NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT

MASTER'S PROGRAMME

MASTER'S THESIS

AN INVESTIGATION OF HOW ONLINE BUSINESS CAUSE JOB INSECURITY AMONG TRAVEL AGENCIES: A CASE OF ZIMBABWE.

GABRIEL BENSON BAYE

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Prepared by

GABRIEL BENSON BAYE

20146443

SUPERVISOR

ASSOC. PROF TULEN SANER

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Prepared by

Gabriel Benson Baye

Examining Committee in charge

Assoc Prof Tulner Saner   Near East University

School of Tourism and Hotel Management

Assoc Prof Serif Z Eyupoglu   Near East University

Department of Business   Administration

Assist Prof Dr Nersin Bahceleli   Near East University

Department of Tourism and Hotel Management

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof Mustafa Sagsan
Acting Director

ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the impact of online business and marketing by tourism suppliers on traditional travel agencies business. The use of online business and marketing has created a direct communication link between the supply and demand, which was the sole responsibility of travel agencies. Also analyzed is the impact of online business and marketing in the modern day travel and tour business. A multinominal logit model was used to examine the influence of online business and marketing. The results show that online business and marketing by suppliers has become a major business activity, hence there are perceived insecurity features among traditional travel agencies employees and business. Factors linked to an increased likehood of complete use of online business and marketing in travel business are not limited to low costs, ubiquity, reach out to wider range of audiences, provide customized services, enhance global marketing, direct and consistent information, viral i.e. it reaches to different masses and allows dialogue and interactions. Finally this study recommends that traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe should incorporate new business strategies that are more conversant to current and global standards.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, turistik tedarikçiler tarafından geleneksel seyahat acenteleri işinde çevrimiçi iş ve pazarlamanın etkisini analiz etmektedir. Online iş ve pazarlamanın kullanımı, seyahat acentelerinin tek sorumluluğu olan arz ve talep arasında doğrudan bir iletişim bağlantısı oluşturdu. Ayrıca analiz edilen online iş ve pazarlamanın günümüzdeki seyahat ve tur işlerine olan etkisi. Çevrimiçi iş ve pazarlamanın etkisini incelemek için çok terimli logit modeli kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, çevrimiçi ticaretin ve tedarikçilerin pazarlamasının önemli bir ticari faaliyet haline geldiğini, dolayısıyla geleneksel seyahat acenteleri çalışanlarının ve işlerinin güvensizlik özelliklerini algıladıklarını göstermektedir. Seyahat işletmesinde çevrimiçi ticaretin ve pazarlamanın tamamının kullanımıyla ilgili artan beğeniyle bağlantılı faktörler, düşük maliyetlerle, her yerde bulunmayla sınırlı değil, geniş kitleye hitap eder, özelleştirilmiş hizmetler sunar, küresel pazarlamayı, doğrudan ve tutarlı bilgiyi, viral yani geliştirir. Farklı kitlelere ulaşır ve diyalog ve etkileşimlere izin verir. Sonunda bu çalışma, Zimbabwe'deki geleneksel seyahat acentelerinin mevcut ve küresel standartlara daha fazla eğilen yeni iş stratejileri içermesi gerektiğini belirtti.

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this thesis to my family and friends. I am proud of you all, because you always wished for the best for me. Special regards to my dad, mom, sisters and brother. May the Dear Lord continue to bless them.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Introduction

The following study will discuss the development and use of online business and marketing in the modern tourism business, suffice to say that, this has brought competition for market share in Tourism industry. This competition has been around over the last few years and it has stimulated interest in the analysis and assessment of the efficiency of either the use of new tourism distribution channels or traditional methods. Notably the new distribution channels referred to are, different online applications (social media platforms i.e. Facebook and twitter) for marketing and service platforms such as (online payment portals and accounts) while the traditional channels are the use of intermediaries such as traditional travel agencies. Indeed according to Lang (2000) the evolution of online services have influenced the connection between the supply and the demand side, as the commercial world of this 21st century has been mainly characterized by the evolution of business operations. Indeed this shift, has been seen largely from the traditional aspect to the modern methods and this has positively affected the world and the Tourism industry itself Bennet (2008). Among the contributory factors of online business and marketing as a success in business is that it is a communication tool which has low costs, it is convenient to both the firm and the third parties (consumers) and it also reaches a large audience in a short space of time Inkpen (2008). However, the internet has its own drawbacks as a business and marketing tool hence it is recommendable to establish the impact and influence of online business and marketing in Tourism. Based on this gap in literature, the conceptual purpose of this paper is to give a clear and objective analysis of the internet as a new marketing and business contrivance in Tourism distribution channel.

Job insecurity according to William (2014) is an employee's perception that his or her job is uncertain and may come to end sooner than expected. Indeed the positive attributes that have been brought by the internet through the use of online business and marketing have caused perceived uncertainty for both the employees and the business in the traditional travel agencies business. The new business strategy in tourism has indeed gave birth to a new business culture

and environment where these suppliers have a direct communication and transacting link with their consumers. As such the role that was done by intermediaries (traditional travel agencies) is slowly or has been affected by this technological development. The technological development being referred to is the use of online applications and systems for business and marketing by product suppliers. As such because of the advance services provided by online business and marketing services, traditional means of business services are now viewed as poor services delivery handles thus there are perceived threats of job insecurity among traditional travel agencies. Indeed De Witte (1999) citied in William (2014) suggests that job insecurity effects include poor services, reduced work loyalty and increased deviant behavior. While William (2014) argues that job insecurity is highly threating to employees or business given the prospect of losing the positive material, social identity and psychological benefits associated with employment or business. Notably it is generally agreed that job insecurity results are significantly negative and its individual-effects is well established William (2014). Moreso various researches into job insecurity have provided consistent evidence that job insecurity is associated with negative attitude, behaviors, and health. Arguably it is unfortunate if job insecurities are not managed well it can be detrimental, thus it has to be minimized.

Indeed this research provides a rationale to assist a job insecurity research in explaining its effects on organizational performance, business sustainability and customer retention in traditional travel agencies business. This can be measured using the overall reactions of both the employees and the business performance. According William (2014) such an assumption can be tested using the Human Resource Management theory which suggests that business reaction (performance) is largely based on employee reaction (job satisfaction). However Kozlowski and Klein (2000) believe that there are limitations to this approach, particularly in explaining organizational performance because it is difficult to validate multi-level relationships. To this end, it is important to identify relationships between job insecurity effects and subsequent organizational performance. As such the results of this research will provide solid evidence for the effects of job insecurity features or elements among traditional travel agencies i.e. the business and the employees.

1.1 Background of the Study

Job insecurity according to Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) refers to perceived powerless to maintain the desired continuity in a threatened job situation and it has become more common. Indeed such factors that are affecting the Travel agencies business in Zimbabwe are not only limited to the development and use of online business and marketing services, but may also include the turnover of tourist i.e. both (inbound and outbound). Another factor that has been a subject of debate is the preparedness of the traditional travel agencies in enhancing technological challenges which are fast growing Sheldon (2004). To this end, the emergence of web 2.0 applications such as (Facebook and Twitter) among other applications have created the new phenomenon in business culture which allows a two way communication between the tourism products suppliers and the consumers while causing disintermediation. Arguably these developments have seen an introduction of different business terms such as e-business, e-commerce, e-tourism and online marketing which is the thrust of this research. Notably the use of online business and marketing in Tourism is at center stage, as these are used by Tourism institutions to promote their brands and products. Therefore with the traditional role of traditional travel agencies, online business and marketing services have brought a paradigm shift and an offensive business challenge that has resulted in job insecurity features or characteristics among traditional travel agencies business and work. In this regard, it is imperative to note that both traditional travel agencies and online business and marketing services tools serve the same purpose of promoting and marketing tourism products albeit at different scales, hence the need to ascertain the effects of technology in the Tourism market.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In the last few years the number of traditional travel agencies institutions in Zimbabwe has declined as result of different factors such as the poor local economic environment, continued political instability and the growing relationship between service providers and consumers through the use of online marketing and business. This research will focus on how the use of online services have affected the growth of traditional travel agencies business, or how the use of online services can be viewed as a threat in a modern business environment such as that of traditional travel agencies.

1.3   Aim of study

The aim of this study is to come with strategies that rejuvenate the "dying" traditional travel agency business in Zimbabwe. It is also meant to find solutions for the "threatened" traditional travel agency industry by the introduction, promotion and use of the internet by those in the Tourism industry. Further to that, this study aims to explore the extent to which tourists and tourism consumers are using these online services against the traditional role of the declining traditional travel agencies.

1.4   Objectives of the study

- To establish the effectiveness of online services on service delivery in tourism
- To examine how online services influenced change in Tourism business
- To investigate whether the use of online services is for the better or worse in Tourism
- To examine how online services are a threat (that cause insecurity) to travel agencies.
- To determine the consequences of job insecurity on employ attitude and performance

1.5   Research Questions

- Define and describe the effectiveness of online services on service delivery
- Discuss how online services have influenced change in a business environment
- What is the future of Tourism given the sole use of online business and marketing services
- Define and describe the nature of job insecurity and online business and marketing in tourism
- How does job insecurity affect one's discharge of duties

1.6   Assumptions

- The researcher will not be denied access to important information necessary to establish the decline of traditional travel agency business in Zimbabwe.
- Travel agencies in Zimbabwe will be available for comment and analysis
- That the respondents will fully engage, co-operate and give accurate answers to research questions asked by the researcher
- The Tourism economy does not shift within the period of this study

1.7   The significance of the study

Traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe enjoyed a monopoly of services as they were the sole providers of information, services, and tourism products (tickets or hotel reservations). These agencies were the intermediaries between the tourism suppliers and their consumers (tourists), however with the turn of the 21st century, consumers were offered a chance to use other forms of transacting through the use of online services, which afforded them to access information, services and other tourism related products. Indeed this development has seen the use or consultation of traditional travel agencies being limited or next to none, thus there are now tendencies of insecurity amongst the traditional travel agencies. In this regards, this research will investigate the level or impact of online business and marketing on traditional travel agencies business, a case of Zimbabwe tourism.

1.8   Chapter Summary

In this chapter the study provided the background of the study, which had a narrative of the nature of traditional travel agencies business in Zimbabwe as well as their current working environment. Indeed it was established that the tourism economy has since shifted from traditional distribution channels to new distribution channels through the use of online business and marketing. In this regard, the paradigm shift has caused perceived job insecurity features among traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe. Moreso, this chapter also examined the significance of this research to Zimbabwe traditional travel agencies business, and this research singled out the need to adapt to new marketing and distribution channels, if the travel agency industry is to remain competitive in the Tourism market. Notably the following Chapter (2) will

address in detail the objectives of the study and its aims, in a bid to bridge a gap between online business and marketing and that of traditional travel agencies as these 2 are both distribution channels in tourism marketing and promotion.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The following chapter will discuss various theories that revolve around job insecurity and possible outcomes. The chapter will also focus on the development of new marketing strategies in Tourism in which online business and marketing are mostly used. These discussions were done with the view to examine the use of traditional travel agencies and online services when tourists are transacting. Indeed the influence of online business and marketing illustrates a shift of business culture and thus it has been argued to be an agent of economic development in the modern business world.

