NEGATIVE E-WOM (NE)						
No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website mention negative things about the hotel	1	2	3	4	5
2	I will book a room if the reviews on the booking website discouraged others to book	1	2	3	4	5

	a room the hotel					
3	Negative reviews on the booking website will affect my decision on whether to choose the hotel.	1	2	3	4	5

**4. E-WOM Users Expertise( UE)**

IV 4: E-WOM Users Expertise( UE)						
No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I am very knowledgeable about E-WOM	1	2	3	4	5
2	I often influence other people in their usage or opinions about E-WOM.	1	2	3	4	5
3	My friends see me as a good source of information	1	2	3	4	5

	about E-WOM.					
--	--------------	--	--	--	--	--

**5. Volume of E-WOM.**

IV 5: Volume of E-WOM						
No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	The number of online review/comment is large, inferring that the hotel is Popular.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Highly ranking and recommendation, inferring that the hotel has good Reputations.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The more the hotel is mentioned in front of me the more am aware of it.	1	2	3	4	5

4.	The more the hotel is discussed in front of me the more it influences my purchasing decision.	1	2	3	4	5
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### 6. Booking Intention (BI)

<b>BOOKING INTENTION</b>						
No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Based on the reviews, I will make a booking at the hotel	1	2	3	4	5
2	Based on the reviews, I would recommend my friends to make a booking at the hotel	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I will rely on reviews the next time I need to book a hotel room.	1	2	3	4	5

--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**7. How does the consumers' experience of usage of electronic word of mouth on trip advisor use affect the destination image of Mombasa Kenya?**

No	Question	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
1	How often have you used trip advisor?	1	2	3	4	5
2	How often have you booked a hotel using trip advisor?	1	2	3	4	5
3.	How often have you posted a review on trip advisor?	1	2	3	4	5
4.	How happy are you with your choice of hotels using trip advisor?	1	2	3	4	5

**8. How does using electronic word of mouth posted on Trip advisor contribute to destination image of Mombasa Kenya?**

No	Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	On the site everything is easy to understand	1	2	3	4	5
2	I can find information easily on the site	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Regular updates mean the information is fresh	1	2	3	4	5
4	Aggregating the reviews into rankings makes it easier to choose a hotel	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I can easily compare different hotels using this site	1	2	3	4	5

9. Below is a list of statements assessing your perceptions of Mombasa as a travel destination?  
Please select only one number that best represents your agreement with the statements:

	LOW	-----	MID	-----	HIGH		
Absolutely good place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7



## APPENDIX B



Strathmore Business School

Monday, 08 May 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: FACILITATION OF RESEARCH – REHEMA KASSAM**

This is to introduce Rehema Kassam, who is an MBA student at Strathmore Business School, admission number **MBA/84694/15**. As part of our Masters Program, Rehema is expected to do applied research and to undertake a project. This is in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Business Administration course. To this effect, she would like to request for appropriate data from your organization.

Rehema is undertaking a research paper on **“Assessing The Effect Of Electronic Word Of Mouth Aspects On The Consumer’s Selection Of Hotels In Mombasa, Kenya : A Case Study Of Tripadvisor”**. The information obtained from your organization shall be treated confidentially and shall be used for academic purposes only.

Our MBA seeks to establish links with industry, and one of these ways is by directing our research to areas that would be of direct use to industry. We would be glad to share our findings with you after the research, and we trust that you will find them of great interest and of practical value to your organization.

We very much appreciate your support and we shall be willing to provide any further information if required.

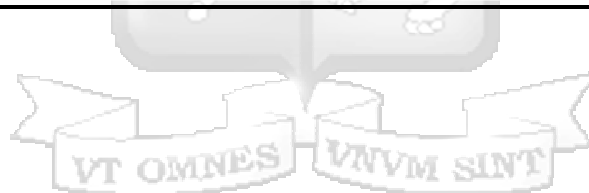
Yours sincerely,

  
Mr. Muriithi Njogu,  
Director – MBA Programs.



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P.O. Box 59857-00200, Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: 0703 034 414/415/417 Email: info@sbs.ac.ke  
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APPENDIX C

The confidence intervals of the various odds per aspect

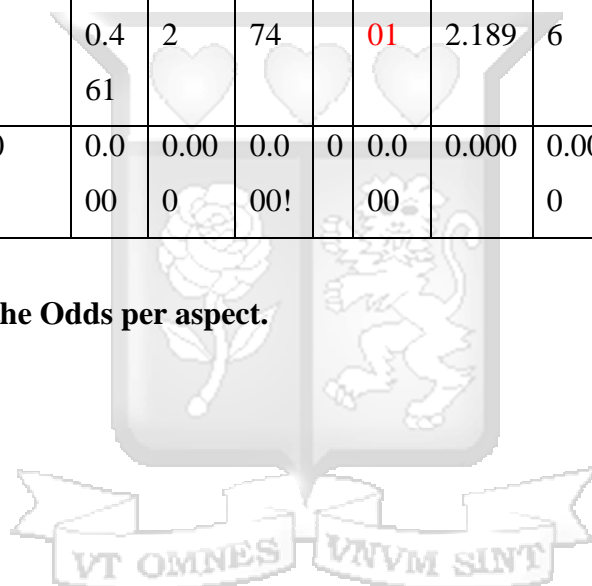
Median Category	Ratings	Per	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	d	Sig	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
PERCEIVED			-	797	0.0	1	0.9	-	1559	0.000	0.000	0.000
Electronic Word of Mouth			40.	9.98	00		96	1568	9.76			
E-WOM			714	3				1.193	5			
CREDIBILITY=1.5												
PERCEIVED			-	142	0.0	1	0.9	-	2786	0.000	0.000	0.000
Electronic Word of Mouth			21.	28.7	00		99	2790	6.42			
E-WOM			450	67				9.320	1			
CREDIBILITY=2.0												
PERCEIVED			-	2.32	2.4	1	0.1	-	0.94	0.027	0.000	2.567
Electronic			3.6	7	18		20	8.178	3			
Word of Mouth			18									
E-WOM												
CREDIBILITY=2.5												
PERCEIVED			-	1.23	9.6	1	0.0	-	-	0.021	0.002	0.242
Electronic Word of Mouth			3.8	6	63		02	6.266	1.42			
E-WOM			43						0			
CREDIBILITY=3.0												
PERCEIVED			-	1.16	4.6	1	0.0	-	-	0.081	0.008	0.786
Electronic Word of Mouth			2.5	2	95		30	4.794	0.24			
E-WOM			17						0			
CREDIBILITY=3.5												
PERCEIVED	Electronic		-	1.05	5.9	1	0.0	-	-	0.075	0.009	0.600
Word of Mouth			2.5	8	71		15	4.657	0.51			
E-WOM			84						1			
CREDIBILITY=4.0												