2.1 The Nature of Job Insecurity

According to Greenhalgh and Rosenbalt (1984) job insecurity refers to powerless to maintain the desired continuity in a threatened job situation and it has become more common in the modern day. In light of this assertion, traditional travel agencies are of the view that their job is at risk as most tourists today are using the internet and associated online platforms to make their various transactions that range from making online bookings, reservations and purchasing of products and packages. Indeed with the case of Zimbabwe Travel agencies, online business and marketing services have seen the decline of sales made by travel agencies before the advent of the internet. Copper et al (2001) argue that job insecurity refers to employees' concern about losing their current job, or characteristics related to job insecurity can also be defined as continued existence of threats to a job in the future. In this regard, because of the ability of the internet and online services to communicate effectively and more conveniently retrenchment in traditional travel agencies business has been a significant organizational action. It is argued that this is so because of the lower costs that come-by using online business and marketing applications than the use of traditional intermediaries in form of agencies which has higher costs. Notably the impact of online business and marketing services on such individuals has a negative effect, as there are possibilities of losing a job or business as suggested by Copper et al (2001).

Some scholars like Hitt et al (1994) however argued that job insecurity encompasses factors such as threats to various job features, powerless to counteract such threats and future existence of

current employment. Undoubtedly these perceived threats have negative implications, as this research established that job insecurity features among Zimbabwe traditional travel agencies were a result of the direct relationship between services providers and consumers. Moreso Dzapasi (2012) argues that service providers are now primarily focused on marketing their products or services directly to the consumers, hence the decline of intermediates. This is also known in marketing terms as Business to Consumer model (B2C). Notably the B2C model today has seen these suppliers using their own websites which are private and commercial. They communicate, market, and promote their services directly to consumers or tourists, Dzapasi (2012) noted that these developments have seen the elimination of intermediation, a process better known as disintermediation in marketing circles, and undoubtedly to some extent these developments have caused job insecurity features among traditional travel agencies. According to Kinnunen (1999) the lack to re-energize or strategize by traditional travel agencies can be a factor that contributes to their perceived threats of job insecurity.

However this research contemplates that political, social and economic unrest in a destination (country) pause much threat to the existence of Tourism jobs. In this regard, Noveli (1995) suggests that such threats result in low in-flows of tourists and tourism activities thus Tourism institutions may take such as actions as retrenching, a measure argued to be a strategy for organizational sustainability. Therefore, this research acknowledges that there are far more factors that in somewhat way cause job insecurity, which has been best defined as perceived threats to job continuity. However Howard (1995) argues that the developments that have been brought about by the internet world indeed have a direct effect on the existence of traditional travel agencies whereas other factors have indirect effects. Notably much of Tourism transactions are now done grossly online thus affecting the services and jobs that were provided by Travel agencies and Tour operators.

According to Latack (1986) the outcomes of job insecurity are often detrimental to productivity of work as well as the well-being of individuals. While Cox (1985) suggests that job insecurity causes stress which mainly stems from the individual's perception and explanation of changes in his/her working environment. Arguably Tourism as a service industry should ensure that all elements that are detrimental to productivity and hospitality are obsolete as the outcomes affects the brand of the sector. In light of this, the foundation and pillars of this research are designed,

for instance according to Cox (1985) job insecurity results in individuals developing negative attitudes about their jobs and organizations, and to some extent affecting their physical and mental health. Indeed as suggested Tourism being a service industry chances of poor customer service delivery by travel agencies are high where job insecurity is a threat or perceived. To this end, this research took it to task to examine the impact of online business and marketing services and associated internet applications on travel agencies business and other tourism jobs in Zimbabwe.

Theories on job insecurity indeed concur with the findings of this research, as the theories suggest that job insecurity results are not limited to;

- causing negative emotional response
- reducing work efficiencies
- lowering level of individual commitment
- increased turnover or retrenchment
- low organizational performance
- poor service delivery

Arguably in Tourism and other service industries there is need to be holistic in approaching any elements that may cause poor customer care and services if ever the industry is to attain its ultimate objectives. Therefore there is need to enhance change and new business practices in order to limit the effects of job insecurity, which is the aim of this study.

Having said that, the question remains "is the use of online business and marketing services in travel business, the end of once a prosperous business of travel agencies in Zimbabwe?" Indeed the factors that cause job insecurity are subject to debate, hence this academic experiment was done based on the case of the development of online business and marketing in Tourism of Zimbabwe. The use of online business and marketing services in Tourism industry cannot go unabated, as the use of the internet is at the center stage of Tourism distribution channel. The following diagram illustrates the nature of job insecurity in an environment

2.2   Nature of Online Business and Marketing

According to Ashley (2015) the emergence and use of the internet created a new phenomenon in the business environment. This new development allows a two-way communication that has a

direct link between the supplier and the consumer. Arguably Bernoff (2008) suggests that online business and marketing services are the foundation for the development of new business marketing trends in which most Tourism institutions and other service providers in Tourism are promoting their brands, products and or packages. Indeed, the following are attributes of using online business and marketing services on different platforms that have seen the doing of business becoming much possible and easier;

- low costs
- ubiquity
- reach out to wider range of audiences
- provide customized services
- enhance global marketing
- direct and consistent information
- viral i.e. it reaches to different masses
- allows dialogue and interactions.

Among other scholars, such as Kim et al (2012) suggest that the internet and online business and marketing platforms have a larger capacity to attract more consumers who may engage with the suppliers' brands and products from different spheres. However this strategy has brought a new marketing dispensation as travel agencies business in Zimbabwe and the rest of the world view the potential success of online business and marketing services as a possible threat to their jobs and business. In this regard, it is imperative to note that the effects of online business and marketing services to Travel agencies are mainly negative, as has been established in other studies. Below are general effects

- disintermediation
- customer turnover
- low sales or commissions
- retrenchment
- job insecurity.

Online business and marketing services are not only confined to sharing of information but they can be used to make payments especially during the last 2years where hard cash has been a

problem in the local economy, arguably thus enhancing the services of tourism producers. Indeed online business and marketing platforms are viral, thus suppliers are forced to react in the most amicable way that ensures that their business and products are not affected in cyber marketing space. Another niche for online services is that they have a social media marketing base, online transactions that are non-monetary, these according to Harrison (2015) are often referred to as Electronic-Commerce (e-com), transactions and Electronic-Business (e-business) transactions. Such transactions have made business a complete revolution, as users can make online payments through web portals using debit cards, visa cards or master cards Manson (2010). As such consumers can transact without the aid or need of travel agencies, thus a sway from the old transacting methods that needed travel agencies and or intermediaries.

According to Barret and Mason (2012) the revolutions in the business world have manipulated the functions of online services, thus it has become one of the leading tools for business and marketing strategies. Through social media, online business and marketing services have in the recent years in the forefront of tourism brand development and promotion. Arguably Chen (2014) argues that in the past decades, the tourism business only adopted the traditional marketing of brick and mortar concept as well as malfunctioning web 1.0 applications (e-mails). In this regard, access to travel agencies who solely rely on brick and mortar concept becomes a challenge, as online business and marketing services are here, there and everywhere (ubiquity). Notably according to Manson (2010) the emergency of online technologies gave a paradigm shift in the business world especially in the marketing discourse. Arguably, through its social framework online business and marketing services lure and retain a wide range of consumers, online services have a niche for globalization of services and products, and they ensure suppliers can monitor their customer trends and preferences thus services become customized or personalized. Indeed online business and marketing services provide raw services that can be designed to suit one's personal needs, whereas traditional travel agencies provide already designed services which in somewhat way may not suit the consumer needs, thus the end up having little or no business in the present technological world of online business and marketing services.

Hagel and Armstrong, (2007) suggest that online business and marketing services have changed the power structures in the marketplace, evidence points to a major change and emergence of a

new breed of powerful and sophisticated customers, who are often difficult to influence, persuade and retain. Indeed the current crop of customers in Tourism come with different needs, expectations, desires and demands, which service providers, should be aware of, if there are to attract more consumers. Akamdari (2013) concurs with this assertion as she suggests, that the use of online services especially the social media platforms are customer empowerment agents, that explains their aptitudes and possible roles as part of corporate marketing that identifies ways of engaging those (customers) as marketing tools. Notably such tenets lack in traditional marketing strategies and thus therefore in some way, the evolution and rapid development of online business and marketing has been perceived as a possible threat to job security. Corstlens, and Umblijs, (2012) suggest that online business and marketing strategies have a passive approach that uses social media as a direct marketing and public relations channel with customer influence as a tool for personalizing services and making them customer-generated services. Therefore this study was guided by the principles of marketing that has been a subject of substantial transformation during the last decades. Notably, old marketing principles are losing ground and are becoming more and less effective. According to Harison, (2015) media proliferation, market globalization and the emergence of new technologies of Information Technology and Communications are changing the marketing rules and market dynamics by weakening and presenting individuals with challenges or opportunities and empowerment.

2.3   The Decline of Travel agencies in Zimbabwe

There are a number of factors that have seen the decline of travel agencies business in Zimbabwe; among such factors is the general decline in tourists' population since the economic recession of 2008. The period was characterized by hyperinflation which saw the Tourism industry being affected worldwide. The political crisis in the country which saw humanitarian abuses, that affected the Tourism brand of the country as it was seen as not an ideal destination for travel and tour. However this study focused on a new challenge that has seen the decline of services of travel agencies business, through "the use of online business and marketing services with their associated platforms."

Indeed according to Kim, (2012) the growing amount of competition between online business and marketing services and travel agencies in the tourism economy over the last decades has stimulated a paradigm shift in services delivery in tourism. This competition has caused panicking among travel agencies in Zimbabwe. This is so because tourism is a service sector

which has no exception to the effects of the advent and evolution of the internet and the use of online services. Moreso Hagel, (2013) suggests that in the last decade ICTs have deeply affected the way business is performed and the way institutes compete among each other. Indeed the aforesaid "paradigm shift" in tourism, is specifically the way tourism products are being distributed in marketplace, this therefore complement the vast use of the online services among them being social media platforms. Notably, the use of online services either for payments or consultations, have affected the services that were once solely for travel agencies. Arguably, traditional travel agencies are responsible for business mediation between the supply and the demand. Accordingly this has been a result of changing business tenets thus the use of travel agencies can be seen as a traditional method of communicating with the demand side. Lang, (2010) suggest that online business and marketing developments have affected the services and the business provided by travel agencies, who have been handling the travel business and services based on traditional means of marketing. Such marketing strategies among others included the use of computer supported reservation systems and global distribution systems. Critical to this is the lack of customer input in designing these systems as the reservation systems are/were not tailored made. However the computer supported reservation systems and global distribution systems are/were referred to as electronic-mediaries (e-mediaries), which were predominantly used as the largest repositories of travel stock that is (information, services, products and packages) Bennnet (2008). In this regard, according to Bennet (2008) the development of online business and marketing services in the early 2000s and subsequent adoption of the developments in the mainstream tourism business have seen the decline or possible total collapse of e-mediaries (travel agencies). Inkpen (2008) also suggests that the advent of the internet use as a universal and interactive means of communication has contributed to consumer behavior and attitudes. For instance contemporary consumers can undertake their entire search and booking online, which therefore hasten to the decline of e-mediaries roles. According to the Zimbabwe Tourism highlights of 2012, there are still local consumers who prefer the use of traditional travel agencies though the figures are relatively low comparatively, while there is little or no evidence of the use of these travel agencies by international tourists who are also the largest consumers of Zimbabwean tourism. This entitles that revenue or income for travel agencies has drastically decreased, thus there can be perceived threats for job continuity among travel agencies in Zimbabwe.

According to Sheldon (2004) the internet is widely used as a means to deliver up-to-date content, and as a result it has created the conditions for the emergence of wide range of new tourism e-mediaries, which are collaborated into e-commerce applications that allows users to access directly tourism information, services, promotions, reservations and products. Arguably such developments in tourism technology continue to affect travel agencies who enjoyed a monopoly of services. According to Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (2012), there are 9 (5starred) hotels in Zimbabwe, 36 Airlines companies and 17 Tour operators, which are doing their business online and they have since either reduced agency commissions or have completely abandon the intermediary system. Notably such developments have negatively affected the roles and functions of travel agencies, while it has been suggested that service quality and efficiency have increased. Evidence points out to the figures of e-commerce use in Tourism in Zimbabwe. However according to Zimbabwe Tourism Authority (2012) the number of web-based travel agencies also emerged, as the local travel agencies began subscribing with internationally accredited Tourism web-based agencies such as expedia.com, ebooker.com and Travelocity.com among others. It has been established however that the number of web-based Travel agencies is relatively lower than the population of the agencies prior to the use of online business services. Notably according to Zimbabwe Tourism Authority offline travel agencies developed their own online provisions on internet portals such as Yahoo, AltaVista, or Excite, as well as making use of vertical portals where they make use of travel content from external online agencies and suppliers. Indeed because of piracy and fake accounts largely found on the cyber space, online travel agencies are often disadvantaged as the public has it on record that there can be robbed of their money and or time. Arguably according to Kim (2012) the proliferation of e-mediaries and e-commerce have seen marketing of tourism products and services in a divide of different distribution channels where the internet space has provided a competitive advantage for both consumers and the Tourism industry. In light of this, questions are often asked about the future of e-Tourism and traditional travel agencies, as technology remains a serious threat to travel agency business albeit they have an essential role in tourism marketing and development. As the technology continues to grow and develop, the threats of job continuity also grow and develop, for example, according to Chen (2014) more recently e-mediaries technologies have been developed to more convenient applications that are compatible with mobile devices. Indeed this entitles that users can therefore access information, services, make reservations and bookings

among other things, from "here, there and anywhere", thus doing business in ones' hand. Notably, such developments are increasingly critical in a market that is focusing towards direct marketing and cost/commission reduction. Therefore the future of tourism can be that, it becomes a customer oriented industry which service its consumers directly, while cutting costs that they incurred through commission imbursements. Indeed such developments are undoubtedly major challenges for traditional travel agencies and e-mediaries who are competing to maximize their market share as well as adding value and benefits for both the business and consumers. In this regards, this study seek to identify the future of both new and traditional marketing tools, and the evolution of business models as a result of Information Technology and Communication development.

2.4   Theoretical Framework

This research used the Technology Acceptance Model and the SWOT analysis model tool to examine the impact of online services on traditional travel agency business in Zimbabwe. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is used to measure generally how the community or users appreciate the development and use of technology today, while the SWOT analysis model is a tool used to examine how a product or a system can penetrate and compete in a market. Notably the following was established, this SWOT analysis model was used to examine the future of traditional travel agency business in Zimbabwe, where the market is now highly invested with the use of online services in business and marketing. Arguably, Marioius (2012) suggest that today every consumer is now a computer user, as such consumers and businesses have been transformed. Ironically this assertion, suggests that with the use of technology the business environment, culture and market have changed hence there is need to investigate the future for traditional Travel agencies in the Zimbabwean tourism market. However the model under review is crystal clear on how technology or online services have impacted the business culture either positively or negatively. However the primary focus for this study is to examine the negative impact of online business and marketing services in tourism business such as that of traditional travel agencies. Indeed it has been noted that for technology to be successful in the market, it has to be accepted by the users or communities, thus this can be argued to be one of the major strengths that is keeping the traditional travel agencies in business.

2.4.1 Discussion and Analysis of T.A.M

According to Marious (2002) the transactions cost theory has been used to explain the impact of technology on market structures. For instance, the internet traffis are relatively cheap (0.25c/mb) while traditional travel agencies services charges are from $5. As such according to this model Marious (2002) noted that substantial costs associated by the internet can determine the buyer behavior as well as the market structure. In this regard, transactions cost between online services and traditional travel agencies have brought stiff competition that has seen the development of a new market structure i.e. the use of online services thereby affecting negatively the work of traditional travel agencies. Bakos (1997) citied in Marious (2002) argues that the rapid use of online transactions have caused perceived feelings of insecurity among businesses and employees. However some scholars argue that contrary to the transaction costs theory, consumers cannot depend on all five senses to make a purchase, instead they rely on limited product representations such as photographs and digital text description which may not be enough to convince the consumer hence the need of physical structures for marketing. Notably, the visuals used online should therefore give traditional travel agencies an added advantage in product marketing as they can as well incorporate the information online. However the question remains how many of these modern consumers still believe in the use of traditional business methods irregardless of new methods ills.

Bruke et al (1992) citied in Marious (2002), suggest that studies about TAM have shown that the representation of product online, the quality of the shopping experience matters for both attitude towards shopping online and intention to buy. However for online services to be successful Marious (2002) identified that well designed web based pages and power web features such as recommender systems and one-click checkouts, enticing product designs, exciting music and "hip" clientele are essential to convince consumers to buy online.

2.4.2   Social and Work environment

According to Marious (2002) TAM can be measured through social status and work environment as online consumers and offline consumers are different. Arguably Marious (2002) established that intention to buy or to use online services is influenced by the level of consumer's lack of leisure time, as in offline shopping where they have time to face the supplier. Moreso the use of these platforms creates a class of different consumers who have different needs. Indeed this research established that offline consumers in Zimbabwe are mainly characterized by age,

literacy and income. Notably people under -18 and those with +65, are computer illiterate and low income people, who basically form the class of offline consumers. Within this class it was established that they use travel agencies for their business and travel. Indeed in these 3 categories of offline shoppers very few if not none in Zimbabwe really travel either for business or leisure hence online services continue to be a threat to traditional travel agencies business.

2.4.3 Consumer Behavior

Marious (2002) identifies behavior as another factor that can be used to measure technology acceptance, further Marious (2002) suggests that "a key difference between online and offline consumer behavior is that online consumers are generally more powerful, demanding and utilitarian in shopping expeditions, thus customer loyalty online is low", while in the physical world consumer behavior is influenced by the availability of good relevant content in an enjoyable context. As such traditional travel agencies should therefore ensure that their services are readily available, understandable and accurate so as to remain competitive in the market. All these aspects are important for consumer behavior especially where intention to buy is an ultimate objective. According to Marious (2002) traditional travel agencies should also prioritize consumer behavior as a strategy to counter online services as it is one of its greatest weaknesses. McCord (1998) citied in Marious (2002) suggest that traditional advertising and promotion methods used by traditional businesses should be avoided so as to retain both new and old customers. Arguably this suggests that there is a shift of focus by consumers because of new marketing trends such the use of online services for business and marketing.

Another factor to consider when measuring Technology Acceptance is that consumers are concerned with risk inherent in buying online, risks such as credit card fraud, receiving fake or wrong products affects the complete success of online business and marketing. These factors can influence consumers not to use online services thereby providing a chance for traditional travel agencies to survive in this market. However, the scale for their (traditional Travel agencies) survival is unknown, hence the impetus of this study.

2.4.4 Customer Intention to Return

This study examined how Technology Acceptance influences consumers' intention to either buy or return which are essential fundamentals of any business. Arguably the results illustrates that customer intention is influenced by consumer behavior, culture and environment. For instance

according to Marious (2002), technology acceptance is affected by culture as customers view shopping as a chance for getting out, socializing and having fun, thus a simply functional web site can be very unappealing. Further to this Marious (2002) argues that if customers cannot participate in the activities that make shopping an enjoyable experience, they may stop using online services and return to the more enriching and enjoyable physical world Rich (1997), Quelch and Takeuchi (1981) citied in Marious (2002). Notably customers' intention to buy or return are argued to be factors that contribute to customer loyalty to services provided.

However for online services Marious (2002) suggests that when shopping online consumers perform certain tasks that can elicit both emotional and cognitive responses, these responses can determine consumers' intention to return for a second visit to a web store or site. Notably this research argues that online shoppers are indeed self-reliant and powerful in decision making than their offline counterparts, as these shoppers can perform their transactions independently as well as making a purchase online. As such with the growing number of these consumers, competition between online services and traditional travel agencies continues to grow thus increasing pressure to traditional travel agencies business in Zimbabwe. Collective studies and researches on Technology Acceptance Model concur that the following factors below have seen the use of online services or physical store methods by consumers:

  I.   shopping enjoyment
 II.   perceived control
III.   concentration/attention focus
IV.   unplanned purchase

2.4.4.1 Shopping Enjoyment

Travel begins when one enquires and subsequently makes a payment for a tour package. This phenomenon has a great feeling, enjoyment and excitement, as the customer anticipates his/her holiday expeditions. Indeed online services provide such great feelings, enjoyment and excitement to their consumers, but however Marious (2002) argues that shopping enjoyment online is affected by limited concentration for consumers. Indeed this can be as a result of too many options that are provided online that can confuse a customer to make a decisive choice. Whereas the physical store or business structure offers a physical interaction between the agent and their customers which is not sophiscated, time refrained and not confusing Marious (2002). In this regards, the traditional travel agencies remain useful for these and other customers who

perceive physical shopping enjoyment as part of their holiday design. According to the Technology Acceptance Model shopping enjoyment is positively related to customer intention to return.