Median Ratings Per Category	Estimate	Std. Error	Weight	df	Sig	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
PERCEIVED Electronic Word of Mouth E-WOM CREDIBILITY=4.5	-2.155	1.134	3.612	1	0.057	-4.377	0.067	0.116	0.013	1.070
PERCEIVED Electronic Word of Mouth E-WOM CREDIBILITY=5.0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
POSITIVE E-WOM=1.0	-4.731	2.444	3.748	1	0.053	-9.522	0.059	0.009	0.000	1.061
POSITIVE E-WOM=2.0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
POSITIVE E-WOM=3.0	-0.921	1.085	0.721	1	0.396	-3.046	1.205	0.398	0.048	3.336
POSITIVE E-WOM=4.0	-0.827	0.680	1.479	1	0.224	-2.160	0.506	0.437	0.115	1.658
POSITIVE E-WOM=5.0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
NEGATIVE E-WOM=1.0	3.830	1.207	10.063	1	0.002	1.463	6.196	46.040	4.321	490.600
NEGATIVE E-WOM=2.0	3.772	1.234	9.347	1	0.002	1.354	6.191	43.476	3.872	488.100
NEGATIVE E-WOM=3.0	3.887	1.334	8.490	1	0.004	1.273	6.502	48.786	3.570	666.693

Median Ratings Per Category	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
NEGATIVE E-WOM=4.0	0.904	1.364	0.439	1	0.508	-1.769	3.576	2.468	0.170	35.743
NEGATIVE E-WOM=5.0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
E-WOM User Expertise UE=1.0	1.294	1.177	1.209	1	0.271	-1.012	3.600	3.646	0.363	36.585
E-WOM Users Expertise UE=2.0	3.955	1.274	9.640	1	0.002	1.459	6.452	52.219	4.300	634.189
E-WOM Users Expertise UE=3.0	2.562	1.037	6.104	1	0.013	0.530	4.595	12.963	1.698	98.950
E-WOM Users Expertise UE=4.0	3.357	0.956	12.340	1	0.000	1.484	5.230	28.697	4.410	186.734
E-WOM Users Expertise UE=5.0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000
Volume of E-WOM=1.0	26.657	0.000	0.000	1	0.000	26.657	26.657	377612703573.569	0.000	0.000
Volume of E-WOM=2.0	-0.344	2.257	0.023	1	0.879	-4.767	4.079	0.709	0.009	59.106
Volume of E-WOM=2.5	19.409	142.287	0.066	1	0.999	-2786.8460	2790.7279	268780060.650	0.000	0.000
Volume of E-WOM=3.0	-1.243	1.015	1.498	1	0.221	-3.233	0.747	0.289	0.039	2.111

Median Ratings Per Category	Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Odds Ratio	Lower	Upper
Volume of E-WOM=3.5	0.375	1.184	0.100	1	0.751	-1.945	2.695	1.455	0.143	14.811
Volume of E-WOM=4.0	-0.428	0.792	0.292	1	0.589	-1.979	1.123	0.652	0.138	3.076
Volume of E-WOM=4.5	-0.461	0.882	0.274	1	0.601	-2.189	1.266	0.630	0.112	3.548
Volume of E-WOM=5.0	0.000	0.000	0.000	0	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000

**Confidence Interval of the Odds per aspect.**



APPENDIX D

<b>Case Processing Summary</b>			
		<b>N</b>	<b>Marginal Percentage</b>
	1.0	1	1.0%
	3.0	1	1.0%
	4.0	7	7.3%
	5.0	24	25.0%
	6.0	34	35.4%
	7.0	29	30.2%
	1.5	1	1.0%
	2.0	1	1.0%
	2.5	1	1.0%
	3.0	11	11.5%
	3.5	10	10.4%
	4.0	43	44.8%
	4.5	19	19.8%
	5.0	10	10.4%
	1.0	2	2.1%
	2.0	1	1.0%
	3.0	8	8.3%
	4.0	65	67.7%
	5.0	20	20.8%

Median NEGATIVE e- WOM	1.0	36	37.5%
	2.0	34	35.4%
	3.0	14	14.6%
	4.0	8	8.3%
	5.0	4	4.2%
	1.0	6	6.3%
	2.0	7	7.3%
	3.0	23	24.0%
	4.0	50	52.1%
	5.0	10	10.4%
		<b>N</b>	<b>MARGINAL PERCENTAGE</b>
	1.0	1	1.0%
	2.0	1	1.0%
	2.5	2	2.1%
	3.0	10	10.4%
	3.5	5	5.2%
	4.0	49	51.0%
	4.5	16	16.7%
	5.0	12	12.5%
Valid		96	100.0%
Missing		0	
Total		96	