2.4.4.2 Perceived Control

According to Marious (2002) perceived control has been in several theoretical frameworks and under different variations, however perceived control has be defined as the level of one's control over the environment and one's actions. In light of this study it has been established that the bulk of modern business consumers consider control and power to make their own decision, as such because of the end products (not customized or personalized) mainly supplied by traditional travel agencies, it can be argued that these services do not meet the standard of expectations of modern day consumers hence a shift of business for traditional travel agencies. Arguably according to Marious (2002) online business and marketing services have caused a great migration of customers from traditional business methods to new business methods that are more customers orientated. Indeed online services provide consumers with the chance to make independent decisions, which is in other words customer empowerment and involvement strategy that enhances perceived control. Arguably Marious (2002) identified that for customers on the web or online, the information environment is different than that of offline customers. Indeed the environment is characterized by less time available for information out-sourcing or decision making Engel et al (1990) citied in Marious (2002), constant human cognitive resources available for information processing Miller (1996) citied in Marious (2002) and an explosion of information and products available online has led to more consumers demanding control, less effort and higher efficiency during business. As such Marious (2002) established that online services have responded to the challenges of the new genre of consumers by providing site features such as search engines and recommendations tabs that enables consumers to easily find information they need, learn more about the information and quickly purchase it. Arguably these features resulted in online customers enjoying high levels of control and convenience Batty and Lee (1995) citied in Marious (2002). To this end various studies and that of Marious (2002) illustrates that perceived control is positively related to customer intention to return.

2.4.4.3 Concentration/Attention Focus

Marious (2002) suggests that for an individual (customer) to be in "flow" they must concentrate on their activities. Indeed both online and offline users have to consider attention focus in their decision making, though there are challenges associated by using each of the methods i.e. online services have limited time frame for concentration hence the need for the user to be more effective and self-reliant, while offline users are affected by work attitudes of personnel. Arguably these attitudes are often caused by such elements as job insecurity which reduces morale. However Marious (2002) identified the following as challenges that affect the effectiveness of concentration for online users;

   I.   noise pollution

  II.   disturbances from (children, colleagues and phone calls) as online transactions can be carried out at home, work and on phone

 III.   other online activities (Facebook, e-mail, ads and cookies)

While in the physical world consumers allocate most of their attention to their task as they interact with the sales people and making decisions to purchase. Arguably because of the aforesaid discussion, concentration can be a factor to consider for customer return, however according to Marious (2002) investigations and studies, perceived usefulness of online services is positively related to intention to return and perceived ease of use of online services is positively related to intention to return, thereby the use of online services or offline physical stores can be view as ones' choice.

2.4.4.4 Unplanned Purchase

According to Marious (2002) unplanned purchase is often associated with consumers with higher shopping enjoyment. Indeed unplanned purchase of offline users may be caused by strategically placed promotions and enticing displays throughout a store, while online consumers have high levels of control over what they see and do through the use of search engines, intelligent agents and recommendation systems Batty and Lee (1995) citied in Marious (2002). In this regards, online users are given a chance to make decisions or choices over the advertising and

promotional material they are exposed to, thereby reducing the warrant of unplanned purchase Draft (1993) citied in Marious (2002).

In light of this, Marious (2002) concluded that;

i.   consumers with higher shopping enjoyment are more likely to make unplanned purchase

ii. consumers with higher perceived control are less likely to make unplanned purchase

iii. consumers with higher concentration are likely to make unplanned purchase

Summarily the T.A.M ascertain that technology acceptance is highly affected by demographic features such as age and gender as well as web skills. For instance this study established that the use of online devices and access to online services is done mainly by economically active people as compared to non-economically active population. Indeed the factors that have been considered by this research that are against Technology Acceptance are;

i.   naivety – failure to accept change by some sections of the society

ii. culture and environment

iii. web skills

2.5 SWOT Analysis

Strength	**Weakness**
• Characteristics that gives your business advantage over others? • What is your value proposition, how does it differentiate you from your competitors? • What do others perceive as your strength	• Characteristics that place business at disadvantages relative to others? • What do your competitors do better than you? • What do other perceive as your weakness?
Opportunities • What are the elemets your business could exploit to its advantage? • What are trends, conditions that may positively impact you?	**Threats** • What are elements in the environment that can cause harm to your business? • What trends can negatively impact you?

Figure 1: Swot Analysis

The importance of this SWOT analysis model is that online services are relatively a new phenomenon in e-Tourism that has brought some tangible changes in the business and industrial environment of tourism. According to Sheldon (2004) in order to launch a new product or system in a market there is need to carry out a research analysis in which the impact of the product or system in the market can be established. Arguably this translates to establishing how the new product or system can influence positive development and change for the better. Notably this study examined and investigated the use of online business and marketing services in tourism against a traditional phenomenon of traditional travel agencies who in their business endeavors were ICT constrained. Suffice to say that, there were no such technologies in tourism business, marketing and communication. In this regard, the inception of online business and marketing services have brought significant changes in a business environment that once enjoyed a monopoly of services. The impact is positive to the tourism economy indeed because it has become fast growing in the last few years. According to Sheldon (2014) online business and marketing services refer to marketing of products through an internet network or platforms and virtual communities, in which there is a designed communication channel between the supplier and the consumer that claims that services provided are customized and ensure privacy. Moreso, Marison (2010) claims that online business and marketing services were created to enhance the relationship between suppliers and consumers. Arguably based on these assertions the future of traditional travel agencies is unknown because there are now clear parallel lines between the supplier and the agencies while there is a direct link between the supply and the demand. Notably the direct link between the supplier and consumer was/is the prime function of traditional travel agencies, before the use of online services by suppliers, indeed this compliment the research findings of this investigation which suggests that the use of online business and marketing services in tourism is fast becoming the main communication handle between the supplier and consumer, while replacing the traditional travel agencies.

Arguably it is therefore imperative to note that the SWOT analysis model is a very effective way of identifying how a new product or system can function in the market where there can be other competitors, with regards to this study it was established that the use of online business and marketing services in tourism business and marketing is more effective than the use of traditional travel agencies especially in modern world where ICT forms all spectrums of business.

2.5.1   Strengths of Online Business and Marketing

Through the use of social media marketing, online business and marketing services have an abundant and wide range of consumers that ensure the growth of a business. Social media has helped tourism institutions to become global and have established brands that are known worldwide. Social media marketing has a strong distribution channel, thus indeed it has not faced much challenge in penetrating into the market environment of tourism business and communication. Notably the use of online business and marketing services have been argued to be fast and reliable, thus they provided a pleasant change to customers and defiantly they have created a better distribution channel for tourism marketing, promotion and development. Online services products are often customized and that has enabled tourists or Tourism consumers to have vast knowledge about tourism information, products, destinations and reliable flights in the market. Online business and marketing services have also seen an introduction of offensive competition among suppliers while the suppliers increase quality and reducing prices.

2.5.2   Weaknesses

Online services could face challenges from a primitive society that is naïve to adopt to change. It can be affected by attitude that arises from bad connectivity that may cause boredom, in which one would prefer the use of traditional travel agencies. The cyber space has been on target by hijackers that may rob the attention of consumers in disguise of an official tourism company/airline company web site.

2.5.3   Opportunities

Online business and marketing services are systems that have market needs i.e. they have low prices and it provides personified products. Online services have a potential to even see the tourism economy continuing to be a leading industry in any country. In this regards, traditional travel agencies might be slow to respond to the impact that has been brought by online business and marketing services and it is important to note that online business and marketing services have already grabbed this opportunity of being a leading tourism communication and marketing medium. Arguably a greater opportunity is awaiting tourism industries such as travel and tour if they holistically enhance the use and adoption of e-Tourism.

2.5.4 Threats

The biggest threat for online services, is the ever changing technological world in which African countries such as Zimbabwe are still to adopt to relatively old ICT technologies whereas there are already new systems that complement the use of online business and marketing. For instance the use of e-commerce in Zimbabwe is relatively low to an extent that the use of social media is done to access information about products and the intended transaction is done through travel agencies. Arguably this has been the hope of traditional travel agencies as they primarily remain in business. Some aspects that threaten the complete success and use of online business and marketing are criminal cyber space cases that continue to haunt consumers as well as ICT literacy rate in Zimbabwe which is relatively low. The use of online platforms as a communication handle is still viewed as a platform for the rich and educated.

Summarily the SWOT analysis was done to investigate the impact of online business and marketing in tourism communication and other businesses. The analysis however was largely done to ascertain how the new system (online business and marketing in travel business) can be a leading brand in a market invested with other competitive systems, in a short possible time.

2.6 Gap analysis

Gap analysis a tool used to examine how a business/services perform in a market i.e. today, tomorrow and in the foreseeable future. This study established that online business and marketing services handles have a wider range of consumers who are also diversified than the consumers that use the traditional travel agencies. Notably consumers who use online services in transacting any business transactions are arguably self-reliant than those who still seek the work of intermediaries. It has been noted that the majority of online business and marketing consumers are the educated and business class, thus there is no brand loyalty of online services in Zimbabwe. Moreso as online marketing is a new phenomenon particularly in the tourism industry for Zimbabwe, the market share for online marketing and that of traditional travel

agencies cannot be determined as yet. Arguably during the course of this research it was established that the majority target market is using online business and marketing platforms when making various tourism transactions i.e. acquiring information, purchasing products and services, bookings and reservations inquires and subsequently making payments. Further it was established Zimbabwe has a high literacy rate thus the growth of this new distribution channel in tourism is possible as the consumers are ICT erudite. Moreso the market segment targeted by this research are two kinds of tourists' i.e. local tourists travelling within and out of Zimbabwe and international tourists. Indeed it was established that local tourists travelling out of Zimbabwe and internationals coming to Zimbabwe largely use online platforms and e-commerce platforms to make their various tourism transactions, while the locals travelling in Zimbabwe hardly use either online platforms or traditional travel agencies. In this regards, this narrative continues to describe and define the nature of how online business and marketing services have caused job insecurity features among traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe. This have a negative impact to the traditional travel agencies business because the travel agency industry once enjoyed a monopoly of services before the turn of millennium where there was little or no use of ICT in Zimbabwe tourism.

CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW OF TRAVEL BUSINESS IN ZIMBABWE

3.0   History and Association

Travel agency business in Zimbabwe started around 1957 that is over 60 years ago. The growth and development of this business over these years was significant to an extent that it became the leading business activity in tourism industry. In 1990 the Association of Zimbabwe Travel Agents (AZTA) was formed, with an intent to become 1 voice to suppliers and authorities. This also enabled standardization of business and services done by these agents, this association seek to ensure that all travel agents are represented and respected irregardless of company size. The association has a membership of 55 throughout Zimbabwe and it is registered with the following regional, international and local boards:

i	IATA	-	International Air Transport Authority
ii	UFTAA	-	United Federation of Travel Agents in Africa
iii	ZCT	-	Zimbabwe Council for Tourism
iv	ZTA	-	Zimbabwe Tourism Authority

Indeed the main function of AZTA is to ensure that the integrity of travel agents is not compromised and that high standard of services is delivered with consistency and commitment to the valued travelers and customers.

3.1   Function of Travel Agents

According to Sanyal (2002) travel agency is a retail business that sells travel products and services to customers, on behalf of suppliers, such as airlines, car rentals, cruise lines, hotels, railways, sight-seeing tours and package holidays that combine several products. However some agents have separate departments that make travel arrangements for business travelers and some specialize in commercial and business travelers only.

It is important to note that unlike other retail businesses, travel agents do not keep a stock at hand but they rely on discounted products from suppliers which they sell and get commission. The following are the general functions or services provided by travel agents in Zimbabwe:

i   Travel information

ii   Preparation of itineraries

iii Liaison with service providers

iv   Ticketing

v   Provision of foreign currency

vi   Insurance

vii Bookings/hiring

viii Reservations

3.2   Number of travel agents and different suppliers per city

City	Tourism destinations	Airport	Hotels / Lodges	Travel agents
Harare	18	1	58	20
Bulawayo	5	1	13	8
Gweru	3	-	14	3
Mutare	8	-	10	2
Masvingo	10	1	12	10
Vic Falls	18	1	33	12

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.0   Introduction

A lot of emphasis in this chapter is centered on how the data for this research was collected and subsequently presented in the chapter to follow. The chapter however takes into account the research design that was used, the target population, the sampling methods and the sample size. It will also focus on research instruments used for data collection and the validity and reliability of the data collected. Thereafter the chapter will explain the manner in which the data was processed, organized and presented in order to reveal the patterns upon which interpretations were made and conclusions drawn. Indeed this was established on a platform based on various data analysis and presentation tools.

4.1   Research Design

According Copper and Schindler (1998) the research design is a blueprint for the fulfillment of objectives and answering of questions and is the plan for the selection of the source and types of the information used in answering the questions. However according to Churchill (1998) research design is also a method on which an investigation bases and how a study was carried out. Indeed this research used Zimbabwe Tourism Authority annuals and related documentation for analyzing the trends and challenges of travel agency business in Zimbabwe from its inception. Notably during the course of this project the research design that was used ensured that the research will address all relevant problems in the study. Therefore this research was frantically guided by the exploratory and descriptive research designs.

4.1.1   Exploratory research design

According to Kumar et al (2004) exploratory research is when one seeks an insight on the general nature of a problem, the decision alternatives that are possible and the relevant variables that have to be put into consideration. In this regards, the major aim for this exploratory research

design is all about formulating a problem, clarifying concepts, gathering explanations, gaining insights, eliminating impractical ideals and formulating hypotheses where possible.

4.1.2   Descriptive research design

According to Burns and Grove (2003) descriptive research is designed to provide a picture of a situation as it naturally happens. Thus it may be used to justify current practices and make judgments and also develop theories Kumar et al (2004). For this study, descriptive research was used to obtain a picture and opinions of traditional travel agencies regarding the challenges affecting their business, with a view of improving the standards and growth of the business in a foreseeable future. Therefore descriptive research gave assistance to the researcher in gathering qualitative and quantitative data for the study.

4.2   Target population

According to Dibbes et al (2001) a target population comprises of all elements that include objects, individuals and events that meet the sample criteria for measuring in a study. The traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe constituted the population of this study. Arguably the emphasis of this study is profoundly focused on the challenges faced by traditional travel agency business that have caused job insecurity features among traditional travel agencies. Therefore the population sample in this study is the travel agencies employers and employees. The reasoning being that these group of people or individuals are directly linked with the business in somewhat way and they have seen the use of online business and marketing by tourism suppliers as a potential threat for their future and survival in the Travel and Tour business. According to Melville and Goddard (1996) population as any group is a subject to a research interest, notably the data that was used in this research was obtained from interviews and questionnaires that the researcher carried out.

4.3   Data source

There are two types of data sources that include primary and secondary data. In this research the primary and secondary sources of data were used in gathering data for carrying out this study. A combination of the two was mostly used so as to get a wide range of relevant and accurate information that can solve the research problem that is at hand. Therefore in obtaining the much needed data the researcher was given permission to carry out the research by the responsible

authority at Zimbabwe Tourism Authority and Travel agencies private companies. Thereof the researcher signed and dates a confirmation for privacy, confidentiality, and explains anonymity.

4.3.1 Secondary data

The researcher used secondary data from tourism manuals, journals, international and regional tourism conferences or seminars, online resources, text books and the ZTA statutory acts. According to William (2004) secondary data is the data that would have been recorded and interpreted. Indeed it can also be defined as the data that would have been previously collected for other projects and not for the project at hand, and the data is usually historical and would have already been assembled Kotler (1997). Arguably secondary data can be obtained from external and internal sources. The internal sources may refer to the information from the ZTA past records while external sources may include information gathered from libraries, scholarly or industrial journals and online resources among other possible sources. Therefore in order to come up with valid and reliable information this research examined the travel agency business past records and practices against the current marketing trends.

This research was carried out also using the desktop study; this was done in order to make a critical analysis of online business and marketing systems for tourism. Notably the researcher also carried out a review of business and marketing journals from a tourism perspective. Last but not least the researcher also carried out a process of selecting information that was relevant to the research problem.

4.3.2. Primary data

Primary data is the raw data that will be collected for the specific problem at hand. Instead of relying heavily on the secondary data available; this research also incorporated primary data sources. The data used in the research was gathered through interviews with the experts in travel business, and travel agencies that included the employers and employees as the perceived threats affect them. The researcher also distributed questionnaires, the data gathered from these questionnaires is deemed essential and important in drawing up summative and limited illusive recommendations on the analysis of the impact of online business and marketing in traditional travel agencies business.

4.4   Research Instruments

Research instruments are tools that are used in the gathering information for a research William (2004). The tools used in this research were interviews and questionnaires.

4.4.1   Questionnaires

According to Leedey (1985) a questionnaire is a printed self-report that is designed to elicit the information that can be obtained from written responses of the selected subjects. The researcher designed the questionnaire with the intention to get accurate information affecting the business of traditional travel agencies.

The type of information that is obtained from a questionnaire is similar to that of information that is obtained from an interview. However questionnaires are discouraged because there are often limited on information. Indeed the questionnaires in this research were designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data as the information gathered can be descriptive and measurable. Notably these questionnaires consisted of mostly closed-ended questions, these were used for the reason that they are easy to administer and analyze. To this end, it was established that questionnaires can give insights to respondents to what is being investigated, thus subsequently providing valuable contributions to the research authentication.

Open-ended questions were also included in the questionnaire and these provided more options and a diverse of details. Arguably open-ended questions provided respondents with a platform to respond to certain questions in their own words, thus ensuring the judgments; conclusions and recommendations drawn are not subjective but rather objective as a representation of a wide range of various contributions.

However the researcher was disgruntled with the fact that some questionnaires were spoiled, omitted completely and some were never returned. Indeed because of the sample size chosen for this research this was not an all-inclusive challenge.

4.4.2   Interviews

According to Francis (1992) an interview is a method of data collection in which the selected participants are asked questions for the reason of finding out what the participants do, think or feel or the opinions of the respondents on the research problem. Interviews are designed to gather qualitative data; thus they are carried out to the targeted subjects. The researcher conducted

personal interviews with travel agencies and academic specialists in Zimbabwe so as to be able to expand more information to that obtained from questionnaires. This also helped the researcher in gathering a wide collection of information, analyzing, interpreting and establishing some facts that were not included in the questionnaire. The researcher used interviews as a guide to keep focused; however the challenge that emanated from this method of data collection was that it was difficult to make clear analysis as divergent views emerged from respondents interviewed.

4.5   Data collection procedure and administration

The data collection procedure shows how both primary and secondary data was collected and combined. This study followed a series of guidelines in administering the questionnaire and in carrying out interviews.

4.5.1   Questionnaire

One type of a questionnaire was used in the collection of the data and the questionnaire was meant for the travel agency employees. All questionnaires were hand delivered to respondents and the respondents were entitled to fill the questionnaire at their own spare time. Thereof the researcher collected the questionnaires after 5 weeks, and subsequently self-administered the questionnaire into informatory data using the SSPS version 23 data analyzing tool.

4.5.2   Interviews

Interviews were carried so as to collect data that was specific to the study under review. The researcher used face-face interviews during the research. The interviews were formal and were therefore carried out at different travel agencies offices and private places with the academic specialists. Notably most interview sessions took not later than 30-45minutes.

4.5.3   Desktop survey

This was done to establish the current practices of business and marketing done by the traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe, this included the promotion and development of the business, policy implementation as well as ascertaining the business and marketing environment conditions. To this end, the importance of such aspects formulated the basis of this study. Therefore the advantage of this technique is that the researcher had hands on experience with the challenges affecting these travel agencies

4.6   Data analysis and presentation tools

The researcher analyzed the questionnaires to ensure that they appeared to be completed correctly. The findings from the research were uploaded to the SSPS which is argued to be suitable for further processing and analyzing of data. The aim was therefore to improve on the reliability and validity of data.

4.7   Chapter summary

The chapter identified the befitting research methodology, research design and research instruments that were used in the research as a whole. The chapter also discussed the target population of the study, the sampling methods used, the sample size that was rationale with the needs of the study and this chapter also examined the strength and weakness of each of the ways of gathering data. The reliability and validity of the data collected envisaged the methodology as a credible tool for the data gathering which is accurate.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.0   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present, analyze and interpret the findings of the research. The research was conducted through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires were distributed among different operating traditional travel agencies firms and interviews were done with different experts who included both academic and business personnel. As such the following information represents the findings of this research.

5.1   Presentation of Data and Analysis

The data to be presented seeks to answer the following research questions from the introductory chapter i.e. chapter 1 Define and describe the effectiveness of online services on service delivery, Discuss how online services have influenced change in a business environment, What is the future of Tourism given the sole use of online services, Define and describe the nature of job insecurity and How does job insecurity affect one's discharge of duties

5.2   Response rate

The response rate of this research was overwhelming, notably the researcher conducted interviews with academic experts and specialists in tourism. The interviewed included entrepreneurs who are in the traditional travel agency business. Whereas questionnaires were administered to employees in the traditional travel agencies industry in Zimbabwe. The response rate breakdown is as shown overleaf

Table 1:Response rate

Respondents	Questionnaires/Interviews administered	Questionnaires returned	Response rate (%)
Employees	35Q	30	86
Academic experts	5	5	100

Entrepreneurs	15	14	93
Total	55	49	89
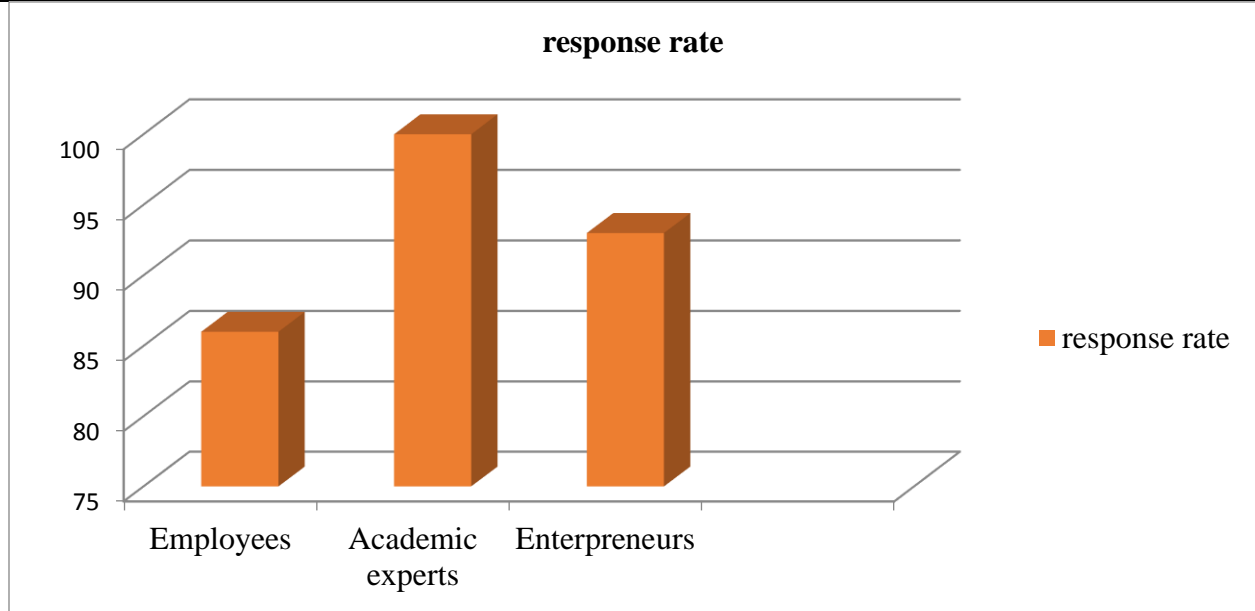
Figure 2: Response rate

The information above represents the total number of questionnaires administered (35), and interviews (20) carried out. 30 questionnaires were answered and returned, this had 86% response rate. 5 interviews were done with academic experts and the response was 100%. 14 interviews were done with entrepreneurs and the response rate was 93%.

5.3 Reliability analysis of research instrument

Table 2: Case processing summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	86
	Excluded[a]	5	14
	Total	35	100

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

Table 3: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's alpha	N of items
.785	26

Cronbach's Alpha measures the internal reliability of questionnaire items. According to Streiner (2003) one of the central doctrines of classical test theory is that scales must show high degree of internal consistency above 0.7 as shown by Cronbach's alpha. The table above shows Cronbach coefficient of 0.785 which is above the general agreed limit. The coefficient above 0.7 shows that the instrument is reliable for the study. 26 items that sought to capture respondents' general information, measure the use of online business and job insecurity among travel agencies were in the questionnaire.

5.4   Gender, Age and Academic qualifications

According to Greenhalgh (1985) such factors as gender, age and academic qualifications can be used to measure the causes of job insecurity among employees. Arguably the responses received show that there are more females than their male counterparts as employees in travel agency business in Zimbabwe. Data obtained from interviews suggests that women are more vulnerable to features and elements of job insecurity. In this regard, it was established that most employees in this business of traditional travel agencies, are women who are also mostly above 33 years of age. What this implies is that most of these women are probably married thus they may be content with their jobs such that they could have not, have a chance to think of furthering their studies. Arguably a secondary certificate or diploma of the 1980s or 90s may not have the best skills for an employee of the modern tourism business that is technologically advanced. Notably for those traditional travel agencies that wish to upgrade their business services this can affect this class of employees with lower academic skills or qualifications. Gender, age and academic qualifications may cause job insecurity because of the need of growth, change and development, these aspects are important as there are formidable in current business patterns which are being implemented in tourism and other sectors of the economy. This study also examined the complex relationships between gender and job insecurity. Arguably it will be naïve to argue that women

are solely affected by job insecurity in traditional travel agencies business, but however in this study it was established that women are affected by job insecurity because of their age, marital status and academic qualifications which are relatively low. These variables are important in examining job insecurity features and elements because job insecurity is a salient aspect of contemporary working life. As such because of the need of development and growth among other traditional travel agencies job insecurity is a realistic threat for these employees classified in this category.

Table 4:Age Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	30	24.00	52.00	35.5000	6.45275
Valid N (listwise)	30				

A total of 30 respondents participated in this research, the youngest employee is 24years and the oldest is 52 years. Notably all respondents are economically active hence the existence of job threatening features affects these people socially and mentally.

Table 5: gender cumulative percent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	9	25.7	30.0	30.0
	female	21	60.0	70.0	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		

The respondents of this research were both male and female adults. There are relatively more women (70%) than their male (30%) counterparts, as employees in travel business Zimbabwe.

Table 6:work experience cumulative percent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 to 5 years	5	14.3	16.7	16.7
	6 to 10 years	5	14.3	16.7	33.3
	11 to 15 years	7	20.0	23.3	56.7
	16 to 20 years	9	25.7	30.0	86.7
	21 and above	4	11.4	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		

This data shows the working experience of different employees. Generally this information shows that most employees have between 11 and 20 years working experience in travel business. As such the new business and marketing strategies used today in tourism maybe different to those which were used 20 years ago. It is this shift that may cause job insecurity features among the employees.

Table 7: academic qualifications percent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	secondary certificate	7	20.0	23.3	23.3
	diploma	18	51.4	60.0	83.3
	degree	4	11.4	13.3	96.7
	masters	1	2.9	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		

The above information shows the academic qualifications of different employees in different companies in travel agencies business. 23.3% have a secondary certificate, 60% have a diploma

in Travel and Tour, 13.3% have a degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management and 3.3 % have Master degree in Travel and Tour. Indeed diploma holders are the majority respondents as such because of competition in the market most companies now hire employees with higher qualificatins and experience which therefore becomes a threat to this populace.

5.4.1   The effectiveness of the following variables on service delivery:

- Online business
- Online marketing
- Cash shortages
- Poor management

This research established that these variables are significant for any business' services delivery. However a wide range of responses obtained from both questionnaires and interviews illustrated that the rate of significance of each variable is institutionally based. As such the general results of this reflects that the aforesaid variables are important in modern business and marketing operations. However a common balance was noted, for a modern tourism business to be successful it has to be all encompassing thus it has to incorporate all business strategies both new and old. Arguably the challenges that are affecting the traditional travel agencies business maybe a result of lack of innovation and technological development in the tourism environment in Zimbabwe. Moreso because of the direct link between the suppliers and their consumers the social identity of traditional travel agencies has been affected and continues to be threatened. Indeed this new relationship between the supply and the demand side continues to worry both the employees and the business in traditional travel agency business because their future cannot be determined. Of note is the perceived of jobless and low business. As such these variables (online business and marketing) are detrimental because they imply an anticipated situation with a negative effect. Arguably if job insecurity affects the well-being of the business and that of employees, the performance and quality of work is negatively affected. 86 % percent of the respondents strongly agreed that the use of online business and marketing has far fetching effects on their business and work as they may be forced to shut down. Evidence to this response is the high rate of traditional travel agencies that are closing and that have closed over the last few years.

Another factor established is that job insecurity has negative economic effects on both employees and the business because it involves making huge financial planning which is often extremely difficult if resources are scarce. 90 % agreed that recapitalization is difficult given the economic crisis in Zimbabwe. Indeed such attributes caused by job insecurity have a gigantic impact on how the employees and the business feel too. The following table shows the frequencies of how different operators and employees responded to the need of effective service delivery that ensure customer retention.

Table 8:Responses of Service delivery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no effect	3	8.6	10.0	10.0
	Neutral	4	11.4	13.3	23.3
	Effective	11	31.4	36.7	60.0
	most effective	12	34.3	40.0	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		

The above information relates to the effects of different variables questioned on service delivery. 10% argue that online business has no effect on their business, 13.3 % were neutral they could neither confirm nor deny that online business services have an impact either positive or negative on their business. 36% agreed that online business is effective on service delivery, while 40 % suggested that online business is the most effective variable for service delivery in tourism today.

Table 9: Responses of the effectiveness of online marketing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no effect	1	2.9	3.3	3.3
	less effective	4	11.4	13.3	16.7
	Neutral	3	8.6	10.0	26.7
	Effective	12	34.3	40.0	66.7
	most effective	10	28.6	33.3	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		

The above data relates to the effectiveness of online marketing on service delivery. 3.3% argue that it has no effect to their business, 13.3% suggest that it is less effective, 10% could not neither confirm nor deny the effectives of online business. 40% suggest that online marketing is effective on service delivery, while 33.3% suggest that it is the most effective variable in tourism business today

Table 10: Responses on cash shortages

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no effect	2	5.7	6.7	6.7
	less effective	5	14.3	16.7	23.3
	Neutral	16	45.7	53.3	76.7
	Effective	2	5.7	6.7	83.3
	most effective	5	14.3	16.7	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		

Cash shortages in circulation have affected business transactions in tourism thus affecting the services to be delivered to consumers. Indeed these were the responses obtained 6.7% say it has no effect, 16.7% say it is less effective, 53.3% could neither confirm nor deny, 6.7% said it is effective and 16.7% said it is most effective variable affecting tourism business today.

Table 11: Effects of poor management on service delivery

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	no effect	17	48.6	56.7	56.7
	less effective	5	14.3	16.7	73.3
	neutral	4	11.4	13.3	86.7
	effective	3	8.6	10.0	96.7
	most effective	1	2.9	3.3	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		

This research also considered poor management as a factor to consider for effective service delivery. The following are the responses received, 56.7% said it has no effect, 16.7% said it is less effective, 13.3% could neither confirm nor deny the effectiveness of poor management, 10% said it is effective while3.3% said is the most effective variable affecting tourism business today.

5.5   Market share responses

This relates to the competition between online business and marketing done by tourism suppliers and the services and work done by traditional travel agencies. Arguably this new business dimension by tourism suppliers has created a new business strategy in travel agency business. The responses received illustrates that online business and marketing has more market share than that of traditional travel agencies. Indeed (85.7%) strongly agreed that online business and marketing in travel agency business affects the work and sales for the traditional travel agencies. The results received also illustrates that traditional travel agencies have lost a significant share of customers and subsequently profits thus there are challenges that are threatening the future of their business. 83%strongly agreed that the travel agency business for traditional travel agencies has been under pressure from the changing technological and competitive environments in the tourism market. Other respondents argued that the complex nature of modern consumers who are often sophisticated to deal with is making their business to be more difficult, because the consumers have different needs and requests which may not be part of their services. Notably there is a shift of business culture which has evolved thereby affecting traditional travel agencies business practices. Indeed these characteristics in the new business environment have seen the use of online applications and systems thereby creating the relationship between the supplier and the consumer, while pushing out the roles and responsibilities of intermediators (traditional travel agencies). 89 percent of the responses on market share agreed that the roles performed by traditional travel agencies are firmly grounded in a new market space and these roles are being challenged. Ironically these roles are challenged because of the use of the internet for business transactions which is a new phenomenon in tourism business environment. Indeed the irony of this is that the travel industry has now a competitive market which has seen for once traditional travel agencies being challenged in terms of their market share as they previously enjoyed a monopolized business.

The following table illustrates the responses on market share;

Table 12: Market share responses

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	2	5.7	6.7	6.7
	not sure	3	8.6	10.0	16.7
	Agree	8	22.9	26.7	43.3
	strongly agree	17	48.6	56.7	100.0
	Total	30	85.7	100.0	
Missing	System	5	14.3		
Total		35	100.0		
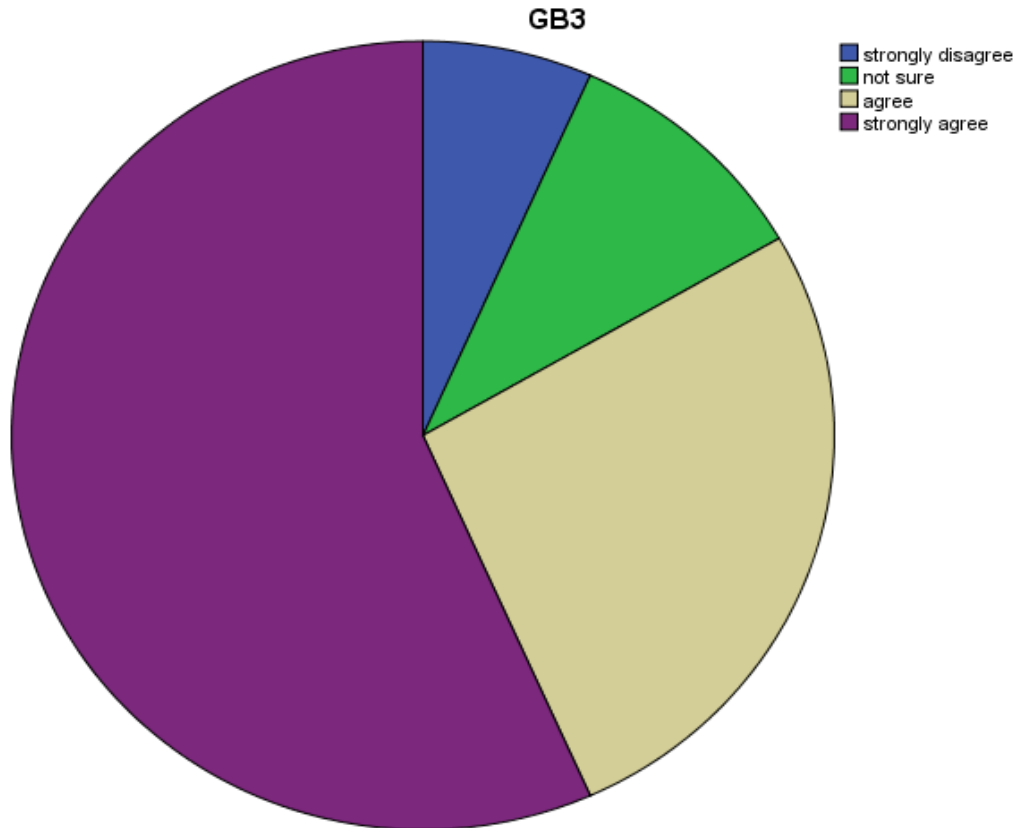
Figure 3:Market share

The following are responses obtained from the administered question on market share and competition between traditional travel and tourism suppliers. Notably 6.7% strongly disagree that the link between the suppliers and consumers affects their business, 10% could neither confirm nor deny, 26% agreed that online business and marketing has brought competition for consumers in the market. A resounding 56.7 strongly agreed that the use of the internet has brought a new dimension in tourism business and market space.

5.6 The future of Tourism and Traditional Travel Agency business

This question was asked in a bid to ascertain whether these employees have indeed the feeling of insecurity because of the direct contact that now exists between the supplier and the consumers. It was also questioned with a view to establish whether the traditional travel agencies are aware of the modern trends in tourism business. The responses received illustrates that with the use of new business strategies the growth of tourism especially in the travel and tour sector is

substantial and continues to grow significantly, thereby affecting the business of traditional travel agencies. Some interviewed respondents suggested that tourism may become a leading economy business or in some countries it continues to lead over other economies. In this regard, most responses obtained, agreed that the use of online technologies and applications in tourism have contributed that to a better tourism environment and business. 94% of the respondents strongly agreed that traditional travel agencies have to consolidate their business because the internet has created new conditions for business practices. This has resulted from the fact that there has been a significant usage of the internet for travel purposes by the public. Indeed the future of tourism has been defined and characterized as electronic tourism (e-tourism) and it is agreed that the future is substantial and it has a capacity to grow as the use of the internet is increasingly getting higher. Tourism products are expected to be customized and personalized this has been a result of the relationship between the suppliers and the consumers. As such the industry is expected to grow in terms of consumer base for travel industry. 85% agreed that the proliferation of online business, marketing and e-commerce will gradually intensify competition further, as such the growth of the industry.

However a relative small percentage (12%) argued that this is difficult to establish in less developed countries such as Zimbabwe because the use of internet for business is limited or relatively low, thus there maybe need to have both systems in place.

5.6.1 Consequences of job insecurity on service delivery

This question was asked with the view to establish the effects of job insecurity on service delivery. Arguably these consequences can be common or institutional, as such the responses obtained suggest that job insecurity affects the performance of both the business and the employees. Various studies have measured employee performance using perceptual data, and 70% of the operating traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe participated in this research. Indeed 94% of the research findings show that job insecurity has a significant negative impact on employee satisfaction, motivation and it has an indirect effect on perceived organizational performance. 87% agreed that because of the uncertainty of the future, some business in travel industry chose to close down their operation while others have opted for other business activities

such as bus hiring and reservations. However these substitutes have relatively lower business than the main travel and tour business activities. Notably the general responses received from both the questionnaires and interviews reveals that job insecurity is among organizational problems, that the business has to endure and it therefore requires intense pressure to remain profitable. However this study established the following factors as the main drivers of perceived job insecurity among traditional travel agencies. This question was asked with the view to ascertain whether the assumptions of this research concur with that of the employees in traditional travel agencies business. Indeed a significant population of the respondents agreed that there are elements and features of job insecurity. As such their performance and service quality has been affected. Some suggested that their morale is low as their future is hanging in the balance.

5.7   Chapter Summary

This chapter focused mainly on the responses that were obtained from the questionnaires and interviews. Most of the information in this chapter was obtained from interviews that were done with the researcher and academic experts as well as travel agencies entrepreneurs. In this regards, it was revealed that most travel agency businesses in Zimbabwe have no strategic plan or management which help them to forecast and plan for their future. To follow is chapter that will try and discuss, summarize, conclude and recommend what is needed to revive the business for traditional travel agencies that was once prosperous.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

6.0   Introduction

This chapter will sum up all that has been discussed, investigated and established during the course of the research. Notably this information is primarily from the background of the study, review of related literature, the methodology used and the presentation, analysis and discussion of data. Indeed the information to be presented in this chapter maybe based on the research results assumptions and that of the data obtained from various sources, suffice to say that it may be a guiding handout for other businesses in travel and tour industry.

6.1   Discussion

This is the chapter whereby the research shall discuss all the issues that revolve around the development of traditional travel business. The researcher assume that this will help the management of any other travel and tour related business across the tourism divide.

6.2   Management Policy

According to the data obtained from various sources i.e. secondary and primary data, revealed that the Zimbabwe Tourism Agency Authority which is the custodian of all travel agencies in Zimbabwe has no clearly defined or up to date management policy which governs the business of traditional travel agencies. That alone is a disaster in business as the policy provides the business with guidelines that stipulate how the business should or is to operate. According to operating entrepreneurs interviewed, it was established that there was no a standard management plan that stipulates the working culture and environment for travel business. Generally it was agreed that there is no such a policy in Zimbabwe, arguably with such a scenario it is difficult for the traditional travel agencies to operate as a united force but as private institutions. In somewhat way this maybe among the reasons why they have been a high rate of shutdowns of other agencies over the last few years. Indeed this research suggests that a management policy is a detailed written statement that explains why travel agencies are in business and how they operate and the policy should articulate the business with professional standards regarding travel and tour business. With such a policy at hand, it could be much easier for traditional travel agencies

to realize that their business practices or systems are under threat, and they are no longer conversant with current business methods and strategies i.e. online business and marketing in tourism. Arguably every business, association and government departments should have a clearly defined and expressed policy. The policy should show how travel and tour business reflects the mission of travel agencies. It should outline main areas and emphasizes on business initiatives and developments. In this regards, the policy therefore should be designed to protect both the business and its human resources from elements that threaten their operations and future. Needless to say it should be holistic and all-encompassing, with a prime aim of ensuring business continuity.

6.3.   Business Planning

Business planning is a very important aspect that the traditional travel agencies possible did not consider very much. Planning is important in any business institution because planning helps in forecasting and evaluating various business activities. Arguably forecasting and evaluating are 2 important methods used to ascertain the business performance as well as that of its employees, as such with the implementation of forecasting and evaluation it easy to identify what challenges are associated with the business or its employees. Moreso clearly defined plans through periodical evaluations, help to identify how the business is operating, and will operate as well as establishing possible challenges. Some scholars argue that planning is a strategic management tool that helps to plan on what business is to do, how it will react to change so that its operations remain competitive in the market especially in this dynamic business world. As such with a business plan, these traditional travel agencies will be able to focus on their mandate and vision hence eliminating the perceived threats of insecurity for both the business and employees.

6.4   Business Association and Twinning

This refers to forming alliances with other institutions in the same business, be it local or at international level. Indeed we have such organizations such as the International Travel Agency Association which provides various assistance (financial, management, academic etc.) to its members. Notably the Zimbabwe traditional travel agencies should seriously consider to work with other institutions as well as subscribing with international organizations. This is very important because these institutions have clearly defined policies and strategies that govern the business and work for travel agencies. These organizations often hold conferences and seminars

that discuss and analyze their working environment, thus indeed travel agencies are kept informed with data about the ever-changing business space. Notably business association and twinning provides professional and international standards for travel agencies, which is very important especially when faced with such challenges under review. Indeed the management policy should therefore clarify all functions of association related to management and business development, however the mission and vision of their business should not be compromised. Business association and twinning is important because they include a reiteration of the purpose of travel business, they have a standard definition of the scope of business i.e. they are solely offline travel agencies or online travel agencies. Moreso business association and twinning provides shared plans, goals, approved business strategies, and mandates of responsibilities that include market research. However business association and twinning can remain a mere relationship between businesses if it is not implemented holistically, arguably the lack of planning, business association and clearly defined management policy in somewhat way may be among the leading contributors for the deliplated situation that the traditional travel agencies are facing today and possible tomorrow and thereafter.

6.5   Recruitment and Staffing

Recruitment and staff complement is a significant management strategy in business development and growth. Generally it is agreed that higher academic excellence correlate with better skills that contribute to self-confidence and performance. However with the information obtained from the analyzed data, the current crop of employees, employed in the traditional travel agencies business in Zimbabwe exposes lack of quality in terms of academics and professionalism. As such thus it can be argued that "yes" the use of online business and marketing by suppliers is indeed a challenge for the traditional travel agencies business and its employees because of what the new business methods are providing to the consumers. Notably some scholars argue that poor recruitment and staffing exposes the business and its employees to external challenges that affect the business operations while affecting the well-being of the employees. With such a scenario job insecurity features may affect the day-day business operations of these traditional travel agencies. To this end, there is urgent need to carry out on-job training programmers that are specifically designed to develop these low skilled employees and low performing business, such that they are well informed about new business systems and methods that are evolving in tourism business. Indeed it has been argued that on-job training increases performance, morale,

motivation and loyalty of employees, therefore with the availability of these elements perceived feelings of job insecurity are next to none, suffice to say that the business will develop in all spheres. Therefore recruitment and staffing should be surely be considered in planning and management strategies, and this should be engulfed with a human resource policy. This policy should be ethical, flexible and inclusive as the business employees are the stewards of the business who ensure its survival and development. Some scholars also suggested that the human resources policy should be either a separate policy or enshrined in the overall management policy, this is important for performance and quality monitoring and evaluation processes. Arguably the concept of recruitment and staffing is not clear in many travel agency organizations as investigated by this study. For those few travel agencies that have this human resource policy, the policy is not fully implemented and the policy is crystal silent on staff development or on-job training programmers. This addresses the aspects of insecurity and its consequences as questioned by the researcher in the questionnaires distributed and interviews carried out. Indeed the development of traditional travel agencies cannot be ascertained as there is no clear out objectives for the business and employees development.

6.6   Decline of Traditional Travel Agencies

The future of traditional travel agencies based on this study is not clear and it is not only an assumption of this study, but that of many other intellectuals, and the respondents of this exploration. As discussed in the literature review that "the perception that there is job uncertainty, work performance and quality is affected thereby losing business and customer", makes it difficult to determine the future of business and employment for traditional travel agencies. This research also explained the possible reasons that may have caused the decline of traditional travel agencies business, and indeed among other results it was established that the challenges caused by online business and marketing by suppliers are unabated and are continuing to affect the business of traditional travel agencies which was once a viable trade. As such it may be naïve to suggest that the business for traditional travel agencies will remain as competitive as before in this new and sophiscated tourism market. Arguably these traditional travel agencies were caught unaware with technological changes and developments in tourism business and marketing, thus the pressure that has been or being exerted by the use of online business and marketing through the internet in tourism is/has pushed the traditional travel agencies seemingly out of business unexpectedly. Therefore if anything is to go-by, these travel agencies should

seriously consider reinventing themselves through adoption of new business methods and approaches that include the use of technological business systems.

However it was established that they are minimum chances for the survival of these agencies due to technology acceptance by the public. Indeed Zimbabwe is among 3rd world countries that experience lack of full implementation of ICTs in business, as such this maybe argued also as factors that contributed to the decline of traditional travel agencies as the consumers are using the internet ranging from mobile devices to desktops and other internet handles. There are also those people (consumers) who generally believe doing business using traditional systems, as this class of consumers also form a relative low business for these agencies as compared to that of agencies that have online access and business networks. It was also revealed that the travel agencies under study have indeed shifted their focus of main business to other activities that accommodate them. Such activities include cross-border bus passenger-booking mainly to neighboring countries (South Africa, Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana), and this business is mainly done with informal traders. Arguably even the activity thrives it cannot be compared with what could have been their main activity if they had to be online. Generally it was established that the failure to accept change by both the agencies and some consumers is among other the reasons why there is still traditional travel agencies business in Zimbabwe. Other factors that are related to the above are customer loyalty, enjoyment of shopping as a part of trip plan, culture and environment, nativity, computer and web skills and age.

6.7   The Future of Travel Agency Business

According to Dimtrios and Maria (2010) in the last few decades, ICTs have deeply affected the way business is performed and the way organizations compete. The use of the internet in business is of great significance and this development has contributed to increased service delivery, and excellent quality of products. The use of the internet in business has made information accessible and accurate, thus there are a wide range of consumers. However it is argued that performance is measured by connectivity, but it remains higher than that of traditional agencies. Among other traits in e-tourism, is online distribution channels that allows the distribution of tourism products into the market. The travel agency business has a potential of growing because the internet use is relative high in the market. It also continues to grow because the information provided is first hand, and the content is up-date. However Buhalis and Licata

(2010) argue that it is difficult to predict the future of travel agency business because of the ever-changing business methods and strategies. Notably this research established that the travel agencies business in Zimbabwe is growing since the inception of the internet use in business.

6.8   Delimitations

The research will make a comparison of new tourism distribution channels' impact on traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe from the inception and use of online business and marketing in Zimbabwe travel business. The research will use information of tourists and tourism consumers who use online services in transacting their various tourism businesses acquired from relevant institutions. The people contacted will be Zimbabwe Tourism Authority officials and Zimbabwe Travel Agencies Association officials.

6.9   Limitations

Limited time to carry out this study may affect the effectiveness of this research. The researcher maybe faced with the challenge of balancing school time and research time. Sensitivity of some information and issues may expose the lack of preparedness by traditional Travel agencies to enhance and adapt to change.

6.10   Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the challenges that are associated with traditional travel agency business in Zimbabwe. Ideally it was established that the development and use of online systems and applications in business and marketing have brought a new business culture that is affecting the efficiency and performance of old business and marketing. In this regard the development and use online business and marketing according to this investigation can argued to be a salient feature that can cause job insecurity amongst employees and the business. Indeed the recommendation made can be used to revive the business for traditional travel agency business in Zimbabwe.

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APPPENDIX 1

INTERVIEW: ACADEMIC EXPERTS

Section A

1   What is your highest qualification

Degree [ ]   Master   [ ]   Doctorate   [ ]   Professor   [ ]

2   How long have you specialised as an analyst in tourism

5-9 years [ ]   10-14 [ ]   15-19 [ ]   20+ [ ]

3   Do you have any publications on internet use business/organisational behaviour/human resources management/ strategic marketing and management or other?

YES [ ]   NO [ ]

If yes, which publication and field...

Publication date and board..

4   Briefly describe the challenges that are facing traditional travel agencies in Zimbabwe

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……

5   How does the new business and marketing strategies affect travel agencies business? What has caused this change?

Section B

1.Do you agree that the Traditional travel agencies business was once a flourishing   business in Zimbabwe?

Yes ☐   No   ☐

Please briefly explain your answer

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2 Do you agree that the business of traditional travel agencies is mainly done offline and it is a brick and mortar type of business?

Yes ☐   NO ☐

Explain your understanding with this question

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3 Do you think the use of online services created a direct like between suppliers and their customers?

YES ☐   NO ☐

If YES what has been benefited by:-

Suppliers..

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Customers...

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4 Does this relationship between suppliers and consumers affect traditional travel agencies?

YES ☐   NO ☐

Please briefly describe the effects

5 How do you perceive that the impact of online technology in travel and tour business?

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6 What impression do traditional travel agencies have because of the vast and continued use of online services by their suppliers?

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7 What is the future of traditional travel agencies in the next 5 years and beyond?

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8 Does Zimbabwe tourism industry promote the use of e-tourism distribution channels?

YES [   ]   NO [   ]

If YES, how has the sector benefited from e-tourism?

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9 Since the inception of online services what are major organisational changes that tourism institutions have witnessed?

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10 How does the use of online services cause job insecurity features among traditional travel agencies?

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APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW WITH TRAVEL AGENCIES

1. How long have you been in the travel agency business

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

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2. What are the main characteristics that define your business environment and culture

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3. What challenges are facing in business? If any what are you doing as solution for such problems?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

4. What is the current state of your business?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Briefly describe the future of your business and others in the next 5-10 years

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………......................

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EMPLOYEES IN TRAVEL BUSINESS

Section A:

1. Age   ………………………………………………….

2. Gender (Please tick)   Male [   ]   Female [   ]

3. Work experience

1-5years [   ]   6-10years [   ]   11-15years [   ]   16-20years [   ]   21+ [   ]

4. Academic qualification (Please tick)

Secondary certificate [   ]   Diploma [   ]   Degree [   ]   Masters [   ]

Section B:

5. Please rank the following services according to their use in your business. (1=least important, 5 most important)

Service	1	2	3	4	5
Bus booking					
Airline booking					
Tour hiring					
Rent a car service					
Hotel booking and reservations					

6. Rank the effectiveness of the following in terms of service delivery in Tourism.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Online payments					
Social media marketing and promotions					
Cash shortage (withdrawal limits)					
Power outage					
Poor management					

7. The use of internet in business today causes job insecurity. Please tick appropriate box

1. Strongly disagree (   )   2 Disagree (   )   3. Not sure   (   )   4. Agree   (   )   5. Strongly Agree ( )

8. How does online business influence change in Tourism business. Please tick in appropriate box

1. No influence (   ) 2. Little influence (   ) 3. Moderate influence (   ) 4. High influence ( ) 5. Substantial influence (   )

9. If you tick (5) to what extend does the change affects structure of your organisation?

1. To a greater extent ( ) 2. Moderate ( ) 3. Not sure ( )   4. Lesser extend   ( )

10. The use of online services in tourism has contributed to a better tourism industry. Please tick

YES [   ]   NO   [   ]

If No briefly explain……………………………………………………………….

11. Which of the following is the most and the least threat to job security and business for traditional travel agencies. Please rank 1=least, 5=most

Variable	1	2	3	4	5
Online business					
Social media marketing and promotions					
Cash shortage (withdrawal limits)					
Power outage					
Poor management					

12. Please rate the following consequences due to job insecurity

Consequences	1	2	3	4	5
Demotivation and poor performance					
Poor customer care					
Stuff turnover					
Poor service quality					
Conflicts					

  13. The introduction and use of internet in tourism lead to unemployment and threatens job security.

1. Strongly disagree (   )   2 Disagree (   )   3. Not sure   (   )   4. Agree   (   )   5. Strongly Agree ( )

THANK YOU